NEO-TIPO-GRAFÍA: MATERIAL POETICS IN THE SPANISH HISTORICAL AVANT-GARDE

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ABSTRACT

My dissertation analyzes the poetry of the beginning of the twentieth century in Spain with an eye to its material characteristics. The project analyzes the work of the poets in Spain who found inspiration in innovative work from across the European avant-garde, and it contends that their typographical experimentation was not just visual and not just mechanical, but was rather a key method for enacting the poetics of "l'esprit nouveau." These poets wanted to abolish the museums, kill insincerity and bombast, and get rid of the idea of the poet as prophet of the ineffable. Their goal was to herald a new age of intellectual rather than sentimental poetry. Typography was essential to this goal, for attention to the material qualities of the poem could make the artwork a material rather than a spiritual artifact.

I trace the development of avant-garde material poetics theoretically to the historical avant-garde's challenge to Symbolist transcendence. I analyze the various techniques for enacting this material poetics in writers like F.T. Marinetti, Guillaume Apollinaire, Tristan Tzara, and Vicente Huidobro, and then in Spanish writers Ramón Gómez de la Serna, Guillermo de Torre, Juan Larrea, Antonio Espina, Ernesto Giménez Caballero, and finally Manuel Altolaguirre. My analysis shows that the material poetics of the avant-garde goes much deeper than simple typographical antics. While it is true that novelty was a driving motivator for many artists in the historical avant-garde, their typographical experimentation was anything but directionless buffoonery. Through my close readings of these works from Spain's historical avant-garde I show how a material poetics united the praxis and the theory of the avant-garde's attack on the institution of art. The effects of these poets' efforts in material poetics are still with us today.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Whatever happened to the dark sublime,
sin of the third eye,
cross-gap between flesh and abstraction?

Contemporary American poet Charles Wright asks this question in his poem "Lines After Rereading T.S. Eliot" (4). The simple answer is that the "gap" between flesh and abstraction was closed and the "dark sublime" got squeezed out of poetry. It disappeared from art in the twentieth century, along with concepts like "sin" and "the third eye." But how and why did these things disappear? This is indeed a historical question, but we live immersed in its answer, reiterated in the myriad shapes and colors of language in every moment of the present. Ours is a very visual culture, enacted and maintained in the ubiquitous codes of advertising, social media, traffic signage, and entertainment. Writing now rarely appears in the form of *hand*writing. We are accustomed to produce and consume highly mediated forms of written language, conditioned by the conventions of typography, graphic design, and the user-computer interface. We take in language with two eyes and we decode it by using our vast but mostly passive knowledge of typefaces and layout. Wright, then, is even himself providing an answer with the very lines that ask the question. The offset typographical layout of his poem proves that the locus of poetry in the twentieth-century is not in the clairvoyant or spiritual "third-eye," but in the material stimuli captured by the two organs of human sight. Poetry happens on the page.

This study will look to the historical period in Spain where this reality begins to take shape. For all the historicity of the historical avant-garde, however, its typographical and poetic advances remain influential in the way we read and write today. "Typography

is what language looks like," writes historian and teacher of typography and graphic design Ellen Lupton (1), and if we accept that poetry is made of language, then typography is what poetry looks like too. But Lupton conceives of language much differently than did the poets of influence at the end of the European nineteenth century. So does Charles Wright, a twentieth-century poet and necessarily a product of his time. In French Symbolism and Hispanic *modernismo*, poetry (or more likely Poetry with a capital P) did not *look* like anything. It could not be held or torn. Poetry was felt, intuited, it was more musical than pictorial; it was an energetic impulse, more wave or potential than material, like light or an electric voltage. After all, the poet for Rubén Darío was 'God's lightning rod.' Following a very different conception of what poetry was and should be, the pugnacious heirs of the Symbolists and *modernistas* in the European avant-garde, while nonetheless children (or grand-children) of Romanticism, fought with history and with themselves to establish a poetics whose focus would lie, as does Lupton's, on the page itself. They strove to create a poetry made of language, built out of typography, and indeed out of other materials as well.

The historical avant-garde in Spain, a period in Peninsular literary history entangled in the thorny notions of the Generation of 1898, *modernismo*, the Generation of 1927 and other labels and schema (including wider Western Modernism), enjoyed the inheritance of French Symbolism and Hispanic *modernismo* at the same time that its artists strove to produce works vehemently present, aggressively modern. Typographical experimentation was a key tool towards this end. My dissertation analyzes the function of typography in the work of the poets of the historical avant-garde in Spain. I study their theoretical preoccupation with the materiality of language and specifically how

typographical innovation, the presentation of the poem on the page, embodies and conditions their aesthetic attitudes. Novel spacing, variable fonts, and attention to the use of serif (Spanish "palo cruzado") versus sanserif ("palo seco") typefaces are hallmarks of avant-garde poetry across Europe. Innovative typography in Spain is not just a by-product of the desire in Spain to escape fin-de-siècle *modernismo*, to be cosmopolitan, modern, and in-step with the rest of a newly mechanized and typographically appealing Europe; it is also a part of these poets' praxis, a set of tools which they employ purposefully to advance their aesthetic values as individual artists.

The European 'new typography' of the avant-garde was synthesized and disseminated in 1928 in a book by German designer Jan Tschichold. Tschichold's *Die Neue Typographie* is a handbook of avant-garde typographical and layout design. It takes cues from the formal innovations in poetry, sculpture, and painting of Futurism, Cubism, Orphism, the Bauhaus, the Dutch De Stijl group, and Dadaism (Tschichold 30-41). A key product of this 'new typography' was the development of geometric sanserif typefaces. Following from Bauhaus experimentation in the early- to mid-1920s in search of a "universal alphabet," Jakob Erbar developed a new kind of typeface, Erbar, which was released by Ludwig & Mayer in 1926 (Kinross 113). Until this point in history, letterforms had always been designed on a calligraphic foundation, representing in cut metal alphabetic writing's historical roots in hand-lettering and stone inscription. Coinciding with important technological advances like wireless telegraphy and the automobile, as well as Cubist abstraction and the "dehumanization" of modern art famously observed by José Ortega y Gasset, typography likewise became cosmopolitan, geometric, and abstract. Cubism in the plastic arts, the guiding example for avant-garde

poetry, helped to usher in "a new conception of the typographic/painterly page" (Tschichold 54). Letter design, typographical layout, reading order, and the motives and goals of poetry would all undergo change together in this period.

This dissertation is not about type design or typefaces specifically, and not even about typography broadly defined as page composition. It is about how these things were made to contribute to a material poetics that characterized the avant-garde project, and what this material poetics looked like in Spain. Some of the works studied here do not on first glance look like examples of typographical experimentation in poetry. Conversely, some works, like Ernesto Giménez Caballero's "carteles literarios," do not look like poems at all. This dissertation aims to demonstrate how the material poetics of the avant-garde, the theoretical stance of the artists of the period, manifests in the work they produced even when, as in the case of Manuel Altolaguirre, the poems are printed on the conventional grid pattern or, in the case of Giménez Caballero, the work under consideration is not really 'poetry.' This dissertation also aims to shed some light on the work of Spain's avant-garde poets in order to resituate Spain in Europe's typographical modernity and within the European historical avant-garde. While it is true that typographical modernity was cut short in Spain by the outbreak of the Civil War, as Patricia Córdoba demonstrates in her book *La modernidad tipográfica truncada*, it is not true that Spanish poets of the historical avant-garde, like the *ultraístas*, were unaware of the European new typography or poorly informed of "l'esprit nouveau," as Córdoba unfortunately suggests (45-7).

One of the most intriguing and important figures for the poetry of the avant-garde in Spain is Guillermo de Torre. His name will appear often throughout this study. In his

1925 book, *Literaturas europeas de vanguardia*, Torre includes a section titled "La neotipografía," essentially enumerating all the basic theoretical points with which Tschichold would defend his New Typography in 1928 and which inform Joanna Drucker's theoretical appraisal of avant-garde typographical experimentation in her 1997 book *The Visible Word*. Torre writes that "hoy, en el momento de exaltación de lo plástico y de las estructuras definidas y vertebradas, se sobrepone lo arquitectural: esto es, la tipografía" (369; 330).[1] This dissertation will take a close look at the poetry of the historical avant-garde in Spain and seek to draw some conclusions about why and how the plastic arts came to occupy such a privileged place in the minds of the poets of the period. I shall read the avant-garde poetry of Spain with an eye to the material parameters of the texts and with a conscious attention to the importance of the plastic arts for the poets of the 1910s and 1920s in order to situate their work historically *vis-à-vis* Hispanic *modernismo* or the Generation of 1927. My dissertation's title, "Neo-Tipo-Grafía," speaks to the novelty of these poets' work ("Neo"), their concern with typography ("Tipo"), and the historical avant-garde's general reevaluation of writing and the sites of literature ("Grafía").

The first chapter traces typographical experimentation in the historical avant-garde to the new century's challenge to Symbolism's poetics of transcendence. Against Wright's "dark sublime," that is, the conception of the poet as a prophet and his project as the spiritual quest of a privileged soul, the poetry of the historical avant-garde sought to unite art and life and thus created works which were material rather than spiritual

[1] Guillermo de Torre's 1925 book *Literaturas europeas de vanguardia* (abbreviated to *LEV*) is an especially important text for my project and will be cited often throughout the dissertation. I will always cite both the more commonly available 2001 Renacimiento edition followed by a citation for the same passage in Torre's original 1925 edition, published by Caro Raggio.

artifacts. Chapter One develops a theoretical approach to typographical experimentation in the historical avant-garde, situating material poetics within previous theoretical conceptions of the avant-garde undertaken by Peter Bürger, Matei Calinescu, Marjorie Perloff, Domingo Ródenas, and other critics, and in relation to the poetics of Symbolism and *modernismo* as practiced by figures like Charles Baudelaire, Paul Verlaine, and Antonio Machado. The avant-garde needs to be understood as a historical phenomenon, a brand of aesthetic modernity where the "cross-gap" in Wright's words, or in Andreas Huyssen's terminology, the "Great Divide" between mass culture and high culture, life and art, is closed. Joanna Drucker's work on avant-garde poets like Guillaume Apollinaire and Tristan Tzara is key to my understanding of the avant-garde's material poetics as an attack on Symbolist transcendence and a method for bringing art into the realm of lived experience.

Chapter Two constitutes a "florilegio," a collection of exemplars of avant-garde poetics, especially material poetics. I analyze authors whose work was important to the historical avant-garde in Spain, works often created in French. F.T. Marinetti, Guillaume Apollinaire, Blaise Cendrars, Vicente Huidobro, Max Jacob, Tristan Tzara, and Ramón Gómez de la Serna are the central figures for defining the material poetics that I will analyze in subsequent chapters.

Chapter Three focuses on three poets publishing in Madrid, each implicated in different ways and to different degrees in *ultraísmo,* the particularly Spanish take on the European poetic avant-garde. Guillermo de Torre, the heart and soul of Ultraism, wrote poems whose typographical layout reimagines poetry's place in time and space. Juan Larrea, an early enthusiast of *ultraísmo* and then a convinced *creacionista*, published

some of the most enigmatic of the typographically innovative poetry of 1919 as he travelled between Madrid and Bilbao. Antonio Espina, a shrewd critic and a somewhat paradoxical 'conservative' avant-gardist, wrote sly, ironic poetry which found a comfortable home in the subdued typographical aesthetics of Juan Ramón Jiménez's *Índice* venture but which nonetheless made intelligent use of the typographical innovations of the avant-garde's aggressive material poetics.

The "carteles literarios" created by Ernesto Giménez Caballero in 1926 and 1927 represent avant-garde material poetics at its most striking synthesis of poetry, painting, advertising, and criticism. Chapter Four considers Giménez Caballero's innovation of this genre in the context of the 'return to tradition' operating on the poetry of the second half of the 1920s in Spain and Europe. First developed out of the critical prose writings collected in his 1927 volume *Carteles*, Giménez Caballero's 'literary posters' mix media and discursive techniques in quickly apprehensible combinations of text and image. This chapter closely analyzes two of these pieces, one from *Carteles* that places Madrid's newspapers on a political and visual spectrum, and one dedicated to French poet Jean Cocteau and exhibited in Barcelona and Madrid along with other posters not first included in *Carteles*.

The final chapter of this dissertation takes up the poetry of Manuel Altolaguirre, a poet and printer associated with Cocteau's *rappel à l'ordre*, the 'return of tradition' characteristic of Spain's well-known Generation of 1927. In Chapter Five I argue that Altolaguirre's poetry must be read with the material poetics of the historical avant-garde in mind. Too young to have participated in Ultraism, Altolaguirre is nonetheless informed in his writing and in his work as a printer by the avant-garde's attention to the material

concerns of literary production. His metaphors owe a great debt to Ramón Gómez de la Serna's *greguería* and to the simultaneous aesthetics of Gerardo Diego's *imagen múltiple.* They are also often grounded in visual correspondences and indeed in the physical space of the printer's shop and tools. While a publication like Altolaguirre and Emilio Prados's magazine *Litoral* certainly presents a very different aesthetics to one of the more iconoclastic magazines of the avant-garde like *VLTRA*, the material poetics of the first post-war avant-garde in Spain is important for reading, writing, and printing practices among the canonical Generation of 1927 group and beyond.

THE BREAD RISES

This chapter's title comes from the first line of Blaise Cendrars's poem, "Hommage à Guillaume Apollinaire." Following the poet's death just two days before the armistice that ended the First World War in November of 1918, Cendrars writes

> Le pain lève
> La France
> Paris
> Toute une génération
> Je m'adresse aux poètes qui étaient présents
> Amis
> Apollinaire n'est pas mort (122-23)

And indeed he was right. Apollinaire would continue to live in the poetry of an entire generation, in a newly international France and beyond the borders of the Hexagon. Cendrars continues in this homage,

> Des petits Français, moitié anglais, moitié nègre, moitié russe, un peu belge, italien, annamite, tchèque,
> L'un a l'accent canadien, l'autre les yeux hindous
> […]
> Ils ont tous quelque chose d'étranger et sont pourtant bien de chez nous
> […]
> Ils ressemblent à leur père et se départent de lui (123)

Apollinaire is, according to Cendrars, to be the father and origin of a new French and indeed international poetry. Ramón Gómez de la Serna echoes this sentiment in Spain, saying that Guillaume Apollinaire was "el poeta que menos murió al morir" (*OC* XVI, 321). Guillermo de Torre, another important figure in the historical avant-garde in Spain, wrote that Apollinaire was the "hito inicial, punto de partida de las nuevas trayectorias literarias en la ruta cubista…De ahí que en las letras de vanguardia adquiera un magno relieve de precursor," an influence which still exercises in 1925, for Torre, a "bienhechora tiranía" over the 'new poetry' in Spain (*LEV* 164; 135). While the degree to

which Spanish poetry in the twentieth century depends upon French[2] poetry is debatable, the link cannot be doubted. Bread can be leavened with many different kinds of yeast, and even in a very well-controlled yeast culture the provenance of each individual microbe would not be easy to determine. Nor does it matter; the bread rises. The percentage of the yeast culture in the 'bread' of Spanish avant-garde poetry, so to speak, derived from France is not the topic of this chapter. Rather, its aim will be to watch the loaf as it proofs and then rises in the oven.

While Apollinaire did say that "on ne peut pas transporter partout avec soi le cadavre de son père" (*Les peintres cubistes* 16), critics have repeatedly affirmed Apollinaire's importance for the Spanish as well as the international avant-garde. This paternity should not be overlooked, as it certainly was not forgotten by the poets who followed Apollinaire after his premature death or by the critics and commentators of the European and specifically Spanish avant-gardes (Soria Olmedo, *Vanguardismo* 17, Videla 97-8; Shattuck; Bonet, *Diccionario* 57; Bohn; Décaudin). Here, rather than give

[2] Of course, notions of nationality in my dissertation will be far from fixed. Blaise Cendrars (born Frederick Louis Sauser), Guillaume Apollinaire (Wilhelm Albert Włodzimierz Apolinary Kostrowicki), and Tristan Tzara (Sami Rosenstock), are "French" poets because they write in French and in a tradition based in Paris and in the French language, despite being Swiss, Polish/Roman, and Romanian by birth, respectively. But I am not concerned with reductive definitions of nationality, much less national character or anything like it. One of the most exciting and most trumpeted aspects of the post-World War I avant-garde, in Spain and elsewhere, is its cosmopolitanism. Vicente Huidobro, at least in poetry and in my dissertation, is Chilean, French, and Spanish all at the same time. While Marjorie Perloff notes that the *avant-guerre* was at times a fiercely nationalistic climate, even for expatriate poets, post-1918 writers are less concerned with being French (or any other nationality), especially when that identity would suppose an opposition to others (see *The Futurist Moment*). Guillaume Apollinaire's defense of national literatures in his "L'Esprit nouveau et les poètes" is indicative of the pre-war nationalism that drove many artists to the fight, but the cosmopolitanism that he warns against there comes to define, in fact, the avant-garde following the war. All the same could be said of the adjective "Spanish" a little earlier on in this sentence. Few of the poets treated in this study have any strong feeling of Spanishness or any great concern over their nationality (Ernesto Giménez Caballero, as he founds Falange Española, is a notable exception). They are, or would like to be, cosmopolitan.

an exact account of all the chemical processes at work in the successful baking of a loaf of bread, rather than relay the measurements and the exact recipe for the historical avant-garde in Spain, I shall simply acknowledge the importance of the yeast and offer an account of what happens in the oven. By looking into the avant-garde's genesis in Paris and taking the pulse of avant-garde poetics in action, we can begin to theorize the typographical audacity of the poetry of the period. I intend to demonstrate that a material poetics – that is, an aesthetics of the physical printed poem – is the result of the avant-garde challenge to its Symbolist origins. I will begin this work with a look at Guillaume Apollinaire.

If Apollinaire is the point of departure for the avant-garde poetry of France and Spain, as Cendrars, Gómez de la Serna, Torre, and many others would affirm, where did he come from himself? He is a 'Cubist' poet for Torre and for Rafael Cansinos Assens ("Instrucciones para leer a los poetas ultraístas"), but this latter critic also attributes the 'modern image' as he finds it in Apollinaire and Spanish *ultraísta* poets to the Symbolist tradition of suggestive metaphor. How can we make sense of the fact that Apollinaire publishes *Alcools,* "essentially derived from Symbolism" (Lockerbie 1), the same spring of 1913 in which he publishes his manifesto-*affiche*, "l'Antitradition futuriste"? Can he be Symbolist at the same time as he calls for the elimination of "l'ennui" and the "sublime artiste" in poetry, and hands an enthusiastic "mer…….de……" to Charles Baudelaire and the "défenseurs de paysages"(Perloff, *Futurist* 98) ?

To understand the avant-garde in Spain we need to understand something of Guillaume Apollinaire, who represents as much a break from Symbolism as a continuation of it. For all of Apollinaire's strident opposition to tradition, he was

nonetheless the inheritor of the Symbolist mode, and even at times the cautious champion of canonical writers. "Many people [among his contemporaries] saw in him simply a talented purveyor of secondhand knowledge and mannerisms" (Shattuck 275), but while the poems included in *Alcools* may owe a great deal to Symbolist metaphor, they are unmistakably his own. One poem from this book, "Annie," can demonstrate both Apollinaire's important link to Baudelairean Symbolism and his equally important break with it. The unpunctuated lines tell us of a woman who walks through a garden full of roses adjacent to a house "Qui est une grande rose" (*Alcools* 38). When the speaker goes by on the road lined with linden trees he and the woman look at one another. The speaker notes,

> Comme cette femme est mennonite
> Ses rosiers et ses vêtements n'ont pas de boutons
> Il en manque deux à mon veston
> La dame et moi suivons presque le même rite (*Alcools* 38)

The symbolic leaps that Apollinaire makes in this poem take him first from roses to the woman, a conventional move. Then the woman's sartorial peculiarities lead Apollinaire to a pun; "boutons" are simultaneously buttons on clothing and buds on a rosebush, neither actually present in the garden scene. The lack of buttons on the Mennonite woman's simple clothing corresponds to the lack of sensuality and color in her garden. Finally, Apollinaire makes his greatest leap of all, which in formal logic is a *non sequitur* but in Symbolist analogy could be a great discovery. Since the speaker's jacket is missing two buttons he must be of the same austere religion as the woman in the rose garden. Obviously in this case, however, the speaker need not really be a Mennonite for the poem to work. Rather than a sincere affirmation about the speaker and religion, the conclusion

is a purely poetic idea. No profound truth is arrived upon here, just innovative imagery, unexpected associations.

The Autonomy of Art

To understand Symbolism's relationship to Apollinaire and, by extension, to the entire historical avant-garde, we must see how Symbolist poetry works and what the avant-garde did to break with Symbolist tradition. French Symbolism can be characterized by an emphasis on the musicality of poetry and on the importance of the symbol, allegory, myth (Fowlie 12-13). Of course, as Arthur Symons says as a near contemporary of the Symbolist poets, the use of metaphoric language has always been a part of literary practice (3). We should also remember that language is essentially metaphoric, even in regular daily use (Richards 92). The period we now call Symbolism was, however, the moment of a heightening consciousness of the use of symbolic language and a new kind of consecration of the metaphor (Symons 3; Chadwick 1-2). Paul de Man likewise notes the conscious use of allegorical language that especially characterizes Symbolism as a literary period in the second half of nineteenth-century France. He writes, "It may be true that all literature is symbolic, but it is not sure that all literature has been explicitly aware of it," as poets starting with Baudelaire certainly were (De Man 5). The fundamental characteristics that have defined Symbolism historically and will define it for this study are the consciousness of metaphoric language and the belief in the ability of that language to transcend physical reality. And so Symbolism for Michel Décaudin could be defined, more than by musicality, innovative rhythms, or free verse, by

> l'idéalisme qui rassemble les poètes. Sans doute depuis le romantisme on est « artiste » par opposition à l'utilitarisme « bourgois » ; mais c'est dans la seconde moitié du [dix-neuvième] siècle que l'art devient une morale, une religion, une métaphysique. (19)

For the Symbolist poet, "the light and the grass and the skies which appear in his poems remain essentially other than actual light or grass or sky" (De Man 6), and are rather elements of the poet's very conscious effort at evoking an idea of metaphysical transcendence by way of analogical correspondence. Even when critics divide Symbolism into several kinds, as Charles Chadwick has perceptively done by distinguishing a "human" from a "transcendental" Symbolism in his brief study (1-2), all kinds of Symbolism as practiced by the central poets of the tendency aim to evoke something beyond and superior to regular life. Chadwick writes, "Symbolism can, then be finally said to be an attempt to penetrate beyond reality to a world of ideas, either the ideas within the poet, including his emotions, or the Ideas in the Platonic sense that constitute a perfect supernatural world towards which man aspires" (6). This division between lived reality and artistic creation will be of capital importance throughout this dissertation.

We can follow Chadwick and many other critics, like Wallace Fowlie or Umberto Eco, in their suggestion to take Charles Baudelaire's sonnet "Correspondances" from *Les Fleurs du mal* as a manifesto of this kind of Symbolism (Fowlie 13; Eco 152).[3] In this

[3] Though Baudelaire's sonnet is not explicitly a manifesto of Symbolism, there actually was a Symbolist manifesto, Jean Moréas's "Le Symbolisme," published in *Le Figaro* on 18 September 1886. Moréas describes Symbolist poetics thus: "la poésie symbolique cherche à vêtir l'Idée d'une forme sensible qui, néanmoins, ne serait pas son but à elle-même, mais qui, tout en servant à exprimer l'Idée, demeurerait sujette. L'Idée, à son tour, ne doit point se laisser voir privée des somptueuses simarres des analogies extérieures; car le caractère essentiel de l'art symbolique consiste à ne jamais aller jusqu'à la concentration de l'Idée en soi. Ainsi, dans cet art, les tableaux de la nature, les actions des humains, tous les phénomènes concrets ne sauraient se manifester

poem, man passes through a forest of symbols which observe him with familiar looks. Here, "Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répondent" (Baudelaire 40). Everything corresponds to everything else, in fact, in a "profonde unité." There are even certain aromas, "ayant l'expansion des choses infinies,/Comme l'ambre, le musc, le benjoin et l'encens/ Qui chantent les transports de l'esprit et des sens" (Baudelaire 40). Baudelairean Symbolism seeks original correspondences between symbols of the poet's choosing, correspondences which are meant to transport the poet and the reader to a metaphysical rather than a physical plane of thought and feeling. This kind of prophetic poetry, emphasizing a 'profound unity' among all aspects of experience, "revindicated belief in the spiritual destiny of man" in the face of nineteenth-century scientific positivism and incipient industrialization (Fowlie 29). Like a Symbolist poem in the vein of Baudelaire, Apollinaire's "Annie" traces original correspondences between the beauty of the house ("une rose," perhaps it is painted red), the absent buds of the rosebushes in the garden, then the lack of buttons on the woman's and the speaker's own clothing, and finally the surprising idea of religious creed. But "Annie" is first and foremost a linguistic artifact, not a prophetic statement. Its surprise conclusion suggests more about conceptual rather than spiritual thinking. In Apollinaire's poem metaphor is the center of the poem's concern, not the poet's intuition or genius. Meanwhile punctuation is dropped, and rhyme, while present, is shifted away from the center of the rhythmic structure through the use of wide variation in line length and some enjambment. This is all very much unlike another arch-famous poem of French Symbolism, which like Baudelaire's

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eux-mêmes; ce sont là des apparences sensibles destinées à représenter leurs affinités ésotériques avec des Idées primordiales."

"Correspondances" could be read as a program for the movement.[4] Paul Verlaine's "Chanson d'automne" is musical, melancholy, and inwardly focused.

> Les sanglots longs
> Des violons
> De l'automne
> Blessent mon cœur
> D'une langueur
> Monotone.
>
> Tout suffocant
> Et blême, quand
> Sonne l'heure,
> Je me souviens
> Des jours anciens
> Et je pleure.
>
> Et je m'en vais
> Au vent mauvais
> Qui m'emporte
> Deçà, delà,
> Pareil a la
> Feuille morte (25)

The musicality of the poem is central to its structure, a musicality which Apollinaire implicitly mocks in his "Antitradition futuriste" by including a musical scale with the "mer…….de……..." that he presents to the "ruines" in their various forms. In this "manifeste-synthèse" Apollinaire takes up the typographical gestures of Futurism[5] to bring poetry closer to the plastic arts. Rather than continue striving for musicality in poetry, Apollinaire's innovation was to replace the musical foundation of poetry with

[4] "Movement" is of course a problematic descriptor, but a common one. Michel Décaudin gives the dynamics of the problem thorough treatment from the outset of his book *La crise des valeurs symbolistes.*

[5] Not without ambiguity, as Marjorie Perloff and Michel Décaudin point out, considering his earlier condemnation of Marinetti's movement (*The Futurist Moment* 97-98; Décaudin 473-4). Willard Bohn affirms, however, that Apollinaire and the Futurists were "on friendly terms" (*Modern Visual Poetry* 51). P.A. Jannini's documentation of Marinetti and Apollinaire's correspondence seems to confirm this view, also shared by Guillermo de Torre (*LEV* 168; 139).

visual concerns, as we have begun to see in "Annie," and as can be observed much more dramatically in his *Calligrammes.* Just as in both Apollinaire's poem and, of course, Baudelaire's, all of the images in Verlaine's "Chanson d'automne" work together in a closed poetic system of connections. Unlike Apollinaire's "Annie," however, Verlaine's poem from the 1866 *Poèmes saturniens* is centered closely on the speaker, and the withered leaf, along with the wind, the falling temperature, everything in the scene, communes with the speaker's soul. This technique of extended metaphor as expression of the poet's feelings called *paysage d'âme,* was probably, along with traditional landscape painting, the target of Apollinaire's barb directed at the "défenseurs de paysages" cited above.

In Spain, avant-garde admirers of Apollinaire would attack the same kind of "impressionisme tragique" that Henri Peyre reads in Verlaine (78). But, according to Rafael Cansinos Assens's contemporary appraisal of the situation, the poets in Spain who would constitute the avant-garde were unfamiliar with French Parnassian or Symbolist poetry, could not get a hold of Mallarmé, had not read Verlaine, and did not even know the language. He says they were too poor to buy foreign books anyway (*La nueva literatura* 77). They were nonetheless primed for the same kind of shift in poetic sensibilities that took place in France with the avant-garde and the advent of Cubism. In Spain in the early years of the twentieth century, the dominant mode of poetic composition was the *modernista* style of Rubén Darío, Francisco Villaespesa, Antonio Machado, Juan Ramón Jiménez, and other devotees of the "almost religious task" of writing immortal icons of the human soul (Debicki 9). Just as Baudelaire's poetry "revindicated belief in the spiritual destiny of man" (Fowlie 29), Hispanic *modernismo*

sought in "símbolos y metáforas…una extraña alianza de lo sagrado con lo profano, de lo sublime con lo obsceno" (Paz 43). Octavio Paz continues later on in *Los hijos del limo,* his study of *modernismo* and modernity,

> El modernismo fue la respuesta al positivismo, la crítica de la sensibilidad y el corazón – también de los nervios – al empirismo y el cientismo positivista… El modernismo fue nuestro verdadero romanticismo y, como en el caso del simbolismo francés, su versión no fue una repetición, sino una metáfora: *otro* romanticismo. (94)

We can take a poem from Antonio Machado's 1907 collection *Soledades, galerías y otros poemas* as an example of the Symbolist/*modernista* mode in Spanish poetry at the beginning of the twentieth century.[6] "El casco roído y verdoso" is much like a *paysage d'âme* in the tradition of Baudelairean analogy, but an important shift away from the prophetic is already underway.

> El casco roído y verdoso
> del viejo falucho
> reposa en la arena...
> La vela tronchada parece
> que aún sueña en el sol y en el mar.
> El mar hierve y canta...
> El mar es un sueño sonoro
> bajo el sol de abril.
> El mar hierve y ríe
> con olas azules y espumas de leche y de plata,
> el mar hierve y ríe
> bajo el cielo azul.
> El mar lactescente,
> el mar rutilante,
> que ríe en sus liras de plata sus risas azules...
> ¡Hierve y ríe el mar!...
> El aire parece que duerme encantado
> en la fúlgida niebla de sol blanquecino.
> La gaviota palpita en el aire dormido, y al lento
> volar soñoliento, se aleja y se pierde en la bruma del sol. (459)

[6] J.M. Aguirre gives a very complete discussion of French Symbolism's connection to Antonio Machado and *modernismo* generally in his book *Antonio Machado, poeta simbolista.*

The poem presents a simple scene. A small weather-worn boat rests in the sand. Its downed sail is rumpled in inactivity. The sun hits the waves while a gull hovers above the shoreline and then takes off into the distance. In this poem personification abounds, as the sail seems to dream of past adventures on the sea, while the sea itself sings, roils, laughs. The air is asleep, complementing the gull's 'dreamy' flight towards the blurry sun. While the poem lacks rhyme, a free combination of hexasyllablic and nonasyllabic lines complements the close visual perspective of the beginning of the poem, while the broadening and deepening of the perspective towards the end of the poem is likewise complemented by lines of ever-increasing length. Line length underpins shifts in perspective while immobility in the 'old' boat corresponds to stagnation and nostalgia in the speaker. And as the speaker's (or reader's) focus shifts to the gull, its flight corresponds to the dreamy freedom called for by the laughing sea and the speaker's own remembrances. These correspondences are various "modos de operación del pensamiento analógico," which is how Octavio Paz defines the set of poetic tools that the poet has at his disposal: metaphor, metonymy, rhyme, rhythm etc. (64). By utilizing these 'operative modes of analogical thinking,' the *paysage d'âme* technique depends to a certain degree on a reading of the poem in consonance with Fowlie's appraisal of Baudelaire's poetic mission, "that of transmuting his intimate emotions, his personal anguish, into a strange and impersonal work" (50). Verlaine's "Chanson d'automne" is an example of this technique, and in fact, the first line of Verlaine's own poem "Clair de lune," may be the source for the term *paysage d'âme*.[7] But Machado's poem, unlike Verlaine's, lacks an

[7] The first line is "Votre âme est un paysage choisi" (83). I owe thanks to Andrew A. Anderson for corroborating my intuition that this may have been the source of the term and for offering another possible source. He added that Henri-Frédéric Amiel writes in his *Journal intime* in

explicit speaker. We might call it more a "paysage d'idée" than a Symbolist *paysage d'âme,* the metaphorical manifestation of a higher genius. Miguel Gallego-Roca makes this same point about Machado's distance from prophetic Symbolism. He says that for Machado, true lyric poetry, which he identifies with Symbolism, is emotive and intuitive. Opposite this kind of poetry is a poetry of ideas directed at the reader's logic. Though I might disagree with Gallego-Roca's placement of Machado as 'equidistant' from Symbolism and the avant-garde, his basic point is valid; "Equidistante del simbolismo y de la vanguardia, Machado pretende una poesía dirigida tanto a la intuición como al pensamiento" (63).

The magical, prophetic poetry of the *paysage d'âme* is possible in Symbolism, indeed it is to a large degree the goal of Symbolism, because, according to Octavio Paz, analogic thought remits us to the time of myth (81), and thus poetry rooted in symbols is a poetry "del tiempo sin fechas," or magical, intuitive, non-linear time (64). It is an ancient kind of poetry and constitutes a new true religion for poets at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth (Paz 59). At this time in Spain, French Symbolism gave rise to the nearly religious take on poetry shared by Machado, Juan Ramón Jiménez, and Rubén Darío, even though these poets would come to produce less prophetic verse in later years. Coopting Darío's own words for Verlaine, Rafael Cansinos Assens wrote that the Nicaraguan poet came to occupy the place of "padre y maestro mágico" for Spanish *modernistas* (*La nueva literatura* 213). In the same way, Baudelaire had been the first high priest of the new kind of religion called Symbolism, as Wallace Fowlie eagerly explains:

October 1852, "Un paysage quelconque est un état de l'âme" (II, 295). Whatever the original source, the term is now ubiquitous in writing on Symbolist poetics.

> Baudelaire's revelation was to provide a metaphysical conception of… the universe. His famous sonnet on synesthesia and Symbolism, *Correspondances,* reassigns to the poet his ancient role of *vates,* of soothsayer, who by his intuition of the concrete, of immediately perceived things, is led to the *idea* of these things, to the intricate system of correspondences. (Fowlie 29)

Machado's poem exercises all of the power of Symbolist correspondence, but the correspondences between things as observed by the reader or by anyone contemplating a "casco roído y verdoso," give rise to the poetic moment, rather than the poet's "intuition" about what these things might mean or how they could be read as an extension of his own privileged emotional state. The boat could easily be real, and indeed, for Antonio Machado, real physical boats are perfectly apt for poem-making. As Willis Barnstone says of "Machado's best poems,… the poet dreams of a remembered landscape. He then presents a temporal reflection of his dream – an outer landscape – to the reader who, in turn, reads back into it the original landscape" (Barnstone 22). In these "poems of a secular mystical character… the world is revealed in images of startling clarity, the outer and inner worlds join" (Barnstone 22). Machado's physical world is accessible to his readers. Geoffrey Ribbans makes a similar appraisal of the poet's use of metaphor and image in "Campos de Soria."

> [E]ven after he has infused them with his own personal emotion, Machado never fails to respect the existence in themselves of the objects he describes or evokes; they are never dissolved into a hazy "paysage d'âme," or treated any longer as symbols divorced from a reality outside himself, (295)

charges that Ribbans levels at the early poems of Juan Ramón Jiménez in *Arias tristes* and *Jardines lejanos.* Conversely, if we reread Verlaine's "Chanson d'automne" we will see that, though it is autumn, the iconic fallen leaf at the end of the poem is not explicitly real. The leaf is present in the poem only as a metaphor for the poet's soul. Paul de Man's

observation that the Symbolist poet's grass or sky are not physically real grass and sky but "merely" symbols that the poet uses from his prophetic space of separation applies here (De Man 5-6). It seems the autumn wind exists for Verlaine only to set his poetic mind in motion, to produce then 'the long sobs/ of autumn's violins,' and finally a dead leaf, ultimately generating a poetic trajectory that is always oriented inwards towards the poet and his feelings, and never outwards towards lived material experience, as could be the case in Machado.

Antonio Machado's *Poesías completas* are published in 1917, effectively canonizing him in Spanish letters. Machado is absorbed into the "institution of art," the bourgeois conception of art that kept art and artists, until the avant-garde, on a transcendent plane above the daily life of society (Bürger 12). He is canonized, along with already laureled prophets of poetry like Darío (who died the year before) or Verlaine. For the avant-garde in Spain the *modernistas* and the Symbolists would constitute the previous generation of writers, the poetry which they would inherit as the contemporary paradigm and thus also the target of their efforts at poetic renovation. Consequently, Machado's "Symbolist filiation" is a key factor in the sympathetic view accorded the French avant-garde by young Spanish poets who had been raised on Hispanic *modernismo* (Debicki 11-12). Juan Manuel Bonet, one of the most active devotees of the Spanish historical avant-garde, still considers Machado a "gran poeta simbolista" in his very complete *Diccionario de las vanguardias en España* (388), just as J.M. Aguirre titles his study of Machado *Antonio Machado, poeta simbolista*, remembering Emilio Carrere's 1906 assessment of Machado as "el gran sacerdote del simbolismo" (Aguirre 17). It is an aptly applied adjective since Machado, Jiménez, Darío

and other representatives of *modernismo* were the conduits for French Symbolism in the Spanish-speaking world.

The prophetic strain in Symbolism and *modernismo* viewed poetry as a new kind of religion, separate from and superior to daily life. Symbolist poets exercised their prophetic mission by forging new metaphors, correspondences in words that brought them closer to a spiritual and immaterial "profonde unité." Peter Bürger argues that this conception of art placed it beyond the critique of the bourgeois logic of material means and left it for the contemplation and enjoyment of a select few (13). This meant art was autonomous from society and existed only for itself (Bürger 17).

We can call the "autonomy of art" as Peter Bürger describes it the institution of art, *l'art pour l'art,* Aestheticism, *poesía pura*, or in José Ortega y Gasset's terminology, "arte artístico" (Ortega 51; Soria Olmedo, *Vanguardismo* 13). While these terms certainly cannot be considered synonyms, some of the same ideas about art and its relationship to society are part and parcel to them all.[8] In autonomous art the artist is a seer, like the Symbolist poet, an "aristocrat" and "an ivory-towerite" (Pucciani 27). His work is immaterial, emotionally and intellectually superior to normal existence. Though José Ortega y Gasset's essay *La deshumanización del arte* of 1924-1925 is often considered the theoretical appraisal of a new art that challenged *fin-de-siècle* aestheticism, he still

[8] Each concept can be understood in several ways. The idea of *poesía pura,* for example, inhabits Juan Ramón Jiménez's poetry as a goal of limpid transcendent poetic perfection at the same time that Guillermo de Torre says that successive stages of "depuración" in poetic images can take the image or metaphor to a "plano hiperespacial" (*LEV* 331; 298). This critic's comments on Jiménez's "ansias de perfección" (*LEV* 70; 43) demonstrate that for him 'purity' and 'perfection' had much more to do with technique and craft than with transcendence. The concept is strongly associated with Stéphane Mallarmé and Paul Valéry. It can be understood in a variety of ways (see Siebenmann's chapter, "Poesía pura," 240-265). Marjorie Perloff associates the interest in 'purity' with high Modernist aesthetics, as I do (*The Futurist Moment* 228). I will revisit the concept in my chapter on Manuel Altolaguirre.

describes this new "arte artístico" in terms that bring it very close to the art-as-institution that Peter Bürger says the historical avant-garde takes as its enemy. Ortega's "arte artístico" is superior to regular life, and indeed is beyond the reach of the material world and worldly men. The founder of the *Revista de Occidente* writes of this autonomous art in his essay *La deshumanización del arte*,

> Si el arte nuevo no es inteligible para todo el mundo, quiere decirse que sus resortes no son los genéricamente humanos. No es un arte para los hombres en general, sino para una clase muy particular de hombres que podrán no valer más que lo otros, pero que, evidentemente, son distintos. (52)

Human sensibility is no longer the main criterion for distinguishing great art from lesser art, as Ortega says it was in the nineteenth century. The principle of evaluation is now artistic sensibility. This means an attention to form and an ability to isolate or purify, both in artistic execution and in interpretation, the artistic qualities of a work from the human content that may, in part, constitute it or which informed its creation in the first place (Ortega 55).

Ortega's seminal essay is an astute contemporary appraisal of what I would like to think of as modernity in the broadest sense possible in Spanish poetry in the beginning of the twentieth century, a broad "modernism" that functions as context for many different literary phenomena all over Europe and the Americas, a view elaborated most thoroughly by Domingo Ródenas.[9] Ortega writes that the 'new poetry' is not apprehensible for an uninitiated public, that the run-of-the-mill bourgeois businessman is incapable of feeling "sacramentos artísticos," that he is "ciego y sordo a toda belleza pura" (51). He lists seven aspects of the new or 'young' art that he sees leading up to his essay of 1924-1925:

[9] Ródenas provides, in my view, the most complete and nuanced account of the historical avant-garde in the context of Modernism, *modernismo*, postmodernism, and literary history in Hispanic letters in the first part of his book, *Los espejos del novelista.*

1, dehumanization; 2, avoidance of the representation of living things; 3, the work of art is art only, *l'art pour l'art*; 4, art is ludic, it is a game; 5, an essential irony; 6, an avoidance of all falsehood; and 7, art is not transcendent (Ortega 57).

I say that Ortega's criteria do well to sketch a basis for understanding Spanish poetry of modernity in the widest sense because all of these are indeed prominent aspects of poetry written in Spain after the Spanish American War and before the Spanish Civil War. With reason, critics like Ródenas, Nelson R. Orringer, and C. Christopher Soufas have in recent years urged that the many "modernisms," both Spanish and international, be considered jointly as aspects of a single Western aesthetic modernity spanning from Symbolism to the mid-twentieth century. However, within all of the poetry that might fall under Ortega's rubric of "arte deshumanizado," or any of the other available schema for Western Modernism, avant-garde poetry espouses a particular program (often very vocally in its manifestoes) and is characterized by several aspects in opposition to what has usually been called in English "Modernism." As Soufas argues against Peter Bürger, the historical avant-garde may not be "radically different" from "modernism," ("Modernism and Spain" 10); they are in fact intertwined concepts. But wide views of Modernism like Soufas's and Astradur Eysteinsson's, which take the individual historical groups of the avant-garde as "salient motors of modernism" (Eysteinsson 178; Soufas, "Modernism and Spain" 10; also Orringer, "Introduction"), still need to address the tension between what has been called the historical avant-garde and Orringer's third aspect of Modernism, namely the "sustained revolution with religious zeal in all spheres of cultural creativity" ("Introduction" 140). The cult of novelty defines all of Modernism,

but the avant-garde also always stresses non-transcendence, attacking not religion necessarily, but reverence.

As both Soufas and Orringer help to document, terminological and taxonomical confusion is a serious problem for any study of the historical avant-garde, but especially in the criticism of Hispanic literatures, since Modernism, *modernismo,* and modernity as labels are so easy to conflate. "Avant-garde" is often absorbed into this mix as a synonym for "Modernism" in English without serious attention being given to its relationship to the other terms (Calinescu 118, 139-41; Ródenas, *Los espejos* 56; Pérez Bazo 11). Also, Spanish literary historiography has long depended upon and wrestled with the generational model, in which the Generation of 1898 is opposed to *modernismo* in a philosophical versus lyric-sensual dichotomy, this pair being replaced later by any number of generations centered on the years 1914, 1925, or 1927 (by far the most famous, most prestigious, and most entrenched). Modernity for Andrew Debicki is the umbrella term under which *modernismo,* high modernity, the Generation of 1927 take shape, as well as several other "currents" like avant-garde "indeterminacy" (30)[10] or later "committed poetry" such as Miguel Hernández's Civil War verses (49). Debicki deserves more credit than Soufas gives him for seeing all of these "currents" as parts to the whole that is modernity, but Debicki also minimizes the avant-garde movements' lasting effect on their contemporaries or later writers (Debicki 39), ultimately perpetuating the critical practice of blindly isolating some currents from others even when points of contact could be discerned (Soufas, *The Subject in Question* 42-3). Likewise stressing the differences

[10] Debicki follows Marjorie Perloff's analysis of the "other tradition," that is the current of indeterminacy in modern Western poetry that she says follows from Rimbaud. I will likewise make use of Perloff's work to approach a definition of the historical avant-garde.

among the various poets and poetics of the first decades of the twentieth century, and the need for more attention to be given to some neglected categories, Andrew A. Anderson analyzes the historical use of the Generation of 1927 moniker in his book *El veintisiete en tela de juicio,* concluding finally that Modernism, avant-garde, and the Generation of 1927 are certainly not one and the same and serious attention to delineating each should be a mandate for further criticism, even while the old crutches of these categories should also be reexamined (284-5). But the practice of criticism and literary history over the last century has made revising and repositioning these categories very difficult. "Narrow view[s]" of the panorama of modernity in Spanish poetry have sought to separate *modernismo* completely from Modernism, and to deny continuity, fluidity, or comparison between Generation of 1898, *modernismo,* avant-garde, or even between any Spanish writing and broader trends in European literature (Debicki 9).

However, even when a wider lens is used for criticism of modernity in Spain, as in José-Carlos Mainer's *La edad de plata,* the terminology can perpetuate the problematic excision of Spain from broader currents in Western modernity. Certainly Mainer's label, "La Edad de Plata," is useful for its ability to bring together many different writers and literary tendencies which doubtless intersect, as it has done in the Residencia de Estudiantes's excellent archives and research tools grouped under the term.[11] But even Mainer himself recognizes the term's 'inadequecy' in the second edition of his book (15) and it could perpetuate the critical schism between Spain and Europe. Perhaps "La Edad de Plata" is the best name for modernity in Spain, but under this umbrella there are many confused currents that require specific attention. This over-arching label also threatens, in

[11] A wealth of very useful information, digital reproductions of texts, etc. at www.edaddeplata.org.

the end, to be one more label on top of many others. For Anderson, "una multitud variopinta de versiones de la literatura del pasado, con sus correspondientes nombres, obras, fechas, etiquetas, rúbricas, clasificaciones y categorías," confuses the whole and naturally contributes to a somewhat arbitrary distribution of fame, honor, and oblivion (*El veintisiete* 278).

The opposite tendency, that is, towards total synthesis, is not necessarily preferable to this proliferation of versions of twentieth-century writing in Spain. The tendency to equate all of Modernism and the avant-garde in Western culture is, unfortunately, common (Calinescu 140). As an example, the back cover of the 1968 Princeton English translation of Ortega y Gasset's *The Dehumanization of Art* proclaims the essay to be the definitive theory of "Modernism," which, considering the fact that it is a translation into English published by the press of a prominent American university, could very well mean the Anglo-American Modernism of, for example, T.S. Eliot. Other critics equate Ortega's essay unequivocally with the avant-garde. As a case in point, José-Carlos Mainer says that *La deshumanización del arte* includes "siete principios que Ortega considera característicos del arte de vanguardia" (*La Edad de Plata* 189). In 1953, Juan Ramón Jiménez stated in his lectures at the University of Puerto Rico that poetry then was still following the trajectory of *modernismo,* the great revolution in poetic language taking shape following Rubén Darío (*El Modernismo* 104-5). For Jiménez, the poet was a "clarividente" (*El Modernismo* 96), essentially the prophet that he had been in French Symbolism. Juan Ramón even applies this label, "simbolista," to himself (*El Modernismo* 106) at the same time as he effaces the differences between Symbolism, *modernismo,* Modernism, and the avant-garde. Of course, as an important actor in the

poetic panorama of the first half of the twentieth century in Spain, Jiménez had continual contact with many of the poets that would constitute the avant-garde. Their relations were often contentious and the future Nobel laureate would never fully embrace the *vanguardias.* He was nevertheless a contributor to some avant-garde magazines. Even a writer as hugely important for the international avant-garde as was Apollinaire is often called, and not without reason, 'modernist.' Where then do we draw the lines?

In the Hispanic context, Soufas's and Orringer's point is well taken: Modernism happened in Spain too, and "the abandonment of the old generational groupings" does allow critics to think about the old paradigms of *modernismo,* the Generations of 1898 and 1927, and the avant-garde in new ways that will not pigeonhole any writer, group or moment ("Modernism and Spain" 11). It bears keeping in mind, though, that Darío and Lorca are very different, to say nothing of Guillermo de Torre or Juan Larrea. The avant-garde consciously defined itself in opposition to Orringer's Modernist "religious zeal" ("Introduction" 140) and Soufas's Modernist "superior consciousness" ("Modernism and Spain" 15), and so finding a way to speak about avant-garde poetics needs to take the avant-garde's materialist and iconoclastic zeal into account.

My goal here is not to untangle all of these terms. Rather, I will follow several critics' thinking in an attempt to define broadly the historical avant-garde and demonstrate the theoretical impetus for a material poetics in the avant-garde. I will show that two broad currents exist in Western aesthetic modernity, currents which, though distinct, often cross and mix in the same writer or even in the same work. One of these currents characterizes what is often called "high Modernism" while the other is the special mark of the "historical avant-garde." We can say that Ortega y Gasset was talking

about both phenomena at the same time in his famous essay on dehumanized art. Benefitting from some historical distance and the work of other critics, I can begin to isolate each for discussion. My starting point will be Symbolism, broadly defined, and Western modernity. Matei Calinescu identifies two types of Western modernity in his *Five Faces of Modernity*: industrial and aesthetic (41). Industrial modernity entails mechanization, means-end economics, the logic of progress, and the sensible allocation of resources. On the other hand, Calinescu says, aesthetic modernity, as Baudelaire saw it, depended on novelty and creative genius (Calinescu 49; Debicki 8). Modernity is a "spiritual adventure," an "alchemical"[12] search for the "heroism of modern life" (Calinescu 54). In poetry written in Spanish, since *modernismo* is more than anything a "synthesis" of French Symbolism (Calinescu 70; see also Paz; Jiménez, *El Modernismo*; Debicki 8) and the Hispanic aspect of the wider occidental *fin-de-siècle* (Soria Olmedo, *Vanguardismo* 18; Hambrook), it makes sense to consider Modernism and *modernismo* aspects of the same broader Western aesthetic modernity, as Domingo Ródenas, Nelson R. Orringer, C. Christopher Soufas, Federico de Onís, Ricardo Gullón, and Juan Ramón Jiménez do (see Calinescu 75-7; Debicki 9; Soria Olmedo, *Vanguardismo* 19; Ródenas, *Los espejos* 46).

The Hispanic avant-garde, under the banners of *ultraísmo, creacionismo,* and sometimes other labels, however, often defined itself in strict opposition to Rubén Darío's or Antonio Machado's *modernismo* and Symbolism. Thus Juan Cano-Ballesta is able to say that "la poesía en la vanguardia española es lo opuesto de 'parfum exotique' de Baudelaire" (15), even if such an opposition was also always a kind of dependence

[12] Calinescu could easily be thinking of Rimbaud's "Alchimie du Verbe" or the alchemical resonances in some of Mallarmé's poetry (see Chadwick 38).

and debt, as Miguel Gallego-Roca intelligently reminds us (47-9). Though often of a mixed character, this opposition was coherent and explicit in many cases, despite and indeed because of the fact that the avant-garde writers often first learned their craft as *modernistas* and enthusiastic fans of Darío, much the same as Apollinaire in France developed his work out of Symbolist poetics.

Avant-garde poetry in Spain was 'dehumanized' in many of the ways that Ortega described, but the "resacralization" of art (Bürger 28) implicit in Ortega's description of 'pure beauty' beyond the reaches of the 'masses' (Ortega 51), was something the avant-garde poets of France and Spain rejected outright. Indeed it seems that the autonomy of art accords poorly with some of the other characteristics that Ortega discerns in the new poetry, namely its ludic irony and its non-transcendence. Gloria Videla made note of this specific contradiction in her 1963 study of *ultraísmo* but dismissed it as typical of the movement's general multivalence (95-6). I think, however, that the dissonance between Ortega's ideas about the experience and understanding of art as a 'pure' and 'sacred' enterprise and his denial of artistic transcendence in the same essay merit further attention here. This very same point of dissonance appears in any attempt to view Modernism and avant-garde as synonyms, writes Matei Calinescu:

> In France, Italy, Spain, and other European countries the avant-garde, despite its various and often contradictory claims, tends to be regarded as the most extreme form of artistic negativism – art itself being the first victim. As for modernism, whatever its specific meaning in different languages and for different authors, it never conveys that sense of universal and hysterical negation so characteristic of the avant-garde. The antitraditionalism of modernism is often subtly traditional. That is why it is so difficult, from a European point of view, to conceive of authors like Proust, Joyce, Kafka, Thomas Mann, T.S. Eliot, or Ezra Pound as representatives of the avant-garde. These writers have indeed very little, if anything, in common with such typically avant-garde movements as futurism, dadaism, or surrealism. So, if we want to operate consistently

> with the concept of modernism (and apply it to such writers as those mentioned above), it is necessary to distinguish between modernism and the avant-garde… [Avant-garde]'s negative radicalism and systematic antiaestheticism leave no room for the artistic reconstruction of the world attempted by the great modernists. (140-1)

The essential irony which Ortega mentions as an aspect of the new poetry is certainly present in Apollinaire's "Annie." His mocking assertion that the speaker must be a Mennonite just like Annie, since his jacket is missing two buttons, is the "profonde unité" of Symbolist correspondences turned on its head. Apollinaire's irony confirms the lack of transcendence that Ortega sees in the poetry of those in Spain who would greatly admire and emulate the inventor of the calligramme after his death, but this allegorical irony attacks Symbolist allegory at the same time as it operates within the allegorical system (Paz 109).

This is what the historical avant-garde does. It is the Symbolism that denies the transcendence of Symbolism, it is the artistic attack on the autonomy of art (Bürger 22), the "parody of modernity itself" (Calinescu 141). The avant-garde is the kind of modern 'insubordination,' in Domingo Ródenas's felicitous characterization, of aesthetic modernity (*Los espejos* 38). If Apollinaire's poem is more a linguistic construct than a spiritual revelation – as I advanced above – it is anything but an "artistic [read transcendent] recreation" of a lived scene (Calinescu 141). The ironic realization about religion in Apollinaire's "Annie" is not profound, but rather mocks attempts at profundity in art. As Octavio Paz writes, sincere analogy and irony are irreconcilable (81). The avant-garde targets Symbolism's "problème le plus grave," which is for Michel Décaudin the idealism that leads the Symbolist poet to adopt a superior and disdainful attitude to material daily life (20). This is what makes Apollinaire avant-garde even while he is of

course modern, for as Peter Bürger says, the superiority of art and its separation from life as espoused by *l'art pour l'art* and aestheticism are denied by avant-garde irony (Bürger 22, 27).

So, while Ortega y Gasset's *Deshumanización* clearly explains many of the processes of avant-garde art, I still read an irresoluble oppositional dichotomy in his discussion of "pureza" and "intranscendencia" (57), an opposition that we find also in the avant-garde's attitude to what has become known as Modernism.[13] A dehumanized poetry that still held on to the transcendent idea of genius, that still sought a 'profound unity' in the artist's experience and believed in his sacred power to create masterpieces, can be described as "high modernity" or Modernism (Debicki 10, 18; Calinescu 140-41; Orringer "Introduction" 139-40). While the high Modernist work of art rejected mimetic representation, as Ortega noted, it still aspired to attain a kind of mythological higher order rooted in art's transcendence of life, the autonomy of the institution of art (Anderson, *El veintisiete* 282-3). Ortega's third point about the 'new art' contains a key contradiction then, as his idea of 'non-transcendent pure beauty' fails to address the tension between avant-gardist non-transcendence and the high Modernist 'Ideal.' He says that the work of art only aspires to be art, that the new art has no transcendence, but he simultaneously contends that pure art is somehow sacred.

Some fifteen years before Ortega y Gasset's *Deshumanización*, on the threshold of the historical avant-garde in Spain, the critic Edmundo González-Blanco felt that the

[13] Again, we can say, with Juan Manuel Bonet, that Ortega's essay helps us to understand the poetry, music, and plastic art of modernity, "la modernidad," (*Diccionario* 458), rather than specifically "Modernism" or the "Avant-garde." I should not like to suggest that Orringer's, Soufas's or even Juan Ramón Jiménez's use of "modernism" or "modernismo" is unsuited to broad discussions of aesthetic modernity, but I believe it worth seeking the nuances within modernity that set the avant-garde poets apart from others.

slogan “el arte por el arte,” was not lofty enough and preferred rather “el arte por la belleza” (542). In 1910 González-Blanco agrees strongly with the notion that “el poeta ha de ser un santo” (543), even clarifying that he only means the poet should be a saint because of his divinity, not his practical example of good works. I hope that some of what I have described as Ortega’s high Modernism’s debt to prophetic Symbolism is apparent in González-Blanco’s defense of the *modernista* aesthetic, even if this critic’s emphasis on mimesis is the antithesis to *deshumanización*:

> Debe siempre distinguirse en la literatura los procedimientos tenidos por *no moralizadores* y los procedimientos *inmorales:* esta distinción es capital, pues el arte tiene la misión de elevarse muy por encima de lo abyecto, de lo grosero, de lo subversivo. El arte es una imitación, y, por consiguiente, una apología de la naturaleza. Pero la naturaleza no es buena (544)…. Los literatos son seres elegidos; su vida tiene goces que nadie comprende, á no ser artista como ellos: poder exteriorizar emociones, desenvolver sentimientos, es una satisfacción que bien vale la pena de que á ella se sacrifiquen muchos postulados directivos de la vida práctica…. una de sus [del artista] preocupaciones debe ser no dejarse de ningún modo banalizarse…. La humanidad se divide en dos clases de hombres: los *artistas,* que tratan de la belleza, y los *filisteos,* los *burgueses,* los *epiciers,* que no la entienden como los artistas, ó que no gustan del mismo arte que ellos. (546)

In this rather directionless article González-Blanco defends “el arte por el arte” reformulated as “el arte por la belleza” (542). Both Ortega and González-Blanco affirm their faith in the autonomy of art by distinguishing between two classes of human beings: those who are capable of understanding art (whether artists or simply people of refined taste and intellect) and the remaining rabble that have no hope of accessing it. González-Blanco decries politically motivated art of any kind and advocates rather the “sublime” (542). Whereas Ortega y Gasset ambivalently claimed that the new art made no attempt at transcendence but aspired to a ‘sacramental’ or ‘pure’ beauty – certainly a paradoxical assertion – González-Blanco’s article is testimony to the very strong religious spirit of

modernista aesthetics at the cusp of the avant-garde. The avant-garde will deny this religious spirit, but Ortega, writing his famous essay in 1924, will inadvertently, as I advanced above, claim both sublime pure beauty and its denial as aspects of the new art. Thus, the autonomy of art is an attitude present in both González-Blanco's Symbolist-*modernista* preference for the poet-saint, and in Ortega's aristocratic and spiritualized view of supposedly non-transcendent art. Ortega says that purity in art comes out of non-transcendence, "La aspiración al arte puro no es, como suele creerse, una soberbia, sino, por el contrario, gran modestia. Al vaciarse el arte de patetismo humano queda sin trascendencia alguna – como sólo arte, sin más pretensión" (91). But Ortega also consistently links ideas of "belleza pura" (51) to the work of art as something "espiritual y no mecánico" (69), and to "el hombre selecto" (70), assigning art and the artistic mind to a transcendent and superior plane – despite his claim of objectivity regarding 'value' (52).

Defying the Orteguian distinction between "hombres egregios" and "hombres vulgares" (51), essentially a distinction between art and life (Ortega 52), avant-garde poetry took an ironic view of even the poetic enterprise itself. Rather than maintain the art-life distinction inherited from nineteenth-century aestheticism – a distinction upon which Ortega strongly insisted (72) – the historical avant-garde fought to break away from the institution of art, not just to make a break with respect to the previous traditions. Whereas high Modernism represented a 'reorientation' of the institution of art, the avant-garde, argues Domingo Ródenas, sought to tear down the institution entirely (*Los espejos* 64-5). As Octavio Paz says, "la vanguardia es la gran ruptura y con ella se cierra la tradición de la ruptura" (108). Instead of affirming the prophetic genius of the artist and

riffing off earlier artists, thus innovating in order to 'reorient' past tradition, the art of the historical avant-garde worked to tear down the ivory tower of the institution of art, to reinsert art in the "praxis of life" (Bürger 40), indeed to "revolutionize life" (Calinescu 112). Following Jürgen Habermas's division of Enlightenment rationality into scientific, moral, and aesthetic reason, Ródenas argues that the historical avant-garde, realizing that these intellectual orders were increasingly distanced from life, formulated a project to "reconciliar la cultura, partida en tres áreas y tres racionalidades, con la praxis cotidiana" (*Los espejos* 36). In the historical avant-garde, art becomes "un estilo de vida" (Paz 108). The "Great Divide" between high culture and mass culture which Andreas Huyssen uses to define Modernism and which characterized institutional art before, closes in the avant-garde. Art reinserts itself into life and giddily absorbs the culture surrounding it (Huyssen viii, *passim*; Ródenas, *Los espejos* 59-60). Rather than place the poet on a pedestal, art exists for the *vanguardistas* and their champion in Spain, Guillermo de Torre, in the "dinámica, jubilosa y perecedera plenitud de su instante" (*LEV* 43; 17).

Material poetics. The beginning of the historical avant-garde

The break with the tradition of breakage, the Symbolism that turns Symbolism on its head, is only possible from a position of irony with regard to tradition.[14] Of course, as Willard Bohn notes in his astute studies of visual poetry, avant-garde poets were living in a very exciting historical moment, where photography, the cinema, telegraphic

[14] As Bürger, Calinescu, and Huyssen all note, the historical avant-garde may have coded in itself its own failure. The attack on the autonomy of art was only possible from a position of opposition to the institution of art, a position of irony with regard to modernity. Once the ironic is no longer surprising the avant-garde becomes generalized and thus loses its shock-value and its target (Bürger 50; Calinescu 146; Huyssen, viii, 3-4). This does not mean, however, that the avant-garde leaves no lasting mark on the literature to follow.

communication, and revolutions in painting, namely Cubism, were challenging traditional modes of representation and interpretation. A new "awareness of the printed page" was in part a product of the technology of the age (Bohn, *Aesthetics* 3). Bohn continually stresses that poetry that has recourse to visual effects owes much to the plastic arts as well. In fact, as María del Carmen Solanas Jiménez says, Cubism and collage brought renewed focus to objects, linotype and monotype offered new possibilities for printing, and the *vers libre* tradition was stretched to its limits in the poetry of the avant-garde (87-92). And so, "la materialidad de la palabra," writes Solanas Jiménez, "reivindicada por medio de un empleo inusitado de la tipografía, es uno de los rasgos esenciales de la poesía de vanguardia" (89). While it is true that what I will call material poetics is greatly fertilized by advances in communications technology and painting, I should like to focus in this section on the theoretical import that the avant-garde challenge to the autonomy of art had for the techniques treated in Solanas Jiménez's thesis and in Bohn's books on visual poetry. After all, poetry meant to be seen was not a new idea at the beginning of the twentieth century. Witness seventeenth-century English poet George Herbert, ancient Greek poets Simias of Rhodes, Theocritus, Dosiadas, and Vestinus (Bohn, *Aesthetics* 1, 48; Solanas Jiménez 85; Edmonds), William Morris and the British arts and crafts movement, and the sumptuosity of *art nouveau* and *modernista* printing in France and Spain (Trapiello 49-51).

Solanas Jiménez treats avant-garde typographical techniques as the extension of Gustave Kahn's *vers libre*, while Bohn says that visual poetry in the avant-garde was a reaction against Symbolism (*Aesthetics* 6). While each of their contributions is valuable, neither critic tackles the important theoretical question of why this must necessarily be

so. That is, how the reaction against Symbolist aesthetics manifested itself on the printed page, why avant-garde poetry is necessarily visual-material poetry. Before embarking on an analysis of material poetics in specific works, we must first work towards answering these questions: Why do avant-garde poets write visual poetry in the first place? If Marinetti's and all of the avant-garde's 'words in freedom' owe something to *vers libre*, why is this the tradition they take up? Why, as poets, are they thrilled by film and the telegraph? Is there a theoretical grounding to their use of 'expressive typography,' *parole in libertà*, and other techniques of material poetics, beyond the heightened consciousness of letterforms and printing brought on by linotype, monotype, and modern advertising? Namely, if the avant-garde is defined by its ironic stance towards Symbolism, what is the connection to typography?

To work towards answers to these questions I would like to follow Umberto Eco as he broadly traces the Western tradition of metaphoric language in his essay "On Symbolism." Meanwhile, Paul de Man's take on the historical bifurcation of the path of Symbolism as he sees it exemplified in the figures of Baudelaire and Stéphane Mallarmé will help me broadly delineate two currents in modern poetry.[15] This is the instant of the avant-garde, the break with the tradition of breakage, the moment in which Marjorie Perloff perceives the split between two traditions of modern poetry, the Symbolist vein of Baudelaire that gives rise to T.S. Eliot-style "high Modernism" and the "anti-Symbolist" vein of "indeterminacy" first exemplified by Rimbaud (Perloff, *The Poetics of*

[15] De Man's essay, "The Double Aspect of Symbolism," was published in 1988. Its transcriber, Tom Pepper, judges that it was written between 1954 and 1956. The argument is much like the one that Marjorie Perloff advances in *The Poetics of Indeterminacy* in 1981. She could not have known De Man's article when she wrote this book, but I will give him here the chronological precedence his essay did not originally have, especially since his focus is limited to Baudelaire and Mallarmé. I will follow later by citing Perloff's much more extensive analysis.

Indeterminacy; Anderson, *El veintisiete* 290-91). The high Modernism of Eliot, for example, which, generally speaking, like *modernismo* is the heir to the Symbolist poetics of correspondences and prophecy, is at times opposed to and at times intertwined with the other heir to Symbolism, avant-garde indeterminacy, irony, play. Since I have briefly sketched the key difference between high modernity and the avant-garde in their attitudes toward art and life, I should now like to show how avant-garde on one hand and Modernist (and *modernista*) aesthetics on the other can trace their parallel pedigrees to French Symbolism. From here, articulating a definition and a theory of avant-garde material poetics will be possible.

The symbol of the middle ages, says Umberto Eco, was a preface or a placeholder to rational discourse (147). Medieval metaphor made verbal links between two terms, and readers of metaphorical texts or viewers of allegorical paintings identified the links between vehicles and tenors, that is, between the metaphorical element and the referential object. Metaphor and allegory, according to Eco, cannot be said to be Symbolism in the way we understand that term today because, while a multiplicity of interpretive nuances in a given metaphor is possible, metaphor provides a direct link between its constituent parts. I will prefer I.A. Richards's broader thinking about what metaphor can be, but we can nonetheless follow Eco's thinking with regard to what he sees as the traditional single-faceted metaphor. Traditional metaphor must mean something, it has limited semantic potential. It conveys an idea, invariably directing the reader from the vehicle back to a pre-established and discrete tenor. Likewise, allegory is almost "heraldic"; its emblems remit us to well-learned lessons (Eco 143). In traditional metaphor and allegory the tenor and vehicle, the two elements that can be said to form a metaphor, are known

quantities (Richards 96). The vehicle is a stand-in for the tenor and once the link is made in the mind of the reader or viewer, no more mysteries remain. Baudelaire's theory of correspondences works this way, except that in Baudelaire the metaphorical vehicles are "longs échos qui de loins se confondent" (40). In this blurring or con-fusion (se confondre, "to comingle") the poet and his reader feel some profound notion of unity, a notion that is however vague and imprecise. Rather than effect a determinate meaning through the direct relationship between tenor and vehicle, Baudelairean metaphors are individually indeterminate but together profess a strong belief in 'unity.'

Umberto Eco says that "the medieval symbol is a way of approaching the divine, but it is not the epiphany of something numinous" (147). The medieval metaphor does not include any "numinous" resonances because the terms in the medieval kind of symbol are already defined and never become 'confused' or mixed together as in Baudelaire's metaphors. This traditional metaphor "appeals instead to a principle of contiguous association" (Richards 107), and so metonymy is common and emblematic objects represent whole nations. The cross, by a kind of metonymy, stands in for Christian redemption. Conversely, in the blending of the echoes in Baudelaire's brand of Symbolism, the "profonde unité" of all things and of human existence comes into blurry being. Rather than offer a direct link between two elements, as Eco says traditional metaphor and allegory do, Baudelaire's Symbolism creates diffuse but manifold ties and associations, eliciting a feeling of what Goethe called the "inscrutable" (Eco 144), what Pucciani calls "the indigestible absolute" (34), or what I.A. Richards calls "a translucent instance… of imagination" (109). Richards finds in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's discussion of symbols a precursor to Baudelaire's particular diction for describing

metaphor, though he does not explicitly suggest a connection between the English poet and the Parisian, despite their strikingly similar terminology (110). Coleridge writes in Appendix B of *The Statesman's Manual,* cited by Richards,[16] that a symbol "enunciates the whole" and "abides itself as a living part of that unity of which it is a representative… it is the poetry of all human nature," and when we "read it likewise in a figurative sense," we "find therein correspondences and symbols of the spiritual world" (Richards 109-10; Coleridge 461).

For Umberto Eco, only following Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Rimbaud did Western poetry come into its own true Symbolism. James Joyce's idea of the epiphany is the model Eco proposes for true Symbolist thought, upon which he elaborates with some of the more enigmatic moments of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (Eco 154-5). The "flashes" that we glean from these epiphanic symbols are for Eco the "pale ersatz elements of a truth we no longer seek in religion" (156), something akin to Coleridge's spiritual symbols. This kind of Symbolism is present in the high Modernist "numinous" metaphor that holds on to the Symbolists' idea of the prophetic and transcendental power of poetry. Modern poets seek this, as Orringer would say, out of a "religious zeal" for novelty ("Introduction" 140). Whether it is the metaphor of nineteenth-century French Symbolists or that of their twentieth-century international heirs in high Modernism, "Symbol is the poet's means of making the transition from the world of the real to the world of the ideal" (Pucciani 33). It is not a metaphor with two terms, tenor and vehicle, but rather by design suggestive and non-explicit. As Paul de Man notes, "Symbolism has often been described by this broad definition: the use of language as a means to rediscover the unity of all

[16] Richards mistakenly cites Appendix C as his source, but the quotation appears in Appendix section B.

being that exists in the realm of the imagination and of the spirit" (8). The modern artist is "duty-bound to refute allegory," says Renato Poggioli (161), as was his Symbolist predecessor: "El mayor pecado de un poeta simbolista no es otro que el de emplear alegorías en vez de símbolos" (Aguirre 55). Allegory, the didactic and direct traditional metaphor that Eco describes as "medieval," is unacceptable for Symbolists and modern poets because, as Mallarmé said "*nommer* un objet, c'est supprimer les trois quarts de la jouissance du poëme qui est faite de deviner peu à peu : le *suggérer*, voilà le rêve" (*Oeuvres complètes* 869). True Symbolism, for Eco, is this refutation of direct linking between tenor and vehicle. Modernist methods for producing the kind of flashes and epiphanies that Umberto Eco says characterize true Symbolism abound in the tradition following from the Symbolist technique of suggesting the thing rather than naming it; T.S. Eliot's objective correlative, Juan Ramón Jiménez's search for *poesía pura,* Antonio Machado's intuition (Aguirre 53-54), or Federico García Lorca's *duende* are all examples. Metaphors become suggestive rather than direct in Eco's 'true' Symbolism, whether we are concerned with the usual historical grouping of French poets or as a poetic technique characteristic of Western modernity more generally.

One problem that Paul de Man finds in this kind of Symbolism is in the very vagueness of the idea of the Baudelairean "profonde unité" to which epiphanic Symbolism aspires. When attempting to name the unity that he seeks, the prophetic poet invariably tends to mention death (De Man 10). Guillermo de Torre, channeling Ortega y Gasset, says as much, complaining in 1925 that the Symbolist/*modernista* poets' attempts at "ese concepto abstracto y falso: Eternidad" turned them into mummies in their own time and left an ashy taste in the reader's mouth (*LEV* 44-5; 18). He advocated instead for

artists and works that would live intensely in the present. Another critic close to the Spanish historical avant-garde, though commenting on the recent biological death of Rubén Darío, makes the same link between poetic unity and death. Rafael Cansinos Assens's words speak to the poetic morbidity inherent in Symbolist/*modernista* unity, as well as the elitist autonomy of art that the attitude engenders. He publishes these effusions sincerely and un-ironically in 1917, before fully feeling the 'new spirit' of the avant-garde:

> Sí, ese es tu mal, poeta; ese es nuestro mal, ignorado de la multitud: ese mal raro y grave, más que las enfermedades de los príncipes; ese mal de la poesía; esa extraña locura por la que se anda solo y triste, privado del oro y del beso; por la que se contrae la palidez prematura y la inquietud; por la que se adquiere la ceguera y el vértigo, y de la que algunas veces – ¡oh Verlaine!, ¡oh Rollinat! – negramente se muere…Este es el mal noble y raro; esta es la terrible predestinación; esta es la púrpura fatal. Este es el mal terriblemente aristocrático, de que no muere el otro. (*La nueva literatura* 210)

About a decade later, Federico García Lorca, a poet very much in the Symbolist tradition of Baudelaire (Anderson, *El veintisiete* 311; Debicki 24; Orringer, "García Lorca") came very close to naming death explicitly as the poet's goal in his 1933 "Teoría y juego del duende." He writes, "estos sonidos negros son el misterio, las raíces que se clavan en el limo que todos conocemos, que todos ignoramos, pero de donde nos llega lo que es sustancial en el arte" (1068). Rather than wrestle with his angel or his muse, the artist must do battle with his *duende* in order to attain perfection, says Lorca (1069). The goal is to effect an "evasión real y poética de este mundo" which produces in those who know how to read and interpret *duende* admiration upon seeing "cómo el estilo vence una materia pobre" (sound, words, stone, paint), and in "el ignorante,… el no sé qué de una auténtica emoción," always related to death (1072). Lorca, having benefited from so

many currents of modernity, can write with an aim to achieving the goals of both high Modernism and the avant-garde.

The effect of *duende* in an initiated audience, as Lorca sees it, points to the "alternate road" that Paul de Man sees in late nineteenth-century Symbolism (11). Whereas Mallarmé's early poetry "expressed his longing to turn his back on life" (Chadwick 34), his later work shows that in the face of "le Néant" and "le Rien," the only poetic places available to him following a renunciation of the world, Mallarmé preferred to become a "human Symbolist" and leave behind his earlier "transcendental" Symbolsim (Chadwick 35-40). In contrast to Baudelaire's Symbolism, De Man agrees that Mallarmé eventually abandoned his search for unity with the universe, death, or in his case specifically, the "azur" (11), and began to develop a kind of Symbolism that eschewed emotive suggestion and instead challenged the intellect, a work preoccupied with technique, Lorca's "estilo." De Man's explanation of the difference:

> Baudelaire's entire work is driven by a desire for direct, unmediated contact with Being, which, for Mallarmé, is precisely what the poet should reject. He has an acute awareness that the kind of unity to which Baudelaire aspires is in fact the annihilation of a consciousness absorbed, as it were, by the power of being in which it searches to drown itself. This kind of unity does not tempt Mallarmé, because it lies beyond the realm of language. Annihilation of consciousness is primarily the annihilation of language and since the poet's only but irrevocable commitment is to language, he can never accept unity on those terms. He has to be, by his essential choice, on the side of consciousness and against natural being. The poetic act, then, is for him an act by means of which natural being is made accessible to consciousness. Consciousness attempts to think through the essential otherness of the object, to transform this otherness into a cognitive knowledge stated in language. Poetry is not an identification with the object but a reflection on the object, in which consciousness moves out towards the object, attempts to penetrate it and then, like a reflected ray of light, returns to the mind, enriched by its knowledge of this outside world. And it is by means of this process of thinking the other that the mind learns to know itself.… The Mallarmean symbol, then, is not an identification between two entities that were

> originally separated. It is, much rather, a mediation between the subject on the one side and nature on the other in which both keep their separate identities but in which a third entity, language, contains within itself their latent opposition. (De Man 12-13)

This appraisal of the function of metaphor is very much like the description that the young Jorge Luis Borges gives of metaphor during his Ultraist years in Spain. He writes in the spring of 1921 in *VLTRA*, the flagship publication of the group,

> Siempre ha sido costumbre de los poetas ejecutar una reversión del proceso emotivo que se había operado en su conciencia; es decir, volver de la emoción a la sensación, y de ésta a los agentes que la causaron. Yo – y nótese bien que hablo de intentos y no de realizaciones colmadas – anhelo un arte que traduzca la emoción desnuda, depurada de los adicionales datos que la preceden. Un arte que rehuyese lo dérmico, lo metafísico y los últimos planos egocéntricos o mordaces. Para esto – como para toda poesía – hay dos imprescindibles medios: el ritmo y la metáfora. El elemento acústico y el elemento luminoso. El ritmo: no encarcelado en los pentagramas de la métrica, sino ondulante, suelto, redimido, bruscamente truncado. La metáfora: esa curva verbal que traza casi siempre entre dos puntos – espirituales – el camino más breve. ("Anatomía de mi «VLTRA»")

In the kind of metaphor that Borges describes here, both tenor and vehicle may be known entities, and even spiritual entities, but the vehicle's relationship to the tenor does not suggest a valuation of the tenor or a message about it, as Umberto Eco says would happen in a traditional metaphor. Also, Borges's metaphor rejects the 'metaphysical,' 'egocentric' planes. Another important feature of Borges's metaphor is language, 'the verbal curve' between tenor and vehicle where, much the same as in the Mallarmean symbol, originality and artistic creation lie. The metaphor's power is linguistic power, not the power of the artist's emotional superiority or detachment from terrestrial life, the "numinous" revelation of the Symbolist or the high Modernist poet. The poet writes with words, the Mallarmé of *Un coup de dés* would remind us, and the thoughts, ideas, or feelings thereby conveyed depend on words and their slippery nature (Richards 131).

Marjorie Perloff's study of the "poetics of indeterminacy" initiated by Rimbaud delineates a similar distinction between high Modernism and a parallel tradition of opposition present in Apollinaire, "Cubist poets" Pierre Reverdy and Max Jacob, the Dada poets, and other artists and movements associated with the historical avant-garde (*The Poetics of Indeterminacy* 4). She begins her book by comparing some Anglophone poets whose work exemplifies these two traditions, especially T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and a poem by John Ashbery, "These Lacustrine Cities." In Ashbery's poem "Totality is absent" (10), and the reader is "left in a state of expectancy" (11) very unlike Eliot's poem which, despite its complexity, is nonetheless "a perfectly coherent symbolic structure" (13). While Perloff includes Mallarmé with Baudelaire as representatives of the Symbolism that forms the basis for high Modernist 'coherence,' she must be thinking of the totality of his work and not specifically *Un coup de dés.* It is precisely in this late poem (from 1897), with its revolutionary use of typography, that Mallarmé declares his allegiance to the indeterminate brand of (anti-)Symbolism which Perloff credits to Rimbaud.

In this Mallarmean-Rimbauldian brand of (anti-)Symbolism, anecdote is suppressed, a characteristic of the avant-garde that Ortega and many others were quick to point out. Language is not the key to access the autonomous and superior realm of genius or beauty (the autonomy of art) but is rather the site of consciousness and of poetry, for both the poet and the reader. "Rimbaud's images," for example, "are framed," says Perloff, "not as symbols pointing beyond themselves, but as metonymic displacements" (*Poetics* 162). In this poetry, language displaces itself rather than present the reader with a suggestive code. Instead of prophesying or seeking through symbols any kind of

"profonde unité," the poet works exclusively in language, allowing indeterminacy and play. Because of this shift in purpose on the part of the poet, language in the Mallarmean (anti-)Symbolist bent "is handled very much as if it were an object," its manipulation determined by the "necessities of cognitive consciousness" (De Man 13). De Man goes on to explain that the result of these necessities is that phonetics, syntax, and even typography become tools that the poet can use to give material shape to the language that is to embody his metaphors (13).

The same split that De Man sees between Baudelairean Symbolism and Mallarmean Symbolism can be easily observed in Spanish avant-gardists' explicit and conscious opposition to *modernismo* (Calinescu 118). While Spanish avant-garde poets began by publishing in periodicals firmly set in *modernista* aesthetics such as *Grecia* and *Cervantes*, they abandoned the prophetic mode of Symbolism at the same time as they abandoned traditional syntax and typography and started new avowedly avant-garde publication ventures. Despite the opposition that the avant-garde consciously formed vis-à-vis Symbolism, the metaphors of Baudelaire's "Correspondances" occupy the first 'link' in a 'chain'– or several – of conceptions of the metaphor that give way to Apollinairean calligrammes, Futurist *parole in libertà*, typographical experimentation, the Ultraist image, and surrealist metaphor (Soria Olmedo, *Vanguardismo* 25).

As Futurism's founder F.T. Marinetti says, "Solo per mezzo di analogie vastissime uno stile orchestrale, ad un tempo policromo, polifonico, e poliformo, può abbracciare la vita della materia" (*Teoria e invenzione* 48). Marinetti, at the outset of the avant-garde, has as his goal semantic indeterminacy, 'stupefaction' and energetic attention in the reader (*Teoria* 48). Accordingly, he advances a program for abolishing

punctuation, inflected verbs, adjectives, free verse, linear reading, and traditional syntax. The international avant-garde starts out from these precepts, modifying them and adding to them in Cubism, Orphism, Creationism, Ultraism, Vorticism, Dada, Surrealism, and other movements.

The two paths of Symbolism represented by Baudelaire and Mallarmé in De Man's essay (corresponding to Perloff's distinction between the Symbolist/high Modernist tradition and the Rimbauldian/anti-Symbolist tradition of indeterminacy) are the paths that lead into Modernism/*modernismo* and its oppositional aspect, the avant-garde. The historical avant-garde in Spain is not all of a same stripe, and certain poets at certain times could be classed as avant-gardists or *modernistas*; as high Modernists in the tradition of Baudelairean Symbolism or, alternatively, as heirs to Mallarmé's material Symbolism that denies poetic transcendence. The full survey of the Spanish historical avant-garde that would work out these questions for each individual author is the task of another series of studies. Rather than attempt that work here, I hope that the preceding discussion at least explains generally what I mean by "Spanish historical avant-garde" and begins to point out why a material poetics is concomitant to the avant-garde project. I will take up a further explanation of this connection now.

Paul de Man says that language in the Mallarmean path of Symbolism is handled nearly as an object, since the poets on this path, the avant-gardists, deny the metaphysical transcendence of Baudelaire's Symbolism. Rather than work in states of the soul, these poets aspire only to work with language, a topic of renewed interest to scholars and poets at the beginning of the twentieth century. This interest came about thanks in large part to the work of Ferdinand de Saussure and also as a result of the effect that free verse had on

poets' conception of the word as the building block of a poem rather than the alexandrine line or a pre-determined stanzaic form (Solanas Jiménez 63). Whether individual poets or artists can be said to have "influenced" Ferdinand de Saussure's thoughts on semiotics at the beginning of the twentieth century, or even whether the reverse is true, is not my goal to explore (Drucker 16-17). But, as Johanna Drucker stresses, Saussure's notion of the "distinct realms of signifier and signified" is very important to understanding how the avant-garde's attack on the autonomy of art produces typographical experimentation, fractured syntax, simultaneism and other aspects of what I call avant-garde material poetics (Drucker 17). In the historical avant-garde, as Solanas Jiménez says, the possibilities of rhythm and image-making in poetry expand radically once the word is conceived of not only on the conceptual plane of semiology but also as a discrete phonetic and graphic entity (21).

Johanna Drucker notes that writing was of little interest to Saussure. He saw written language as a subordinate, even crude, version of the true form of the sign, the spoken word (17, 19). He was uninterested in the graphic sign, but Saussure's insight that the signified, the spoken sign, and the graphic sign were indeed different entities is important for understanding the materiality of signs, both spoken and written (Drucker 18). Phonetic materiality is certainly a central characteristic of some poems, Verlaine's "Chanson d'automne" discussed above, for example, and later Dada efforts as well. The spoken signs are something other than the signifieds to which they correspond, and an important part of Verlaine's artistry is his deft manipulation of pitch, tone, rhyme, meter, in short the sounds of the words, independent of their possible meanings. The poem is

meant to be read aloud and its materiality is phonetic materiality which, in a conventionally printed poem, must take the form of successive sounds.

Drucker, in her study of materiality in poetic texts in the twentieth century, observes that Mallarmé, by the time he wrote *Un coup de dés*, had come to hate linear, successive reading as prescribed by any kind of conventional printing practices (56). This is because Mallarmé, as Paul de Man's representative of the path of (anti-)Symbolism that denies poetic transcendence, could only reject the "profonde unité" of Baudelairean Symbolism by denying the printed text's connection to the prophetic plane of Art, the disembodied work of the genius poet. The only way to read a poem grounded in phonetic materiality is by reading it in a pre-ordained order, pronouncing the words in the succession indicated by the printed text.[17] The "unmarked text," or the text printed only to represent a spoken text, was a key for the reader to access the autonomous art of Symbolism or high Modernism that I have discussed above (Drucker 46). The page was only a method of access. The work of art existed outside of lived reality, as Rubén Darío's opening words to *Prosas profanas* show: "veréis en mis versos princesas, reyes, cosas imperiales, visiones de países lejanos o imposibles: qué queréis! yo detesto la vida y el tiempo en que me tocó nacer" (*Poesía* 96). The poet that aimed his weaponry at the autonomy of art had to bring art back into the praxis of life and make it relevant to its historical present. To wrest poetry from "numinous epiphany," he had to make it contemporary and he had to make it a material, non-allegorical reality. Adopting a very

[17] A text printed without a clear order to its constituent words or elements could be read aloud, of course, but the performer would have to impose an order on the elements in order to pronounce them. This phonetic materiality is the focus of María del Carmen Solanas Jiménez's study of the avant-garde continuation of the tradition of *vers libre*, where blank space and typographical effects become 'silence' and 'noise.'

different attitude from Darío's, he had to love the time he lived in. Thus Marinetti talks of substituting "la psicologia dell'uomo, ormai esaurita, con l'ossessione lirica della materia" (*Teoria* 50). Similarly, as early as 1909 Ramón Gómez de la Serna complains of *fin-de-siècle* writing, saying "No hay en esa literatura ni un apasionamiento, ni una blasfemia, ni un equívoco, ni una impertinencia, ni un desmán. No hay en ella un ESTADO DE CUERPO" ("El concepto de la nueva literatura" 9). Ramón's complaint is germane to my discussion on the levels of novelty, emotion, art's relationship to life, and materiality. By giving literature a 'body' the avant-gardists hoped to write texts that were honest to their readers and to their physical historical moment. In *The Visible Word* Drucker succinctly explains the same connection I see between textual materiality and the avant-garde attack on the autonomy of art. In autonomous art, Drucker says,

> The authority of language resided in its capacity to signify, not its mutability. It is this attachment to authority which kept most writers attached to pedestrian conventions of production. The threat to linguistic authority made by the manipulation of the words on the page was that it returned the written language to the specific place, instance, conditions of production – it became a highly marked text. The unmarked text, the even gray page of prose and poetic convention, appeared, as it were, to "speak itself." Its production codes lent the text a transcendent character. The text appeared, was there, and the unmarked author was indeed the Author of the Text as pure Word – with all the requisite theological resonance. (46)

The ironic attack on Symbolism, on the "Author of the Text as pure Word," comes in the form of art placed back in the praxis of life, in the "specific place, instance, conditions of production," now rid of airy "theological resonance[s]." Drucker calls the avant-garde non-transcendent poem "autonomous" (49), which is a potential source of confusion given the discussion here of the aestheticist/Symbolist autonomy of art. Drucker says that despite great variation in the way artists and critics conceived of the ontological status of their works in the avant-garde, "there is a single common central

theme of attention to materiality as the basis of autonomous, self-sufficient repleteness so that artistic forms are considered to *be* and not *represent*" (50). Tzvetan Todorov, writing on Rimbaud's *Illuminations*, also describes the linguistic artifact as 'autonomous,' and 'free.' Todorov writes that "Rimbaud a découvert le langage dans son (dis)fonctionnement autonome, libéré de ses obligations expressive et représentative, où l'initiative est réellement cédée aux mots" (253). Language in Rimbaud's *Illuminations* is autonomous from any possible discrete message, it functions as a system of play, without a fixed meaning or an anecdotal referent. As Todorov says of Rimbaud, "La totalité est chez lui absente," his poetry being characterized rather by 'indeterminacy,' 'discontinuity,' and 'abstraction' (251). This autonomy is the "deshumanización," that Ortega saw in Cubist painting and avant-garde poetry. This kind of art, as autonomous from any imagined Platonic sphere, has no transcendence, not even to Ortega's plane of "belleza pura" implicit in aestheticist *art pour l'art* (Ortega 51).[18] An important distinction – that Ortega was not prepared to make – then must always be made between what Bürger calls the autonomy of art and what many avant-garde artists following Rimbaud or Mallarmé seek in their work, material autonomy, hinted at in Ortega's idea of dehumanization (72, 78). It is crucial to understand that in the avant-garde, the goal of autonomy in the individual poem is a gesture against the autonomy of art. A poetics of material autonomy is the product of the consciousness of the materiality of language and

[18] The critic and translator Edmundo González-Blanco seems to stumble upon a problem in the formula "el arte por el arte," in his advocacy of "el arte por la belleza" cited above (542). *L'art pour l'art* could be viewed as the motto of an aestheticist elitism that claimed art as autonomous from life, the territory of geniuses and seers, a magical realm of epiphany. González-Blanco so believed in this sacramental view of art that he objected to the formula "l'art pour l'art" because it might alternately be read as a claim to artistic non-transcendence, similar to Ortega's formulation of "la obra de arte no [es] sino obra de arte" (57).

of the artistic object and their lack of a fixed absolute meaning or transcendence, their lack of correspondence to a higher plane of non-material existence.

In the institution of art as autonomous from life, as in Baudelairean Symbolism, each printed page is only the code to access the disembodied 'Work' of which it is the representation. Poems become autonomous in the avant-garde, that is "on an equal stature with the tangible, dimensional objects of the real world" (Drucker 49), by attacking the metaphysical autonomy of art with irony and material textuality. Thus, avant-garde poetics becomes perforce material poetics because the denial of the autonomy of art implies the denial of a transcendent signified (unity, genius, epiphany) as separate from the accessible material sign (the printed poem) (Drucker 104-5). Typography functions as a material tool to effect this denial, as do other techniques such as interpretive simultaneity, humor, the indeterminacy of the *imagen múltiple*, the use of advertising or colloquial language, onomatopoeia, or the aggressively modern thematics of technology, war, sport, film, and speed. All these essentially constitute the Marinettian "ossessione lirica della materia" and the avant-garde disdain for sentimentality (*Teoria* 50). This obsession, expounded upon and advocated for in the proliferation of manifestoes that so characterized the avant-garde, was the theoretical prerogative of Mallarmé and Apollinaire's artistic heirs. As Andrés Soria Olmedo explains, avant-garde groups came to the fore while the reflexive individual artist was left behind. In manifestoes and other programmatic writing these groups called for the negation of the old sacramental art and the reinsertion of art in life (Soria Olmedo, *Vanguardismo* 26).

The bellicose source for the name of these efforts, the "avant-garde," hints at their unpopularity at the time. Ortega explicitly wrote on the unpopularity of the 'new' art, but

he saw the explanation for this unpopularity in its purity, connected in his thinking to Symbolist transcendence. The unpopularity of the avant-garde is however not necessarily a strike against the proclaimed avant-garde desire to reconcile art and life. The reinsertion of art into daily life may be a "clichéd notion," as Johanna Drucker calls it, since so many of the avant-garde artists sought to distinguish themselves from the rest of humanity by becoming literarily (in)famous and (in)glorious (198). But the avant-garde achieved one important goal of its attack on the autonomy of art while enjoying, as Marinetti did, "la volupté d'être sifflés" (Weisgerber 685). This achievement was the attack on the artistic establishment (Drucker 199), and indeed the avant-garde artists did develop a revolutionary new way of life for themselves if not for all of society around them. In the next chapter some of the brash manifestoes that avant-garde poets wrote to snub the noses of the establishment will be held up to poems by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Guillaume Apollinaire, Blaise Cendrars, Vicente Huidobro, Max Jacob, and Tristan Tzara – in many cases the authors of the manifestoes – to afford us a reading of these poets' work focused on the material poetics that I contend is essential to understanding avant-garde praxis and theory. These poets were the precursors to post-World War I avant-garde poetry in Spain and were included and discussed in the Madrid magazines by the leading critic-creators Ramón Gómez de la Serna, Rafael Cansinos Assens, and Guillermo de Torre.

FLORILEGIO: A LITTLE ANTHOLOGY OF AVANT-GARDE MATERIAL

POETICS

Guillermo de Torre, the author of *Literaturas europeas de vanguardia*, was perhaps the most enthusiastic and youthful promoter of the 'new spirit' in Spain. By translating new poetry from France he followed the lead of Rafael Cansinos Assens, who published translations of Apollinaire, Max Jacob, Pierre Reverdy, and other avant-garde poets from abroad in the pages of *Grecia.* Torre was really exceptional in his critical acumen; he would often publish an "efigie liminar" of the poet whose work he was presenting to his readers in the "Antología" section of *Grecia*, and he sometimes published very brief excerpts from many poets in one piece. Such is the case in his "Florilegio" from *Grecia* no. 36, published on 20 December 1919. This "Florilegio" is a single page of condensed selections from Apollinaire, Reverdy, Francis Picabia, Paul Morand, Louis Aragon, and others, in Torre's translation. Only one month before, in *Grecia* number 33, Rafael Lasso de la Vega presented the magazine's readers with a "Pequeña antología 'Dada,'" including brief selections from the work of seven poets. Much of the poetry of the international avant-garde came first to Spain in these and similar formats.

This chapter echoes the work of those translator-critics by amalgamating their titles, somewhat redundantly I admit, since both 'florilegio' and 'antología' mean 'a selection of flowers.' It also combines, as especially Torre's interventions also do, analysis and presentation. Just as Torre's translations and introductory notes served to familiarize Spanish poets with the international avant-garde, the sketches of the poets selected here should set the stage for the discussion of poetry written in their wake in Spain.

Filippo Tommaso Marinetti

Filippo Tommaso Marinetti launched Futurism in the Paris newspaper *Le Figaro* on 20 February 1909 with his "Fondation et Manifeste du Futurisme." This text set off a flurry of manifesto writing over the following years that would inspire authors in every current of the avant-garde to publish all manner of aggressive programmatic texts. The Futurists wrote attacks against such things as English art, the people of Venice, or against bourgeois *mores* more generally. They published and declaimed manifestoes on dance, painting, politics, poetry, film, and grammar. They put their theories to work in all of these fields as well (see Willard Bohn's *Modern Visual Poetry*), and most infamously in politics. Here I will present a few examples of Marinetti's writing from his manifestos, his 1919 word collage *Une assemblée tumultueuse*, and his "Proclama futurista á los españoles," published in 1910 in Madrid's *Prometeo* and translated by Ramón Gómez de la Serna.

Ramón was the first to introduce Marinetti to Spain. He translated and published Marinetti's "Fundación y manifiesto del Futurismo" in the April 1909 number of *Prometeo,* two months after its appearance in Paris. The same issue opens with a long essay by Ramón titled "El concepto de la nueva literatura." About a year after the appearance of Marinetti's foundational manifesto Ramón commissions, translates, and publishes Marinetti's "Proclama futurista á los españoles," also in his father's magazine *Prometeo.* It is a text in stark contrast to Edmundo González-Blanco's article in the same issue, "El arte y la moral," discussed in Chapter One. Marinetti's "Proclama" is not a specifically literary text but rather a political and moral call to arms. Marinetti, in

Ramón's translation, incites Spaniards to "fracturar el misticismo marrullero de frailes y cabildos" (523) and to work towards a new socialist state. The "Proclama" is aimed at Spain's youth as a critique of the Spaniards of the past. Now and in the future, he says, Spain and Europe must celebrate electricity, youth, energy, speed, action. In Spain's moral, political, and literary past,

> bajo las lentas tufaradas carmines del incendiado crepúsculo, los hombres se destruían dando besos á las mujeres coritas en sus brazos. Quizá esperaban ver enloquecer a las estrellas inaccesibles como idas á fondo en el pantano negro de la noche, ó quizá tenían miedo á morir, y por eso no terminaban de jugar en sus lechos esos juegos de la muerte. (520)

Ramón, signing "Tristán," echoes these sentiments in a brief but energetic preface to Marinetti's text. Novelty, energy, iconoclasm, and technology are to be the words and the thoughts of the day while archaizing 'mysticisms' and nostalgia should be condemned. As context, the presence in the same issue of González-Blanco's "El arte y la moral," characteristic of *Prometeo*'s content, dramatizes the stridency of the gestures and ideas that Ramón and Marinetti present to a 1910 Madrid readership.

The "Fondation et Manifeste du Futurisme" that Ramón had translated about a year before this "Proclama" had already caused a generational stir across Europe with its announcement of some of the aesthetic goals and tenets of the movement. While the "Proclama futurista á los españoles" is not explicitly a literary manifesto, its appearance at Ramón's hand and in the same outlet as the earlier "Fundación y manifiesto del Futurismo" imply that the political, moral, and literary projects of Futurism cannot be conceived as separate enterprises. Marinetti says in his manifesto, first published in Paris's *Le Figaro,* that mythology and the 'mystic Ideal' have been surpassed, while, like 'young lions,' he and his 'friends' chase Death to the edge of the horizon. Marinetti

yearns for "l'Inconnue," not because he wants to 'despair' in it, but because he wants to 'enrich the great deposits of the Absurd' with it. As well as the oft-propagated assertions that war was the "seule hygiène du monde" and that a racing automobile was more beautiful than the classical statue of the Victory of Samothrace, Marinetti claimed that since literature had to the day "magnifié l'immobilité pensive, l'extase et le sommeil," the Futurists would "exalter le mouvement agressif, l'insomnie fiévreuse, le pas gymnastique, le saut périlleux, la gifle et le coup de poing."

In order to put these 'aggressive movements' into practice, Marinetti in his "Manifesto tecnico della letteratura futurista" of May 1912 and his "Distruzione della sintassi – Immaginazione senza fili – Parole in libertà" of May 1913, calls for a revolution in language. He advocates for uninflected verb forms; the suppression of punctuation; new raw analogies formed by two nouns placed directly side-by-side like "uomo-torpediniera" or "piazza-imbuto" (*Teoria* 47);[19] the elimination of the first person; the preference for material rather than 'human' themes; synesthetic devices; a new typography where words are free on the page (*parole in libertà*); a "rivoluzione tipografica" to 'combat' the "estetica decorativa e preziosa di Mallarmé," the French poet's "ideale statico" (*Teoria* 77);[20] indeterminacy and simultaneity by way of "lirismo

[19] It is important to note that this kind of double-noun construction is different from "Simple Apposition" as described by Christine Brooke-Rose. Brooke-Rose writes that the hyphen in this kind of metaphor, which 'points' from one term to the other, really stands for the preposition "of" (94, 167). Her examples also include metaphors of apposition without the hyphen, such as "matron Night" and "herald thought" from Keats (95). It is important to note that romance languages do not use nouns in the place of adjectives as readily as English, as in these examples, and that the hyphen in Marinetti's juxtapositions does not indicate a one-way correspondence.

[20] It is important to note that Marinetti attacks Mallarmé here in a manifesto published on 11 May 1913. This is before the 1914 reprinting of *Un coup de dés* which would make Mallarmé's most audacious work widely available to European readers for the first time. We should remember De Man's discussion of Mallarmé and the poet's slow rejection of the search for poetic unity or "l'azur." This earlier Mallarmé must be Marinetti's intended target. The prophetic Mallarmé in

multilineo" and expressive orthography (*Teoria* 78-80). An extreme example of these principles in action would be Marinetti's "not literally readable" (Bartram, 29) composition, *Une assemblée tumultueuse* from 1919, reproduced below. Like other Futurist typographical pieces, this composition is a jumble of strange shapes, numerals, individual words and letterforms from various typefaces, typographical symbols, and clippings of alphabetized lists or series of numbers devoid of their original contexts. Together these elements form a typographical collage that conveys frenetic energy, if little else.

search of "l'ideal" is historically important and is also the one Wallace Fowlie remembers, sympathetically, for example, in his study of Symbolism.

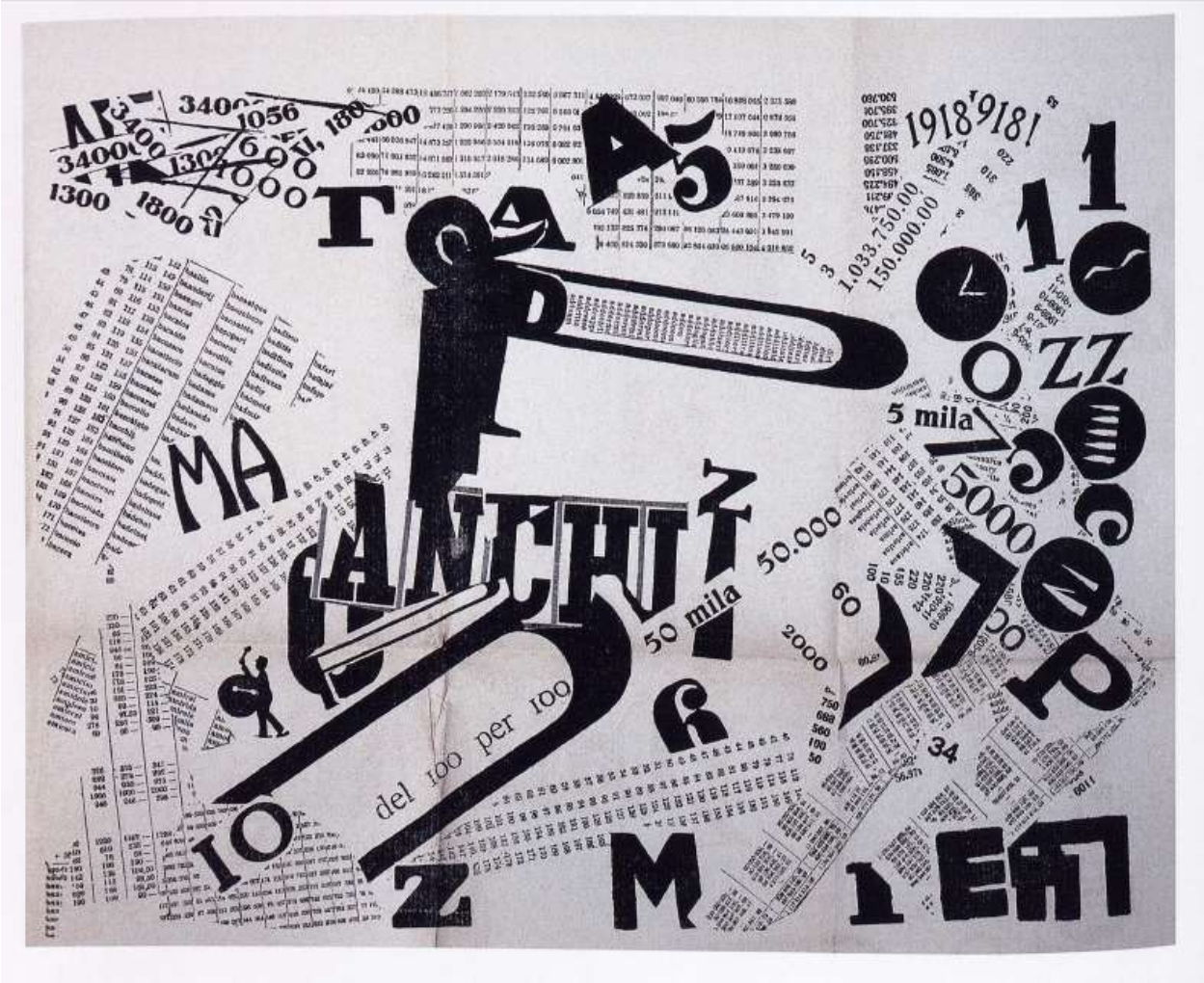


Fig. 1. *Une assamblée tumultuese.* F.T. Marinetti. 1919. Reproduced in Jaroslav Andel's *Avant-Garde Page Design*. Page 106.

Recent critics such as Marjorie Perloff and Javier Pérez Bazo, as well as one of Marinetti's contemporaries in Guillermo de Torre, can all agree that Futurism before the first World War and under Marinetti's banner was the first consolidated avant-garde movement, the program that set the tone for others to come (*The Futurist Moment* 36; Pérez Bazo 18-19; *LEV* 274; 243-4). Ramón's publication of Marinetti's texts in *Prometeo* came at a time when many critics were searching for a new paradigm to direct the efforts of Spain's literary youth (Lentzen 311). As Manfred Lentzen reminds us, the term itself, "Futurismo," had actually already appeared in Spain in 1907 as the title of an

essay by Gabriel Alomar published in *Renacimiento* (311; see also Litvak). Marinetti's *Futurismo* is the one that would take hold and not Alomar's, even though, as Rubén Darío suggests, it is worth mentioning the precedence of the term in the latter's text ("Marinetti y el futurismo" 403). Marinetti's ideas and his peculiar gestures set the stage for the entire historical avant-garde in Europe, even if they were symptoms of a "futurism in general" (Poggioli 145) which characterizes contemporary Cubism and all the avant-garde movements to follow. Thus, Marjorie Perloff titles her book *The Futurist Moment,* giving the nod to Marinetti's movement while also following Renato Poggioli's contention that "the futurist moment belongs to all the avant-gardes and not only to the one named for it" (*The Futurist Moment* xvii; Poggioli 69).

In the same way that movements like *ultraísmo* in Spain could never free themselves entirely of their Symbolist inheritance, Marinetti's brand of synesthesia contains a paradox that may never be fully resolved, even with his very materially grounded *analogia disegnata* (Drucker 105). This is because Marinetti's analogies, synesthesia, and onomatopoeias are mimetic in origin since in his *Distruzione della sintassi* he discusses them as necessary corollaries to important technological and conceptual shifts in modern life (*Teoria* 66). Johanna Drucker has shown that Marinetti, despite his insistence on the material and non-transcendent nature of his poetics, depends on the Symbolist system of correspondences to develop his style of analogy (111-15), and Bohn notes that there is some tension between Marinetti's pursuit of the *analogia disegnata* (for example, "FUUUUUMARE") and his condemnation of figurative poetry (*Aesthetics* 16-17). On certain "microlevels," says Drucker, "Marinetti believes in the onomatopoeic apparency of linguistic form, and its capacity for immediate expression,"

while "on the macrolevel his themes depend on the conventions of mimesis with all of its referential relations and structures" (115). Even if Marinetti fails to realize in every case his goals fully for a material poetics, his manifestoes nonetheless "[sentaron] las bases de una materialidad artística aplicada al texto poético," in Pérez Bazo's words (21). In fact, Guillermo Carnero has shown that Futurist onomatopoeic writing evolves from very strictly referential beginnings (typographical representations of the sounds of warfare and technology) to abstract language without a concrete referent, fulfilling in increasingly more convincing fashion Futurism's material and antimimetic precepts (Carnero 99-103). This is similar to the movement away from mimesis and towards abstraction that Willard Bohn detects in Apollinaire's calligrammes (*The Aesthetics of Visual Poetry* 53).

Guillaume Apollinaire

"Je ne crois pas," Guillaume Apollinaire says regarding "superstitions," "prophéties," and "tout ce que l'on nomme occultisme," in his 1918 book *Calligrammes* (43). The poem containing these words was first published, like many of the compositions in *Calligrammes,* a few years before in the periodical press.[21] Anne Hyde Greet and S.I. Lockerbee say in their commentary to *Calligrammes* that this poem, "Sur les prophéties," is "an apparently levelheaded and rational analysis of superstition" that turns out really to be "a defense of an imaginative outlook on life" (383). Though Apollinaire denies supernatural powers of perception here in the same way that his previously discussed poem "Annie" ironizes prophetic Symbolism, he says that in palm-reading and superstition there can be nonetheless a special way of observing the world "Qui est très

[21] The poem first appeared in *Les Soirées de Paris,* May 1914 (Greet and Lockerbie 383).

legitime" (*Calligrammes* 43). Surprise and irrationality in poetry can help people to see things in a new way, something that anyone, with the right attitude, can accomplish (Greet and Lockerbie 383). Since Apollinaire adopted this "flexible accommodation between reality and fantasy in his poetic approach to the world," which he called *surnaturalisme,* he was able to use Symbolist-style correspondences while ironizing and rejecting prophetic unity (Greet and Lockerbie 383). Guillermo de Torre can thus validly affirm that Apollinaire's poetry lacked any "motivación solemne" or "sugestión ritual" ("Los poetas cubistas franceses" 616; *LEV* 166; 137).

"Sur les prophéties" is one of many free-verse poems in *Calligrammes,* but the most often remembered poems from this book explode free verse into a whole new form. The pictorial calligramme, usually what is meant when one talks of "calligrammes," is a poem whose constituent parts are words, elements of free-hand drawing, musical notes, and typographical symbols. The verbal content of the poem is often reflected in the image that the words' particular typographical disposition forms on the page, as in "Il pleut," for example (*Calligrammes* 62).

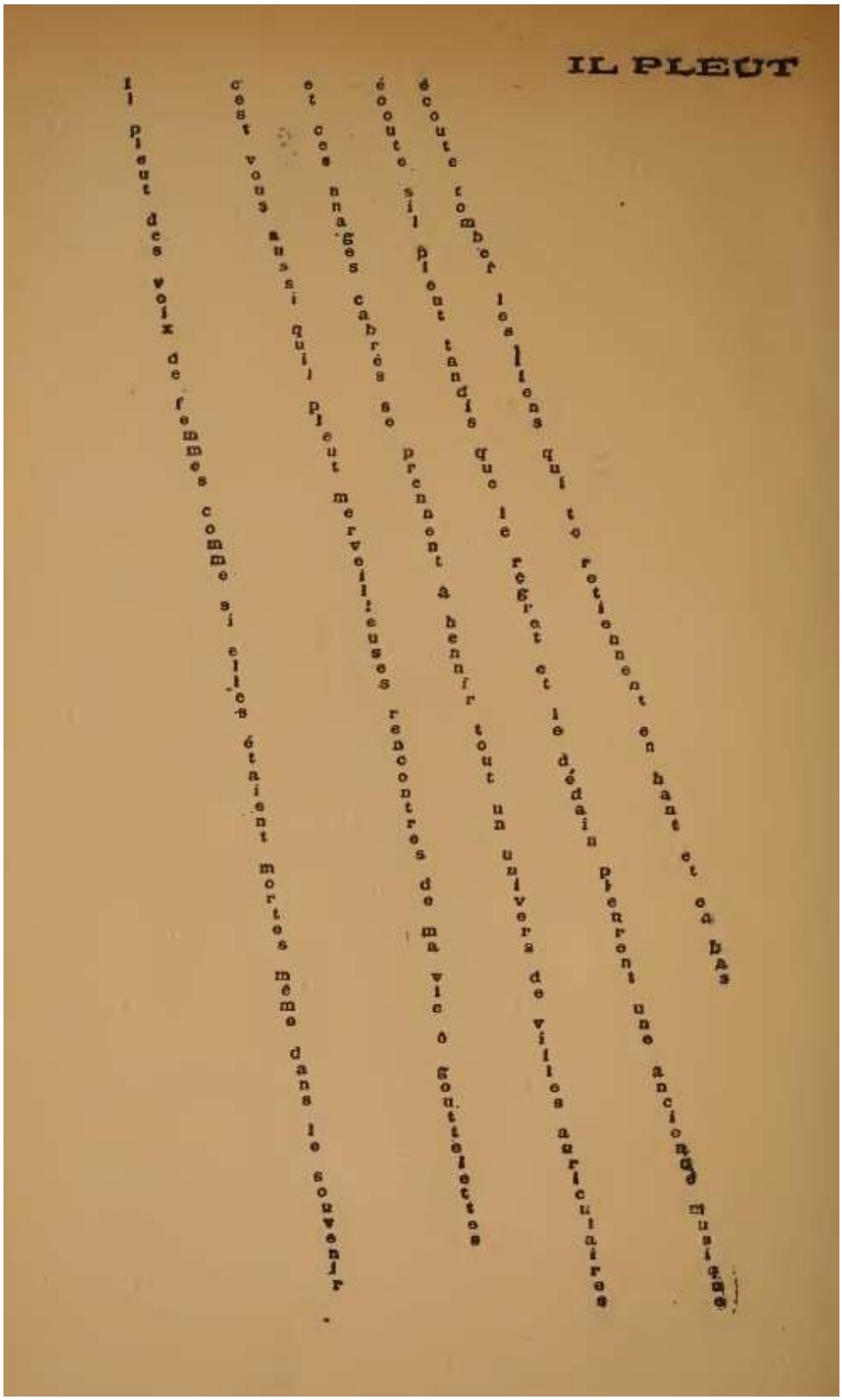


Fig. 2. “Il pleut.” From Guillaume Apollinaire. *Calligrammes.* Paris: Mercure de France, 1918. Page 62.

By combining verbal and visual cues Apollinaire was able to achieve simultaneity in his calligrammes, many of which cannot be read nearly as linearly as "Il pleut." Expanding on the tradition of free verse, the metered line is continually less important for the structure of the poem, which in turn is eventually comprised not of lines but of individual words and even free-standing letterforms (Décaudin 489; Bohn *The Aesthetics of Visual Poetry* 50; Solanas Jiménez 63). In an important historical shift, the poem is now meant to be seen and interpreted rather than enjoyed aurally. The reader of a calligramme is forced to perform an act of synthesis, analyzing the pictorial image and the words that give it form simultaneously (Lockerbie 3). In "Il pleut," the women of the speaker's past, the falling rain, the clouds, the sound of individual drops, and the speaker's memory correspond in loose metaphors much as they would in a Symbolist poem. This is unsurprising given the fact that Apollinaire's title certainly echoes Verlaine. But "Il pleut," though arranged linearly, could be read in several ways. While the first inclination of most readers would be to read the poem top-to-bottom and left-to-right, the motion indicated by the mimetic representation of falling rain disrupts a left-to-right reading. For rain falls simultaneously all around us, independent of the sweep of our gaze.[22] We could just as easily read "Il pleut" unconventionally, from right to left, or even by ordering the lines according to the spontaneous movement of our eye, in a random order.

I cannot make the assertion that this kind of free-order reading was Apollinaire's intention, but it is nonetheless a possibility in "Il pleut" and indeed an unavoidable feature of the reading process in many other calligrammes. The unique capitalization of

[22] Greet and Lockerbie take up Décaudin's argument that the lines could represent rain flowing down a window pane rather than falling through the air (402).

the left-most line, "Il pleut des voix de femmes," in Apollinaire's manuscript, repeated in the typeset version which first appeared in Pierre-Albert Birot's magazine *SIC* in 1916 and then in the 1918 volume, indicates that the poet himself most likely would have read the poem from left to right.[23] The lack of punctuation and the free-floating clauses, each line "one long rhythmic unit" (Greet and Lockerbie 402), however allow for multiple orderings of the lines, a reading strategy seemingly supported by Greet's English translation of the poem, whose left-most line begins with a lower-case apostrophe-free "its raining" (101). If we read the poem from right to left the convention of successive reading is surprised at the outset by the right-most line, "écoute tomber les liens qui te retiennent en haut et en bàs." This line is a challenge to the Verlainian tone of the left-most lines, regardless of the order in which we read them (Greet and Lockerbie 402). Nostalgic metaphor as well as conventional reading (and printing) practices are the "liens," the 'fetters,' 'ties' or 'restraints' from the past that hold us back from our (or a poem's) full potential, just like the "liens" of the opening poem of *Calligrammes* (15).

Willard Bohn stresses that most of Apollinaire's calligrammes are outgrowths of a painterly aesthetic and participate in the tradition of still life. After all, Apollinaire, the author of *Les peintres cubistes,* first intended to title his collection of calligrammes *Moi aussi je suis peintre* (*Aesthetics* 60). Often visual poetry, unlike Marinettian *parole in libertà,* but somewhat like the Futurist *analogia disegnata,* can be figurative, and so the words that talk of dead kings being reborn in the hearts of poets form the shape of a

[23] The manuscript can be compared side-by-side with the first typeset version of the poem in Alan Bartram's *Futurist Typography and the Liberated Word* (12-13). Bartram recalls in this book Stefan Themerson's account of a visit to Albert-Birot which turned up the identity of the typesetter for the original *SIC* printing of "Il pleut." The man's name was Monsieur Levé (Bartram 9) and his work gets high praise from both Bartram and Themerson. Willard Bohn concurs, calling the typesetting of "Il pleut" a "masterpiece" (*Aesthetics* 60).

crown in “Cœur couronne et miroir” (*Calligrammes* 56). Bohn notes that the calligrammes, which Apollinaire first called “idéogrammes lyriques,” become less and less figurative as Apollinaire writes more of them (*Aesthetics* 53). They come to rely more heavily on the “artistic discontinuity” of the multiple relationships between “figures juxtaposées” (*Aesthetics* 50-53). As in “Coeur couronne et miroir,” Apollinaire’s innovation in the calligrammes, according to Willard Bohn, is in the intellectual and visual movement between elements that the poem requires of the reader (*Aesthetics* 49, 56-57). The calligramme is then simultaneously to be appreciated as a figurative painterly representation and as an indeterminate linguistic text whose meaning depends on active and variable reconstruction by the reader.

In response to Henri-Martin Barzun’s 1913 article “Voix, rhytmes et chants simultanés” Apollinaire published the next year in *Les Soirées de Paris* an article titled “Simultanisme-Librettisme,” while still composing and theorizing his calligrammes. He says

> Le simultanisme poétique de M. Barzun ne peut s’exprimer qu’au moyen de plusieurs voix combinées. C’est du théâtre. Dans le livre à un lecteur ces voix ne peuvent être que successives, donc si M. Barzun veut une poésie effectivement simultanée, il faut qu’il fasse appel à plusieurs récitants ou qu’il se serve du phonographe, mais tant qu’il se serve d’accolades et des lignes typographiques habituelles, sa poésie restera successive. (323)

These statements certainly prefigure later Dada performances and they also indicate an understanding on Apollinaire’s part of the conceptual limitations inherent to traditional printing. A lone reader with a book in his hands needs the poem to be printed in such a way that simultaneity is a fact of the reading process, not only a possibility for the reader with friends and a theater on hand. In point of fact, Barzun would later participate in

Dada "simultaneous poems" precisely by having many people recite at once, with Tristan Tzara, Hugo Ball, and company at the Cabaret Voltaire (Motherwell 30). But in this article Apollinaire says that already in 1907 Picasso and Braque were trying to effect simultaneity in their paintings by representing objects and figures from various points of view at the same time, and that the *Prose du Transsibérien et de la petite Jehanne de France,* a poem by Blaise Cendrars printed on accordion-folded paper alongside abstract swaths of color by Sonia Delaunay-Terk, was "une première tentative de simultanéité écrite" (324). He likewise mentions the "champion" of Orphism, Robert Delaunay, as well as Marcel Duchamp, Francis Picabia, and his own writings on simultaneity to prove to Barzun and Parisian readers that simultaneity in painting and literature had already been taken up by many artists (mostly Apollinaire's own friends) before Barzun's claims to its invention. Apollinaire says that of course Barzun is free to make painted poems, simultaneous poems, or whatever he likes, as long as he does not claim to have invented simultaneity in poetry, since the efforts of Cendrars and Delaunay-Terk, Marinetti and the Futurists, or the "simultanéité typographique," conceived of by Mallarmé and "non encore entierèrement explorée" predate Barzun's discussion of the idea (325). Apollinaire's defense of his personal concept of artistic simultaneity is natural, since, in Roger Shattuck's words, "the simultaneist manner of thought and vision formed the armature of his modernism in poetry and the basis of his sympathy with the plastic arts" (287).

Apollinaire's simultaneity, his irony, and his aesthetics of visuality, indeterminacy, and surprise first come to Madrid publications in a pair of articles published by the Guatemalan traveler and writer Enrique Gómez Carrillo in 1914 in *El*

Imparcial (See Bohn *Apollinaire and the International Avant-Garde* 181-2). Gómez Carrillo, who knew Apollinaire personally, paraphrases or nearly quotes Apollinaire on Cubist painting in these early dates, describing for his Castilian readership a wholly new aesthetics (*Apollinaire and the Int'l A-G* 182). The Delaunays move to Madrid in this same year of 1914, bringing with them Orphism and a personal connection to Apollinaire. After another early mention of Apollinaire's thoughts on Cervantes by Paris-based Peruvian Ventura García Calderón in a 1916 issue of *El Imparcial*, the first Spanish translation of a poem by Apollinaire appears in the final issue of *Los Quijotes* in October of 1918.[24] Shortly thereafter Apollinaire dies in Paris and Enrique Díez-Canedo publishes a very well-informed obituary, with a short biography (later reprinted in *Grecia*) and translations of his work in the weekly *España* (*Apollinaire and the Int'l. A-G* 183).

Following Apollinaire's death at the age of thirty-eight, his "literary last will and testament" (Shattuck 295) appeared in the first issue of Enrique Gómez Carrillo's *Cosmópolis* in January 1919. The text appearing in this number of *Cosmópolis* is "El espíritu nuevo y los poetas," an anonymous translation of "L'Esprit nouveau et les poètes," which first appeared in print in December 1918 in the *Mercure de France.*[25] Here Apollinaire calls for total freedom in poetry, announced in form by the advent of free verse at the end of the nineteenth century and boosted to new visual and material

[24] Willard Bohn tells us that the poems in question were "L'adieu du cavalier" and a fragment of "Chant de l'horizon en Champagne," appearing on 25 October 1918, in translation by Rafael Cansinos Assens (*Apollinaire and the Int'l A-G* 186). Rafael Osuna reports that the poems did appear in this number, at the same time that he indicates that the magazine is all but impossible to find (27). I have not been able to see these translations.

[25] Willard Bohn feels sure that Gómez Carrillo himself was responsible for the translation (*Apollinaire and the Int'l A-G* 182). Apollinaire's original text was first delivered as a lecture at Vieux-Colombier on 26 November 1917.

possibilities by typographical experimentation ("El espíritu" 18; "L'Esprit" 386). He relates the need for synthetic, fast poetry to the desire of being in step with the modern age of film and telegraph, and also to a fresh approach to writing that is not "complicado, lánguido, ficticio [o] helado" (20). Despite certain lexical reminiscences of artistic transcendence - the poet's "tâches prophétiques" (392) - Apollinaire's focus throughout the essay is on novelty, creativity, and vigorous attention to presentness. Even when Apollinaire talks of the poet as a prophet he only means that the poet is an imaginative person, heralding, as the 'fable' of Icarus did for modern aviation, future technological and conceptual possibilities. The poet's 'prophetic tasks' entail primarily innovation, not revelation.

> Les jeux divins de la vie et de l'imagination donnent carrière à une activité poétique toute nouvelle. C'est que poésie et création ne sont qu'une même chose ; on ne doit appeler poète que celui qui invente, celui qui crée, dans la mesure où l'homme peut créer. Le poète est celui qui découvre de nouvelles joies, fussent-elles pénibles de supporter. On peut être poète dans tous les domaines : il suffit que l'on soit aventureux et que l'on aille à la découverte. (392)

For Apollinaire a poet is essentially an adventurous spirit, a person in search of novelty and new ways of seeing the world. He explicitly stresses surprise as the most important new recourse for poets ("El espíritu" 23; "L'Esprit" 391). A multiplicity of meanings can be inspired in mundane objects; Apollinaire says there is no longer any need for the sublime ("El espíritu" 25; "L'Esprit" 393). Advocating the re-insertion of poetry into the praxis of life, Apollinaire asks,

> Peut-on forcer la poésie à se cantonner hors de ce que l'entoure, à méconnaitre la magnifique exubérance de vie que les hommes par leur activité ajoute à la nature et qui permet de machiner le monde de la façon la plus incroyable ? (396)

Apollinaire's "esprit nouveau" may not be as strident a form of avant-garde anti-aestheticism as would show up in later writing such as Dada or which had characterized the first Futurist manifestoes, but his fervor for innovation and novelty accord him a capital place in the history of all the European avant-gardes, even if his varied excitements make him a somewhat contradictory figure (Décaudin 486). While Apollinaire still at times talks of the 'mysticism' of an André Gide or a Francis Jammes as a key source for renovation in poetry (Décaudin 493) or the "alchemies archilyriques"[26] that poets will use to present a "sens toujours plus pur de l'idée divine" ("L'Esprit nouveau" 394), his criticism of the moral bent of Baudelaire's poetry in his preface to the 1917 edition of that poet's works is testimony to his interest in a new 'dehumanized,' we could say, poetry (Shattuck 294). Apollinaire was an ambassador for Futurism in France, the publicist and apologist of Cubism, and generally, the "Impresario" of the avant-garde in Roger Shattuck's characterization (253). As such, he may have met the Ultraist writer Pedro Luis de Gálvez as early as 1913 (Bohn, *Apollinaire and the Int'l A-G* 174; Velázquez 115-21), and he certainly had correspondence with Ramón Gómez de la Serna during the war. Ramón even met Apollinaire in person at the banquet held in his honor on New Year's Eve 1916 in Paris, after the latter's return from the front-lines (*Apollinaire and the Int'l A-G* 176; *OC* XVI, 309). Apollinaire's interest in typographical innovation, simultaneity, ambiguity, plasticity, and the speech and objects of daily life (see Drucker 143-6), will be of clear

[26] This is reminiscent of the "alchemical" search for glory in modern life that Calinescu says characterized aesthetic modernity for Baudelaire, as cited in Chapter One (54) and certainly of Rimbaud's "Alchimie du verbe." Another comment of Calinescu's cited above, that which deals with the "subtly traditional" (104) Modernism that is not as prepared as the avant-garde is to do away with all the past, is worth mentioning here as well. Apollinaire, in his "L'Esprit nouveau," is similarly unprepared to ditch all of literary tradition for innovation.

use and inspiration to the poets of the Spanish avant-garde. When most of them first hear of Apollinaire through Vicente Huidobro in the summer of 1918, just a few months after Guillaume's wedding and a few before his death, they find in the author of *Alcools* and the *Calligrammes* a profusion of possibilities. Much like Apollinaire himself, interested as he was in anything new in art, Spanish *ultraísmo* was primarily concerned with the "integration" of a multitude of artistic source codes (Velázquez 122). Thus, "La nueva lírica," wrote Cansinos Assens in reference to the wake of Vicente Huidobro's visit to Madrid in 1918,

> no solo la que se vincula en el nombre de creacionismo, sino, en general, aquella cuyas floraciones arrancan de Guillermo Apollinaire y hoy se ilustra con los nombres de Reverdy, Allard, Frick, Cendrars, etc., aspira a darnos una representación íntegra, desapasionada, de la naturaleza en estilizaciones de una desconcertante variedad….por la simultaneidad de sus imágenes y momentos, hacen pensar en una filiación pictórica, en una trascendencia literaria de los modernos cubistas y planistas. ("Un gran poeta chileno: Vicente Huidobro" 72)

This new lyricism, which would develop in Cansinos's *tertulia* at the Café Colonial and during Ramón Gómez de la Serna's Saturday evening meetings in Pombo, was interested in abstraction, novelty, and irony. Apollinaire's strong "imaginación plástica" sets him above the other poets of his time because it allows him to fuse more fully all of the arts with life, as Díez-Canedo said in his obituary for the poet ("Guillaume Apollinaire"). It also led him to express in his "composiciones de…género tipográfico-literario…visiones más disperas, conceptos más abstractos, expresados por formas casi puramente geométricas," all while, Díez-Canedo is quick to add, respecting and drawing from a long poetic tradition including the Symbolists, Rabelais, and classical literature ("Guillaume Apollinaire"). Thus Apollinaire, as a beginning point for the avant-garde in Spain, is like a fulcrum: Cansinos Assens, whose choice of words is sometimes decidedly

un-avant-garde, was able to read in Apollinaire's "tâches prophétiques" a debt to Symbolism ("Un interesante poema de Mallarmé"; *Apollinaire and the Int'l A-G* 188) while the young and exuberant Guillermo de Torre read Apollinaire's 'prophetic task' as the announcement of the future mechanization of poetry ("Teoremas críticos de nueva estética"; *Apollinaire and the Int'l A-G* 198).

Blaise Cendrars

One of the most colorful personalities of the historical avant-garde in France (and far beyond) was Blaise Cendrars,[27] born Freddy Sauser in Switzerland in 1887. As a young man Cendrars spent time in Saint Petersburg and New York, worked at a number of odd jobs, and cultivated a bohemian style. After establishing himself as one of the most important avant-garde poets in France, he would travel widely; to Italy, to Spain, and especially to Brazil. He lost his right arm below the elbow as a result of wounds sustained in battle while fighting for France in the First World War. After publishing his Symbolist-inspired poem in alexandrines *Les Pâques,* in 1912,[28] Cendrars met Apollinaire, the Delaunays, and other members of the international avant-garde in Paris. He took up the simultaneist aesthetics of these artists with energy and perception, publishing with Sonia Delaunay-Terk his *Prose du Transsibérien et de la petite Jehanne de France* in 1913. The nearly two-meter-long folded poem is full of temporal and geographical shifts, outbursts of vernacular, and unmarked dialogue. Several different typefaces and the shifting text combine with Delaunay-Terk's colored shapes to lend

[27] The pseudonym is meant to be reminiscent of heat and fire. "Blaise" from *braise* and "Cendrars" from *cendres.*
[28] The poem is perhaps better known as *Les Pâques à New York*, but this expanded title is from a re-edition in 1919 (Leroy 339).

movement to the poem, encouraging the reader to shift her focus from the text to the painting and back to the text. The content of the *prose* is emotionally 'colored' by Delaunay-Terk's paintings, which are simple abstract swaths of color until the end, where the only mimetic shape of the whole poem appears in the form of a diminutive red Eiffel Tower.

For Cendrars, intensely interested in the life of the twentieth century, "le poète est venu / Verbe coloré" (78). His *Dix-neuf poèmes élastiques,* mostly written in 1913 and 1914 and published together in 1919, celebrate the telegraph, Mardi Gras revelry, the painting of Chagall and Léger, simultaneity, color, and the "Contrastes" of modern life (70-1). The poem with this title begins by declaring Cendrars's commitment to keeping poetry and life close; "Les fenêtres de ma poésie sont grand'ouvertes sur les Boulevards et dans ses vitrines" (70). He writes in *Der Sturm* in 1913, during the period in which he composes his 'elastic poems,' "La littérature fait partie de la vie. Ce n'est pas quelque chose à part" ("La Prose"; *The Futurist Moment* 9). He asks his reader to listen to the beauty of the present, "les violons des limousines et les xylophones des linotypes" (70). Cendrars, since arriving in Paris in 1910, is interested in urban life, modernity, technology, movement. "De la poésie à l'action!" he writes, "Ce n'est pas de la littérature, c'est la vie!" (Miriam Cendrars 212). Since Cendrars has never loved "ni l'art ni les Artistes" (81), more than genius and inspiration, he is interested in sincerity and innovation, irony and play.

His interest in textual materiality and typographical effects is evident in his long collage poem, *Le Panama, ou les aventures de mes 7 oncles,* printed in the guise of a nautical guidebook and published by La Sirène in 1918. This unpunctuated free-verse

poem includes clippings from rail maps connecting such far-away places as Salt Lake City, Minneapolis, or Chicago and *ex abrupto* lines like "J'ai soif" (47). The poem plays with chronology, space, and perspective, for the adventures of the seven uncles overlap with the speaker's own thoughts and travels. As the seven uncles "apparaissent comme autant de doubles du poète ou plutôt comme autant de figures d'identification possibles avec lesquelles, contre lesquelles, entre lesquelles il s'agit pour le jeune homme de se faire une vie," there is, according to Claude Leroy, a risque of "éclatement" (352). Fragmentation is, indeed, what the poem achieves, since it is something of a collage of life (lives), places, plans, and paratexts. Even if Cendrars did not accept the characterization of his work as Cubist, Guillermo de Torre notes that the juxtaposition of "trasuntos intraobjetivos," or facsimiles of advertising and newspaper clippings, with Cendrars's verse, lends the work a "calidad material," similar to the effect of a Cubist painting by Picasso or Léger (*LEV* 178; 149). A modern collage, as Marjorie Perloff points out, depends on the constituent parts straying from their original context and jostling with other elements likewise torn from their loci of origin (*The Futurist Moment* 47). Perloff elaborates further on the dynamics of the elements in a collage; "Collage also subverts all conventional figure-ground relationships, for here nothing is either figure or ground; rather, the collage juxtaposes 'real' items" which in turn provide oblique references to external contexts (*The Futurist Moment* 48).

Rather than to Cubist collage, Octavio Paz links Cendrars's "digresiones y enlaces imprevistos" in his long narrative poems to the cinema. He argues that the approximated simultaneity of the action in *Les Pâques* or *La Prose du Transsibérien* resulting from fragmented narrative and vernacular speech is closer to cinematic montage than it is to

Cubist collage (128). Paz believes language is necessarily successive and linear and so the simultaneity of Apollinaire's or Cendrars's poetry is 'a compromise' which creates the 'sensation' or the 'illusion' of simultaneity (128-9). Of course, Cendrars would later work in film, but texts like his found poem "Dernière heure" or the train routes reproduced in *Le Panama* (along with the cover art) do indeed operate in much the same way as a collage, unseating 'real' objects and texts from their original contexts and thus unsettling the ground on which the artistic text seems to be set. Paz says that "Cendrars no canta: cuenta," he tells or recounts but does not sing his subject (128). Guillermo de Torre noticed this same aspect of Cendrars's poetry, calling him a "reporter lírico" (*LEV* 178; 149). William Dow, a critic of Cendrars's contemporary John Dos Passos, says that the American author learned from this Cendrarsian technique of "reportage," and that this style of narration is what allows the two authors to play with language as a material thing, parsing, clipping, and mixing texts, working on the same level as their subject and not as distant elitists (Dow 401).

Cendrars's interest in "éclatement," his preference for indeterminate meanings and non-consecutive thought, produces lines that could be taken as terse direct refutations of Symbolist aestheticism. Cases in point from his *Dix-neuf poèmes elastiques*: "Il n'y a plus d'unité" (70); "Le paysage ne m'intéresse plus" (75); "mes yeux sont des kilos qui pèsent la sensualité des femmes" (76). In *Dix-neuf poèmes élastiques* Cendrars declares that Apollinaire was, for twelve years, the "seul poète de France" (77). In fitting homage to his role model, Cendrars includes a poem supposedly transcribed from a newspaper crime report from Oklahoma, "Dernière heure," and a conversation poem, "Aux 5 coins."

Apart from the unmarked vernacular that links this latter poem to Apollinaire's *Alcools* and *Calligrammes,* it is also interesting as a kind of manifesto or *ars poetica.*

> Oser et faire du bruit
> Tout est couleur mouvement explosion lumière
> La vie fleurit aux fenêtres du soleil
> Qui se fond dans ma bouche
> Je suis mûr
> Et je tombe translucide dans la rue
>
> Tu parles, mon vieux
>
> Je ne sais pas ouvrir les yeux ?
> Bouche d'or
> La poésie est en jeu. (85)

The 'play' to which Cendrars subjects poetry is ludic, but it is also constitutes a purposeful effort at destabilizing the autonomy of art. Playing with poetry in the spirit of Apollinaire led Cendrars to experiment with typography, for example in his 1916 *Sonnets dénaturés.* In one, his "OpOetic" dedicated to Jean Cocteau, he capitalizes every "o" in the poem. In another, "Académie Médrano," he achieves simultaneity of expression by using a bracket to make grammatical subordination a typographical effect and to give the reader two simultaneous endings to a clause (112). The poem urges a poet-reader, "Danse avec ta langue, Poète,"

> Il faut que ta langue { passe à la casse
> fasse l'orchestre

The material implications of language play were not lost on Cendrars, whose consciousness of the written form of language must have been heightened by the need to learn to write with his left hand following the loss of his right to a mortar blast in 1915. In "Lettre," a poem from his 1924 collection *Feuilles de route I. Formose,* Cendrars

conjugates the physical act of writing with the act of reading, the ink on the page with indeterminate meaning.[29]

> Il y a des blancs que je suis seul à savoir faire
> Vois donc l'œil qu'a ma page
> Pourtant pour te faire plaisir j'ajoute à l'encre
> Deux trois mots
> Et une grosse tache d'encre
> Pour que tu ne puisses pas les lire. (186)

Guillermo de Torre was intensely interested in Cendrars's work, writing in *VLTRA* in January of 1922,

> Cendrars es, en mi plano de predilecciones, el poeta más netamente moderno y sugestivamente original de todo el Parnaso francés contemporáneo. Y su obra el coeficiente más elevado y distintivo de la ecuación occidental lírica. Genuinamente nunista. Realiza una bella trasposición de los obsedentes elementos vitales al plano estético. Da una certera proyección «actualista» al módulo futurista. Armoniza sus latidos líricos con las sugestiones mecanicistas del contorno. Es antirretórico. Acelerado. Simultaneísta. Desbordante. Un Whitman menos solemne y demagógico. ("Antología crítica: Blaise Cendrars" 2; *LEV* 176; 147)

A few years after Torre writes these lines Cendrars would travel to Madrid and give a lecture on his *Antologie nègre* on 10 June 1925 at the Residencia de Estudiantes (Miriam Cendrars 507). Juan Manuel Bonet relates Miguel Pérez Ferrero's memory of Cendrars's visit, in which Guillermo de Torre pursued Cendrars's conversation aggressively (*Diccionario* 153). Torre must have been very excited to meet Cendrars, and it is interesting that his appraisal of the poet following their meeting is largely unchanged from a few years before: the same article that Torre published in *VLTRA* in 1922 appears (with slight emendations) in his 1925 *Literaturas europeas de vanguardia*, published

[29] An untitled poem by Man Ray expresses very similar concerns. In this work, published in Francis Picabia's *391* in May 1924, black marks of various lengths take the place of words. They represent a text, but there is no meaning to be gleaned from them. The poem is reproduced in Jaroslav Andel's *Avant-Garde Page Design* (138).

right before their meeting at the Residencia, as well as (in abridged form, taken directly from this book with Torre's permission) in the September 1926 issue of the Seville magazine *Mediodía.* Torre perceives in Cendrars's *Profond aujourd'hui,* much as Marjorie Perloff does (*The Futurist Moment* 39), "el más seductor espejo, el más vibrátil canto apologético y el más emocionante y clamoroso himnario de nuestra época acelerada y vorticista a tráves del nuevo prisma refrangible espiritual" (*LEV* 179; 150). In accord with the discussion I have given here to the program and characteristics of the historical avant-garde, the young Torre intelligently notes Cendrars's novel attitude to the autonomy of art. Cendrars's poetry, says Torre, "se halla abiert[a] a la vida y a las múltiples incitaciones de los elementos modernos," (*LEV* 176; 147), citing the line from the *Dix-neuf poèmes élastiques* where the windows of Cendrars's poetry are open to the street (Cendrars 70). Torre writes of Cendrars:

> Desplazando los antiguos ídolos y las remotas alegorías, instaura inéditos coeficientes de sensibilidad, adecuados a los fragantes módulos estéticos…Y no obstante, obsesionado por un lirismo materialista (¡!) eleva la mecánica por encima de los reinos vegetal y animal. (*LEV* 179; 150)

While the parenthetical exclamation points, present in the *VLTRA* article as well as in *Literaturas europeas de vanguardia*, following Torre's evaluation of Cendrars's poetry as "materialista" lend that appraisal some challenging ambiguity, Torre's description of the "ángulos hirientes" and the "perfil recortado" of the "palabras plásticas" that form the "membruda musculatura" of Cendrars's poetry, brings attention to the materiality of Cendrars's poetic praxis (*LEV* 179;150).

Materiality, simultaneity, and lived experience. Cendrars's poetry first comes to the attention of Spanish avant-garde poets at the very end of the First World War, with

Vicente Huidobro's visit to Madrid in the summer and fall of 1918. As they eagerly incorporate the recent poetics of the *avant-guerre* they at the same time participate in new tendencies in 1918. Spain's historical avant-garde begins to take off in this the year of Apollinaire's death, and thus pertains to a second 'epoch' of the European avant-garde. Writing from Nice in 1920, Cendrars outlines for Jean Epstein his view of the different approaches to poetry before and after the war.

> Il y'a l'époque: Tango, Ballets russes, cubisme, Mallarmé, bolchevisme intellectuel, insanité.
> Puis la guerre : un vide.
> Puis l'époque : construction, simultanisme, affirmation. Calicot : Rimbaud : changement de propriétaire. Affiches. La façade des maisons mangées par les lettres. La rue enjambée par le mot. La machine moderne dont l'homme sait se passer. Bolchevisme en action. Monde. (360)

In this second epoch, simultaneity and construction characterize European art. The streets are filled with language, jumbled words that migrate from advertising to poetry to speech, and back in a continuous loop. Life, rendered notably physical in Cendrars's letter as "monde," is, after the destruction of the war, a fresh imperative for a new age starting the year of the armistice, 1918. Ramón Gómez de la Serna, Rafael Cansinos Assens, and finally a very young Guillermo de Torre had slowly begun to catch wind of "l'esprit nouveau" leading up to this key year. When Huidobro arrives in Madrid in mid-1918 bringing news of Cendrars and other new Parisian poets, the Spanish capital's poets are ready to step in with this new constructive spirit of vanguardism, which the Chilean diplomat and writer practiced as *creacionismo*.

Vicente Huidobro (and Paul Reverdy)

Critics usually credit the Chilean aristocrat Vicente Huidobro with bringing the avant-garde to Spain and to the Spanish language.[30] While his stay in the Castilian capital in the latter half of 1918 was undoubtedly a huge catalyst for the Ultraist movement, we would do well to remember the early attention that Ramón Gómez de la Serna gave Marinetti and Apollinaire, as well as Enrique Díez-Canedo's astute and active attention to the French avant-garde, Gómez Carrillo's life in Paris and his writing, and other sparks and flickerings of the 'new spirit' in Madrid before Huidobro had even left South America. As noted in the introduction, Barcelona, while falling outside the purview of this study, had its active poets and critics in the international avant-garde from the advent of Futurism and Cubism before 1910 (Ascunce 73; Velázquez 121). However, Rafael Cansinos Assens, the leader of the group of writers meeting at the Café Colonial who would form Spanish *ultraísmo* in Seville and Madrid, leaves important testimony about Huidobro's seismic impact upon arriving in Spain. Cansinos's group was young and anxious, and –following Cansinos's cue– felt that literary Madrid was stagnating in a *post-modernismo* of solemnity and bombast. Vicente Huidobro came to the Spanish capital for his second stay in 1918 and changed everything for them.

[30] Because of Huidobro's critical role in bringing news of avant-garde poetry to Spain, many critics have dedicated their attention to Huidobro as the first Spanish-speaking poet and herald of the 'new spirit.' The full story of Huidobro's contact with Cansinos, Gómez de la Serna, Guillermo de Torre, Gerardo Diego, Juan Larrea, and other members and movements of the avant-garde exceeds the parameters of this study. Fortunately, thorough works of documentation exist elsewhere. A monographic issue of *Poesía* edited by René de Costa is an excellent historical testimony of Huidobro's significance for avant-garde poetry in Spain, as are De Costa's own critical writings on the Chilean poet's work. Also very useful are Willard Bohn's chapter on Spain in *Apollinaire and the International Avant-Garde,* Velázquez's article "Apollinaire et l'Espagne en 1918," and Gloria Videla's article "Huidobro en España."

After spending about two years in France, first in Paris and then in Beaulieu-près-Loches, in close company with Juan Gris, Jacques Lipchitz, Pablo Picasso, Guillaume Apollinaire, Pierre Reverdy, and other members of the international avant-garde, Huidobro traveled to Madrid in the summer of 1918 to escape the "xenofobia francesa," according to Cansinos, and brought with him news of Cubism and his own Creationism. The Chilean's arrival in Madrid was "el único acontecimiento literario del año," says Cansinos in the first issue of *Cosmópolis* for January of 1919 ("Un gran poeta chileno" 68). As Gloria Videla and Willard Bohn remind us, the young poets around Cansinos had not read Apollinaire, Max Jacob, Tristan Tzara, or even Marinetti, with the possible exceptions of Eugenio Montes and Pedro Luis de Gálvez ("Huidobro en España" 38; *Apollinaire* 185). This makes Huidobro's place in the history of the avant-garde in Spain a privileged one, for he was the conduit for the rest of avant-garde poetry from France and he animated the literary scene of Madrid with his *Horizon Carré,* published in Paris in 1917, and four slim books (two in French, two in Spanish) that he published in Madrid in 1918: *Ecuatorial, Poemas árticos, Tour Eiffel,* and *Hallali.* The second half of 1918 and the beginning of 1919 constitute Huidobro's moment,[31] for, as René de Costa writes, Apollinaire had had the allegiance of basically every avant-garde writer, painter, and group. His death sent the avant-garde scrambling to stake out positions and define personal aesthetic credos (8). As circumstances and personalities would have it,

[31] The aspect of Huidobro's life and work that concerns me in this dissertation is of course this precise moment; Creationism is a relatively short-lived phenomenon and does not define the whole of Huidobro's work, which was varied and lengthy (De Costa 4-5). This aesthetic is however the one that bears most on my dissertation and so my discussion of Huidobro will not go much beyond his *creacionismo* up to the poet's return to Chile in 1925.

Huidobro's position would be that of the avant-garde evangelist of Madrid, even if he later repudiated Spanish Ultraism.

The Spanish *ultraístas* themselves would continually credit Huidobro with bringing them news of Apollinaire, but, while they cited Huidobro as an innovator and an influence, they would always name Apollinaire as their greatest precursor. Thus, Cansinos says that "la nueva lírica" starts with Apollinaire ("Un gran poeta chileno" 72). His enthusiasm for Huidobro's work to escape Symbolist sentimentality and to reform syntax and typography remains forever linked to his greater appreciation for Guillaume Apollinaire's innovation. For Cansinos, Huidobro gets the credit for Creationism, but the larger question of paternity is answered with honors going to the inventor of the calligramme. Cansinos is enthusiastic about

> las tendencias de la nueva escuela - el creacionismo - nacida al calor de entusiastas conversaciones y lecturas recíprocas y cuya paternidad ha de quedar indecisa entre Huidobro y Reverdy, si no se le concede resueltamente á Apollinaire, de cuya mano abierta han salido, en nébula profusa, todos estos gérmenes. ("La nueva lírica" 73)

Ultraists Adriano del Valle, Pedro Garfias, César Arroyo, Jorge Luis Borges, and even Gerardo Diego, a great friend of Huidobro, all attribute to Apollinaire the paternity of the "new spirit" and the essential characteristics of Huidobro's poetic practice (*Apollinaire and the Int'l A-G* 197-220).[32] These questions of paternity and precedence could be thorny, and so Joaquín Edwards Bello's fictional story, wherein he introduces Huidobro

[32] See Adriano del Valle's "La fiesta del Ultra" in *Grecia* for 10 May 1919; Pedro Garfias's "La fiesta del 'Ultra'" in *Cervantes* the same month; César Arroyo's article "La nueva poesía en América" in *Cervantes* in August of 1919; Bohn's documentation of Borges's enthusiasm for Apollinaire (*Apollinaire and the Int'l A-G* 216-17); and Gerardo Diego's "Posibilidades creacionistas" in *Cervantes,* October 1919. Also, the "Mosaico leído por Juan González Olmedilla en la Fiesta del Ultra," in *Grecia* for 10 June 1919, in which Huidobro is accorded equal honors to those of several other poets. *VLTRA* issue number 20 for 15 December 1921 (page 3) shows how the group's relationship to Huidobro gained nuance over these short years.

to Apollinaire in Paris, merited a sharp rebuke from Vicente himself, published as a letter to Isaac del Vando-Villar, the editor of *Grecia,* in his magazine's issue for 31 January 1920 (*Apollinaire and the Int'l A-G* 219). Huidobro would maintain polemics with many other poets, including a long and virulent one with Pablo Neruda, and notably with his *Nord-Sud* co-editor, Pierre Reverdy.

Guillermo de Torre wrote on this disagreement between Huidobro and Reverdy regarding the paternity of Creationsim in *Cosmópolis* in August 1920. Torre gives the nod to Huidobro and rejects Reverdy's "malévolas y calumniosas frases," in which the French poet suggested that Huidobro faked the date on a copy of *El espejo de agua,* supposedly published in Buenos Aires in 1916 ("La poesía creacionista y la pugna" 582; de Costa, *Poesía* 31, 144-6) and re-issued in Madrid in 1918.[33] Egos and tempers were inflamed ever since Reverdy saw the first mentions of *creacionsimo* in Cansinos Assens's 1919 articles in *Cosmópolis.* He communicates his anger with Huidobro and his own story of the genesis of Creationsim to Gómez Carrillo in an interview in *El Liberal* on 30 June 1920 which Torre mentions in his "La poesía creacionista y la pugna entre sus progenitores" in *Cosmópolis* in August (592). Reverdy responds to Torre in a letter in October of that year, aggressively trying to set the young Ultraist straight (de Costa, *Poesía* 75). Reverdy prefers not to mention Creationism in this letter, but rather takes credit for all typographical innovations in his work as distinct from Apollinaire's calligrammatic typography. Here he also tells Torre that the young critic should always

[33] For Cedomil Goic, the mystery can finally be put to rest. It seems that Huidobro did indeed fake the date on the Buenos Aires edition, which was in any case printed in Madrid along with the Madrid edition of 1918. See his notes in the critical edition of the Huidobro's *Obra poética* ("Introducción" xxiv, 379-85).

remember that Huidobro, Dermée, Breton, Aragon, Soupault, Birot, and others were in fact his 'disciples' (de Costa, *Poesía* 75).

Prior to his November 1916 voyage to Europe, Huidobro had subscriptions in Chile to *Les Soirées de Paris* and other Parisian periodicals. So, even before the outbreak of World War I and the subsequent cancellation of these periodicals, his knowledge and application of Apollinairean techniques and his advanced thinking on aesthetics should not surprise us as psychic or prophetic (De Costa 39). After meeting briefly Cansinos Assens and Gómez de la Serna in Madrid, Huidobro falls in quickly with Juan Gris, Jacques Lipchitz, Apollinaire, and Max Jacob in Paris. He encounters Reverdy at a poetry reading organized by Max Jacob (de Costa, *Poesía* 49). Huidobro was soon helping Reverdy to found and fund the review *Nord-Sud* in March of 1917, and the poetics they promoted were closely aligned with the new painting. This meant Cubism, even if Reverdy would prefer not to accept the Cubist label explicitly (Admussen). *Nord-Sud*, the agent for dialogue across Paris, from Montmartre to Montparnasse, explicitly claimed its allegiance to Apollinaire, who had been the Cubists' champion (De Costa 8; Reverdy 13). Since so much of Apollinaire's, Reverdy's, and Huidobro's poetry makes it to the Madrid public simultaneously, mostly thanks to Huidobro's 1918 visit, our concern here is less about prestige and historical flag-planting than it is about understanding the aesthetics of these poets as they all come to bear on the production of Spanish poets immediately after 1918. Determining whether *Nord-Sud* can really be said to be Cubist or whether Reverdy or Huidobro deserve credit for inventing Creationism is not my concern here. Rather, I should like to present the poetics that Huidobro brought to Madrid in the latter half of 1918, not the wounded pride that may have accompanied it.

Richard Admussen notes that despite refutations on the part of Reverdy, *Nord-Sud*'s poetics looks much like Cubist painterly aesthetics. Anecdote is shunned while the work of art aspires to self-sufficiency. The goal of purity in poetry and reverence for Art characterize *Nord-Sud*, an attitude somewhat at odds with other avant-garde iconoclasms. Poetic syntactical fragmentation and typographical dispersion mirror Cubist simultaneous perspective, collage, and juxtaposition (Admussen 22). Of course, painting and poetry are not the same, and so, while the term "Cubist poetry" may be useful, it is in the end unfair to the poets. Consequently, Guillermo de Torre suggested that the Creationists shared a "tangencial afinidad" with pictorial Cubism in their simultaneist attempts to "vivificar plásticamente la realidad y la Naturaleza en sí mismas" ("Efigie liminar: Pedro Reverdy"). However, a literary work of art is, as Reverdy said in the pages of *Nord-Sud*, conceivable only in written form (Admussen 5; Reverdy 53-4). Thus, the "peculiar estructura tipográfica" of Creationist poetry can be said to share some of the aesthetic goals of Cubism, but it must be considered a literary technique separate from painterly practice ("Efigie liminar: Pedro Reverdy"). Indeed, while Admussen cites Reverdy's October 1917 article "L'Émotion" to insist that writing is separate from painting and that the *Nord-Sud* poets did more than just transfer painterly techniques to poetry, in this text Reverdy is actually writing on plot-driven novels. His point here is that a novel that could just as easily be read aloud to a listening audience as read alone in silence is not a fully-fledged literary work, for its emotive interest really depends on the choice of the storyline and the reaction of the reader or listeners to the events which transpire in the plot (54).

In the first chapter I explained how the avant-garde material text challenged artistic transcendence. In his article on "L'Émotion," Reverdy adds another explanation

for the need for attention to the materiality of written form. For the work to be truly a work of art, which for Reverdy means a work of original creation, it cannot relay information culled from outside itself, but must operate autonomously as a surprising and original set of carefully chosen elements (Reverdy 59). This avoidance of anecdote implies the importance of materiality. A literary work must be a piece of writing and the written form it takes must be essential to its conception and execution. This defense of writing as fundamentally different from painting perhaps explains the need for a separate term from Cubism, and hence the new term Creationism. Huidobro, characteristically confident, claimed that Creationism, the new tendency born in *Nord-Sud*, was "la más seria y profunda después del simbolismo." It is the paradigm shift that Futurism had hoped to be (de Costa, *Poesía* 56; Cruchaga). Creationism aimed at the avant-garde goal of re-inserting art back in life by attempting to create new realities, material poems that would exist on the same ontological plane as other objects. Reverdy discusses the new aesthetics in the first issue of *Nord-Sud.*

> Nous sommes à une époque de création artistique où l'on ne raconte plus des histoires plus ou moins agréablement mais où l'on crée des œuvres qui, en se détachant de la vie, y rentrent parce qu'elles ont une existence propre, en dehors de l'évocation ou de la reproduction des choses de la vie. (Reverdy 20)

Huidobro brings this new poetics to Madrid in the form of his *Horizon Carré* and four new books, as well as the slyly "re-issued" *El espejo de agua.* The first of the nine poems that comprise this title is Huidobro's often quoted and reproduced "Arte poética." It is a succinct manifesto of Creationism and will be useful for later reference, so I will reproduce it in its entirety here.

> Que el verso sea como una llave
> Que abra mil puertas.

Una hoja cae; algo pasa volando;
Cuanto miren los ojos creado sea,
Y el alma del oyente quede temblando.

Inventa mundos nuevos y cuida tu palabra;
El adjetivo, cuando no da vida, mata.

Estamos en el ciclo de los nervios.
El músculo cuelga,
Como recuerdo, en los museos;
Mas no por eso tenemos menos fuerza:
El vigor verdadero
Reside en la cabeza.

Por qué cantáis la rosa, ¡oh Poetas!
Hacedla florecer en el poema;
Sólo para nosotros
Viven todas las cosas bajo el Sol.

El poeta es un pequeño Dios. (*Obra poética* 391)

While some of the aristocratic autonomy of art that so characterized Symbolism is evident in Huidobro's declaration of near divinity ('only for us poets, little gods, does the world exist,' he says) the poem's essentially material existence is his most important goal. It is a goal as yet unrealized in this conventionally typeset poem that still makes abundant use of assonance. In another famous metaphor for poetic composition, Huidobro urges poets to make poems as nature makes trees, that is, organically, physically, solidly (417). Writing poetry is for Huidobro more about language than inspiration, craft and intelligence carry the day. Since the poem is a created thing (Greek *poeisis*), a self-sufficient object, its meaning is indeterminate and the poetic line is a key to a thousand doors. Perloff's 'poetics of indeterminacy' that characterizes the rest of the international avant-garde applies here, for the Creationist image inhabits the page, operates in language, and beguiles attempts at transference to other spheres of existence or interpretation. A clear case in point is Huidobro's last book published in France (in

December 1917) before his move to Madrid in July 1918. *Horizon Carré*'s title itself is a Creationist image since the combination of this masculine noun with its regular adjective is syntactically unremarkable but conceptually impossible. The very essence of a horizon is its straightness, so Huidobro's linguistic trick to square a straight line creates a linguistic reality that has no corresponding visual or physical one. This adjective, "carré," gives new life to the horizon rather than kill an old image, true to the poet's "Arte poética." Huidobro himself said that this noun-adjective combination encapsulates his entire Creationist aesthetics; writing images that can only exist in language, the unique products of an active poetic mind (Osorio 174). Elsewhere in less Escherian metaphors Huidobro continues to challenge poetic transcendence with created images, like the elevators that rise like mercury in a thermometer in "Cow boy" (465) or the conceptual line that trembles between women and willows in "Fleuve," dedicated to Jean Cocteau. This latter poem reads:

Le Fleuve où le vent
traîne des chansons
VIELLE VOIX MARINIERE

Les saules
qui écoutent
penchés
chevelures

Des femmes
qui lavent
leurs

Le soleil en trouant les branches
Passe de l'autre coté
sans arracher les feuilles

Il y a des dentelles sur l'eau
Mais L'OMBRE EST DOUCE à supporter

Le bras d'eau cherche l'horizon
Au fond du paysage. (470)

The women washing their hair by the riverbank are placed beside the willows at the water's edge, just as they could be in real life. This juxtaposition is suggestive given the weeping willow's usual melancholic connotations and the inevitable Ophelian resonances of wet-haired women surrounded by the song of the river's "VIELLE VOIX MARINIERE." But Huidobro will not allow this conventional set of images to drag the poem into any kind of hackneyed profundity about life and death. The personified willows could be listening to the women, if we read the three lines dedicated to the trees as preface to the three lines describing the women. But the oppositional layout of the lines and the capitalized clauses ("Les saules"/ "Des femmes") allow us to read the women and the willows as separate and unconnected details in a single scene. They could be images parallel and simultaneous in action as they are in layout. Much like the components of a Cubist collage, the physical juxtaposition of the elements 'willows' and 'women' tears each from its respective context (and from their shared literary-historical context in *Hamlet*). The idea is not to 'give the elements of the composition a certain aspect,' but to "dégager," in Reverdy's words, the women and the trees from their usual meanings, to mix old elements into something new (Reverdy 19). There are "dentelles sur l'eau," 'lace[s] on the water,' but we cannot be sure whether this is literally the women's lace garments spreading geometric shadows over the water or whether the shadows or reflections of the willow leaves take on the women's lace pattern by proximity and spiritual correspondence. In support of this more conventionally Symbolist reading we could cite the Shakespearian source text, wherein referents for the reflection of the willow leaves and Ophelia's garments mix. Queen Gertrude brings the news of Ophelia's death to Laertes in Act IV, scene 6;

> There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
> That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream:
> There with fantastic garlands did she come
> […]
> There on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
> Clamb'ring to hang, an envious sliver broke,
> When down the weedy trophies and herself
> Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide. (1985)

Eventually "heavy with their drink," Ophelia's garments pull her under and drown her as she babbles incoherencies (1985). In *Hamlet,* Ophelia's dress is adorned with plant life, while the willow itself takes on the white color ("hoar leaves") typical of a woman's lace dress and, in its murderous 'envy,' human emotions and agency. A naturalized Ophelia interacts with personified nature in a scene bearing obvious resemblance to Huidobro's "Fleuve." Huidobro's poem, however, through its typographical presentation, eschews complete metaphorical interpenetration between the women and the willows. In a further move against a reading of this poem along similar emotive and symbolic lines as the ones that structure the Ophelia death scene, Huidobro abruptly dispels the possibility of *paysage d'âme* in the next line. Writing in stressed upper case, "Mais L'OMBRE EST DOUCE à supporter," he cancels the homage to the bard by contradicting the suggestive correspondences of sadness and suicide, between the women and the willows. In fact the willows' shade provides some respite for the women from the explicitly mentioned sunshine in this totally innocent scene of bathing. "Fleuve" is a "paysage" but Huidobro, with the personified 'arm' of the river, is already searching for new horizons at the "fond," the bottom, back, or end of the landscape. Here Huidobro seems to have obliquely stated in verse what Max Jacob says explicitly about avant-garde poetry, that is, that "la guerre de 1914 a deshamlétisé la littérature d'avant-garde" (*Art poétique* 39).

In other poems, Huidobro's visual imagination produces typographical innovation as representation of the human voice. For example, the notes of the *solfège* slide down the page in *Torre Eiffel* (616), while patterns of speech and volume are manifested in words diagrammed diagonally in poems like "Tam" in *Horizon Carré* (438). Rosa Sarabia argues that, in line with the Creationist poetics of metaphoric multiplicity and Huidobro's own lines "Pour monter à la Tour Eiffel / On monte sur une chanson" (616), the singing 'scale' also refers metonymically to the tower itself as the image of a staircase, simultaneously rising in tone as it descends the page ("La poética visual" 123). While tourists and Parisians view the tower and see an icon of the city, those on its observation level see the view of the streets and people below as the icon of the French capital, a phenomenon of visual paradox and semiotic simultaneity that Sarabia links to the descending stairs/rising tones pair by describing the sensation of a simultaneous "paradójico movimiento de 'bajar subiendo' o 'subir bajando'" ("La poética visual" 123). Typographical effects like these may seem dull or rather simple to twenty-first century readers, but Andrés Trapiello reminds us (not without heaping sarcasm on Marinetti, Huidobro, and Reverdy) that early twentieth-century audiences would have been rather shocked at seeing works printed this way (107).

Perhaps the most ambitious of Huidobro's material poems are his *Poemas pintados,* exhibited briefly in 1922 in the Edouard VII Theatre in Paris before public outcry necessitated their removal (de Costa, *Poesía* 164; Sarabia, "Introducción"). Like calligrammes, a form Huidobro also practiced, these 'painted poems' combine verbal and visual cues, often with text that presents the shape of its very subject. Some, like "Moulin," with its stripes and triangles of bright colors painted by the Delaunay couple,

recall Blaise Cendrars's and Sonia Delaunay-Terk's *Prose du Transsiberian* (de Costa, *Poesía* 172). Others, like "Un astre" or "Piano" (below) are much more sober, two or three-tone compositions. Their colors, size (73 cm. x 53 cm.), and typography make them different from previous calligrammes which had been designed to be printed in books and magazines. Furthermore, the fact that many of these compositions included figuratively drawn or painted elements rather than only shapes formed of printed words, makes them different from calligrammes strickly speaking and more like 'art objects.'

Fig. 3. "Piano." *Poemas pintados/Salle XIV.* Vicente Huidobro. Reprinted by the Cecilia de Torres Ltd Gallery. www.ceciliadetorres.com.

In a later chapter I will comment on compositions of a similar nature in my discussion of Ernesto Giménez Caballero's "carteles literarios." In these, advertising language and visual strategies, painting, poetry, and literature come together. These "páginas con

plasticidad positiva," as Juan Larrea called the "poemas pintados," present particularly interesting manifestations of material poetics in the avant-garde (de Costa, *Poesía* 173).

Max Jacob

As Picasso's roommate, Apollinaire's close friend, and a contributor to Reverdy's *Nord-Sud*, Max Jacob was perhaps inevitably bound to be classified as a "Cubist" poet. Guillermo de Torre, who would later publish a translation of Jacob's *Le cornet à dés,* discusses Jacob's link with the plastic arts in an article in the December 1921 issue of *VLTRA*:

> Es un paisajista urbano de técnica impresionista y un dibujante de trazos veristas e intencionados. Mas con todo, y no obstante sobrepasar la categoría de «un escritor que cultiva la pintura», preferimos sus cuadros verbales. ("Los nuevos valores")

Five years later, in 1926, Max Jacob gave a lecture at the Residencia de Estudiantes in Madrid in 1926, titled "Sans motif." The abstraction that characterizes Cubist painting could also characterize a verbal work, even the title of a lecture at a cultural institution. In December of that same year José Bergamín wrote something of his own version of an *ars poetica* for Max Jacob, stressing the spatial dimensions of his work. Bergamín writes in the Seville magazine *Mediodía*, "La situación de la obra poética es su espacialidad; el estilo su temporalidad o duración espacializada, su permanencia. La obra poética existe por su situación y persiste -permanece, perdura-, por su estilo" ("Trasparencia y reflejo" 2). Others of Bergamín's judgments on Jacob's poetry are especially interesting for their historical context in 1926. For example, in describing Jacob's poetry he continually

stresses ideas important for the aesthetics of *poésie pure*, such as 'purity,' 'beauty,' 'form,' and 'light.'[34]

Despite the apparently tame and conventional typographical layout of Jacob's poems, something of the material aesthetics of Cubist painting filters through. Jacob himself was also a painter before becoming an innovator of the prose poem, and so thinking of some of the poems from his book *Le cornet à dés* in visual terms can help us to understand his poetics. Additionally, I should like to make mention of a few brief excerpts from Jacob's *Art poétique,* published in Paris in 1922. Many of Jacob's epigrams, metaphors, and artistic pronouncements in this text are good syntheses of avant-garde aesthetics, and, I should like to note, are reminiscent of Ramón Gómez de la Serna's *greguerías*, to be discussed at the end of this chapter.

Rafael Cansinos Assens introduced Jacob to many Spanish readers in February of 1919 with his publication in *Grecia* of a selection of translated pieces from Jacob's 1916 collection *Le cornet à dés*. This book's title envokes Mallarmé's *Un coup de dés,* but it operates very differently from Mallarmé's typographically dispersed poem. *Le cornet à dés* presents the reader with a long series of discretely independent prose pieces, each a brief story (sometimes non-linear and illogical), a play on words, or a fragmented visual scene. When they present an immediately intelligible narrative, as in "Encore les indigents non ambulants" (*Le cornet à dés* 94), these prose poems are often stingingly ironic. Other pieces in the collection play with nouns torn from their contexts and lull the

[34] This concept of pure poetry will appear again in my chapter on Manuel Altolaguirre, whose *Las islas invitadas y otros poemas* is reviewed by Joaquín Romero y Murube in this same issue of *Mediodía.* Also of interest for historical context with regards to *Mediodía,* 'pure poetry,' and the aesthetics of the 'Generation of 1927' is the review of Jean Cocteau's *Le rappel à l'ordre* in an earlier issue of *Mediodía* the same year (no. 2, July 1926).

reader into a false sense of intelligibility by recombining juxtaposed elements in a seemingly regular syntax.

For example, Jacob writes, "Vu à contre-jour ou autrement, je n'existe pas et pourtant je suis un arbre" (*Le cornet à dés* 72). By explicitly locating this reflection in the realm of visual experience, Jacob prepares a conceptual canvass that, in the end, cannot hold the verbal material that follows. The speaker, seen "à contre-jour," which in conventional usage means 'back-lit,' is also viewed, enigmatically, "autrement," or 'other-wise.' The transformation of the speaker into a tree would be the result, in photography, of aiming the camera directly into a source of light, such as the sun. The interposed human subject being photographed comes out in the developed image as a dark shape, lost in the flood of light emanating from behind him. If we read "à contre-jour" in this sense, as terminology from photography, the image makes sense, for the subject being photographed is only a black silhouette and might look more like a tree than a human being. However, following from Jacob's attention to the phonic materiality of words, as evidenced by the internal rhyme in this piece ("autrement/pourtant"), and Jacob's fondness for word play elsewhere, I would argue that "à contre-jour" could also be interpreted by reading its constituent parts, "contre" and "jour," as jostling concepts that together do not produce a stable image. As Gerald Kamber argues, Jacob's poetry operates much like Cubist painting by refusing to accept a single perspective or a single denotative meaning for each of the words. The logic of the sentence presents itself as sound, packed as it is in standard syntax, but it is in the end on one hand nonsense and on the other a photographic metaphor that, while coherent, is unsettlingly ambiguous. A third reading, and a very suggestive one, becomes available when we remember the

mythological Daphne's metamorphosis into a laurel tree. Much like the person being photographed, her identity is erased under pressure from the relentless pursuit of the sun in the figure of Apollo.

But, returning to the first reading, are we to believe that the speaker ceases to exist because of the way his or her photo turns out? Even more strange is the assertion that the same processes of subjective erasure or arboreal transformation could come about without the intervention of photography, if the speaker is simply viewed "autrement." The short poem is over just as it begins and eludes deeper analysis. We are left with the idea of the photographic image as well as with strange ontological questions and mythological resonances, all under the hovering ambiguity of "autrement." Kamber describes Jacob's bait-and-switch technique as "the volatilization and nearly immediate replacement of half-grasped images," which makes for poems characterized by semantic simultaneity and whimsical suggestion (46). Kamber goes on to say, "It is as if the artist were working against himself," constructing images, forging connections, and subsequently denying all the newly offered correspondences (46).

Jacob's poetry, true to the avant-garde spirit, denies the transcendence of art and refuses to make any serious statement. Rather than read his prose poems as insights into his character as a Catholic convert, a mystic, the product of an unhappy childhood, a clown, or a Jew,[35] we should read Jacob's heterogeneous literary production in accord with its moment and as works of art in their own right, as Sydney Lévy urges ("Que faire de Max Jacob?"). Jacob's own *Art poétique* is an interesting document for this purpose.

[35] For details on Jacob's life, including his vision of God on the wall of his apartment and his conversion to Catholicism, see Pierre Andreu's *Vie et mort de Max Jacob*. This 'sublime' vision of 1909 and Jacob's corresponding life-long mysticism stand in contradiction, to a certain degree, to his aesthetic attack on the sublime. This contradiction is evident, indeed, in comparing many of the entries in the *Art poétique.*

Here he writes, “Rimbaud venait de la multiplicité des idées, l’esprit nouveau n’aime pas les idées” (15). Jacob’s semantic indeterminacy is even more radical than some other poets’ attempts at poetic simultaneity,[36] for rather than offer multiple possible referents for a single metaphor, Jacob often aspires to multiple readings that are nonetheless all visually blurry and semantically unfixed. Tropes abound but none can be pinned to a clearly defined idea. His poetics cannot be unequivocally defined as Cubist, but is rather characterized by a jocular multiplicity of aesthetic urges, be they “mystical, surrealist, Christian, classical, even romantic,” as Judith Schneider writes, echoing Guillermo de Torre’s insistence that Jacob’s modern humor, with its “profusión y disimulitud de sus estilos,” had an important classical foundation (Schneider 290; “Los nuevos valores”). Torre cites Jean Cocteau, who says that Jacob entertains his fellow poets by creating *calembours*; since all of poetry is word play, “el poeta asocia, disocia, revuelve las sílabas del mundo” (“Los nuevos valores”; *LEV* 173; 144). Since Jacob’s poetry is so paradoxical, full of “espejismos verbales” and “imágenes prismáticas,” it has changed what art and artists can be, says Guillermo de Torre, “jovializando su [the artist’s] actitud ante la Vida” (*LEV* 172; 143). Play is then the foremost aspect of Jacob’s poetry, treated at length by Sydney Lévy, and recently in a monograph by Anna J. Davies. Playfully, Jacob talks of “le godet du goulot et la goulette du goût d’eau,” in “Cubisme et soleil noyés” (*Le cornet à dés* 88) and humorously makes the moon into a changing combination of three white mushrooms in “Poème de la lune.” This latter poem is also a good example of Jacob’s use of incongruous imagery, multiple constructions like metaphors that however give up no referent.

[36] And Jacob may have been the first to speak explicitly of simultaneity in poetry, in 1905 (Andreu 49).

> Il y a sur la nuit trois champignons qui sont la lune. Aussi brusquement que chante le coucou d'une horloge, ils se disposent autrement à minuit chaque mois. Il y a dans le jardin des fleurs rares qui sont de petits hommes couchés, cent, c'est les reflets d'un miroir. Il y a dans ma chambre obscure une navette lumineuse qui rôde, puis deux… des aérostats phosphorescents, c'est les reflets d'un miroir. Il y a dans ma tête une abeille qui parle. (*Le cornet à dés* 76)

The speaker is not in control of his thoughts, which are indeed nothing more than passive imaginations on moonlight reflected from a mirror. Rather than a muse (or the ghost of one's father) speaking to the genius poet, Jacob's poetry comes from playing with language and image. And so, in the form of a malodorous servant, elements of real life surprise 'the goddess' of inspiration, banishing thoughts of artistic transcendence in "Cela" (*Le cornet à dés* 168). Rather than seek the sublime in the "fantômes inspirateurs du passé" (*Le cornet à dés* 229), Jacob prefers indeterminacy, irony, and play to philosophical declarations, an aesthetic position outlined in his piece on "L'hamlétisme" included in *Art poétique*. Jacob defines 'Hamletism' as "une façon inattendue d'expression tenant à la profondeur de la pensée ou tendant à la faire supposer. Autre exemple : les poètes hamlétiques sont rares ; on ne connait guère que des hamlétomanes" (39). Even more explicitly in support of a de-subjectivized literature, a literature of play, innovation, image, and attention to language, Jacob declares a few lines further on, as I cited above, that "La guerre de 1914 a deshamlétisé la littérature d'avant-garde" (*Art poétique* 39).

Tristan Tzara

Tristan Tzara, born Samuel Rosenstock in Romania in 1896, also felt acutely the shift in European morals and aesthetics signaled by the First World War. Dada, the artistic group

he and other young expatriates formed at Zurich's Cabaret Voltaire in 1916, pursued the avant-garde's general rejection of the bourgeois institution of art to its final consequences. Their aesthetics grew out of the Cubist and Futurist poetics of simultaneity, noise, and novelty while also resolutely denouncing violence and extolling improvisation and individuality. Dada perceived in African and Oceanic art a spontaneity and an asymmetry ostensibly not present in European art, and so it appropriated forms and phonetics from a heterogeneous mix of non-European sources. This appropriation, like others from Cubism and Futurism, may erode most of Dada's claims to originality, as Elmer Peterson notes (52), but Dada stayed fresh by always declaiming against artistic schools and established values. Dada was an artistic movement of negation, a "noisily incoherent but significant protest against formalism in the arts," (Peterson 41). Dada's "anti" stance towards nearly everything may have lead it into an "inevitable cul-de-sac" (Peterson 28), but its vigor and variety are certainly signs that the avant-garde's attack on establishment art was constructive as well as destructive, as Cendrars had said in his letter to Jean Epstein cited above (Cendrars, *Poésies* 360). Dada, much like Spanish Ultraism, was always concerned with constant renovation and so promoted the incorporation of all poetic novelties, regardless of their provenance. Thus, despite Tzara's explicit declarations of distance from Cubism and Futurism, it should come as no surprise that he himself published in Reverdy's *Nord-Sud* while the bulletin *DADA* published work by and on Apollinaire, Reverdy, Cendrars, Picasso, and Marinetti, among many others. Testament to this cosmopolitan and inclusive spirit and its connection to Spain is the fact that the international list of 'presidents' of the movement published in *DADA* no. 6 includes several poets associated with Ultraism, some of their names appearing with

curious spellings: “Cansino d’Assens,” “Jacques Edwards,”[37] “Vincente Huidobro,” Guillermo de Torre, and Lasso de la Vega, as well as Barcelona avant-gardists Junoy and Dalmau (212). While Tzara would not make it to Spain until 1929, a stay in which he visited Ramón Gómez de la Serna’s Pombo and the offices of *La Gaceta Literaria*, he was very present in Spanish literary magazines from *Grecia* and *Cervantes* to *Favorables París Poema* (*Diccionario* 602).

Sometimes Tzara was listed as the director of the *DADA* bulletin, while at other moments he superficially claims to be only one among many, a “sinistre farceur,” as in *DADA* no. 6 (212). But he was an active self-promoter, so even a large-print declaration that “Tout le monde est directeur du mouvement DADA” is an advertisement for himself (212). Tzara was the spirit and the muscle of the movement, to the extent that Ramón Gómez de la Serna’s entry on Dada in *Ismos* is dedicated almost entirely to quoting and paraphrasing him. The Romanian poet’s *Sept manifestes dadas* are seminal texts for the movement, even though he mocks the genre of the manifesto in the “Manifeste Dada 1918.” He says, “je suis par principe contre les manifestes, comme je suis aussi contre les principes” (145). This text, which Tzara read to an audience at the Salle Meise in Zurich on 23 July 1918, is a good synthesis of Dada’s aesthetics of irony and originality. The manifesto’s printing is interesting, for Tzara uses solid black blocks almost like brackets to isolate important points. He also starts new paragraphs without indentation at the beginning or space following the previous paragraph. The text is thus decidedly dense, but Tzara does separate out a few phrases which he sets in a larger font and amid the freedom of some white space. These function almost as headings to the different sections

[37] Joaquín Edwards Bello did however use the name “Jacques” himself.

of the manifesto. They are, “Dada ne signifie rien,” emphasized by an index symbol (☞), also called a manicule or a fist, “La spontanéité dadaïste,” and “Dégoût dadaïste.” These last two phrases actually complete the sentences preceding them.

Tzara claims that despite phonetic reminiscences of other languages or fantastic theories about the etymology of “Dada,” the word means nothing and analyzing the term would be useless. He seeks total artistic independence, for himself as well as for viewers of art, since beauty cannot be boiled down to a theory. He thus sets himself and Dada apart from Cubism and Futurism because he says these movements’ programmatic thinking forces their adherents to consider all objects from the same critical perspective. Dada is the negation of paradigms and programs, even the negation of itself, and thus, “Je suis contre les systèmes, le plus acceptable des systèmes est celui de n’avoir par principe aucun” (146). Tzara says that however the work achieves it, “chaque page doit exploder” (146).

Clearly setting the ground for Surrealism (Shattuck 294), Tzara contends that abstraction, surprise, and cognitive discord should be the goals of literary writing. His image for advancing such an aesthetics is very aggressive: “Je détruis les tiroirs du cerveau,” he writes in the section of the manifesto reproduced below. Here we also see the solid blocks that Tzara uses to isolate important phrases and the lack of indentation and spacing in his paragraph breaks.

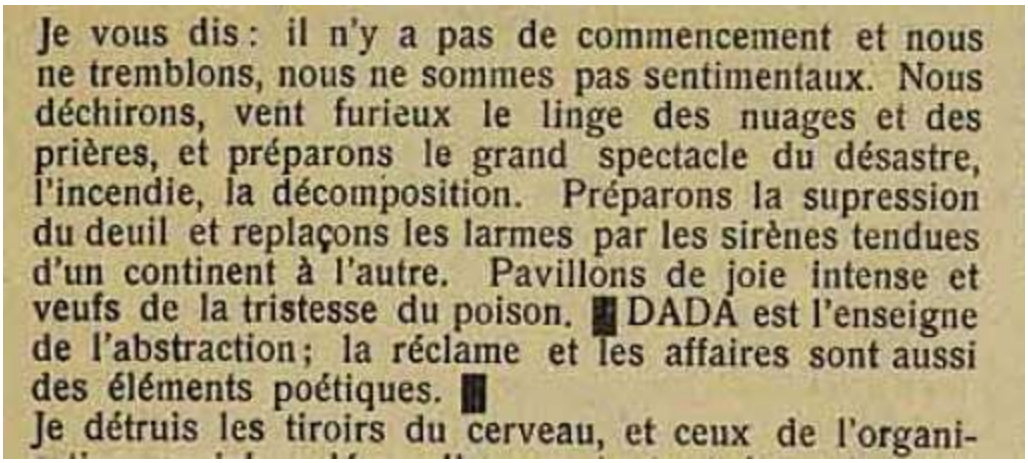
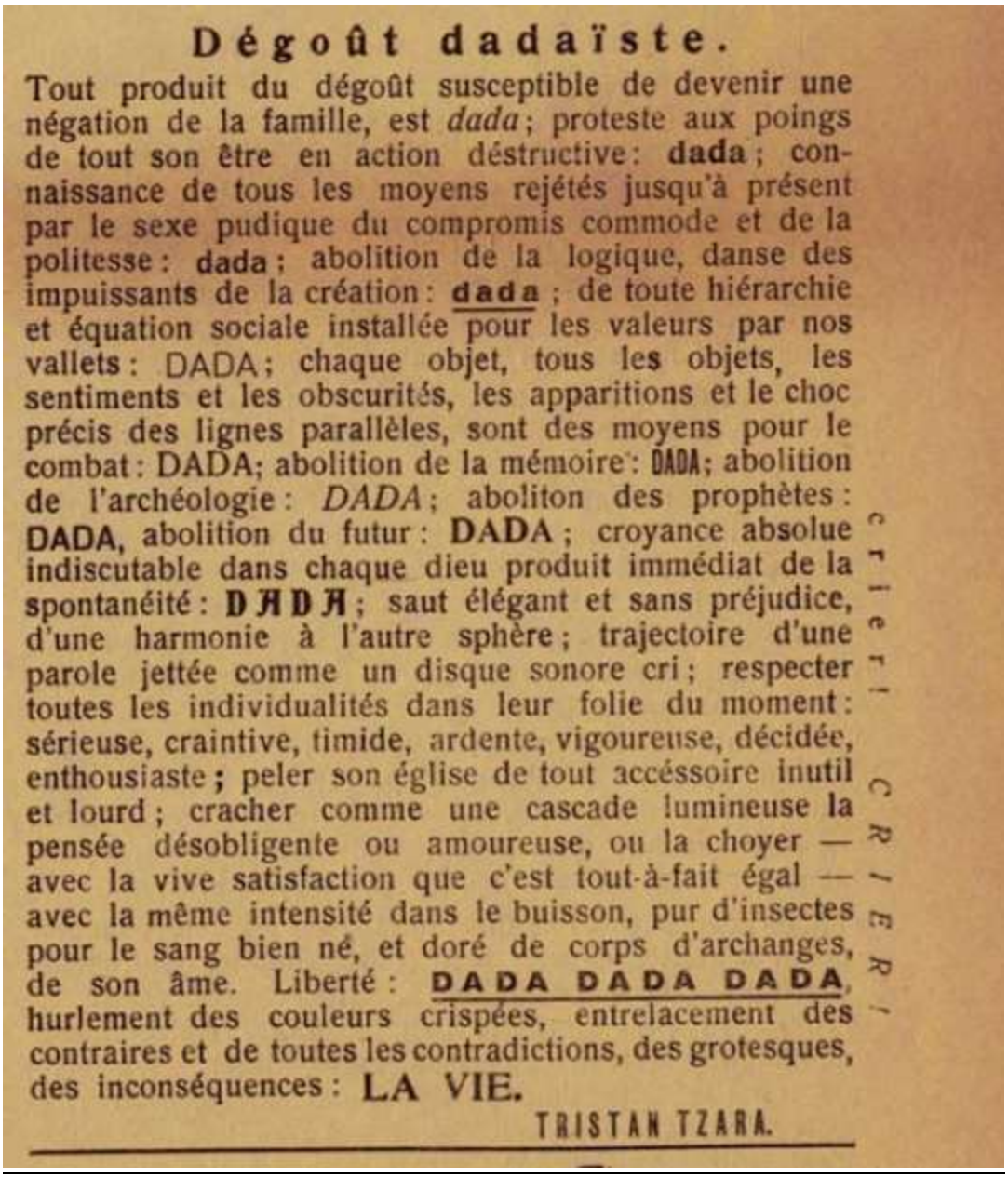

Je vous dis : il n'y a pas de commencement et nous ne tremblons, nous ne sommes pas sentimentaux. Nous déchirons, vent furieux le linge des nuages et des prières, et préparons le grand spectacle du désastre, l'incendie, la décomposition. Préparons la supression du deuil et replaçons les larmes par les sirènes tendues d'un continent à l'autre. Pavillons de joie intense et veufs de la tristesse du poison. DADA est l'enseigne de l'abstraction ; la réclame et les affaires sont aussi des éléments poétiques.
Je détruis les tiroirs du cerveau, et ceux de l'organi-

Fig. 4. From "Manifeste Dada 1918," page 2. Tristan Tzara. *Dada* no. 3 (December 1918). University of Iowa International Dada Archive.

He also says here that "la réclame et les affaires sont aussi des éléments poétiques" (146), and so we see that Dada, true to the general avant-garde spirit, is also interested in mixing art and daily commercial life. Tzara calls his individual artistic and life philosophy "jem'enfoutisme," something like 'i-don't-give-a-damn-ism' (146). Of course, he says, this individuality comes with the important responsibility of respecting the individuality of others. As part of Tzara's goal to reject all theories and to assert artistic and experiential independence from established forms of art (Drucker 199), the typography of the closing section of this manifesto is particularly interesting.



Dégoût dadaïste.

Tout produit du dégoût susceptible de devenir une négation de la famille, est *dada*; proteste aux poings de tout son être en action déstructive: **dada**; connaissance de tous les moyens rejétés jusqu'à présent par le sexe pudique du compromis commode et de la politesse: **dada**; abolition de la logique, danse des impuissants de la création: **dada**; de toute hiérarchie et équation sociale installée pour les valeurs par nos vallets: DADA; chaque objet, tous les objets, les sentiments et les obscurités, les apparitions et le choc précis des lignes parallèles, sont des moyens pour le combat: DADA; abolition de la mémoire: DADA; abolition de l'archéologie: *DADA*; aboliton des prophètes: DADA, abolition du futur: **DADA**; croyance absolue indiscutable dans chaque dieu produit immédiat de la spontanéité: **DADA**; saut élégant et sans préjudice, d'une harmonie à l'autre sphère; trajectoire d'une parole jettée comme un disque sonore cri; respecter toutes les individualités dans leur folie du moment: sérieuse, craintive, timide, ardente, vigoureuse, décidée, enthousiaste; peler son église de tout accéssoire inutil et lourd; cracher comme une cascade lumineuse la pensée désobligente ou amoureuse, ou la choyer — avec la vive satisfaction que c'est tout-à-fait égal — avec la même intensité dans le buisson, pur d'insectes pour le sang bien né, et doré de corps d'archanges, de son âme. Liberté: **DADA DADA DADA**, hurlement des couleurs crispées, entrelacement des contraires et de toutes les contradictions, des grotesques, des inconséquences: **LA VIE.**

TRISTAN TZARA.

c r i e r i C R I E R !

Fig. 5. From "Manifeste Dada 1918," page 3. Tristan Tzara. *Dada* no. 3 (December 1918). University of Iowa International Dada Archive.

After reading this manifesto we see that finally Dada is synonymous with life for Tristan Tzara. He arrives at this hoarse declaration (I imagine these last sentences would be declaimed in a kind of frenetic crescendo) after offering a multitude of definitions of "Dada," at turns categorically negative or expansively inclusive. Each iteration of the

word “Dada” is rendered in a different typographical presentation, with changing typefaces, underlining, capitalization, and the like. If “Dada” is the negation of all of these antiquated ideas and the total acceptance of free-association, if it means nothing, then the typographical presentation of the four letters is really all we have to consider. Spoken noise (the “crier! *CRIER!*” printed vertically next to this section) and printed form constitute the work, whose semantic content is precisely the denial that it carries any semantic content in the first place. Dada is material poetics more than anything else (see Drucker 195-6; Bürger 64, 70; Lupton 98-9), and so in other manifestoes Tzara offers instructions for making a Dadaist poem by randomly ordering words clipped from newspapers, or roars continuously without explanation.

Another manifesto of sorts was composed and distributed by Dada in January 1921, “Dada soulève tout.” It is especially interesting because Guillermo de Torre, through epistolary contact with Tzara maintained since at least 1919, seems to have received it shortly after its publication (Breuil 198-9). Torre’s review and summary of this “hoja volante” appears in the third issue of *VLTRA* for 20 February 1921. As the most fervent Ultraist in Madrid, Torre was very interested in Dada’s “normas jubilosas e irreverentes del vivir” (“Kaleidoscopio”). Torre says that Tzara wrote to him in 1919, “Dadá cambia y se multiplica constantemente” (“Kaleidoscopio”), and this malleability would characterize Ultraism as well. Torre quotes “Dada soulève tout”:

> Dadá conoce todo. Dadá no tiene ideas fijas. - Una joven se suicida. A causa de qué? De Dadá. - Se telefonea a los espíritus. Quién es el inventor? Dadá. - El ultraísmo recomienda la mezcla de siete cosas artísticas. Dadá es la amargura que abre su risa sobre todo lo que ha sido hecho, consagrado y olvidado en nuestro lenguaje, en nuestro cerebro y en nuestras costumbres. (“Kaleidoscopio”)[38]

[38] In a letter to Gerardo Diego, Vicente Huidobro, by this point on bad terms with Torre, insists that Torre’s letter acknowledging receipt of “Dada soulève tout” was passed around and mocked

The lines preceding the mention of Ultraism come from the first page of "Dada soulève tout" while the last line concerning the ironic rejection of received knowledge comes from the second page. The explicit reference to Ultraism seems to delight Torre, but it is a bit of a sarcastic jab at the Spanish group's frantic eclecticism. The original document in French makes claims and counterclaims about what Dada knows, does, agrees to, or rejects. For example, "Dada vous a-t-il jamais parlé…de l'Art (mais vous exagérez cher ami)." The capitalization of "Art" and the parenthetical remark create some ambiguity about Dada's attitude toward art. Who is speaking and how many voices are there? Does the 'dear friend' exaggerate by capitalizing and thus revering "Art" or, alternatively, is the exaggeration the suggestion that Dada has never spoken about art? At any rate, the sheet is peppered with the repeated equation "Oui = Non." Nothing is left steady, though Dada is also happy to continually reanimate older traditions, preferring wobbly totems to fully toppled temples. All of the things that Dada has supposedly 'never talked about' are in fact the only things that Dada ever talks about. Thus, "Le futuriste est mort. De quoi ? De Dada" ("Dada soulève tout") is to a certain degree a statement of affinity with Futurism.[39] At the same time, even Cubism and Futurism were not abstract enough for Tzara, and so he says in his 1918 manifesto, "L'artiste nouveau proteste: il ne peint plus /reproduction symbolique et illusioniste/ mais crée directement en pierre, en

---

by the Dadaists in Paris (Huidobro, *Epistolario* 93). The letter from Guillermo de Torre to Tristan Tzara thanking the Dadaists for their mention of Ultra in "Dada soulève tout," presumably the letter which Huidobro is referencing, in fact lacks the "candidez infinita" that Huidobro ridicules in Torre (*Epistolario* 93; see Breuil 198-9). Huidobro tells Diego that the Dadaists "Andaban con la carta mostrándola y riéndose que daba lástima" (93), but the actual letter from Torre to Tzara seems decidedly unworthy of any kind of guffaws. It amounts to little more than an enumeration of some of the publications exchanged and to be exchanged between the two poets.

[39] Though "Dada soulève tout" was apparently the product of dissension between the Dadaists and Futurists (Breuil 198).

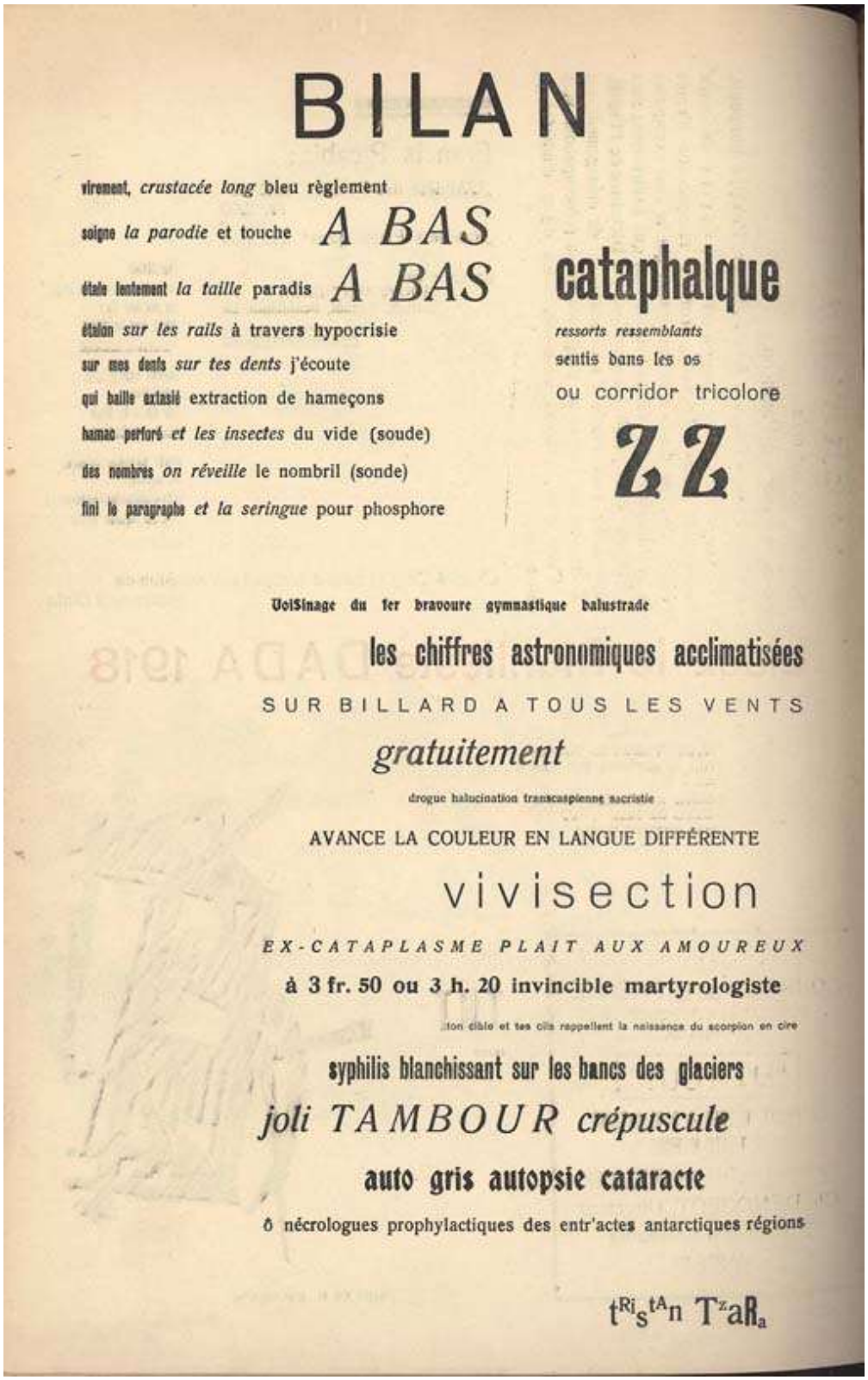
bois, fer, étain, des rocs des organismeslocomotives, pouvant être tournés de tous les côtés par le vent limpide de la sensation momentanée" (145). He could have added another medium to his list of materials, one whose multiple sides he had explored extensively: type.

By physically displacing text from newspapers and advertising or by producing typographically varied texts that appeared to come from these sources, Tzara introduced a material aspect to his compositions which moved the literary journal "away from 'art' and toward 'life' - in other words, from literature to press" (Drucker 204). Johanna Drucker analyzes Tzara's affinity with advertising language and chance and finds that the authorial subject is scattered and broken by his collage-like use of excerpted language and especially by his suggestion that a Dada poem could be cut-and-pasted from a newspaper clipping (193). Tzara's work subverts the idea that language could have a discrete origin or meaning (Drucker 197) and so the audience becomes much more active in the process of reading (Bürger 53). Tzara's typography, says Drucker, by directly referencing language and thus raising his readers' consciousness to it (200), allowed him to "demonstrate the way in which materiality necessarily embodied the semiological as well as the economic and political aspects of [language] production" (196). Typography in Tzara's compositions produces the indeterminacy of thought and meaning that Perloff uses to discuss the avant-garde, the "déreglement de tous les sens" in the avant-garde which Poggioli, incidentally, also traced back to Rimbaud (194). Type is the vehicle for semiological (political, cognitive, emotional, etc.) "descentralización," the succinct definition that Torre gave for the avant-garde in his retrospective article in *La Gaceta Literaria* in 1930 ("¿Qué es la vanguardia?").

Let us consider "Bilan" from *DADA* no. 4/5 (197), one of two poems Tzara published with this title, as an example of the kind of work with type that Tzara and the Dada poets practiced (especially Hugo Ball and Kurt Schwitters). Guillermo de Torre wrote high praise of Tzara's poetry, saying of the Romanian poet in 1919,

> en todos sus poemas resalta curvilíneamente - al vórtice de su estructura inconexa ilógica y antigramatical - la trayectoria inaprehensible de su espíritu caótico, preso de neblinosos espasmos ("Tristan Tzara")

Following this kind of analysis, I will only say that the polysyllabic scientific terminology of "Bilan" would very much have pleased the young Torre. Further commentary will have to be withheld in deference to Tzara's contention in his 1918 manifesto that "la critique est…inutile" (145).



BILAN

virement, *crustacée long* bleu règlement
soigne *la parodie* et touche *A BAS*
étale lentement *la taille* paradis *A BAS*
étalon *sur les rails* à travers hypocrisie
sur mes dents *sur tes dents* j'écoute
qui baille extasié extraction de hameçons
hamac perforé *et les insectes* du vide (soude)
des nombres *on réveille* le nombril (sonde)
fini le paragraphe *et la seringue* pour phosphore

cataphalque

ressorts ressemblants
sentis dans les os
ou corridor tricolore

ZZ

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joli TAMBOUR crépuscule

auto gris autopsie cataracte

ô nécrologues prophylactiques des entr'actes antarctiques régions

$t^{Ri}s^{tA}n\ T^{z}a\mathrm{R}_{a}$

Fig. 6. "Bilan." Tristan Tzara. *Dada* no. 4/5 (15 May 1919). Page 31. University of Iowa International Dada Archive.

The *greguería* and Ramón Gómez de la Serna's Typographical Imagination

Ramón Gómez de la Serna merits a special place in any study on the historical avant-garde in Spain. From his father's magazine *Prometeo*, he published constantly on aesthetic renewal and is especially often credited with bringing Marinetti's Futurism to Spain starting in 1909 in the pages of this publication. The beginning of this chapter showcased some of Ramón's translation work in Marinetti's "Proclama Futurista à los españoles." But Ramón was much more than just a translator of Marinetti's text for his Madrid reading public. As Andrew A. Anderson shows in his reading of letters exchanged between Marinetti and Ramón prior to the publication of the "Proclama" in 1910, much of its content seems to have been guided by suggestions by Ramón to Marinetti ("Ramón").

Even in his early twenties, Ramón was already a protagonist of the nascent avant-garde in Madrid. He was older than the writers who would take up Ultraism and Creationism towards the end of the decade he inaugurated with Marinetti's texts, and his influence on them was enormous. His figure was such that his has been called a "generación unipersonal," constituted solely by Ramón.[40] The younger poets of the avant-garde congregated around Ramón at the Antiguo Café y Botillería de Pombo, and at a rival *tertulia* presided over by Rafael Cansinos Assens at the Café Colonial. "La Sagrada Cripta del Pombo," which Ramón describes in his abundant writings, was a central laboratory of avant-garde activity in Madrid for years. Ramón produced a tremendous amount of literary and critical work;[41] he wrote novels, curious and ambling

[40] The characterization comes from an article from 1923, Melchor Fernández Almagro's "La generación unipersonal de Gómez de la Serna," reprinted in Juan Manuel Bonet's *Ramón en cuatro entregas*, volumen 1.
[41] His complete works, edited by Ioana Zlotescu, occupy twenty-one volumes.

prose account of the objects of Madrid in *El Rastro*, and an entire volume on *Senos.* He was a central figure of the historical avant-garde and he shared a table with Apollinaire at the banquet in his honor in Paris to close out the year 1916, so his writings on the *Ismos* of the avant-garde or on Spanish painters, including Picasso, are very interesting documents for studying the period. This material is far too extensive to treat with any rigor here, but I should like to focus on one important part of Ramón's creative work which will be especially significant for the authors discussed in the rest of this dissertation: the *greguería.*

The *greguería* was so important to the Spanish historical avant-garde because it offered new ways of writing poetry that did not depend on creating a *modernista*- or Symbolist-style *paysage d'âme.* As Nigel Dennis says, the impact was enormous: "casi toda la literatura de la época se *gregueriza* en cierto sentido, contagiándose del estilo de Ramón" ("Introducción xxiii). I think Dennis's choice of words is rather noteworthy here, since instead of becoming infused with the spirit or the personality of Ramón, the literature of the avant-garde became infused with his 'style,' the *greguería*'s particular kind of metaphor-making. Rafael Calleja said something similar in the prologue to the 1919 volume of *Greguerías selectas*, "En literatura, Ramón Gómez de la Serna es el escritor que no quiere tener punto de vista, que aspira a recorrerlos todos" (*OC* IV, 689; *Greguerías selectas* xiv). Thus the speaking subject in a *greguería* is no longer the privileged emotive source of the poetic moment, as in the Symbolist *paysage d'âme.* In a *greguería*, a metaphor could be developed out of the simple surprise and humor derived from the comparison or juxtaposition of two objects. Different from the direct-linking of

analogy and different from the transcendent goals of Symbolist emotive suggestion,[42] the metaphor of the *greguería* often does not privilege one term over the other.

Christine Brooke-Rose, in her *Grammar of Metaphor*, explains that the appositional metaphor, as in a compound form like Marinetti's "uomo-torpediniera" mentioned above, "can be highly ambiguous, since the preposition [linking the two terms] is suppressed altogether, and only the meaning of the two words juxtaposed can tell us which genitive relationship is intended" (167). Ramón's *greguerías* have something of the appositional metaphor to them and are in this way somewhat like Old English kenning, a compound form of metaphor which depends on two terms in juxtaposition eliciting the idea of a third. This kind of "three-term formula" is very rare in the modern English texts Brooke-Rose studies (167), as are noun metaphors in general (2). Both Marinetti's syntactically freed nouns and Ramón's *greguerías* however function differently. Whereas in an Old English kenning like "sea-stallion" we are to read the presence, metaphorically conveyed, of a sailing ship (Brooke-Rose 167), Marinetti's "uomo-torpediniera" is still a kind of man. Unlike either Marinetti's "uomo-torpediniera" or the Old English kenning, the terms in a *greguería* often enjoy two-way communication without privileging one or evoking a third; instead of remitting the reader from the vehicle to the tenor or modifying a fixed denotative term, the metaphor happens between two terms, not uni-directionally from one term to the other.

In a *greguería*, an object, usually because of some material quality, takes on the personality, we could say, of another object of similar characteristics. In fact both objects take on the 'personality,' we might say, of each other. Ramón basically says this of his

[42] See my discussion of Symbolist metaphor in Chapter One.

greguerías, as cited by Guillermo de Torre: the *greguería* "es lo que gritan los seres confusamente, lo que gritan las cosas" ("Escritor" 19). Torre says that the *greguería* for Ramón "es la síntesis de su ambición totalizadora, de su afán por apresar todo y no desdeñar la menor partícula del universo visible" ("Escritor" 19). And so, "Jugar al dominó es recomponer esqueletos" (Gómez de la Serna, *Obras* I, 433). This simple visual metaphor carries no moral weight, but it does illuminate a new perspective on the otherwise regular experience of a game of dominoes. It also works in two directions, at once bringing images of death and bones to a ludic and familiar place, the place of recreation, and also making a game out of the slightly macabre image of a doctor setting broken bones or that of an anatomist constructing a lecture-hall skeleton. The *greguería* works both ways. It presents new angles of experience without offering any complete narrative. It also resolutely eschews moralizing of any kind.[43] For Ramón, "todo es ironía" (*OC* IV, 164; *Greguerías* 108). Thus, "Hay espárragos tan delicados que parece que se han *hecho las uñas*" (*Obras* I, 427), "Las estatuas son viudas siempre" (*Obras* I, 454), and "Los tulipanes parece que escuchan" (*Obras* I, 463).

These brief one-line *greguerías* represent the best-known form of the genre. They have been selected from Ramón's 1936 collection, *Greguerías nuevas*. The earlier collections included many much longer pieces, though the thinking behind them was mostly the same from the appearance of the first volume in 1917 to the *Greguerías nuevas* published in 1936. Even then, the first published volume of *greguerías* from 1917 includes many very short pieces in the same style as the later *greguerías*: "Son más largas

[43] Almost always. Usually when we refer to the *greguerías* we mean these short single-phrase observations. Some of the earliest *greguerías*, before Ramón fully defined the genre, are more like micro-stories, sometimes similar to the more sarcastic little anecdotes in Max Jacob's *Le cornet à dés.*

las calles de noche que de día" (*OC* IV, 65; *Greguerías* 27); "El pez más difícil de pescar es el jabón dentro del agua" (*OC* IV, 208; *Greguerías* 143); "Las uvas son los pezones de la tierra, pezones virginales y menudos" (*OC* IV, 223; *Greguerías* 155). Almost all of Ramón's *greguerías* are based on the physical, unusually visual characteristics of the objects he treats. Rafael Cansinos Assens noted the important graphic component of Ramón's *greguerías* early, writing in 1918, after the publication of the first volume, that "siempre el trazo gráfico predomina en estos cuadritos literarios, brindándose ya preciso y perfecto al dibujante" ("Gómez de la Serna" 55). Cansinos, the early mentor of many *ultraístas* and later their bitter satirizer, notes that Ramón's book *El Circo* "para lograr su efecto, se ayuda de la tipografía" and thus "adquiere un ultraismo insospechado" (51). In fact, many of the *greguerías* in Ramón's first collection of pieces from this genre deal with typographical concerns. While the typographical *greguerías* are less frequent in the 1917 and 1919 collections than in the 1936 *Greguerías nuevas*, I should like to turn now to these to show how the metaphorical style of all the *greguerías* is a corollary to Ramón's typographical imagination.[44]

Ramón's 1917 collection of *Greguerías* opens with a dedication to Carmen de Burgos on its title page and then on the next page includes space for the book's purchaser to pen a "Dedicatoria particular." Ramón, sensitive to the commercial and material circumstances of the book's movement in the market and between individuals, is also sensitive to the fact that the book can be physically altered as it changes hands. Below the heading "Dedicatoria particular" is a large white space delineated by a thin black

[44] Ramón Gómez de la Serna had an extremely fertile typographical imagination. His "fe de erratas" at the end of the 1917 collection of *Greguerías* is very interesting in this regard. He suggests very ironic and humorous corrections for the supposedly misprinted words throughout the volume (*OC* IV 421-30; *Greguerías* 311-318). Also in this volume, Ramón imagines a woman who bears a son to a linotype machine (*OC* IV, 302-3; *Greguerías* 218-19).

borderline. The personal dedication gets its pre-printed start at the upper left corner of the box, "À" (*OC* IV, 39; *Greguerías* 2). Ramón's interest in printing and typography is evident here and in the fact that his '*gregueristic*' mind often spun new metaphors around the themes of printing, spelling, and reading. For example, he writes that "El periódico comprado en la mañana sabe a pan reciente o a churro caliente" (*OC* IV, 182; *Greguerías* 121). Another *greguería* makes the same comparison between hot bread and hot newsprint; "Las pruebas de imprenta recientes, en el papel húmedo y oloroso a la levadura de la tinta, tienen un sabor a pan tierno y reciente. «Las pruebas nuestras de cada día, dánoslas hoy,» rogaríamos al Señor todos los días" (*OC* IV, 233; *Greguerías* 162-3).

Ramón turns his attention to letterforms as well. He writes that "La *k* es una letra mordiente, atenazante, con dos mandíbulas de kokodrilo. ¡Pobre vocal sobre la que cae la *k* agresiva, que cierra sus fuertes extremos de alicates sobre ella!" (*OC* IV, 70; *Greguerías* 30). In a longer *greguería* Ramón considers the relative nobility of the letter 'h':

> ¿Cómo ortografía se escribe sin h? Resulta incomprensible, como es incomprensible que errata tampoco la lleve puesta…La *h*, que es la que da la más alta alcurnia a las palabras – como a los nobles llegar a ser *caballeros cubiertos*-, que es el sombrero de copa de las palabras, su chistera, es incomprensible que no figure a la cabeza de esas palabras…Nosotros las veremos siempre con h, enarbolando una h, encopetadas por una h…*Hortografía*, ¿no estaría mejor que ortografía?..." (*OC* IV, 119; *Greguerías* 70)

It seems Ramón expends quite a bit of thinking on how words are spelled and on the importance of their shape to their character. Old etymology and old nobility are fused in the silent 'h' of Spanish, and the sharp exoticism of the letter 'k' finds its reflection in the dangerous and foreign crocodile. The letter most indigenous to the Peninsula, the most

Spanish of all letters, the 'ñ,' is of particular concern to Ramón. He laments, with local "laísmo," the inattention given to its delicate form in one *greguería*: "¿Por qué ese absurdo complot contra la *ñ*? ¿Por qué ese afán de suprimirla su tilde?" (*OC* IV, 206; *Greguerías* 141). As Ramón's *greguerías* inform the younger poets of the historical avant-garde in their manufacturing of new metaphors, their metaphorical eye will be drawn not only to the ironic and original visual affinities characteristic of Ramón's gaze over all objects; they will also take particular notice of Ramón's penchant for finding metaphorical ways of looking at printed language, considering how the material forms of writing color the metaphorical possibilities of language. Ramón will likewise continue to refine the *greguería*, creating ever more concise and surprising exemplars of this curious genre, and in fact will write new *greguerías* until his death in 1963. For example, these *greguerías* from the 1936 *Greguerías nuevas*, in the first volume of the *Obras* edited by Nigel Dennis:

> "Miércoles: día largo por definición" (54)
>
> "La S es el anzuelo del abecedario" (74)
>
> "La i es el dedo meñique del alfabeto" (98)
>
> "La *ü* con diéresis es como la letra malabarista del abecedario" (117)
>
> "Las golondrinas entrecomillan el cielo" (119)
>
> "La eñe tiene el ceño fruncido" (145)
>
> "Sobre la *ñ* revolotea la lombriz caligráfica" (170)

It seems Ramón, focused as he was on objects and ironic metaphor, would never forget that writing was an exercise in material poetics. The inventor of the *greguería*, as well as his younger companions in the *tertulia* at Pombo, would establish an equivalence

between poetic praxis and material presence, as we can see in this *greguería*: "Escribir a máquina: clavar palabras en el papel" (*Obras* I, 209)

THE NEW TYPOGRAPHY

"ULTRA tiene razón," proclaimed Eugenio d'Ors in Madrid's *La Libertad* in May of 1921. The champion of Catalan *noucentisme* lamented the drab, conventional appearance of Madrid's press stands, and noted that the arrival of *VLTRA* in January of 1921 brought color, youth, and a bold typographical presentation to the city's otherwise style-less, "sucios, lacerados" press kiosks (d'Ors 1). D'Ors, tuned in to the pulse of contemporary art and literature, saw that *VLTRA* was indicative of a sea change in the orientation of literature for the twentieth century in Spain and across Europe. He writes:

> No puede negarse que ciertas notas comunes a los más radicales ensayos de vanguardia ofrecen para ello [for pleasing the eye] la más pintada de las ocasiones. La más pintada, lo digo casi sin tropo. ¿No son aquéllas [las vanguardias] las que muchas veces ligan con lazo tan estrecho poesía y tipografía, que llegan a identificarlas? ¿No son aquéllas las que han vindicado la primacía de los elementos de presencia sobre los elementos de referencia en la técnica de la literatura? ¿No son aquéllas las que, subvirtiendo la clasificación pedagógica de las artes, domeñan y castigan las de la palabra, hasta intentar, si no lograr siempre, expresar con ella un contenido «sinóptico», no ya sucesivo? (d'Ors 2)

As I have argued in previous chapters and as d'Ors succinctly states here, it makes sense that a new typography should come out of the avant-garde's emphasis on presence over representation. *VLTRA* was right, at least optically, said d'Ors, because the magazine's youthful poetic program did not ignore the physical presentation of the group's literary efforts. He saw, as did writers across the international avant-garde, that poetry was closer than ever to painting and that discounting that proximity was a kind of blindness (2). It was then only natural that poets should incorporate typography into their poetic praxis.

D'Ors makes this observation in the company of many other European artists, poets, critics, and typographers. In 1912, F.T. Marinetti published his "Manifiesto tecnico

della letteratura futurista," blasting traditional syntax and sequential reading practices, extolling instead freedom of the page in a new combative typographical aesthetic (*Teoria* 46-54). Jan Tschichold, the German typographer and graphic designer who would coin the term The New Typography for an international audience in 1928, credits Marinetti with jump-starting a series of important changes in the way both literary and commercial texts were read, composed, and interpreted (53). Between these dates, Marinetti's 1912 'technical' manifesto and Tschichold's 1928 monographic program, many other poets, painters, designers, typographers, and architects across Europe weighed in on the new typography.

One of the most important publications working on the new typography in the years between these two seminal texts was the Dutch magazine *De Stijl*, headed by Theo van Doesburg. The De Stijl group, whose membership included prominent abstract artists like Piet Mondrian, advocated in their manifesto of 1918 a new international unity of art, life, and culture (*De Stijl* 237). De Stijl would be a new anti-individualistic artistic enterprise, "le nouvel art plastique," which would eliminate "la forme naturelle" (*De Stijl* 237). De Stijl grew out of Futurism and especially Cubism (see Jaffé 13-16), and expressed the general avant-garde notions that art should be pure, sparse, non-figurative, and material, that is, freed from flimsy subjectivities (Jaffé 21). Tschichold's 1928 book, *The New Typography*, includes De Stijl artists, Dadaists, and Futurists, especially Marinetti, as important contributing thinkers and practitioners in the development of a new system for presenting text in accordance with the times (52-64). In the new typography, as the Russian artist El Lissitzky writes in his "Topography of Typography"

of 1923, "words are seen, not heard" (Tschichold 60).[45] Other very suggestive dicta related to abstract art, materiality, and typography, such as "the concept is designed by means of letters," and "The new book demands the new writer. Ink pots and goose quills are dead," abound in Lissitzky's brief manifesto (Tschichold 60). Verbal expression in the new typography becomes "visual not phonetic," as "the spatial arrangement of the book, by means of the type matter and according to the mechanical rules of printing, must express the strains and stresses of the contents" (Tschichold 60).

Guillermo de Torre, the energetic force behind Spanish Ultraism, was very interested in the methods of this "neotipografía," the innovation of which he credited, like Tschichold, most directly to F.T. Marinetti (*LEV* 279-80; 249-50). Torre rightly sees in 1925 that the typographical innovations called for in Marinetti's manifestoes, those brilliantly practiced by Apollinaire and later pursued by Futurists, Dadaists, Creationists, and Ultraists alike, are common to all expressions of the avant-garde. It is no surprise then that when Eugenio d'Ors pulled an issue of *VLTRA* from a Madrid newsstand in 1921 he would have found advertisements for European avant-garde magazines like *La Vie des Lettres* and references to *De Stijl*, *Der Sturm*, and *391*, all publications experimenting with the techniques of the nascent 'new typography.'

Patricia Córdoba, in her history of the 'truncation' of Spanish typography's modernity, writes that the Ultraists' use of sans-serif type "anticipa inocentemente" the European New Typography, codified and divulgated by Tschichold in 1928 (45-7). But it

[45] Lissitzky's manifesto first appeared in German in *Merz* in July 1923. I am using the English version included in Ruari McLean's translation of Tschichold's book, *The New Typography*. Type historian Robin Kinross (who also writes the introduction to the English translation of Tschichold's *The New Typography*), includes a different English version in his book *Modern Typography* (105).

bears mentioning that *VLTRA*'s colorful boldface cover, the variety of fonts within its pages, and the typographical experimentation of the poems in the magazine (and, especially, in *Grecia* in the second half of 1919) is in step with the general shift in typographical sensibilities and preoccupations characteristic of the entire European avant-garde long before Tschichold's 1928 book. Torre, precocious and up-to-date in his knowledge, was already writing about "la neotipografía" in 1925, and indeed he wrote about it then from a retrospective stance.

D'Ors saw this new typography in *VLTRA* in Madrid's kiosks; Torre had already seen and felt it in the painting and poetry from around Europe, and subsequently became an innovative practitioner and theorizer himself. It is evident in Wyndam Lewis's *Blast* in London, Francis Picabia's *391* (published successively in Barcelona, New York, Zurich, and Paris), *De Stijl* in Leiden, *Zenit* in Zagreb, and in the Ultraist magazines of Madrid, as well as in a host of other publications and in the brightly colored advertising of all of Europe's capital cities. The new typography radically changed the covers of the little magazines as well as the content of the inside pages. No doubt with this ubiquitous shift in mind, Torre writes on "La neotipografía" that

> En rigor pudiera decirse que ha habido una permutación de valores en el poema: el valor auditivo por el valor visual. Y si en la era de las sonoras orquestaciones retóricas, el primero alcanzaba innegable preponderancia, hoy, en el momento de exaltación de lo plástico y de las estructuras definidas y vertebradas, se sobrepone lo arquitectural: esto es, la tipografía; y complementariamente, el ritmo. (*LEV* 369; 330)

In previous chapters we have seen how the avant-garde formulated its artistic stance in opposition to Symbolist transcendence and *modernista* sonority. As the authors profiled in Chapter Two demonstrate, to reconnect art with daily life the poets of the

avant-garde found inspiration in film, the automobile, electricity, and sport. They pursued their goals of finding in poetry a non-transcendent relevance to modern life by writing poems imbued with humor, ambiguity, and youthful vigor. In Chapter Two I presented work by Marinetti, Apollinaire, Huidobro, and Tzara that made novel use of some of the ideas of the new typography, mixing various fonts and disrupting the traditional typographical grid for novel results. In this chapter I will perform close readings of the work of three Spanish poets related (sometimes ambivalently) to *ultraísmo.* The work under consideration here, by Guillermo de Torre, Juan Larrea, and Antonio Espina, exemplifies the achievements of the avant-garde in uniting the new spirit with an active and purposeful material poetics.

Guillermo de Torre, Material Poetics, and the Limits of The New Typography

Guillermo de Torre was "el primer historiador y exégeta del nuevo espíritu" (Ródenas, "Guillermo de Torre," X-XI) and his 1925 *Literaturas europeas de vanguardia* was hugely influential both as a compendium of data about the most recent developments in European poetry and as an erudite guide to future efforts (Ródenas, "Guillermo de Torre" XX-XXI). He was able to command such a position of authority by always staying abreast of the latest manifestations of the 'new spirit,' as when he sympathetically profiled the obscure Dada poet Pierre Chapka-Bonnière in *VLTRA* in 1921. In this article on "Semantismo" in New York, Torre praises Chapka-Bonnière because, he says,

> este poeta semántico llega a prescindir de la palabra misma en sus vocalizaciones ideográficas. Superando el estatismo de los vocabularios, Chapka-Bonnière construye sus coordinaciones semánticas manipulando exclusivamente con los recursos de una fonética personal, ajena a toda reproducción objetiva. ("Un nuevo «ismo» literario")

This language is typical of the young Torre, excited about new ways of stretching language to its limits by playing with the materiality (in the case of Chapka-Bonnière, phonetic and typographical materiality) of the words rather than their referential qualities. I have seen very little of Chapka-Bonnière's poetry, but a quick look at the wide blank underscores, abundant exclamation points, and evocative letter jumbles ("!rrroor" and "tzzi g," for example) of one composition speak to his assimilation of Futurist techniques (Parrish 192). In *Literaturas europeas de vanguardia* Torre talks at length about the typographical innovations championed by Marinetti and gives simple reasons for their necessity: for the purposes of poetic originality the new typography offers an "insustituible fuerza expresiva" and in the avant-garde "no hay nada inviolable y las convenciones de la grafía gutenberiana no han de escapar a la regla" (*LEV* 280; 249-50).

However, the approach Torre takes to "la neotipografía" in his 1925 book is much more restrained than, for example, his 1921 celebration of Chapka-Bonnière or the poems in his own book *Hélices* from 1923. The cooling of Torre's typographical fervor is evident in his light censure in 1925 of some of Marinetti's more outlandish typographical effusions. He writes in *Literatures europeas de vanguardia*,

> lo que hace, en todo caso, reprobable este nuevo sistema tipográfico en Marinetti, o al menos poco asequible al lector distraído, es el hecho de emplearse mezclado con las ininteligibles – hasta cierto punto – palabras en libertad asintácticas, y con la onomatopeya ruidosa, caótica y pueril, que, con el nombre de «verbalización abstracta», ha querido resucitar este audaz insurrecto. (*LEV* 280-1; 250)

A few points in this brief citation merit comment, for Torre is sure that "la neotipografía" will flourish long into the future, even if its least intelligible manifestations will fall by the wayside. But, what is this about respecting "el lector

distraído"? Is the avant-garde not predicated on the goal to 'épater les bourgeois' and tear down the museums? What does it mean to have a "verbalización abstracta" in Marinetti or a "vocalización ideográfica" in Chapka-Bonnière? And if this is innovative, why are we talking about 'resuscitating' onomatopoeia? Torre himself talks about needing, in the new poetry, the "colaboración del lector" (*LEV* 323; 292), and if we understand the new poetry as a material art and not a transcendent one we need to understand what this collaboration might consist of, especially now that Torre is making an appeal to poets to have mercy on the "lector distraído."

Willard Bohn's studies of visual poetry in the avant-garde focus mostly on the visually figurative poetry made a staple of the avant-garde by Guillaume Apollinaire's calligrammes. Following Roman Jakobson's identification of two kinds of linguistic discourse, Bohn separates Apollinaire's calligrammes into metaphoric and metonymic categories (see "Toward a calligrammar" in *Aesthetics*, 69-84). The calligrammes based in metaphor associate a verbal tenor with a visual vehicle through "physical resemblance," as in "Coeur couronne miroir" (*Aesthetics* 73), or by presenting a visual vehicle whose verbal referent is not explicitly present in the text but whose metaphorical relationship is understood through traditional associations. This is the case, for example, in Apollinaire's "L'Oiseau et le bouquet," in which the hand-drawn outline of a bird is filled with the words "Un chant d'amour/ je viens du paradis et j'y retournerai" (*Aesthetics* 77-8). As Bohn says here, the bird, as visual figurative presence, is the metaphoric vehicle for the verbal tenor, the song. The metonymic calligrammes operate not through associative representation but through the contiguity or juxtaposition of the

elements of the composition. Such is the case of Apollinaire's famous "Lettre-Océan" (*Aesthetics* 69).

Of course, Bohn recognizes that almost all of Apollinaire's calligrammes are actually combinations of metonymic and metaphoric discourses (*Aesthetics* 79). In fact, this is clear in my last example, that of "L'Oiseau et le bouquet." The bird could metaphorically stand for song, but there is also the possibility of a synecdochal relationship between the two elements, whereby the bird and the actual birdsong are physically fused in the graphic presentation. The song is not just the tenor of the bird, but is materially connected to it. As we saw in Chapter Two, while each of the three elements in "Coeur couronne miroir" is visually figurative and metaphoric, the reader's attention shifts from one to the next in an uncertain order, thereby activating a series of metonymic connections between the images/words/objects. The text of the poem indeed corroborates a "linear" relationship between the three elements following the traditional reading pattern of left-to-right, top-to-bottom, as Bohn notes (*Aesthetics* 57). But an important fact of visual poetry is also the immediate and simultaneous visual impression of all of the elements on the reader's eye. If the reader chooses to follow the traditional interpretive order of the images, that is left-to-right, top-to-bottom, she is more aware of this movement by virtue of the fact that much of the (visual) semantic content of the second and third elements is already available before she reads the first. The movement of eye and mind from the heart to the crown and then to the mirror become a much more conscious and collaborative process than in the reading of grid-printed text.

In fact, as Bohn intelligently observes with the help of Margaret Davies, the "surprising amount of movement" in Apollinaire's calligrammes is "in direct opposition

to traditional figurative poetry, which is entirely static" (*Aesthetics* 49). The seventeenth-century George Herbert and the ancient Greek poets mentioned in Chapter One produced poetry whose verbal content was uniformly adjusted to its visual framework. The reader saw a solidly apprehensible image and read, sequentially, the verbal content that gave it form and expression. Apollinaire, Bohn shows, was aware of this "static" visual poetry and equally aware of the fact that his calligrammes, through movement and juxtaposition, represented an innovation in visual poetry (Bohn, *Aesthetics* 48).

Guillermo de Torre revered Apollinaire and was aware of the importance of this shift. For Torre, sight is the strongest sense and so most metaphors have traditionally been visual ones (*LEV* 337; 304). As central as visuality for the avant-garde is the Symbolist theory of correspondences, which is the production of metaphors through synesthesia (*LEV* 338-9; 305). Correspondences, as we saw in Borges's discussion of the 'verbal curve between two points,' lead to intellectual (and then visual) motion. The new typography can produce new metonymic and metaphorical results by exploiting the "nueva estructura plástica del poema" (*LEV* 369; 330), as Torre has it, and the aesthetics of simultaneity that Torre learned from his friends Sonia Delaunay-Terk and Robert Delaunay, as well as the Cubists, could now be enacted in poetry. It is from this premise of simultaneity that Torre can talk of the avant-garde metaphor's goal to "transmutar las percepciones estáticas en dinámicas" (*LEV* 349; 316), activating new meanings for material objects through physical, visual, and conceptual movement, as in a *greguería*.

While our critics Willard Bohn and Octavio Paz argue that language is necessarily sequential (*Reading* 16; Paz 128-9), the avant-garde continually suggested that poetic works could produce simultaneous sensorial experiences, either through indeterminacy in

the text's syntax produced through typographical presentation or through the synesthetic combination of various senses in an aesthetic experience. Thought, after all, is not necessarily sequential, and poetry meant to be seen rather than heard involves cognitive processes that get richer and clearer with repetition, as the experiences of several senses coalesce into meanings, meanings which nonetheless remain unstable and continually offer various alternatives. This is why d'Ors can say that the typographical poetry of the avant-garde creates a "sinóptico" reading experience, "no ya sucesivo"(2).

Torre's poem "Girándula," from his 1923 book *Hélices*, will allow us to explore this idea of a 'synoptic' reading experience. The poem, which I will reproduce below, is at first look a calligrammatic composition, both visually resembling a pinwheel-style fireworks display and verbally describing its action.

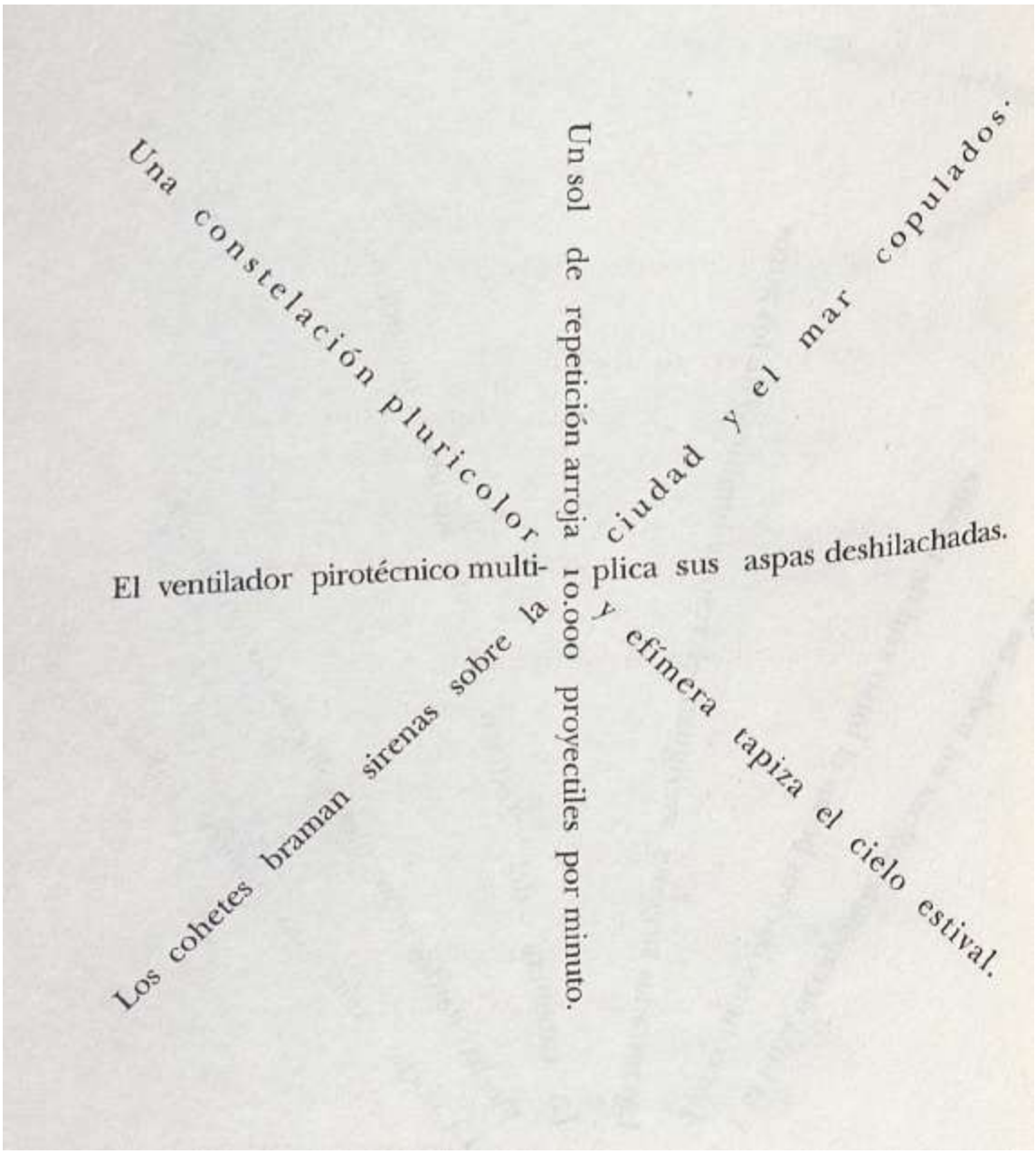

Fig. 7. "Girándula." by Guillermo de Torre. *Hélices.* 1923. Reprinted in Bonet's anthology, *Las cosas se han roto.* Page 520.

As Willard Bohn notes, "Girándula" continues the *ultraísta* interest in multiple metaphor, equating the spinning fireworks display to a "ventilador pirotécnico," a "sol de repetición" (with the secondary metaphorical element of the repeating rifle), and a "constelación pluricolor." (*Aesthetics* 179). A key aspect of the material poetics of this

piece, which Bohn does not miss, is the active collaboration required of the reader, as the text must be physically rotated for each line, thus enacting in real space a pattern of movement analogous to that of the real-life spinning firework (*Aesthetics* 179).

This is important, for the poem must be physically and visually performed by the reader, not just read non-linearly. The operation is quite simple but the consequences of its successful or unsuccessful execution for avant-garde material poetics are rather serious. I should like to offer here two readings of the poem, both based in Ultraist multiple metaphor and material poetics, one uncovering in this poem a fully coherent and ingenious composition and one highlighting the limitations and contradictions of Torre's style of material poetics. In the first reading, the "girándula" must be turned forty-five degrees counter-clockwise with each line.[46] As it spins, the 'pyrotechnic fan' seems to the viewer to multiply its arms as it gains speed.[47] We could defend the still rather stationary look of Torre's poem by referencing what is called the stroboscopic effect, whereby an airplane propeller, for example, eventually appears to remain immobile while spinning at a high rate of speed. By the second line the rockets have begun to launch from the pinwheel and "una constelación pluricolor y efímera tapiza el cielo estival." Not only are the fireworks exploding colorfully in the sky reminiscent of an astronomical constellation, but the poem's typographical layout resembles a simple representation of a star or even an asterisk, sometimes used by astronomers to denote a variable star, often both "pluricolor" and "efímera."[48] The "sol de repetición" continues the stellar metaphor

[46] I choose to spin the poem counter-clockwise because this direction effectively will allow the poem to spin longer. Soon, this reading order will allow me to talk about a "final" line.
[47] There is a faint echo of Cervantes's quixotic windmills in the "aspas deshilachadas" as well.
[48] Thanks are owed for this piece of information to an astronomer friend, Ana García Pérez, and to my father, E. Whit Ludington, who completed his doctorate in astronomy in the 1970s. Bohn states that the poem resembles the "international astronomical sign for a fixed star" (*Aesthetics*

of the pinwheel, incorporating something of the historical avant-garde's fascination with speed, technology, and artillery with its "10.000 proyectiles por minuto." The final line of the poem, "Los cohetes braman sirenas sobre la ciudad y el mar copulados," appears upside-down in our counter-clockwise reading,[49] thus providing a halt in the motion of the poem. The whistling rockets, "sirenas," spend their fuel and extinguish some distance from the launch site over the nearby sea. As they disappear into the water over the horizon and go silent, so the poem stops spinning and ends.

In a less indulgent reading this sudden inverted line, the last of only four, constitutes a very abrupt stop to what is to be imagined as furious spinning motion. If the "Girándula" hyperbolically emits 10,000 projectiles per minute, the three smoothly launched lines we read in the brief seconds that this poem lasts are by comparison distinctly underwhelming. Reading "Girándula" critically, we can say that the final line disrupts the material operation of the poem, and would only allow for all four lines to contribute to the pinwheel's spinning motion if it were flipped across a horizontal axis (with respect to its length). Perhaps this was an oversight by Torre and perhaps it speaks to the unconscious but enduring primacy of the vertical-horizontal grid in Torre's

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179), but the astronomers with whom I have consulted know of no such thing, and indeed I have not been able to track down any information supporting Bohn's claim. García Pérez, an astronomer currently working on analyses of star composition here at the University of Virginia, told me that no designations commonly used by astronomers could corroborate Bohn's claim about the "international astronomical sign for a fixed star." My father concurred, and added this: "the asterisk is not a standard way to tell if a star is variable or not, but it has been used often in lists where the purpose was a survey, general catalog of stars or star charts, which would include their apparent magnitude. These catalogs (charts) are used for many purposes, like keeping track of possible apparent motion relative to background stars or to just communicate where things are in the sky. In these general catalogs the magnitude is important for a number of reasons (e.g., long-term changes, distinguishing very close pairs), and the asterisk to denote possible variability is so future users of the catalog would know that the person(s) making the catalog weren't sure of the magnitude."

[49] This would have happened earlier in a clockwise reading, in the third rather than the fourth line.

typographical mind; as "Girándula" is printed in *Hélices*, the bottom margin of the page is fixed in space and all four lines of the poem are typeset with reference to this anchor.

As a textual manifestation of Torre's idea of the "imagen polipétala" (Bohn, *Aesthetics* 171), "Girándula" is an interesting piece for thinking about how material poetics and avant-garde indeterminacy can work. Multiple metaphor and visual and spatial materiality come together in this poem in surprising ways. The 'multiple metaphors' of the four lines of "Girándula" are multiplied by the various metaphorical referents available for reading the typographical layout of the poem. Following Torre's theory of the "imagen polipétala," we could imagine that the poem resembles a flower, the breaking wheel of Saint Catherine's martyrdom for which these fireworks are often named, or alternately a star, as we have seen, and even the famous annual "Girandola" fireworks display at the Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome.[50] All of these readings of Torre's "Girándula" are very suggestive avenues of approaching material poetics in Ultraism, but each is frustratingly incomplete.

Another interesting poem of Torre's from his 1923 book is his exercise in expressive typography, "Arco voltaico." Typical of the avant-garde fascination with industrialized urban modernity, this poem celebrates the relative novelty of arc lamp public lighting in Madrid. It begins with an epigraph from Tristan Tzara and typically includes strange proparoxytones in lines like "la noche hemiédrica," and "Oh el paróxico orgasmo desbordante/ de las vías conmocionadas" (Bonet, *Las cosas* 515). Only a few

[50] This building houses the Emperor Hadrian's mausoleum. Since 2006 the Vatican has revived the yearly "Girandola" fireworks display there. I admit that I am not sure whether the fireworks display was an active tradition in the 1910s and 1920s, though it certainly enjoyed great fame in earlier periods. See Joseph Wright's painting of 1776, "The Annual Girandola at the Castel Sant'Angelo, Rome," to this effect.

lines appear to challenge the traditional printing grid: “C I U D A D,” printed sliding down the page at a steep angle; “10000…../ Wattios,” appearing near the center of the poem, oriented upside-down and angled towards the upper left-hand corner of the page; and the words “Cátodo” and “Ánodo” printed on the left side of the poem along a vertical axis, as reproduced here.

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Cathode and anode are names for the two electrodes at either end of a system with electric potential. Electrical current flows from cathode to anode across a voltage. In an apparatus like an arc lamp the electrons moving from anode to cathode[51] ionize the gas through which they pass within a sealed glass bulb. The ionized gas, whether neon, xenon, or some other gas, glows brightly as the current passes through it from cathode to anode. This understanding of electron flow in an electrical device on first examination makes Torre’s poem problematic, since he positions the words on the same vertical axis but in opposite orientations. Thus we must read them in different directions, though, by

[51] Since an electron is negatively charged, the flow of an electrical current (the flow of positive charge) is opposite to the flow of the electrons.

definition, current flows from cathode to anode in the same direction, out of the cathode and into the anode. We could argue that Torre was trying to suggest alternating current (AC), which effectively converts the cathode into anode and the anode into cathode with each switch in direction of the electron flow. The reader could re-produce this rapid shift in current flow by spinning the poem around one-hundred-eighty degrees, reading this line once in one direction and then again in the opposite direction.

This reading is supported by the historical evidence, since the first arc lamp public lighting in Madrid, the expensive Yablochkov lamps (often spelled Jablochkoff in Spain) installed in the Puerta del Sol in 1878 for Alfonso XII's wedding, operated on alternating current (García de la Infanta 478). But Torre's enthusiasm for the technology seems a bit misplaced, since this type of lighting was already considered nearly obsolete by the nineteen-teens, having been replaced systematically starting in the 1880s by incandescent filament lamps (Guerrero Fernández)[52]. The effort required to seek meaning in Torre's use of typographical experiment in this lines pays off, at least in that we can read this line as the ingenuous poetic expression of an invisible electrical phenomenon. But, just as with "Girándula," the typographical novelty of the piece wears off when we consider the fact that in any reading, either top-down or bottom-up, of the "Cátodo/ Ánodo" line, current (or electron) flow stops in the middle and must be taken up again by the reader at either end of the line. Essentially, even after all the effort imagining how Torre's typographical arc lamp reproduces the actual electrical functioning of the historical technology, the light never turns on in this poem.

[52] Of course, Ramón del Valle-Inclán's portrait of early twentieth-century Madrid includes many broken municipal gas-lamps [scene 4(73)] as well as candles, acetylene lamps, and "arcos voltaicos" in the restaurant where Max Estrella finds Rubén Darío [scene 9 (132)].

When we direct similar efforts to other lines in "Arco voltaico" likewise set off from the vertical-horizontal typographical grid, the returns are even more meager. What can the skewed printing of "10000…../ Wattios" and "C I U D A D" possibly contribute to the meaning of the poem? I can offer no reading that would illuminate the angled typesetting of these lines beyond a general preference for typographical play.

Despite the frustrating interpretive dead ends created by some of Torre's typographical experiments in *Hélices*, the poems in this book at least successfully challenge the reader to recreate Torre's thinking in physical space. "Girándula" may stop short of a full rotation, but it is a poem which actually moves in two dimensions, and as such is no mean poetic feat. The "verbalización abstracta" and the "vocalización ideográfica" that Torre lauded in Marinetti and Chapka-Bonnière may come into play in part in Torre's poems, since they are undoubtedly both verbal and ideographic, while also being partially unpronounceable and concrete. If the representational characteristics of the poems treated here partially undercut Torre's mission to create poetic abstractions in material form, he deserves credit at least for challenging us to imagine where poetry happens, within what set of coordinates, and in what temporal framework. The poems in *Hélices* aspire to be "hiperespacial[es]" (*LEV* 331; 298) or at least they move into physical areas where poetry did not conventionally go, beyond calligrammatic visual-linguistic synthesis, and into physical space. Apollinaire's metaphoric and metonymic correspondences in his calligrammes were innovative for depending on intellectual and visual movement on the part of the reader, but the poems by Guillermo de Torre that I have treated here move one step further by utilizing spatial movement to activate their typographically conditioned meaning.

These poems belong to a period in Guillermo de Torre's life that he would later call his literary 'preconscience' (*De la aventura al orden* 4). He writes in his "Esquema de autobiografía intelectual" of 1969 that his manifesto *Vertical* and the poems in *Hélices*

> querían romper con el sentimentalismo, la delicuescencia subjetiva, los motivos tradicionales del amor, y afines; en suma, con toda la simbología romántica y simbolista o más exactamente con los rezagos del rubendarismo. Exaltaban, por el contrario, los motivos del mundo moderno que entonces amanecientes nos parecían deslumbrantes. (*De la aventura al orden* 4)

He writes that these poems were influenced by Cubism, the early cinema, and architecture, and that this poetry

> En lo visual y tipográfico se señalaba por la ruptura de la página habitual, la inclusión de poemas dibujados, palabras en libertad, inconexiones dadaístas, supresión de la puntuación y su reemplazo por blancos o espacios… En definitiva, venían a ser un muestrario experimental de las últimas novedades. (*De la aventura al orden* 4-5)

Even if Torre's manifesto *Vertical* is evidence of the 'mediocrity' of some of Ultra's poetic ideas, as Rafael Osuna opines (90), Torre deserves credit for seeking out new techniques from across the European avant-garde and searching for new modes of expression. As Osuna says, most calligrammatic writing did more to shake up typographical conventions than poetic ones, as syntax was rarely affected (95). Language in the calligramme remained mostly unchanged, taking place in visual rather than oral space (Osuna 95). Torre's poems, while breaking down on certain levels, nonetheless allowed poetic language and its typographical presentation to move beyond just the visual space of the reader's own mental production of the poem and into the physical space of the page in its time and place.

According to Willard Bohn, Torre was consciously trying to make aesthetic use of the concept of the "fourth dimension," a popular idea at the beginning of the twentieth

century variously linked to Einstein's writings on relativity, Cubist aesthetics of simultaneity, and Proustian investigations into the nature of memory and time (Bohn, "Writing the Fourth Dimension"). Bohn reads Torre's most common neologisms, developed from the prefixes *hiper*, *ultra*, *novi*, *supra*, and *ene*, as products of this exploration of the fourth-dimension concept, common to all avant-garde movements, interested as they were in creating new aesthetic experiences with no pre-existing referents ("Writing the Fourth Dimension" 132).

Bohn cites Torre from his infamous manifesto *Vertical* (with some unfortunate errors in transcription) to this effect. The young *ultraísta* writes "El Arte Nuevo apellídase *ultraísta*, *creacionista*, *cubista*, *futurista*, *expresionista*, comienza allí donde acaba la copia o traducción de la realidad aparente: allí, en aquel plano ultraespacial donde el poeta forja obras inauditas y creadas que no admiten confrontación exterior objetiva" (Videla plate 3; Torre, *Vertical*). As we saw in the previous chapter, this is precisely the domain of Huidobro's brand of Creationism, exemplified in his *Horizon Carré.* In this unmapped "plano ultraespacial," the poets of the avant-garde developed work in new mixed linguistic, visual, and tactile media, as we will see in the work of Juan Larrea, which did not depend on the known coordinates of conventional space and reading.

Juan Larrea and the Riddle of the Sphinx

In May of 1919 Juan Larrea, bored and unhappy in Bilbao, heard of the poetic renovation underway in Madrid and Seville and immediately 'converted' to the new avant-garde aesthetics (Nieto, *Versión celeste* 18-19). His friend Gerardo Diego had

passed through Bilbao and left in Larrea's possession three hand-copied poems from Vicente Huidobro's *Poemas árticos* and a single issue of the Ultraists' new magazine, *Grecia*. At this point the Ultraists were publishing translations of Apollinaire and Marinetti, but they also continued to publish verses which did not stray outside the contours of the shadow of Rubén Darío. But Vicente Huidobro had recently met Cansinos Assens and his young poets in Madrid; the Seville group held its first "Velada" on the evening of 2 May 1919, celebrating Marinetti and Apollinaire.[53] By the 10 June issue of *Grecia* the Ultraists were publishing poems that enthusiastically rebelled against typographical conventions. Paul Morand's poem "En la Puerta del Sol," for example (*Las cosas* 381), appears in this issue. For 15 April Xavier Bóveda had included onomatopoeic lines like "Trrrrrrrrr/ Trrrrrrrrr," in his poem "Un automóvil pasa," and this could have been the issue Diego left with Larrea. In *Grecia*'s 20 June issue Larrea himself published his poem "T.S.H.," which makes use of punctuation marks to evoke Morse code.[54] A flurry of typographical work followed in the pages of *Grecia* for the next six months.

Larrea participated actively in this typographical experimentation, publishing several innovative poems in the pages of *Grecia* and *Cervantes* in the second half of 1919. One of the most interesting and enigmatic of these is the poem he published in *Grecia* no. 32 on 10 November 1919, given the title "Esfinge" by the magazine's editors.

[53] An account of this first "Velada" appears in issue 15 for 10 May 1919. It is signed by "ADRIANVS," Adriano del Valle.
[54] Which when transcribed, incidentally, is gibberish.

ESFINGE

La esfinge me clava los ojos
Las olas como hojas de almanaque
van y vienen al viento
Gaviota, nadas?
Negrean las aguas todas
los celestes calamares
Parpadea el Ojo en el Triángulo
En el triángulo inverso y carnal
pestañea el Ojo labio
Las posibles vidas
nos solicitan desde los vientres núbiles
Alas, ola y vela
dan al viento las triangulares lonas
y la gaviota luna
es una coma
Pausa

JUAN LARREA.

Fig. 8. "Esfinge." by Juan Larrea. *Grecia.* 32 (10 November 1919). Page 6. Hemeroteca Digital. Biblioteca Nacional de España.

Predating Surrealism, which would later greatly interest Larrea, "Esfinge" nonetheless contains strange juxtapositions and oneiric imagery, which led Gloria Videla to read in Larrea's early poetry a kind of poetic Surrealism *avant la lettre*. David Bary corroborates this appraisal, writing that when reading Larrea's early poetry one has the sensation that Larrea "conociera el surrealismo, por así decirlo, antes de que se inventara" (Bary, *Nuevos estudios* 98). Videla says that in Larrea's compositions appearing in *Grecia* and *Cervantes* Albi and Fuster's definition of the Surrealist image applies perfectly; the Surrealist image is for these authors, and for Videla as she cites them, "incomprensible, indescifrable," and only available to those readers with a "sensibilidad

dispuesta a la comunión, capaz de abrirse a su contacto mágico, tenebroso" (Videla, *El ultraísmo* 133). Similar readings of Larrea's earliest poems, which consider them examples of "deliberately refractory, resolutely opaque" poetry which "anticipates…experiments with Surrealism" (Bohn, *Aesthetics* 151) are easy to find throughout Larrea criticism, especially in Bodini, Ilie, and Bary (see Gurney's review of critical appraisals of Larrea, *La poesía de Juan Larrea* 20-45).

The "refractory" imagery and syntax of Larrea's early poetry is not, however, an intuitive premonition of Surrealism. Juan Manuel Díaz de Gereñu advises caution here, citing the poet's interest in revision throughout his productive period (154, 160-1). Larrea never was an 'automatic' writer, so reading Larrea's earliest poems – at any rate those predating Surrealism –through a Surrealist lens makes especially little sense.[55] Even when Larrea was living in Paris among the Surrealists, he clearly distances himself from their automatic, and thus for Larrea involuntary and unartistic, practices. He writes in the first of *Favorables París Poema*'s two issues in July of 1926, "Para el individuo, sin embargo, escribir, pintar, son actos estrictamente voluntarios" ("Presupuesto vital" 1). He continues in his "Presupuesto vital,"

> Artista es el que, sin desmayos ni transigencias, selecciona y desecha, exigiendo más y más de las potencias proveedoras para conseguir su máximo rendimiento. Así como en estos tiempos de ideas facilitadas a cualquier alcance, sabio sólo puede ser aquel que conscientemente se deslastre de lo que debe no saber, artista sólo existirá en cuanto consciencia de lo que no debe expresarse. ("Presupuesto vital" 2)

[55] Though the reverse operation might prove quite interesting. For example, J. Francisco Aranda suggests that the famous lacerated eye from Luis Buñuel's film *Un chien andalou* derives from a Juan Larrea poem of 1919 (67). Aranda does not say which poem is the source of the eye image, but violent eye imagery abounds in the poems Larrea wrote that year. He has lines like "Todos los disparos / centran los blancos concéntricos / en la retina del tambor" in "Estanque" (*Versión celeste* 72), while "Evasión" declares "Acabo de desorbitar / al cíclope solar" (*Versión celeste* 67). Of course, the abundant eye imagery in "Esfinge" is also noteworthy.

Consciousness is key for Larrea and in fact the words "consciencia" and "conocimiento" pepper the entire document. Against automatic writing (an "idea facilitada"), Larrea advocates for conscious aesthetic choices of selection. While Larrea always worked towards a kind of mysterious, emotionally transcendent poetry evident in this "Presupuesto vital" and somewhat at odds with the avant-garde's most iconoclastic aims, his poetry from the years of his early exposure to Ultraism and Creationism is still rich with very traceable, if not unidirectional, metaphorical vectors.[56] I will show how Larrea's "Esfinge" can be read as a key to understanding the Spanish avant-garde's new engagement with material poetics, especially in the historical context of waning Symbolist influence. This poem fits into the typographical experimentation that the Ultraists were working on throughout 1919 in *Grecia* and *Cervantes*, and then putting into more focused practice in the magazines *Tableros* and *Reflector* in 1920. *VLTRA*, the publication in which the Ultraists finally unified theory and practice in all aspects of the magazine's layout and content, never published any of Larrea's work, but it caught Eugenio d'Ors's eye in the first months of 1921, as we saw earlier in this chapter. In it the Ultraists typographical audacity found its fullest expression and then finally lost its momentum.

[56] Surrealism falls outside the scope of this study, but it would be interesting in later work to reexamine Larrea's relationship to Breton's movement. Surrealism certainly sought to exploit states of consciousness other than 'normal' waking consciousness, but I would argue that Symbolist transcendence is not exactly what the Surrealist poets were after. In fact, in his 1944 essay on *El surrealismo entre viejo y nuevo mundo*, Larrea himself takes the Surrealists to task for failing to live and write prophetically, as he says Nerval or Rimbaud successfully did (*Poesía y revelación* 287-9). Larrea complains that Surrealist techniques can only reveal a "débil intuición, en verdad ínfima y no distinta a la que puede en cualquier momento emocional tener un individuo cualquiera" (*Poesía y revelación* 293). Despite Larrea's proximity to many of the central figures of Surrealism, I think that in this essay there is strong evidence that Larrea did not or could not understand Surrealism's place in the wide trajectory in which he situates it, from Romanticism to the Second World War.

"Esfinge" is one of the first poems in this trajectory, and it was written, if Vittorio Bodini is correct in dating it to May of 1919, when Larrea had seen only one issue of *Grecia* and a few of Vicente Huidobro's pieces from *Poemas árticos* (*Versión celeste* 68). Larrea's correspondence with his friend Gerardo Diego shows that his readings at the time included Ramón Gómez de la Serna's *greguerías*, Diego's own poems, including "Zodiaco," Oscar Wilde, Juan Ramón Jiménez, and, by June, all the *ultraístas* writing in *Grecia*. By September and October it seems Huidobro's work was his preferred reading. He also tells Diego that he has ordered editions of Mallarmé and Apollinaire (*Cartas a Gerardo Diego* 79, 86-9, 105, 106-8). In the interest of analytical accuracy, we should then read this poem in its historical context, as one of the first typographically daring poems of *ultraísmo*, written in fact by a very fresh recruit who in March of 1919 was unsure of his poetic path but felt "la llamada del Arte" (*Cartas a Gerardo Diego* 81). In the strange language of "Esfinge" and in its even more enigmatic triangular symbols we certainly see what d'Ors was talking about when he said that the avant-garde valued presence over reference (d'Ors 2), but the poem is informed by Baudelaire's theory of correspondences and is in fact crisscrossed by classical and visual metaphorical structures. Considering that throughout the year of this poem's composition and publication Larrea is struggling to find his path in poetry, noting that "hallazgos gráficos y cerebrales me sobran, pero el aglutinante no aparece" (*Cartas a Gerardo Diego* 105-6), we should not read this poem as simply a typographical curiosity or an early indicator of Larrea's dubious Surrealism,[57] but rather should consider the great metaphorical possibilities offered up by its images, both plastic and linguistic.

[57] Since Larrea writes, "lo que he hecho arranca de Huidobro en línea recta" (*Cartas a Gerardo Diego* 91).

The first elements to occupy our attention are undoubtedly the striking symbols at the end of the poem,[58] which conjure the idea of a piercing stare as well as the image of a crescent moon and of course the pyramids of Egypt. The title, "Esfinge," immediately brings to the reader's mind the mythological creature in its various guises. I would like to focus especially on the story of Oedipus, who defeated the sphinx to save the city of Thebes from its violent terror. The first line, reading, "La esfinge me clava los ojos," links the small circles in the triangles with the eyes of the sphinx and effectively puts both the poem's speaker and its reader in the place of Oedipus, staring down the mythical monster.

Oedipus was crowned king of Thebes when he defeated the sphinx by correctly answering her riddle. The riddle asked of Oedipus by the sphinx was, by various accounts, "What beast walks on four legs in the morning, two legs in the afternoon, and three at night?" Oedipus's clever answer of "Man," was correct, and the sphinx threw herself from her rocky perch and died, never to harass and murder wandering Thebans again. Oedipus was able to imagine the different times of day as metaphors for various phases in the lives of human beings, crawling on all fours in the first years of life, walking during the middle decades, and moving about with the aid of a cane in the twilight of their days. Similarly, this poem asks its reader to imagine common objects in metaphorical senses which cross paradigms of time and space. So, waves, like the pages

[58] According to Miguel Nieto, the manuscript version of this poem shows the triangular and lunar symbols at the beginning of the poem, in the place of a title. I will deal with the poem as it first appeared in *Grecia*. George Bornstein's cautions about textual criticism and editing are noted, and it certainly seems that for future editions of Larrea's work these problems should be addressed. Nonetheless, I do not consider the differences to be too great in this case as to impede our analysis, since the symbols are visually arresting whether printed above or below the poem's text, and the printed title "Esfinge" does not prematurely clue the reader in to anything he would not see by reading the very first line (*Versión celeste* 68).

of an almanac, “van y vienen al viento.” In this simile, Larrea suggests a link between the waves and writing, as well as between the continuous movement of the sea and the passage of time. This link is reinforced by the pun on “hojas,” which are pages as well as leaves; writing and the change of seasons are coded in the same word.

By this point the reader, cued in to the Oedipal resonances and the scribal metaphorics of the poem, should be primed to imagine all of the possible metaphorical complications of the superficially simple line that follows, “Gaviota, nadas?” Indeed, the gull swims in two ways; firstly, we can imagine the process of flight through air to be analogous to swimming in water, since the mechanics are much the same. Gulls also sometimes dive for prey. Even more suggestive is the etymological source for the Spanish word for gull, ‘gaviota.’ It derives from ‘gavia,’ a kind of sail (*DRAE* I, 1126). Following Oedipal riddle logic, the answer to Larrea’s question could be “yes,” because the air is metaphorically water and because the bird, if we trace its name’s synecdochic etymology, is a boat.

A similar set of correspondences is set into motion in the next two lines, “Negrean las aguas todas / los celestes calamares.” Squid, when startled, spray the water with dark ink to confound their pursuers, so these lines can operate on a near literal level, excepting the modifier “celestes.” Returning to etymological considerations, Spanish ‘calamar’ derives originally from Latin ‘calămus,’ a writing pen (*DRAE* I, 394; Corominas I, 752). Of course, modern Spanish conserves ‘cálamo,’ meaning ‘writing pen,’ and whose origin is the same as that of ‘calamar’ (*DRAE* I, 395). The squid is named “writing pen,” rather ambiguously, for the application could come from either the ink it ejects or from the animal’s single slender bone, called in Spanish “pluma” and in English a “quill.” In fact,

like the word ‘gaviota,’ the ‘calamar’ is an animal whose name actually derives from a metaphoric reference to a human invention. Rather than nature informing the naming of man-made artifacts, these objects have lent their names to animals. Even without the etymological knowledge, however, the squid’s blackening of the waters with ink should clue the reader to the possibility of a metaphor for writing, which is completed when we look back to the second line, “las olas como hojas de almanaque.” ‘Celestial’ squid blacken all the waters, waters which were earlier likened to pages in an almanac or calendar. The squid, by way of ink and etymology, remit us to a writing pen, and so we can imagine the huge, ‘celestial’ hand of the author filling many pages (waves, days) with fresh black writing.

Writing, especially in the wake of his discovery of Huidobro, would be Larrea’s salvation from provincial boredom, as his biographer and longtime correspondent David Bary notes (see especially *Larrea: Poesía y transfiguración* 41-51). As a material solution to psychic and emotional problems, writing appears in “Esfinge” at the suggestion of two poems from Baudelaire’s *Les Fleurs du Mal*. In one of the poems from the “Spleen” series, poem LXXVI, “l’ennui, fruit de la morne incuriosité, / Prend les proportions de l’immortalité” (111). The poem concludes by lamenting the speaker’s current state of mental and emotional stagnation:

> — Désormais tu n’es plus, ô matière vivante !
> Qu’un granit entouré d’une vague épouvante,
> Assoupi dans le fond d’un Saharah brumeux ;
> Un vieux sphinx ignoré du monde insoucieux,
> Oublié sur la carte, et dont l’humeur farouche
> Ne chante qu’aux rayons du soleil qui se couche. (Baudelaire 111-12)

Larrea, confronted with the novelty of Huidobro's poetic renovation, finds himself at a crossroads. He can rediscover the sphinx,[59] and if he challenges himself to answer her riddle he has a chance to escape from his poetic and existential ennui. Part of this process, implied in Baudelaire's poem, would be the resuscitation of the surrounding "matière vivante," a reengagement with the material experience of writing and of daily life. In David Bary's reading of "Esfinge," the sphinx's two eyes, the "Ojo en el Triángulo" and the "Ojo labio" in the inverted, "carnal" triangle, are the two "antiquísimos símbolos de dos visiones, opuestos o complementarios del universo" (*Larrea* 49). Bary goes on to argue that the eye within the upward-pointing triangle represents a spiritual life united with experience while the eye in the downward-pointing triangle represents a sensual philosophy of experience, the one from which the poet flees in another of his poems from this period, "Evasión" (*Larrea* 49). In an article in *Ínsula*, later reprinted in his book *Nuevos estudios sobre Huidobro y Larrea*, Bary studies Larrea's poem of 1917, "Transcarnación," and finds that Larrea, from very early on, was trying to articulate a poetics which would unite experience and intellect, thought and material, where "'espíritu' y 'carne' son una sola cosa." (97).

While Bary does not mention it, the symbol of an eye within a triangle is the old Christian symbol for the Eye of Providence, a sign conveying the notion of the Trinity as well as the all-seeing eye of an omnipotent and omniscient divinity.[60] This eye, the "Ojo en el Triángulo," capitalized to underscore its divine dimension, "parpadeaba," and so the

[59] And with Baudelaire's mention of the Sahara desert, both the Egyptian and the Greek sphinxes are present.

[60] The symbol is often associated with Freemasonry but is found in all kinds of Christian religious iconography, both Roman Catholic and Protestant. It also features prominently on the Great Seal of the United States, included on the back of the U.S. one dollar bill. Here and in many other representations, complementing Larrea's choice of a sphinx, appears a pyramid like the famous structures at Giza.

reader can imagine that Providence in this poem is less than certain in its designs. The questioning stare of providence is also the stare of the sphinx. Larrea must choose whether to pursue the more noble but uncertain path of poetic providence or take the path of the "Ojo labio." Through this poem he opts for the former. The path Larrea does not follow is the purely sensual one, an inverted triangle suggesting a kind of pubic shape where "las posibles vidas / nos solicitan desde los vientres núbiles." Instead of pursuing this sensual and even sexual option, which operates also as an invitation to reproduction and fatherhood, Larrea turns to the realm of the intellect informed by experience, the realm of poetry, multiple metaphor, correspondences, and movement: "Alas, ola y vela / dan al viento las triangulares lonas / y la gaviota luna / es una coma / Pausa."

In 1919 Larrea had recently read the French Symbolists, especially in Enrique Díez-Canedo and Fernando Fortún's 1913 anthology, and was thrilled with the discovery of Huidobro's work (Bary, *Larrea* 39; *Nuevos estudios* 100). His multivalent metaphors also seem to have something of Ramón Gómez de la Serna's innovative *greguerías*, a genre for which he expressed enthusiasm in February of 1919 (*Cartas a Gerardo Diego* 79). He was at an important juncture in his poetic trajectory. The wings, waves, and sails of "Esfinge," as mutual referents for one another, are all filled with the impulse of the wind of poetic creation, the same wind present in "Evasión" (*Versión celeste* 67). Rather than the "vientos contrarios" which shake his sails in "Evasión" (*Versión celeste* 67), however, the winds in "Esfinge" seem to have carried the poetic voice to a new place of calm reflection. By pausing and reflecting on the sphinx's challenge the speaker gains new perspective, allowing the contemplation of wings, waves, and sails as essentially one and the same, or different versions of each other. They are each represented

simultaneously by the triangular forms at the base of the page, and the simultaneous visual and textual impressions on the reader build and multiply throughout the poem. Visually and metaphorically, the moon becomes a gull as the gull becomes the moon, and this transformation is all possible only in the physical act of writing, including drawing: "y la gaviota luna / es una coma / Pausa."[61]

Beauty in Symbolism, as we can see in a sonnet from *Les Fleurs du Mal*, "trône dans l'azur comme un sphinx incompris" (Baudelaire 52), but Larrea has understood the sphinx's riddle and has solved it in more than one way. The Symbolist system of correspondences, discussed in Chapter One, depends on suggestion and a certain vagueness of expression which in turn produces the mysterious feeling of beautiful contact with 'the absolute.' In "Esfinge," Larrea exploits the Symbolist technique of metaphorical correspondences not to graze the heights of the infinite absolute but to unite poetic exploration with the physical act of writing and drawing with ink and paper. The eyes of the sphinx, presented in the shape of two triangles, represent the two paths of experience available to the poet, as David Bary proposes (*Larrea* 49). As well as referencing the Egyptian pyramids, they also, in combination with the crescent moon-comma figure, demonstrate Larrea's pictorial and metaphorical engagement with the riddle put to Oedipus: in the dawn of a person's life, represented by the upward-pointing triangle, he crawls on all four legs. By the end of his life, the setting sun of the downward-pointing triangle, he uses a cane to move about. The middle portion of his life, represented by the rising moon appearing on the clear afternoon sky, is a time of

[61] Interestingly, there is also a "comatic aberration" in optics. It is a distortion in an image caused by imperfections in a lens and is called "coma" in both Spanish and English. The images resulting from this optical effect appear distended and stretched from their true axis, almost like a period mark stretched into a comma.

intellectual maturity and action. This action is as yet indeterminate, for the poet must decide what he is to do. The moon, as a traditional symbol of mutability, is an apt vehicle to convey this decisive moment. The importance of decision-making at this vital phase is underscored by the intellectual "Pausa," metaphorically represented by a comma, taken by the poetic voice as it considers its path.

Towards qualifying as a state archivist, Larrea studied paleography, numismatics, and archeology in 1915 and 1916 (Bary, *Larrea* 39), so it should come as no surprise that he was familiar with ancient symbols and mythology, including the Eye of Providence and the Oedipal myth. In the context of these studies, acknowledging another explanation for the sphinx's riddle may prove illuminating. The seventeenth-century alchemist Michael Maier, author of a unique book on alchemical emblems, proposed that the answer to the sphinx's riddle was not "man" but the Philosopher's Stone. H.M.E. de Jong summarizes Maier's reasoning:

> first, one should consider the square or the four elements, and that from there one should advance to the hemisphere, which has two lines, the straight and the curved one, representing Luna, who is made white, and that after that one should pass to the triangle, which consists of body, soul and spirit, or Sol, Luna and Mercury. Referring to this, Rhazes [or Rasis, the alchemist] says in his *Epistola*: "The Stone is a Triangle in its essence, and a square in its properties." (257)

While Maier uses the geometric properties of the Philosopher's Stone to argue that the alchemical mystery was the answer to the sphinx's riddle, it bears mentioning that even Maier claims these properties are derived from the proportions of man (De Jong 166, 168). Ultimately, then, "man" is the answer to the sphinx's riddle even in Maier's interpretation, since even the alchemical symbol for the Philosopher's Stone includes man at its center. In Larrea's poem, alchemical hopes for language are dispelled by the

much more realistic and serious pursuit of a use for language in life, a humanist rather than occultist poetics.

The disappointment and poetic reorientation of Rimbaud's "Alchimie du verbe," from *Une saison en enfer*, should inform our reading of "Esfinge" at this juncture. For Rimbaud in one poem in the "Alchimie du verbe" section, 'eternity' comes into clear view for the first time when he chooses "science et patience" as his guiding principles. Rather than search for "l'azur" in the sky, Rimbaud finds 'eternity' in "la mer mêlée / au soleil" (Rimbaud 311), just as Larrea finds a new creative path in the con-fusion of the sea, the wind, and the page. Human intelligence and present experience are the philosopher's stone to reveal any and all knowledge; bogus alchemies are abolished and the intellectual pursuit of the physical present through writing is the basis for learning. In this poem Larrea makes explicit the knowledge that various possible lives lay ahead, just as Rimbaud noted in "Alchimie du verbe": "À chaque être, plusieurs *autres* vies me semblaient dues" (311). Now that Larrea has discovered the 'new spirit' in the poetry of Vicente Huidobro and the new material poetics practiced by the founder of Creationism and the budding group of Ultraists in Madrid, he 'pauses' to prepare to move forward. In moving forward, Larrea will become a fervent adept of Huidobro's *creacionismo*, pursuing productive novelty in consonance with the primordial meaning of *poeisis*, but without renouncing the near spiritual devotion to poetry spurned by the Ultraists and Dada (Infante 60). One of the defining characteristics of this new type of creation, as we saw in Chapter One's discussion of Huidobro's title *Horizon Carré*, is the fact that its images are purely semantic. As Guillermo de Torre writes, it might be possible to

represent Symbolist verses pictorially, but not lines from Creationist poems (*LEV* 129; 102).

While not yet fully informed by Huidobro's developing Creationist poetics,[62] Larrea's "Esfinge" presents us with an enigmatic drawing in which various metaphors intersect simultaneously. As Ignacio Infante writes of Creationist poetics, the combination of verbal and visual elements contributes to the particularly Creationist take on media in the avant-garde; "Esfinge," as an "intermedial" composition, attempts to overcome the material limitations of traditionally printed poetry, discovering new metaphorical territory in the juxtaposition of elements from traditionally separate media, and in this case, graphic traditions (Infante 61-2).[63] As José Manuel Díaz de Guereñu writes, Larrea writes poetry meant to be seen, heard, and felt, an active poetry of all the senses (33-5).

In "Esfinge" Larrea seems to do what neither Maier nor Rimbaud were quite prepared to do. He develops an 'alchemy of the word,' but realizes that, just as for the sphinx's riddle, the answer to the enigma of poetic creation must ultimately also be man. This means an honest engagement with reality, an appreciation for the material process of writing and a poetic humility that the Symbolists, let alone the alchemists, never could have shown. Rafael Osuna's critique of a certain shortsightedness on the part of

[62] Larrea would meet Huidobro for the first time in person at his lecture on poetry in Madrid in 1921. Up to that point he had only had epistolary contact with the Chilean poet. Also, by this point Guillermo de Torre's Ultraists were no longer on good terms with Huidobro. *VLTRA* published a brief summary and commentary of Huidobro's remarks in its twentieth issue for 15 December 1921.

[63] Infante is writing on Huidobro's "poemas pintados," his typographical experimentation, and especially his use of French, but his argument applies to Larrea and to much of the avant-garde generally. The French language, in which both Huidobro and Larrea would ultimately write the majority of their poetry, also acts an an intermedial space for these writers, "in which individual words suffer a displacement and a reconfiguration of their original or standard linguistic forms… translated into newly created poetic images" (Infante 61).

proponents of the calligramme indirectly summarizes my argument for Larrea's achievement in "Esfinge." Osuna writes, "Como el alquimista que desea, pero no puede, convertir el plomo en oro, el oro deseado por los caligramáticos no deja de ser plomo; plomo de imprenta, de hecho" (95). As I have shown, Larrea was very interested in the physical act of writing, aware that the ink, paper, and eventually the lead letterforms of his printed poems were just that: materials. The illusory alchemical gold of Symbolist correspondences was at an important remove from physical experience, as was the representational basis of calligrammatic writing, which ultimately strives to invoke objects outside the poem. Larrea's poem is neither an appeal to the Symbolist absolute nor an example of the calligramme, which Osuna criticizes for lack of true novelty. "Esfinge" is rather a riddle, a reflection, and an ode to the emotive power of the written and printed word.

Antonio Espina, Romantic Irony, Carnival, and Textual Performance

Larrea's direct involvement with Ultraism was short-lived. He visited Cansinos Assens in Madrid in 1919 after hearing about the new poetry being written there and in Sevilla, and he read more widely in Huidobro's work and that of other avant-garde poets in Paris. But Huidobro and Torre would have a falling out, and the epistolary record shows how Huidobro made sure his new acolytes, Larrea and Diego, would cleave to his side of the divide.

Even less invested in the enterprise of Ultraism was Antonio Espina, a poet, critic, journalist, and translator who published often in the Madrid weekly *España*. In one of his pieces appearing there in October of 1920, "Arte nuevo," Espina criticizes what he sees as the false novelty and obsessive antics of the *ultraístas*, especially their constant

fawning over Apollinaire. But, like Eugenio d'Ors, he does credit the group with providing a much-needed wake-up call to "las personas ortodoxas" (*Poesía completa y epistolario* 329). Poetic novelty in itself is not new, says Espina; it has always been the goal of poets to innovate and distance themselves from their literary predecessors (325). This is especially true since Romanticism, and perhaps this is why Antonio Espina's less radical brand of poetic renewal earned him comparisons with Romantic writers.[64] In this section I will analyze some of Espina's typographically disperse poetry from his 1923 collection *Signario* in the context of Ultraism, Juan Ramón's *Índice* editorial project, which published the book, and the importance of material poetics to the more famous poets of the Generation of 1927. Espina was a Romantic, but the "inquietud superatriz" of his first book, *Umbrales* (1918), also convinced a young Guillermo de Torre that the *ultraístas* had just found a new member ("*Umbrales* (Poesías) por Antonio Espina García"). Tellingly, the same "libro tan saltador," *Umbrales*, impressed Juan Ramón as a breath of fresh air, "no «castizo» sino errante y universal" (*Selección de cartas* 69). Espina's irreverence and irony certainly owe something to the Romantic tradition, especially to Mariano José de Larra, who in fact was a great inspiration to Ramón Gómez de la Serna.[65] Meanwhile, Espina's incorporation of avant-garde techniques of typographical dispersion and non-sequential reading within the context of the circle of Juan Ramón Jiménez can help us to theorize the persistence of avant-garde material poetics in the more canonical authors of the second half of the 1920s.

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[64] Guillermo de Torre, for example, wrote in 1927 about the feeling of Romantic rebellion in Espina's work ("Perfil de Antonio Espina"). Jaime Mas Ferrer compares him to Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer (203) while Juan Ramón insists in *Españoles de tres mundos* that Espina practically qualifies as the reincarnation of Mariano José de Larra (121-3).

[65] And Espina is very well aware of the affinities between Ramón and "Fígaro." He ends his 1965 article on "Ramón y los ismos" by claiming that Gómez de la Serna and Larra share a "sepultura" (76-7).

Juan Ramón wrote in 1928, "Veo a Antonio Espina, reveo a Fígaro. Sin falta" (*Españoles de tres mundos* 121). For Juan Ramón, Espina picked up where Fígaro, Larra's pen name, left off. A poem like "¡Qué asco!," from Espina's *Umbrales*, published in 1918, confirms this lineage. The speaker in this poem accompanies his friends to a masked ball, flirting with young women and drinking to excess behind the cover of an "antifaz de seda" (*Poesía completa y epistolario* 158). Late in the next day he awakes to find an anonymous female companion sleeping off her hangover beside him and cannot help but exclaim to himself and in agreement with the "ancianos" he mocks at the poem's outset, "¡Qué asco!" (159). Much like Larra's ironic use of dialogue to prove a point, for example in "Yo quiero ser cómico," the blithe speaker here discovers through his narration Espina's own opinions on society and personal conduct.

This feature of both writers' work makes them very performative authors, exploring problems of sincerity and vice through the tropes of carnival, theatre, and social posing. In this vein, I shall read the poem "Ópera Real" alongside Larra's article, "La Nochebuena de 1836," to show how Espina, while sharing Larra's Romantic critical eye and performative bent, heightens the Bakhtinian carnivalesque ambiguity of an incomprehensible world through the use of avant-garde typography. Like Espina's poem "¡Qué asco!," Larra's article is an *in vino veritas* tale, a "delirio filosófico" in which Fígaro's drunk servant forces his employer to face his bourgeois hypocrisy upon returning home late on Christmas Eve. The Roman Saturnalia's social inversions, role play, and hedonistic excess all appear in Fígaro's very pessimistic reflection on human brutishness. Fígaro is surprised to find out in the end, however, that his servant's liquor-loosened tongue provides the clearest interpretation of both men's behavior: the servant

satisfies his basic material needs and is content in his comfort and lack of ambition; Fígaro's literary and social pursuits, pursuits of a supposedly higher order, oblige him to play the hypocrite and to invent problems for himself, emotional, economic, and intellectual.

Larra's characteristic blend of irony and pessimism sets this article in motion as Fígaro claims that he is superstitious, believing that the 24th of every month brings him misfortune, because he was born on the 24th (of March 1809). Writing is the confirmation of his attitude, since, he says, "en cada artículo entierro una esperanza o una ilusión" (Larra 401). The performative and imaginative aspect of the article begins to come to light as Fígaro compares himself and his servant to Don Quijote and Sancho Panza: "involuntariamente iba a exclamar como don Quijote: «Come, Sancho hijo, come, tú que no eres caballero andante y que naciste para comer»; porque al fin los filósofos, es decir, los desgraciados, podemos no comer, pero ¡los criados de los filósofos!" (402). Fígaro, like Don Quijote, is guilty of a kind of delusional pride while his more simple-minded companion leads a less tortured and more clear-eyed existence. Fígaro is kidding himself about the importance of his philosophical musings. And these musings, in the form of his articles, are just as much fantasy as reality. Confirmation of the theatrical character of the article comes in the rhetorical question, "los fabulistas hacen hablar a los animales. ¿por qué no he de hacer yo hablar a mi criado?" (406).

Fígaro's Christmas Eve experiences are decidedly carnivalesque, linked explicitly to the Roman Saturnalia, full of 'horrible contrasts' (403), excess, and debauchery. The Saturnalia, the Roman festival around the winter solstice, was characterized by revelry and a loosening of social strictures, including a full reversal of master and servant roles.

The mixing of the sacred and the profane, pageantry and excess, inverted social structures, and 'carnival time,' key features of the Bakhtinian carnivalesque, abound in Larra's article as they did in the Roman Saturnalia (Vice 151-6). The grotesque body of Bakhtin's carnival is also forcefully present, especially in Fígaro's servant and in the diners our chronicler sees throughout the city. The servant's laughter is characterized as "el demonio de la gula que reconocía su campo" (403). Fígaro later reflects that, "era horrible el contraste de la fisonomía escuálida y de los rostros alegres" in the revelers' 'orgies' of food and drink (403-4). Fígaro sees two plays at the theatre, both of which confirm his profound disappointment in Spanish culture; in one the men are like women and the women are like men, and he reads in the other an allegory of the Spanish people's inability to settle on an effective form of government (404). Carnival time also pervades the article. Fígaro's encounter with his servant takes place precisely at midnight, with a feeling of "enajenación" in the air (404).

For John R. Rosenberg in a perceptive article on Larra's "La Nochebuena de 1836," the carnivalesque atmosphere comes about from Fígaro's isolation. He is both eager to join the crowd and disdainful of the lowness of the fun, "he excoriates the mask wearers of his time from behind his own protective façade" (Rosenberg 380). Both Larra's vision of the world and his own place in it are grotesquely warped, for he removes himself from the culture he disdains and then bitterly discovers he is alone. More playfully, Antonio Espina seems to continue in this Romantic tradition of isolation from the carnivalesque events he describes, mocking the hypocrisy of the performers and audience of the Teatro Real, while, as we shall see, designing the masks and players himself. In the end, though, Espina's speaker turns out to be a part of the carnivalesque

atmosphere he describes and is indeed reluctant to leave it. Espina's poem "Ópera Real" is intensely indebted to Larra's brand of Romantic irony, but through the use of playful typography the poem operates within the avant-garde paradigm of poetic simultaneity, more interested in aesthetic experience and juxtaposition than in earnest critique.

While Larra's "delirio" was a sign of real personal turmoil, as Rosenberg argues, Espina's Romanticism was "muy atenuado por una expresión acartonada y humorística moderna," in the words of Jaime Mas Ferrer (295). Thus, all the characters in "Ópera Real" are satirized and made ridiculous, but the characteristic standoffish superiority of Larra's critical eye is missing from Espina's poem. The speaker of "Ópera Real" seems to be rather a participant, detached and mildly entertained, but complicit in the hollowness of the farce. The poem, typographically dispersed across two pages[66] and split into twelve 'scenes,' begins during a "Noche de gala" at the "Ópera Real." We see that the people filling the theater, "Figulinas/ Prodigiosas en los palcos," include "Dilettantes, / Aristorios,[67] / Gentlemanes" (13).

These various categories of *poseur* are included in one large curly bracket, whose 'label' or uniting theme is the split line, "Figulinas / Prodigiosas en los palcos." Blaise Cendrars, as discussed in Chapter Two, uses the same typographical technique to achieve poetic simultaneity. One line is applied by way of a bracket to several others and the syntax, again, through the bracket, allows for various combinations. Antonio Espina uses brackets for these and similar purposes throughout "Ópera Real," as well as in other poems, especially "Pompas fúnebres" and "Poema signario" in *Signario*, but also

[66] In its first publication on 13 March 1920 in *España*, pages 13 to 14. This is the version of the poem I will work with here, though it also appears in his book *Signario*, of 1923, and the two modern editions of his works, Gloria Rey Faraldos's 2000 edition and the Calambur edition prepared by Eduardo Hernández Cano.
[67] A neologism. Soria Olmedo offers "Distinguidos" as a definition (*Las vanguardias* 254).

elsewhere. Eduardo Hernández Cano writes in the introduction to his edition of Espina's work that this use of brackets is certaintly indebted to Mallarmé's new conceptualization of poetic space, but that it differs importantly from calligrammatic writing. He writes, "este uso de las llaves no potencia tanto la plasticidad como el carácter conceptual de esos signos gráficos, usados para indicar identidad o simultaneidad" (28).

My argument throughout this dissertation has been that the avant-garde reworks the conceptual framework of poetry precisely by focusing on its plastic qualities. The syntactical possibilities offered by bracketing and spacing are not to be imagined as standing in opposition to the plastic possibilities of typographical experimentation, as Hernández Cano suggests. On the contrary, they are one and the same. It is in the performative aspect of this text, I will show, where the graphic and plastic fully converge in Espina's characteristically ironic vision of his world. Everything in Espina's "Ópera Real" is "Pantomima. / Artificio," and so the superficial high society of Madrid is metonymized in their "Insinuencias / Decadentes / De pecados / Salpicados / De brillantes" (13). Everyone is performing and the least important show in the opera house is the opera itself. Typically, the upper-crust theatregoers are more interested in seeing and being seen (Dougherty and Anderson 290). In fact, while the various eccentric personalities of the theater are presented quite clearly, we cannot know which of three operas might be unfolding on stage. It is perhaps Jules Massenet's *Werther*, the same composer's *Manon* or alternatively Puccini's version, or *The Barber of Seville*, but it matters little which (Soria Olmedo, *Las vanguardias* 254). Espina's characters are consumed in vanity and pomp and have little concern for the singers.

While a marquise tries to capture the attention of a bored duke, an old man remembers the glory days of opera when the famous Gayarre sang; "¡Yo le oí!" he exclaims as an exercising in name-dropping, not to be outdone by younger posturers. In the next 'scene,' as I have chosen to call them, the poem becomes particularly interesting.

IX

Tieso,
De gran uniforme,
(En el grana / Palco Regio, / Rubicundo,) Hay un Borbón;

y

(Extranjeros, / Diplomáticos, / Geltilhombres, / Chambelanes.) En el Palco de la Corte (Seis / Muñecos / De cartón (1).

El Teatro
Es ritmo, tirso, moaré.—Fuera (Llueve, / Llueve, / Llueve.

Dentro los magnates gozan,
Fuera los lacayos duermen.
Dentro, los violines (Cantan: / Rien, / Rien..—Fuera: *¡Llueve!*

X

Al regreso,
Cabalgata de carruajes bocinantes.
En desfile
Pasan autos encendidos (¡Ilusorio / Transeúnte / Del gran mundo!

XI

—Turno par.—
(Ascua, / Fiesta, / Farsa, / Orquesta) Del luciente festival.
Opera Real.

XII

(Sin más / Finó la función. / Es Diciembre / y hace frío. / Mucho frío. Frío.) Fin.
Opera Real
y
Telón.

Antonio Espina García.

(1) (Falta un fraile).

Fig. 9. "Ópera Real." by Antonio Espina. *España.* 254 (13 March 1920). Pages 13-14. Hemeroteca Digital. Biblioteca Nacional de España.

In the royal box, "Extranjeros, / Diplomáticos, / Gentilhombres, / Chambelanes," are characterized as cardboard cutouts of people, "Muñecos / De cartón" ("Ópera Real" 14). This line includes an indicator "(1)" for a footnote, which remits us to the bottom left-hand corner of the page. The note states that this group of spectators is incomplete, for it should include a monk, "(Falta un fraile)." This is typical of Espina's penchant for irreverent and ironic jabs at the monarchy and the church, but it is also an important detail for interpreting the typographical originality of the piece.

The unlikely (or all-too-likely) appearance of a monk alongside courtiers contributes greatly to the carnivalesque atmosphere of the opera house, where the sacred and profane, art and sensuality, mix in a gender-bending ("El Tenor {Almibarado, / Italiano, / Feminino") farce. Everyone is performing in this theatre; everyone is a figure, a cutout, a mask. This performative aspect of the poem is reflected in the typographical character of the text, presented in brackets, side notes, and the monk's footnote, very much like notes for a performance or even a printed opera libretto. Dramatic texts, like opera librettos, have traditionally been given priority over their more ephemeral performances, notes Keir Elam (190-1). But, Elam argues, the dramatic text depends upon the possibility of its performance, "the written text… is determined by its very need for stage contextualization, and indicates throughout its allegiance to the physical conditions of performance" (191). Each text, the dramatic text and the performed text, "bears the other's traces" (Elam 191). Espina's missing monk is a curious link between the two worlds, textual and physical, since in the scene represented in "Ópera Real" there is in fact no monk present. It is through the textual footnote that the monk appears in his

conspicuous absence. In fact, the presence of the writer's annotation makes the missing monk the most foregrounded of all the figures. The poem, with its brackets, and especially its footnote to include a monk, as if edited for a future performance, becomes a dramatic text begging for (and reflecting) live performance and unfinished composition. This is the appeal of the opera and the librettic text to Espina; pessimistic as he is, the outside, unperformed world is cold and uninteresting, as we see in 'scene' XII. While the opera is a farce, it is also, we read, "ritmo, tirso, moaré," while in the outside world, "Llueve, / Llueve, / Llueve." The opera, like carnival, is Bacchic, exciting, and revelatory. Typographical and material considerations in a text can make carnivalesque revelations and revelries possible by suggesting, as the simultaneity of Espina's brackets or his imperative footnote do, their need for performance.

The poem's speaker-director-librettist is inside the text, performing, watching, enjoying, critiquing. Though Guillermo de Torre noted early on that there was something of Valle-Inclán's dramatic *esperpentos* ("Perfil"), plays of the grotesque, distortion, and tragedy, in Espina, Hernández Cano notes that in Espina's farces the tragic element is missing (Espina, *Poesía completa y epistolario* 29). The 'Great Divide' between high and low art analyzed by Andreas Huyssen and mentioned in Chapter One is closed in the carnivalesque performance of this poem as the experience of the opera is not passive but active, not institutional but improvisational, and it is produced in the printed page. Very much in tune with the avant-garde attack on transcendence, this poem takes no art completely seriously, neither opera nor poetry.

Perhaps for Larra the world was full of masks and that was cause for bitter lament, but for Espina it is just the way things are. Larra's Fígaro in "El mundo todo es

máscaras. Todo el año es Carnaval," is an elitist; he has to be dragged to the masked ball by his friend. There, he entertains himself by smugly toying with other partygoers behind the protection of his own mask, but is overwhelmed in the end by the variety, the frenzy, and the hypocrisy of the festivities (Larra 217). Espina's speaker seems more aloof. 'The Great Divide' closed off by the avant-garde in Huyssen's analysis was a source of tension for artists concerned with the transcendence of art. Any incursion of prosaic, commercial, or material concerns in the artistic sphere was met with derision and recoil. Espina was certainly an avant-garde poet in the sense that he was unconcerned with crossing and closing this divide, standing inside the carnivalesque atmosphere, and indeed creating it, in order to cast his ironic eye upon it. Thus, his contemporary Melchor Fernández Almagro could write of our poet, "Antonio Espina, lírico; Antonio Espina, panfletario" (Mas Ferrer 203). "Ópera Real" is imagination and commentary, creative and critical. It makes sense then that while Espina does not render his lines in conventionally ordered verse, in some cases they would fit a stanzaic form. For example, 'scene' XI can easily be presented in sequential verses, highlighting the tetrasyllabic structure and the jaunty rhyme of these lines, features which are visually dispersed in "Ópera Real's" typography.

XI

Turno par.
Ascua, fiesta,
farsa, orquesta,
del luciente
festival.
Ópera Real.

Espina is lyrical and typographical, celebratory and critical. Fernández Almagro noticed that Espina was not quite like the other poets taken under Juan Ramón Jiménez's wing in

the magazine *Índice* and its associated book series. He writes in December of 1923 that in *Índice,*

> todo es representación lírica y voluntad de creación. Los cantos de los poetas enclaustrados [in Juan Ramón's 'abbey'] se desprenden hacia el Infinito en vuelo de sabia e ingenua disciplina. No cortan el aire: lo calan de su propia melodía, y ascienden en penetración inefable… Buscan las oraciones el Infinito. Mas se percibe una – la de Antonio Espina – que, en el tanteo de su ruta, prefiere, al anhelo de la asíntota, el juego de las concéntricas. Y planea sobre el mundo de lo concreto, lastrada como está por una intención humorística, que apunta en el grado suficiente – y no más – para cualificar su canto.

The other poets of *Índice,* including Dámaso Alonso, Gerardo Diego, Federico García Lorca, Jorge Guillén, and Pedro Salinas, are trying, in the tradition of Symbolism, to write poetry for eternity. Their quest is asymptotic, for they seek a poetic ideal. Espina is however concerned with more 'concrete' problems, and he traffics in the ironies and the language of the world, naming many of his compositions, appropriately, "concéntricas."

The poets I have just listed all eventually become constitutive figures in the canonical Generation of 1927 group. While *Índice,* as Andrew A. Anderson reminds us, explicitly stated its lack of interest in forming a cohesive group of young poets around Juan Ramón, the inclusion of these poets in the four issues of this magazine represents an early step in the long process of canon formation (*El veintisiete* 18). Anderson's book, *El veintisiete en tela de juicio,* shows how the Generation of 1927, as a set group of ten poets, is a historical category with its own problematic history and uneven application. As it currently stands, the canonical group does not include Antonio Espina in any significant way. He is nonetheless continually mentioned in lists of names associated with the canonical poets of the 1927 group, though his work is not discussed in any detail. For example, Francisco Javier Díez de Revenga's 1987 *Panorama crítico de la*

generación del 27 indexes Espina's name nine times. Every single appearance of his name throughout the book, however, is as an item in a list, with no discussion of his contributions to the literature of the period. Other critics, such as Mainer and Cano Ballesta, mention him, but are mostly interested in his work as a critic and journalist. It could be, as Hernández Cano has it, that Espina's increasing interest in explicitly political writing and his adhesion to the leftist newspaper *Nueva España* from 1929 to 1931, kept him from being included in Gerardo Diego's famous anthologies and other canon-forming media (Espina, *Poesía completa y epistolario* 61). It could be, alternatively, that the canonical poets of the 1927 group first associated with the Residencia de Estudiantes participated in an aesthetics in line with this institution's principles of eclecticism and moderation, "una visión que se mantuvo al margen de todo el «bum-bum» (como decía Tzara) agresivo y rupturista de las vanguardias" (Blanco Aguinaga 181). Of course, we know that these poets knew Espina's work well and were familiar with the typographical experimentation of the avant-garde. Gerardo Diego, the anthologizer of the Generation of 1927 certaintly did, and a letter from Espina to Federico García Lorca shows how *Signario* circulated early among the 1927 group (*Poesía completa y espitorlario* 378). Espina, though dedicated to Juan Ramón, also had his disagreements with members of the *Índice* group, as Hernández Cano documents in his introduction to Espina's works (44-7). Any number of extra-literary reasons have then contributed to Espina's marginalization in the canon, and the subsequent lack of attention to the typographical features of not only his poetry but that of his peers.

Espina's work, and the typographical audacity of all of the avant-garde, drew attention to the material parameters of poetry as it was written, printed, and read. The

canonical poets of the Generation of 1927 who took over the Spanish literary scene after the Ultraists were indelibly marked by avant-garde material poetics and they were not ignorant of the lessons learned from typographical experimentation. As I will show in the final chapter, poets like Manuel Altolaguirre, a central figure in the Generation of 1927 working as both poet and a very prolific printer, wrote and printed poetry greatly indebted to the advances of the new typography. As twenty-first-century readers, critics, and editors of their poetry we must likewise be aware of the historical importance of typography for their work. Inattention to the material features of the poetry of the avant-garde (and beyond) can result in misreadings and exclusions that more careful criticism could help avoid. Likewise, attention to the material poetics of figures like Antonio Espina and other writers whose work has been left out of the canon can inform and enrich our readings of more canonical writers.

Literary critics, as Michael Groden writes, can no longer proceed as if the texts under their consideration were uncomplicated records of a disembodied work. All critics must recognize that "a critical distinction between a text's words and its spelling or punctuation is often not relevant" (263). I would add to Groden's mention of spelling and punctuation other typographical concerns like typeface, layout and spacing, ink color, paper, and whatever contiguous material accompanies the work under scrutiny. Groden's main concern is with the editing of texts whose various versions, paratextual material, and publication records bear on the possible interpretations for contemporary readers. Groden considers any edition of a work in some way incomplete and problematic and so advises caution and due diligence for editors. He cites Thomas Tanselle in support of his view of textual criticism's purpose; "Verbal works," writes Tanselle, "being immaterial,

cannot be damaged as a painting or a sculpture can; but we shall never know with certainty what their undamaged forms consist of" (269). But in the historical avant-garde poetry comes closer than ever to painting, as d'Ors realized in the article cited at the opening of this chapter. Willard Bohn reminds us that the visual and material poems of the avant-garde function very differently from the "immaterial" texts that Tanselle is talking about; "As Johanna Drucker observes, their self-conscious materiality signifies that they are associated with being rather than with representing" (Bohn, *Reading Visual Poetry* 160). Poetry from the historical avant-garde, like Antonio Espina's, which enacts a conscious material poetics in opposition to the transcendent poetics of Symbolism, then actually *can* be damaged when edited (i.e. reprinted) without proper care.

Espina's "Ópera Real" is a case in point. It appears in Visor's massive anthology of *Las vanguardias y la Generación del 27*, edited by Andrés Soria Olmedo, included in the section on the "Fin del ultraísmo. Grupo de *Índice*" (251-4). While Soria Olmedo includes his own useful footnotes, he eliminates Espina's footnoted reference to the missing monk (253). He pulls the poem from Gloria Rey Faraldos's edition, which uses an asterisk to mark the footnote rather than the numeral "1," as in *España.* This difference is perhaps less important, but Soria Olmedo's complete erasure of the footnoted monk alters the performativity and the materiality of the text. A key element of the poem's ironic commentary on and creation of the scene is then missing from the Visor anthology. In editing just as in Espina's poem, absence can be presence and the typography of "Ópera Real" performs this ironic absent presence with a wink of the eye. Improperly edited, both eyes are closed to the performance in Espina's poem.

THE POSTER BOY OF THE AVANT-GARDE: ERNESTO GIMÉNEZ CABALLERO'S "CARTELES LITERARIOS"

> *¿Cómo no loar neolíricamente —en una audaz innovación temática— esta fulgurante apoteosis de los carteles radiosos, en el ocaso espasmódico de la ciudad tentacular? Todos los líricos escoliastas de los panoramas energéticos —desde Whitman hasta Cendrars, pasando por Verhaeren, Romains, Marinetti, Settimelli, Sandburg, Zweig y Wolfenstein— han cantado algún peculiarismo occidental. Y leed, no más, estas palabras de Cendrars en su epopeya nunista* Profond Aujourd'hui*: «Carteles extravagantes sobre la ciudad multicolor, con la escuadrilla de tranvías que trepan por la avenida, y en el aire el grito virgen de los trolleys».*
>
> *Floración, apoteosis y estertor: He aquí los tres jalones del desenvolvimiento cíclico, que caracterizan y fisiologizan la vida de los carteles. Porque si en el medio día esplendoroso —centro de gravitación de los impulsos mañaneros— y en el crepúsculo tumultuario, tienen estos una perspectiva peculiar, es en la media noche rotunda cuando adquieren su matiz epilogal y desolador.* (Guillermo de Torre, "Apoteosis de los carteles")

Guillermo de Torre publishes this enthusiastic encomium of modern advertising media in the *ultraístas*' flagship publication, *VLTRA*, in April of 1921. Commercial advertising and political propaganda were changing rapidly all over Europe and avant-garde artists could not help but be captivated by the bold, industrial look of urban posters and billboards. Likewise, Futurist typographical experiments were rapidly appropriated by advertisers. The finances of the avant-garde magazines and newspapers were such that their creative work also inevitably shared space with advertisements for books, cinemas, automobiles, toothpaste, passage on transatlantic ocean liners, or beauty products. For half of *VLTRA*'s life, the union between commerce and art was so complete that its office shared space with a store selling "Arte Decorativo Ultraísta." This business offered clothing, furniture, and ceramics under the proprietorship of Wladyslaw Jahl, a frequent contributor of *VLTRA*'s distinctive cover art.

Savvy to this particularly avant-garde melding of commercial language and artistic discourses, Ernesto Giménez Caballero, cofounder with Guillermo de Torre of *La Gaceta Literaria*, innovated a new genre of creative criticism in the second half of the decade of the twenties, the "cartel literario."[68] Giménez Caballero is probably most often remembered (and not fondly) for being one of the first members of Falange Española and an early Fascist ideologue. His creative work, though not disconnected from his politics, should however merit attention in its own right, if only because of Giménez Caballero's importance as a critic and a publisher of avant-garde writing. I will argue here, however, that his "carteles literarios" are in fact essential to understanding what the avant-garde's most radical typographical experimentation meant for artists and writers after the fizzling out of Ultraism after 1922.

This chapter will examine two of Giménez Caballero's 'literary posters,' while making reference to others, in order to study the Spanish historical avant-garde's engagement with material poetics as a critical practice towards the end of the decade of the 1920s. Giménez Caballero is a complicated and polemical figure and one who could lead this study in myriad directions, which, as Andrew A. Anderson notes, cross difficult ground (*EGC* 305). Our interest here shall be limited to his literary posters, however, for as material and visual works they are milestones in the material poetics of the historical avant-garde in Spain. The two I have chosen belong to the two main venues in which Giménez Caballero's posters appeared: "La prensa de un país" is from his 1927 book *Carteles*, while "Jean Cocteau" was exhibited at the Galerías Dalmau in Barcelona and at

[68] I will style the whole of Giménez Caballero's work in this new genre this way to avoid confusing the specific titles *Carteles* with the individual "carteles literarios," some of which appeared in the 1927 volume and some of which did not (Anderson, *EGC* 47). By "carteles literarios" I mean all of the graphic posters Giménez Caballero made, both those included in the second part of *Carteles* and those exhibited after the book's publication.

Ediciones Inchausti in Madrid in 1928 (Anderson, *EGC* 47). The 1927 volume *Carteles* included mostly prose reviews culled from the many texts Giménez Caballero published in the Madrid newspaper *El Sol.* In a final second section of the book, he included arresting visual compositions which were the outgrowth of his critical practice started in prose in the pages of the newspaper. After developing this new genre of the "cartel literario" in the pages of this book, he would continue to produce more of these novel compositions and eventually exhibited some of the originals from *Carteles* along with new posters in 1928.

Gecé, as our *cartelista* often signed his name, aimed to "shake up" the practice of literary criticism, and he did so in an attempt to "realizar en expresión literaria lo que la plástica ha resuelto ya por medio del cartel" (Anderson, *EGC* 63-4; *Carteles* 15). Succinctly, as we saw in Chapter One, this could be the summation of the entirety of avant-garde literature: Cubism in painting was the source for a great deal of the inspiration for poetic experimentation in Europe in the teens and twenties. We have seen in other poets how material poetics allowed poets to question the ontological and exegetical nature of the poem, asking readers to reimagine where poetry occurs, how it is created and read, and what its function is. Giménez Caballero's "carteles" take this experimentation one step further from pieces like Vicente Huidobro's "poèmes peints," however, because they conflate the genres of advertising, poetry, painting, and criticism to fully collapse the "Great Divide" between high culture and mass culture (Huyssen viii, *passim*).

Rather than finding lyricism in advertising, as Torre says Whitman, Cendrars, Marinetti, or of course Torre himself do, Giménez Caballero creates 'lyricism' by

producing texts that are at the same time advertisements, reviews, paintings, and poems, combining and commenting on various genres at once. Gecé's interest in mixed-media and generic experimentation is a product of the avant-garde material poetics of presence; typical of Cubist collage and exclamations of modernity from Futurist, Ultraist, or Dadaist texts, Giménez Caballero's "carteles" bring attention to their materiality by sourcing text cut from other printed material as well as images clipped from magazines, newspapers, or books. They take on the form of advertisements because they began as book reviews printed alongside the advertisements typical of the publications in which they first appeared (Anderson, *EGC* 63). By reading two of Giménez Caballero's "carteles literarios" we will see how these palimpsestic[69] pieces came about and how they comment on and perform the material poetics of the avant-garde which will continue to be important, if more subtly, for poetry in Spain after the historical avant-garde calms its typographical fervor.

The Poster as Criticism

Many of Ernesto Giménez Caballero's book reviews appeared on page two of the Madrid daily *El Sol*, starting early in 1925 (Dennis, "En torno" 103; Anderson *EGC* 48). Through a professional connection between Giménez Caballero's father, a printer, and Nicolás María de Urgoiti, the publisher of the newspaper, our young critic was able to find a stable platform for his work (Anderson, *EGC* 48, 257). In this space, where his writings alternated with reviews by Enrique Díez-Canedo, Ramiro de Maeztu and a few

[69] I am thinking of Gérard Genette's important work, *Palimpsestes*, when I use this term, but in fact I would like the word to mean something slightly different to what it does in Genette. In Genette, the presence of an earlier text (an "hypotexte") in a later one (an "hypertexte") is generally always semantic or rhetorical. In Giménez Caballero, as well as in the earliest historical palimpsests, the presence of the "hypotexte" is material and graphic.

other contributors, Giménez Caballero wrote reviews of books by Pío Baroja, Bertrand Russell, or Jan Neruda. Page two of *El Sol* also included theatre and music news, constant updates on tuberculosis vaccinations, and a wonderful array of advertising. In fact, a majority of the largest format and most elaborate advertisements in any issue appeared on page two alongside the "Revista de Libros" section.

Giménez Caballero's reviews of works like Guillermo de Torre's *Literaturas europeas de vanguardia* (3 June 1925) or Oliverio Girondo's collection of poems, *Calcomanías* (10 April 1925), appeared amongst this paratextual material. Inspired by the former, Giménez Caballero shows himself in the review of the latter to be disdainful of what he sees as the traditional, provincial Spain. He laments the fact that Girondo, an Argentine poet, sees Spain as dusty and backwards, "muertecita y pintoresca," but he rather agrees with this pessimistic appraisal of his country ("España en América"). Girondo, says Giménez Caballero, "dispara sus metáforas, y las ordena, y las mete el 'passe-partout'" ("España en América"), presenting scenes of the most well-known places in Spain as one might present photographs, first cut and rearranged, then pasted, matted, and framed. Following from his title (a "calcomanía" can be a sticker, or closer to its etymology, collage-making as a pastime), Giménez Caballero sees Girondo's poetic praxis as a kind of photographic and metaphorical cut-and-paste operation.

In a short time, Giménez Caballero's reviews begin to look less and less conventional, incorporating many genres and taking cues from the textual and visual material that surrounded them. Already in his review of *Calcomanías*, Giménez Caballero had chosen to review two books at once, Girondo's collection of poems on Spanish scenes and Ramón Gómez de la Serna's *Cinelandia*, a book of "fantasía absurda

americana" ("España en América"). Less interested in either of the two works than he is in their juxtaposition, Giménez Caballero is exploiting a technique of collage to launch into his own creative work. Soon his reviews will look nothing like traditional book reviews, taking on epistolary form, for example, or dialogue (Dennis, "En torno" 104). He was inspired in this respect by his reading of Guillermo de Torre's *Literaturas europeas de vanguardia*, an important new book in 1925.

As Andrew A. Anderson and Enrique Selva note, Giménez Caballero found in *Literaturas europeas de vanguardia* a wealth of inspiration (Anderson, *EGC* 309; Selva 81). Selva makes mention of a very interesting letter, in which Giménez Caballero is even willing to acknowledge Torre's artistic 'paternity' over him and considers his creative work to be the product of his contact with Torre, both as the author of *Literaturas europeas de vanguardia* and as his collaborator on the project of *La Gaceta Literaria* (Selva 81; Anderson *EGC* 260). The trans-European railroad "Simplon-Orient-Express," mentioned by Torre in *Literaturas europeas de vanguardia*, figures heavily amongst other aggressively modern images in Gecé's review of the book such as boxing and football (*Carteles* 133-4). It is precisely where Torre celebrates the cosmopolitanism afforded by such international travel that he also suggests that in the new cosmopolitan future, "sólo acostumbrados a los carteles, al traspasar rápidamente las ciudades terminaremos por dejar olvidados los libros en un hotel" (*LEV* 412; 371).

An ecstatic Gecé is ready to get on board. After enthusiastically reviewing Torre's book on 3 June 1925,[70] Giménez Caballero continues publishing book reviews in *El Sol*. It should come as no surprise that these reviews soon take on many of the characteristics of the commercial texts which share space with them on page two of the newspaper

[70] The review is reprinted in *Carteles* (133-4).

(Dennis "En torno"107). As Nigel Dennis argues intelligently, even when Gecé writes in standard prose he imagines literature, along with Girondo, Torre, or the Cubists, as a visual enterprise, to be renovated by borrowing techniques from collage, photography, and advertising (105-6). Giménez Caballero saw that his reviews functioned much like advertisements anyway,[71] and so he would have been sensitive not only to the innovations of the avant-garde about which he read in Torre's *Literaturas europeas de vanguardia*, but also to the immediate influence the adjacent advertisements would have on his reviews.

The generic division between review and advertisement comes to blur in Giménez Caballero's writing to reflect an already blurry distinction between journalism and advertising throughout the pages of *El Sol*. For example, a recurring 'section' appearing on page two was "La Casa Propia," essentially a section for advertising high-end home construction. It featured a single blue-print for a house in each iteration, along with descriptions of the materials, duration of construction, and price. "La Casa Propia" is signed, as an article would be, by a professional author, the architect Julián de Sáenz Yturralde.

[71] As Anderson notes, the books reviewed by Giménez Caballero were often published by CALPE, a publishing house founded by Nicolás María de Urgoiti and headed by José Ortega y Gasset, the two men responsible for running *El Sol*. Urgoiti essentially published reviews of his own products in his newspaper. The situation was "incestuous" but "not, however, unusual for the period" (*EGC*, 48-9).


Página 2 | El Sol | 23 de junio de 1925

Revista de Libros

LA CASA PROPIA

EL TEATRO

CASERIO DE SEIS VIVIEÑDAS

La moda y la casa

EN LAS CARRERAS

LA CONSTRUCCION ECONOMICA

Cimentación, fábricas y cubiertas

Fig. 10. An example of the section, "La Casa Propia," from *El Sol.* This one is from 23 June 1925 and shares the page with a review by Giménez Caballero. Hemeroteca Nacional. Biblioteca Nacional de España.

The distinction between journalism and advertising is nearly erased completely when, on 13 May 1925, "La Casa Propia" is referred to explicitly as a 'section,' delayed for the next day's edition because of a lack of space. Another frequent advertiser on page two of *El Sol* was the soap and perfume manufacturer Perfumería Gal. Its large format ads, often occupying the center third of the page or more, portray modern women enjoying very modern pursuits; for example, a woman with short-cropped hair sunbathes in an elegant and understated line drawing by illustrator Federico Ribas Montenegro for 6 August 1925. The copy for advertisements for the line of perfume products "Jardines de España," or the soap "Heno de Pravia," stresses beauty, youth, and a kind of tranquil,

modern, and feminine Epicureanism. For example, one for the "Heno de Pravia" brand soap, which is still internationally popular today, gives women a clue on how to make the most of the perfume in the soap, which is "exquisito," "inconfundible," and "intenso."

This advertisement appeared in *El Sol* on 29 October 1925, next to a review by Giménez Caballero of a new Calpe edition of Hernán Cortés's letters relating the conquest of Mexico. In the 'review' on the page from *El Sol* reproduced below as well as in many others, Calpe's series on "Viajes clásicos" served as the springboard for Giménez Caballero's own musings on Spain's waning imperial influence, *la leyenda negra*, and current politics (see Anderson *EGC* 57-62). In this way, texts like Gecé's piece on Cortés's letters, which was reprinted later in his book *Carteles*, "certainly diverge from any notional norm" of the book review genre, as Andrew A. Anderson points out, but they are still far from embodying the other genre, that is the advertising poster, which the 1927 volume takes as its title (*EGC* 62). In reading the book *Carteles* we may at first have difficulty seeing how Giménez Caballero went from writing reviews, albeit untraditional ones, but which were nonetheless textually unmarked, to creating collage-like posters dedicated to Pío Baroja or Rafael Alberti. But if we follow textual critic George Bornstein's recommendation and look back at the textual history of the early 'reviews,' seeing where they first appeared and alongside what other material, we can begin to understand how the paratextual material of *El Sol* (including soap advertisements) along with Gecé's recent discovery of many of the avant-garde's most characteristic gestures in Torre's book, contributed to his development of the "carteles literarios." Perhaps in the case of these unusual texts are Bornstein's words truer than for almost any other: "any embodied form of a text is a contingent product of historical and

economic institutions rather than a transparent conduit of an author's unmediated words" (*Representing* 8). In the case of Giménez Caballero's "carteles literarios," very much consistent with the avant-garde project as a whole, the text in fact *consists of* its embodied form, it exists *only as* the physical work of collage. Barely any "author's words" appear in them. The early, text-based reviews' appearance alongside advertisements like this one for "Heno de Pravia" soap can help us to understand how and why Giménez Caballero took the next step to producing a new kind of creative 'review' based on the commercial advertisement.

Fig. 11. "Heno de Pravia." *El Sol.* 29 October 1925. Hemeroteca Nacional. Biblioteca Nacional de España.

The "Heno de Pravia" piece recommends readers use the soap's wrapper as a bookmark and thus transfer its aroma to "la página predilecta," the reader's favorite page. Giménez Caballero saw that his reviews represented the intersection of criticism and advertising and that their appearance next to commercial advertisements like this one, themselves multi-media and trans-generic compositions, could inform his future production. The "Heno de Pravia" advertisement effectively advocates for collage, the mixing of commercial packaging and literary text. Each then participates in the discourse of the other, and, like the permanently perfumed page, once united their identities will never be separate. The "Heno de Pravia" advertisement is not a particularly avant-garde text, but what is characteristic of the avant-garde is the seamless melding of commercial material (the soap wrapper) and art ("la página predilecta") that the advertisement suggests. Thus, one of the most notable aspects of art in the historical avant-garde is its appropriation of commercial advertising techniques.

A key clue to Giménez Caballero's thinking in this regard, picked up by Anderson, comes from another article in *El Sol* published a few months before his work appeared next to this particular soap advertisement; Gecé writes that his goal as a critic is to "subrayar y desmenuzar con colores fuertes, como un cartelista, productos concretos, lirondos, mercantibles" ("Sobre si hay humoristas en la literatura rusa"; Anderson *EGC* 62). He follows Torre's suggestion that modern artists might simply forget about books and take up the aesthetics of advertising posters. Since people in the twentieth century cannot help but feel at most "indifferent" to the image of a regular person smoking a pipe, for example, Giménez Caballero says in the opening pages of *Carteles* that modern writers need to take a cue from the exciting and colorful promises of advertisements for

automobiles, perfumes, and other products portrayed in modern posters which "nos sugiere[n] en el acto un mundo de apetitos, de vanidades, de delirios, de calenturas inapagables" ("Carteles literarios" 33). This mention of "en el acto" is important because the speed shared by Torre's international train and Gecé's advertising impact will contribute to the *cartelista*'s interest in synthesis and economy of expression. The Perfumería Gal suggests that the soap wrapper and the book can be combined in a new synesthetic experience and Giménez Caballero, seeing his reviews published alongside commercial advertisements and reading Guillermo de Torre, intuits the possibilities of mixing literary and commercial media and discourses.

Criticism in Action and the Closing of the Great Divide

To see how he exploits these possibilities I should like to turn now to two of his "carteles literarios." The first is one that appears in the second section of his 1927 book, *Carteles.* The second represents an example of the many posters he created and exhibited after the publication of the book. This piece, a poster dedicated to Jean Cocteau, appeared alongside other new compositions exhibited at the Galerías Dalmau in Barcelona and the exhibition space at Ediciones Inchausti in Madrid in 1928. In "La Prensa de un país," then, Giménez Caballero does a very effective job of executing his stated goals, that is, once more, to "subrayar y desmenuzar con colores fuertes, como un cartelista, productos concretos, lirondos, mercantibles" ("Sobre si hay humoristas en la literatura rusa"). His very cleanly presented "cartel" is more journalistic than literary in its object of criticism, as it shows the titles of twenty Madrid newspapers arrayed in a kind of colored spectrum. At the top of that spectrum is, in black, the ultra-conservative Catholic daily *El Siglo*

Futuro, while at the bottom, colored red, is *El Joven Comunista.* The colored spectrum of newspaper titles is the visual result of the informed reader, represented by an eye, having the benefit of Gecé's "espectroscopio" to determine the political complexion of each news outlet.

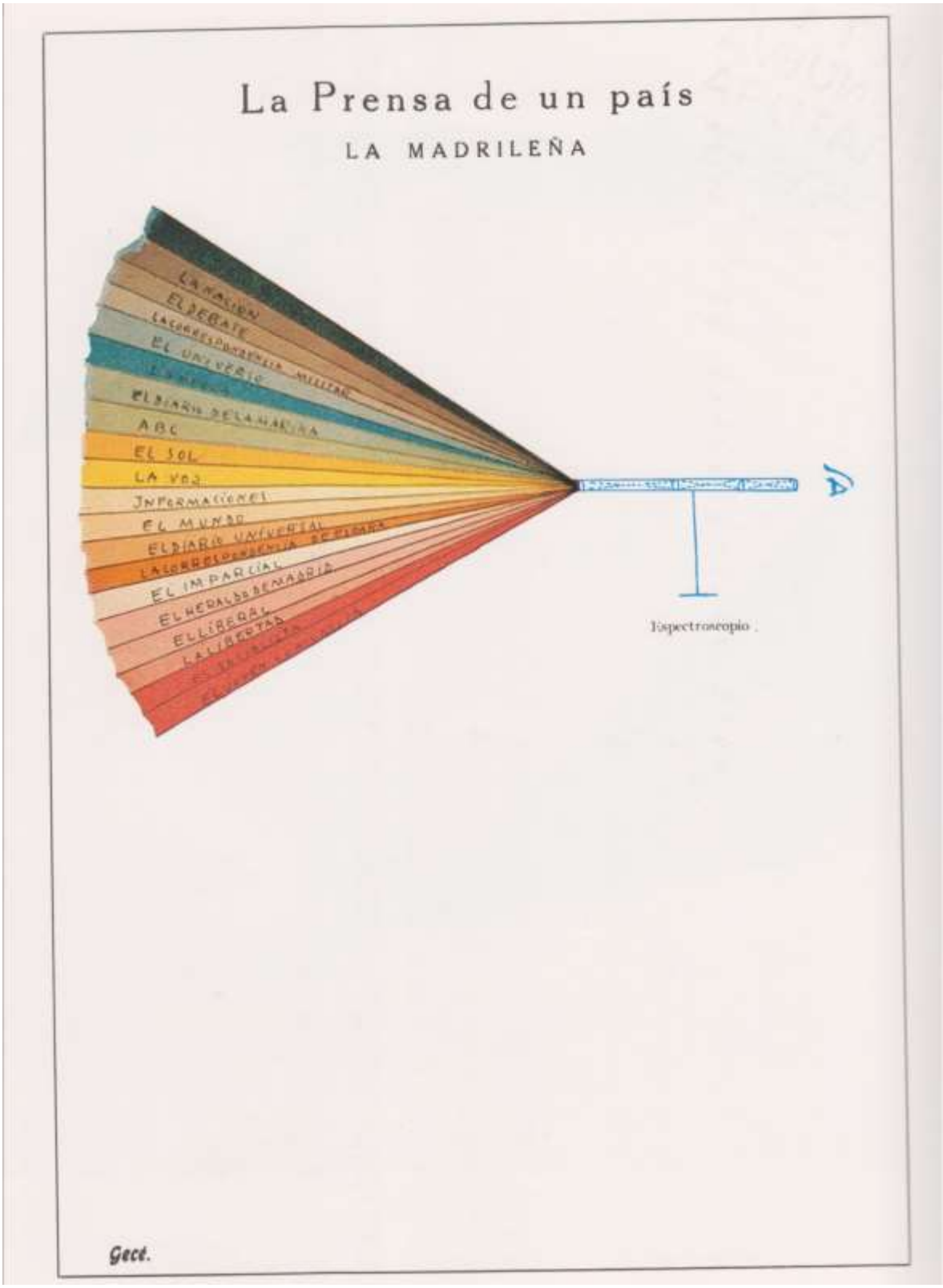


Fig. 12. “La Prensa de un país: la madrileña.” *Carteles* (259). Reprinted in “Carteles literarios.” *Poesía* 26 (1986). Page58.

A spectroscope or spectrometer measures properties of light over a specific range of a spectrum, such as the visible spectrum. Spectroscopes are often used to determine the chemical composition of unknown materials. The light emitted from heated materials is unique to its chemical makeup, so refracting that light with a prism across a portion of the spectrum produces a likewise unique pattern of visible light. Flame spectroscopy is the simplest form of this analysis; a sample of the material to be studied is burned and the light from the resulting flame is dispersed through a prism. The unique wavelength of the light from the flame produces, in prismatic dispersion, an identifiable set of colors which can serve as markers for categorization of the material.

In Giménez Caballero's poster the unique composition of the Madrid press is made explicit and identifiable by dispersing the 'light' of the many different political leanings of its various components. Naturally, spectroscopic analysis of the press of another city would produce a different set of colors. It would seem that, according to Gecé, much of Madrid's press is colored red, or at least tinged pinkish, most explicitly and intensely in the case of *El Joven Comunista.* Spectroscopic analysis for Gecé then shows that he considers that majority of Madrid's journalistic production leans leftward politically. Giménez Caballero's own employer, *El Sol*, as well as its sister publication *La Voz*, fall on the center of his spectrum, presumably as models of moderation and unbiased clarity. Though now faded, the green color of *ABC* and the indigos and violets of *La Época, El Universo, La Nación,* etc., complete the spectrum before *El Siglo Futuro,* alone in its severe blackness, represents in Gecé's opinion the lone ultra-conservative news source in Madrid.

Without Giménez Caballero's spectroscopic analysis, this poster suggests, the Madrid news readership, represented by the image of an eye, would not be able to easily situate the political wavelengths informing the the daily discourses in the city in relation to the whole. The light would reach the eye unrefracted and thus the nuances of its components would go unnoticed. Gecé's poster performs just this operation of refraction for *madrileños,* claiming to classify scientifically each newspaper in relation to the others. It achieves this as a critical text, but like Gecé's other reviews, not as a criticism elaborated through descriptive analysis. The poster is more about classification than commentary, and the impact of the visual presentation conveys a great deal of information in an immediately apprehensible and ostensibly objective image. The poster is a visual piece, metaphorically the product of Giménez Caballero having burned the newspapers of the capital to measure and separate the political wavelengths emitted by the flame. The colors are then coded in intelligible ways, but there remain some ambiguities. Red corresponds simply enough to communism and black signifies catholic orthodoxy, but what does the green of the middle of the spectrum represent? The slight right-leaning orientation of *ABC* allows us to interpret the green color it is cast in, but there certainly is no clear political philosophy to be associated with that color as there is for communism.

In a discussion of parody and pastiche in his book *Palimpsestes,* Gérard Genette discusses Marcel Proust's "critique en action," which for Proust is a kind of imitative exploration of an author's style, to be preferred over descriptive critical analysis. "La critique descriptive," writes Genette, "serait apparemment moins amusante, plus fatigante et en tout cas plus longue à écrire (et/ou à lire?) que la critique imitative" (113). Giménez

Caballero certainly understood this in his critical practice but he took 'criticism in action' to another level. Rather than actively imitate a certain style as a kind of homage, Giménez Caballero's criticism, by incorporating physical objects from a variety of material sources (the tear line on the spectrum piece is visible), is active but ambiguous. In reference to this procedure, he writes at the outset of *Carteles* that "utilizar para lo literario, como herramienta, el cartel – esto es, un utensilio pertinente a la plástica y, por tanto, iliterario – parece *ipso facto* como una traición tramada sobre el campo mismo de la literatura," but it really simply supposes a reevaluation of what literature and literariness mean in the industrial age ("Carteles literarios" 33). Rather than 'immortalize' an artwork, the artist or the critic must be aware in the twentieth century, says Gecé, that artworks are merchandise and "el cartelista" or the critic, "es irresponsable… no tiene más misión que poner su color, su gracia, su ingenio en envolver los productos a veces más groseros, antipoéticos y brutales de la vida, recubriéndolos de un aura luminosa de ilusión, de fosforescencia, de seducción embriagadora" ("Carteles literarios" 34). More personally and less publicly, Giménez Caballero makes a similar statement of aesthetic moral detachment in a letter to Guillermo de Torre in the summer of 1926, writing, "Yo no me suponía hombre de opiniones" (*Gacetas y meridianos* 71).

In this context, little does it matter what Giménez Caballero's politics are when he creates the poster for "La Prensa de un país." His meditation on the political orientation of each newspaper produced not a reasoned descriptive critique but a very subjective kind of criticism in action, in Proust and Genette's terminology. His poster is primarily visual and not political. So active (and anti-activist) is this criticism that it sometimes sources material directly from other texts, plucking images and objects from various print media

as well as the wider world. In this way, Giménez Caballero's "carteles" are even more "hypertextual" than Genette's "hypertextes" because they are composed *of* rather than *according to* outside references. They are mixes of genres and registers, as Antonio Espina noted with enthusiasm in *La Gaceta Literaria* in 1928, calling Gecé's "cartel literario" "una mezcla de literatura y plasticidad, de anuncio y biografía, de banderola y aleluya, de luz y de pregón, públicamente, expresivamente moderno" ("Los carteles de «Gecé»"). As Giménez Caballero closes the generic gap between advertising and literature, graphic design and writing, or the discursive gap between reference and appropriation, he also closes the gap between popular cultural and literary criticism. As we saw from his explicitly stated plans for *Carteles* above, his work does not aspire to a place in a museum or to immortality, but it does move freely between the realms of newspaper advertisement and urban art gallery.

We owe the theorization of the closure of this gap between high and low culture, the shrinking of the "Great Divide," to Andreas Huyssen, but one of Gecé's contemporaries already saw that effectively this is what the "carteles literarios" did and that the crossing of this great divide was characteristic of the period. José María Salaverría writes,

> En el libro *Carteles* es donde mejor resaltan y se distinguen las dos cualidades que hacen característica la personalidad del autor: desgarro un poco callejero y erudición. Parece una amalgama paradójica. Parece que no puede haber manera de acoplar ese tono como de parroquiano de café de la plaza del Progreso, y ese consumado saber que sólo se adquiere asistiendo largos años al gabinete de Centro de Estudios Históricos, donde Menéndez Pidal gobierna el mundo aparte de las papeletas y los ficheros. Y el caso es que *Gecé* lo logra. Y da, por consiguiente, el espectáculo inaudito, el espectáculo propio de nuestra edad de instrucción extensa y democrática, del joven que habla con dejo de pueblo y dice cosas de alta y fina cultura. Algo semejante a lo que ocurre con Ramón Gómez de la Serna, con el que tiene *Gecé* tanto parecido. (qtd. in Selva 74)

Le rappel à l'ordre **and Collage**

Gecé's "carteles literarios" close the gap between popular and even commercial discourses and art, just as the Cubist and Futurist innovators of the collage had done some fifteen years before. Collage for the Cubists and Futurists, however, depended on the juxtaposition of disparate elements to create a new image. As Marjorie Perloff's analysis shows, this image might be a synthetic composition utilizing different materials, such as in the case of Picasso, or it might be a less harmonious construction whose materials retain all their literalness, such as in the case of Tatlin (*The Futurist Moment* 69). Perloff's distinction between compositional collage and constructional collage is important here because it can help us to determine what exactly Giménez Caballero is doing in his "carteles."

In some of the posters exhibited at the Galerías Dalmau and at Ediciones Inchausti in 1928 Giménez Caballero uses materials like corrugated cardboard (in his "Toisón al futurista Marinetti") or small nails (in his poster of "José Bergamín") which give them a decidedly 'constructional' feel. Perloff notes that Picasso's collages are more compositional than constructional since Picasso would not use a newspaper, for example, to represent a newspaper, but would repurpose materials to new meanings. Collage in this compositional sense is about juxtaposing objects for an overall effect, whereby the materials find a new home in the improvised context of the collage while only obliquely referencing the original context from which they have been taken. For Tatlin, on the other hand, says Perloff, "construction replaces composition" (*The Futurist Moment* 69). A piece of wood is only a piece of wood and is never employed other than literally.

The corrugated cardboard, metallic paint, bowtie and string of Gecé's "Toisón al futurista Marinetti" ("Carteles literarios" 48) seem to be rather haphazardly arranged, giving no immediate impression of semiotic sense. We should remember the origins of the "carteles" in Gecé's reviews, however, and consider that the "Toisón" might be more than just an exercise in materials arrangement. "Toisón," as a kind of award or insignia, could be a clear enough reference to the Spanish-Austrian chivalric Order of the Golden Fleece, La Insigne Orden del Toisón de Oro. Marinetti, instead of receiving the usual golden pendant portraying a sheep held up at its mid-section, receives a bowtie on a string. The order's sheep insignia represents the golden fleece of Jason, and is usually depicted dangling from a pendant, its belly squeezed by a kind of strap or tie. Marinetti, much more modern, receives a bowtie whose shape, tightly tied in the center, is reminiscent of the order's characteristic sheep pendant. Rather than gold, of course, this modern insignia is a mass-production clothing accessory and is presented on industrial cardboard, a material whose modernity is emphasized by the metallic paint swaths in copper, silver, and greyish-green.

But why should Giménez Caballero award Marinetti a modern parody of an aristocratic decoration? As Andrew A. Anderson notes, Giménez Caballero was around this time working to rehabilitate the figure of Marinetti, and this cheeky award could actually remind the poster's viewers that Marinetti was instrumental in the genesis of the avant-garde ("Futurism" 173). Indeed, Futurism in Russia is associated with a magazine named after the chivalric order here referenced, *Zolotoïe Runo* (*Toison d'Or*), which held several artistic salons exhibiting early Cubist and Futurist works (Villegas 2). It seems

then that Gecé's poster, despite its somewhat ragged constructional appearance, is a measured composition, and a very literary one at that.

Likewise, I suspect that the twenty-four small nails visible in the facsimile of Giménez Caballero's poster dedicated to José Bergamín included in the selection reproduced in the magazine *Poesía*, are not in fact all the nails originally included on the piece. Corresponding to the thirty texts in Bergamín's book *Caracteres*, there should be thirty nails, and in fact some marks on the paper seem to show where missing nails once were. Bergamín's *Caracteres*, printed by Emilio Prados and Manuel Altolaguirre in their Imprenta Sur in 1926, is a series of thirty caricatures or brief profiles of character types, including things like "El Avispado" or "El Bondadoso." Many of these "semblanzas" were inspired by the most noteworthy literary figures of the day, and though Bergamín tried to distance the literary sketch from the person alluded to, as he says in a note opening the 1978 facsimile edition, many of the subjects for his *Caracteres* were recognized when they appeared in 1926 (5). Some of these people, Antonio Espina, Juan Ramón Jiménez, Enrique Díez-Canedo, for example, appear explicitly on Gecé's poster, with small dotted lines linking their names to a particular nail. We could use the dotted lines following from each name to determine the literary figure's place in the lineup, as it were, and thus identify the caricature assigned to him.[72] It would seem that, in another very literary move, metaphorical rather than just materially constructional, Gecé has taken the nails from their normal context and transplanted them to a linguistic one: he

[72] Unfortunately, it is evident that, in addition to losing some of the nails, the piece of paper holding the nails has been shifted so some of the dotted lines do not line up with their continuation to the names below, written on the main poster paper. If all the nails were present and the lines had not been shifted, we could use Gecé's poster to decode some of the caricatures in Bergamín's book.

seems to be saying that Bergamín's characterizations are so exact that he has "hit the nail on the head"[73] with all thirty of them.

From these examples we can see that Giménez Caballero's posters are more like compositional than constructional collage. While not specifically discussing collage, it is noteworthy in this respect that José-Carlos Mainer remarks on the 'synthetic' qualities of posters like Gecé's depiction of the phases of José Ortega y Gasset or the celestial "Universo de la literatura española contemporánea" ("Ernesto Giménez Caballero" xliv). The linguistic and historical codes of these posters, however, make them much more literary than Picasso's synthetic pieces. Here, an important point that Perloff makes about writing in collage comes to the fore. Perloff says that cut-and-pasted texts strongly reference their original context through simple intelligibility while nonetheless, by way of their selection and incompleteness, we are forced "to see them as compositional rather than referential entities." She continues, "the position of writing in collage is thus equivocal; the words refer to people and events," and in the case of the next poster we shall examine by Gecé, the words refer to an author. "Yet," continues Perloff "the collage structure simultaneously contradicts that reference" (*The Futurist Moment* 50).

[73] The expression is essentially the same in English and in Spanish.

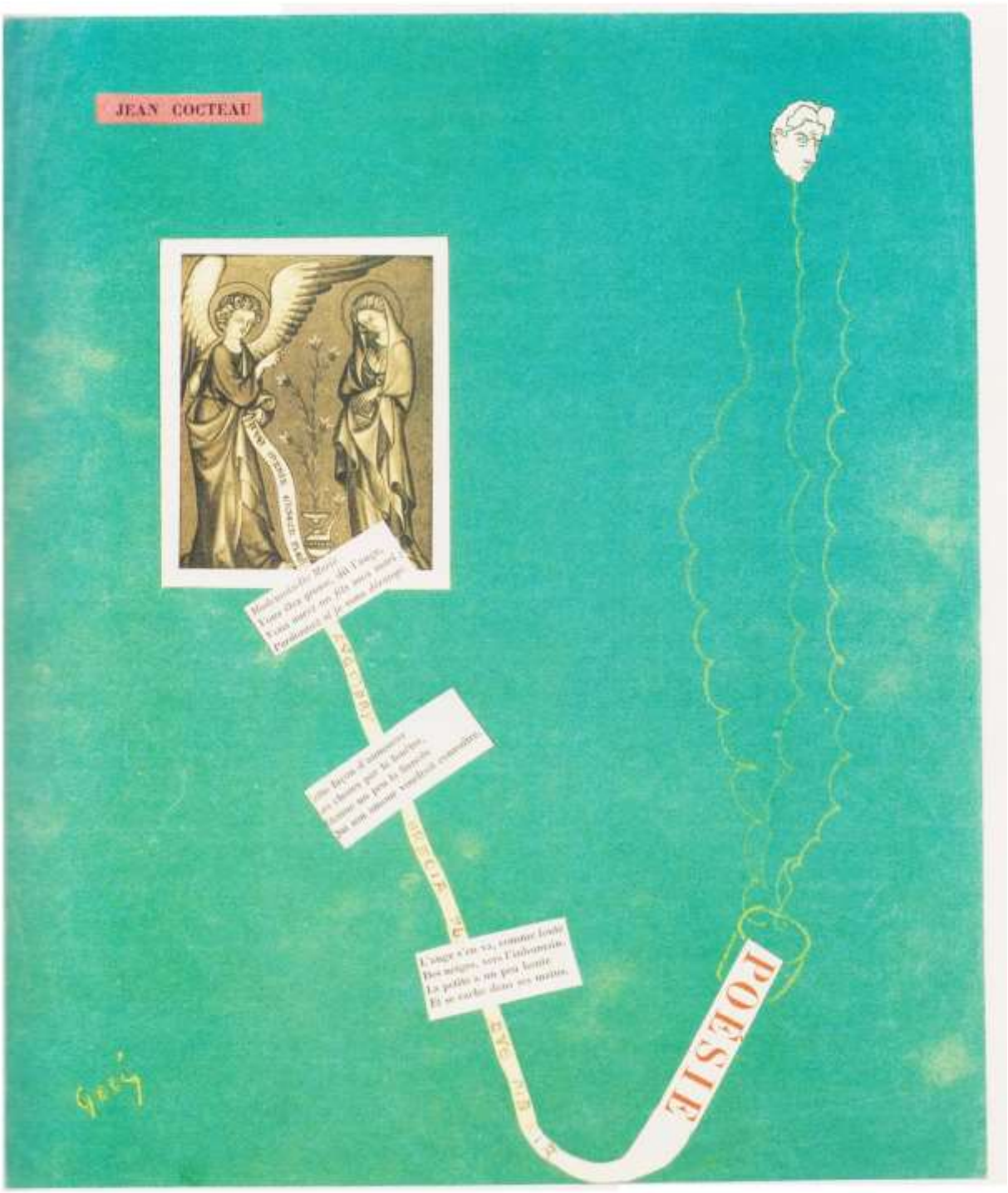


Fig. 13. “Jean Cocteau.” Ernesto Giménez Caballero. Printed in “Carteles literarios.” *Poesía* 26 (1986). Page 41.

Giménez Caballero's poster dedicated to the French poet Jean Cocteau is a challenging piece to work with given this inevitable interpretive ambiguity. Over a background of celestial blue paper, Gecé has pasted Cocteau's name, cut from the pink paper of one of his publications. Under Cocteau's name, the poster shows a kind of late medieval image of the Annunciation, with the angel Gabriel speaking with the Virgin Mary while holding a scroll reading "Ave Maria Gracia Plena." Giménez Caballero has extended the scroll beyond the limits of the frame around the angel and the Virgin, repeating "Ave Maria Gracia Plena" until arriving at the upturned and improvised end of the scroll. Here, the word "Poésie" in capital Bodoni letters, diagonal and upside-down, is capped off by a simple line drawing of a smoking pipe. Cocteau's cutout self-portrait materializes from out of the pipe smoke at the top right-hand corner of the poster. Along the downward progression of Gabriel's scroll, Gecé has pasted the separate stanzas of Cocteau's poem, "Gabriel au village."

The poem, from Cocteau's 1922 collection *Vocabulaire,*[74] reads as follows:

> *Mademoiselle Marie*
> *Vous êtes grosse*, dit l'ange,
> *Vous aurez un fils sans mari;*
> *Pardonnez si je vous dérange.*
>
> Cette façon d'annoncer
> Les choses par la fenêtre
> Étonne un peu la fiancée
> Qui son amour voudrait connaître.
>
> L'ange s'en va, comme fonte
> Des neiges, vers l'inhumain.
> La petite a un peu honte
> Et se cache dans ses mains. (Cocteau, *Poésie* 418)

[74] And reprinted in the 1925 collected poems, *Poésie*. It is from this later volume that Giménez Caballero cuts the poem.

Giménez Caballero's choice of Jean Cocteau as the subject of this poster, as well as his choice of this poem and his techniques of execution, can tell us much about the place of material poetics in the avant-garde towards the end of the 1920s. Looking at how Cocteau's poem is printed in his 1925 *Poésie*, which is the source from which Gecé cut the poem, we might be tempted to assume that the typographical experimentation of the preceding years has fallen out of favor.

It is true that right around the time of the publication of this volume of Cocteau's poetry, only a few years before Giménez Caballero's poster exhibitions in Barcelona and Madrid, a push was already underway to move European poetry away from the iconoclastic spirit of the early avant-garde *isms* and towards something more subdued, an art more interested in respecting tradition. In fact, Jean Cocteau's 1926 book *Le rappel à l'ordre* was a very important title in this movement, and its title is often used in antonomasia for the general trend. In the texts collected in this volume, rather than a return *to* tradition, however, Cocteau tries to make clear that he advocates for a measured return *of* tradition, in the form of rhyme, conventional typographical presentation, explicit emotion, and the like (*Le rappel à l'ordre* 246).

The short lyric chosen by Giménez Caballero for his poster is indicative of this shift in its clean presentation, its rhyme, its narrative structure, and its pathetic theme. Increasingly political, Giménez Caballero welcomes the return of aesthetic tradition as a nationalistic celebration, and even considers the contemporaneous celebration of Góngora organized by the 1927 group a 'fascist' event (Anderson, *EGC* 262-3). But Giménez Caballero makes clear in his "cartel" and in other writings (Anderson, *EGC* 263-5) that he saw that this shift was not a reversal of avant-garde advances but a reincorporation of

traditional poetry within the avant-garde, or alternately in Giménez Caballero's own metaphor, revolutionary wine in traditional skins (Anderson, *EGC* 263). Firstly, the poem is not traditionally religious, for our "Mary" figure hides her face in her hands upon hearing the news, or the reminder, I would argue, that she is soon to bear a son. In fact, many features of the poem allow us to read it not as the record of a supernatural event, but as a much more mundane interaction between common villagers. The 'angel's' sarcastic manner of speaking, "Pardonnez si je vous dérange," and the fact that he seems to have delivered his message through a window, hint at the fact that we could be witnessing the taunting of a pregnant young woman in a patriarchal small town instead of the Christian miracle of the Gospels. In this reading, "ange" is a rather ironic metaphor for the villager passing by Marie's open window, a messenger of the townsfolk's gossip or derision.[75] As Gabriel melts into "l'inhumain" like the snow, we see that the avant-garde's focus on the physical world, the world of non-transcendent phenomena, gives us a particular reading of this term. Rather than anything 'incorporeal' or 'celestial,' "inhumain" here means the undifferentiated masses of the hostile and inhuman world. Marie, as "la petite," is not a holy figure but simply a humiliated individual. She is a village girl abandoned by her former lover to raise her child alone in a thoroughly earthly world which condemns her for the coming 'miracle' of her child's birth. Elsewhere in the same volume of Cocteau's poetry the Virgin Mary is also decidedly terrestrial; in one

[75] While Marielle Wyns, in her study entirely dedicated to angels in Cocteau's poetry, continually stresses the idea of the angel as the almost supernatural inspiration for poetic creation, she allows that modern poetry since Rilke and Mallarmé treats angels as much more personal, less dogmatically orthodox figures (43) and that the scene of the angel's apparition, "traditionellement empreinte d'émotion et de sacralité, est traitée par Cocteau sur un ton pour le moins léger; l'apparition et l'annonce sont ramenées à des considérations matérielles, quotidiennes" (115). This is especially true in the poem under consideration here, as well as the others I mention, and in the very personal interactions in the *Discours du grand Sommeil* or in poems like "Les anges maladroits" (*Poésie* 157-71; 426).

poem a dying bull lies prostrate “comme la Sainte Vierge nègre” (154); World War I aviation ace Roland Garros’s plane is likened to Gabriel (130) as well as the Virgin Mary, “L’ange de plomb/la vierge enceinte” (138); in the “Discours du grand Sommeil,” the Virgin Mary has more than one potential visitor, the “messager de Bethléem” and a sailor crawling through the window (157). In Cocteau, the Virgin Mary becomes a metaphor for the earthly concerns of death and war, or when figured as a woman, a regular human being, struggling with the earthly problems of sexuality, abandonment, and community contempt.

Giménez Caballero has taken Cocteau’s poem and cut each stanza from the others, pasting them down the page of his poster. He has likewise taken the title “POÉSIE” from Cocteau’s 1925 collected verses, cutting out the word from the front cover as well as cutting out the material from page 418. Poetry, in a physical sense in this poster, takes place in a lower sphere than the sphere of divine inspiration, and is indeed inverted here again to reiterate the avant-garde’s continued claim to poetry’s material nature. By cutting the poem’s stanzas into separate pieces and distancing “POÉSIE” from the divine messenger, Giménez Caballero shows his interest in referencing but not revering Cocteau, poetry, and Christian theology. Perhaps figuring into his effort to demystify poetry as Cocteau has demystified the Marian figure, the poem “Miracles,” which appears opposite “Gabriel au village” on page 417 of Cocteau’s collection, is cut-up and glued facing down in this composition. Cocteau’s self-portrait floats above the yellow vapors of ‘poetry,’ but seems to solidify in the blue sky not as the creator but as the byproduct of the poem. The placement of Cocteau’s head in this position seems to subvert the traditional authorial precedence in favor of the poem. Cutting and pasting

amount to citation as well as disruption, so Gecé's poster to Jean Cocteau is a homage, but it is not hagiographic.

Cocteau's poem's terrestrial reexamination of the figure of the Virgin Mary was a perfect choice for Giménez Caballero in 1927. His book of that same year, *Los toros, las castañuelas y la Virgen,* includes an essay entitled "Ave María Purísima" on the new modern European woman, celebrating advances in sports, literature, and technology while lamenting the loss of certain traditional feminine virtues (Selva 79; Anderson *EGC* 99). As Anderson writes, "nationalism is at the center of Giménez Caballero's preoccupations," already in 1926, and so he chooses to extol symbols of Spanishness like bullfighting, castanets, and the image of the Inmaculada, but, Anderson continues,

> a wave of modernization is sweeping Europe, and Spain is not immune to its impact. People – in particular women – are playing more sports, like soccer and tennis; people – and in particular women – are driving more automobiles, like Citroëns; classical music and literature are transformed, as Satie and Cocteau bear witness; fashionable women have adopted the style of the flapper that downplays some of their essential femininity. Giménez Caballero's response to all this is deeply ambivalent. (Anderson, *EGC* 99)

Satie and Cocteau appear explicitly in Gecé's text as corrupting influences for women, who like the woman in the "Heno de Pravia" advertisement discussed above, have shortened their hair, have changed their clothing, and have become ever more present in economic and cultural life. "Se va teniendo a la mujer demasiado cerca, demasiado fácil, demasiado encima," our author complains, and he wonders whether Spanish men will grow tired of the situation, as he certainly hopes they will. In fact, Giménez Caballero writes, "Quizá esté más próxima de lo que se sospecha la bajada del nuncio angelical, del nuevo envío celeste a la estancia femenina" (*Los toros, las castañuelas y la Virgen* 193).

The ambivalence of Giménez Caballero's attitude to the modern woman comes into full focus when we read this desire for a reorientation of Spanish womanhood towards tradition, set in the terms of the biblical Annunciation, next to his "cartel" for Jean Cocteau. Both Gecé's metaphor for this new cultural annunciation and the image in Cocteau's poem seem to reference the story of Gabriel's visit to Galilee recounted in the Gospel of Luke, wherein the angel visits Mary in her home and tells her that she is to conceive a son of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1: 26-35). In the Gospel of Matthew, however, Joseph, engaged to be married to Mary, resolves to leave her discretely rather than publicly shame her when he discovers that she is pregnant. Instead of visiting Mary, the angel Gabriel visits Joseph in a dream and informs him of the child's divine progenitor, resulting in Joseph remaining committed to the wedding (Matt. 1: 18-25). In Luke's version, Mary's innocence is never questioned. She receives the word of God directly from the angel Gabriel and she is charged with informing Joseph. In Matthew's version, the public shaming I read in Cocteau's poem is a real possibility for the biblical Mary. The same difficulty involved in reconciling these two accounts is attendant in Giménez Caballero's appropriation of Cocteau's poem. Is the modern woman to be, in Gecé's imaginary, the agent of her own change, or does his essay on "Ave María Purísima" amount to an annunciation to men (the Josephs in this equation) to bring the modern woman back into the fold of traditional political and cultural life?

Giménez Caballero is, to be sure, not very clear on this. His essay denounces some of the Don Juan-style misogyny characteristic of Spain which he says has contributed to the modern woman looking so unlike the Inmaculada. While he celebrates avant-garde music and poetry as well as industrial-age advances like aviation and the

automobile, he is not sure all this modernity is so good for Spanish women. Politically speaking, a complete 'return to order' is not only impossible but is undesirable, for Giménez Caballero fears that it is precisely a particular Spanish machismo that has driven an emotional wedge between men and women by bringing them too violently close together. Thus, he would rather talk about a "renacimiento" in Spain rather than a "resurrección" (*Los toros* 103), or as he does on the cover of the book, three "*resucitamientos*." Don Juan is the product of Spanish nationalism (*Los toros* 118) but he also represents the "castiza encrucijada de la bifurcación sexual española" (*Los toros* 175). In this bifurcation and in Giménez Caballero's mind, Spain is experiencing in its modernity a generalized ambivalence of attitudes toward women: "Duda de la virginidad + Exaltación de la Inmaculada. Y, por otro [lado]…Heterodoxia contra María + contrarreforma ortodoxa en pro de la Purísima" (*Los toros* 176). Giménez Caballero goes on to ask if it is any surprise then that Seville could simultaneously be the "patria" of Don Juan and the Virgin Mary (176). His essay concludes that literature is beginning to reflect a generalized desire to reconcile this cultural ambivalence towards women. "Todos lo hemos sentido un poco ya… Nuestro fastidio de donjuanes escépticos, defraudados," he writes (*Los toros* 193). The 'renaissance' of Spanish women in the guise of the Purísima would however be "new," a return of the earlier paradigm as a tonic to modern masculine excesses.[76]

Giménez Caballero would have read Cocteau's earliest poetry, such as his work in *Le Cap de Bonne-Espérance*, with its typographical experimentation and modern thematics, as definitively avant-garde. But what did he make of poems like "Gabriel au

[76] Giménez Caballero has an idea of what the modern interest in sports and industrial-age energy might lead to and he vigorously opposes it. Homosexuality, he claims, could come about as a result of the modern 'virilization' of women (*Los toros* 192).

village"? The 1925 edition of Cocteau's poetry from which Gecé cut the poem for his poster provides a good synthesis of Cocteau's move towards more traditionally formatted (and rhyming) verses. For example, the poems of the *Discours du grand Sommeil*, in sequential stanzaic presentation, are from the years 1916 to 1918 but remained unpublished until 1925. It seems Cocteau felt these poems (some, like the "Ode à la pipe" [*Poésie* 190], with very regular rhyme patterns) finally fit with the aesthetics of his poetry following from the 1920 collection *Poésies* and could thus appear publicly without being dissonant within his overall production. By 1922's *Vocabulaire*, Cocteau apostrophizes roses and speaks candidly about personal emotions. The intimate pathos of "Gabriel au village," its rhyming quatrains and biblical allusions, would all have been very objectionable to Guillermo de Torre still in 1925, but many other artists of the period, including Giménez Caballero, embraced this kind of 'return of (or to) tradition.'

Torre exclaims against Cocteau's return to rhyme in his *Literaturas europeas de vanguardia*, claiming that the French poet must be feeling a certain nostalgia for the Symbolist readings of his earliest youth and asserting that "las rimas son las muletas del inválido" (*LEV* 370; 331). On the other hand it seems, according to Anderson, that Gecé wrote his "Ave María Purísima" in 1926 (*EGC* 78), and so he was already concerned, certainly on a political level, with tempering some of the more radical aesthetic impulses of the avant-garde. He was an enthusiastic reader of Torre's 1925 compendium of avant-garde poetic practice, but he soon recognized that across Europe a revaluation of poetic tradition was underway. Thus, while his exhibition of his "carteles literarios" in Barcelona was accompanied by a "manifestación pictórica de vanguardia," including paintings by Dalí and Barradas in early 1928 (Brihuega, *Las vanguardias* 288), Giménez

Caballero was also soon to publish, in May of that year, on a Belgian group's manifesto in favor of poets like Antonio Machado and Jean Cocteau over avant-garde rebels like Marinetti, Torre, or Louis Aragon ("Valor proverbial de Antonio Machado").[77] During his visit to Germany, also in 1928, Giménez Caballero recounts how he discussed his "carteles literarios" with a group of artists in Hanover. These "abstractos" include Kurt Schwitters, one of the most interesting experimenters in typography from Zurich Dada. Giménez Caballero writes on this group,

> Además de lo abstracto, este grupo de artistas tiene la obsesión de lo materioso (más que de lo material). En su respeto a la forma, permite a la materia introducirse libremente en sus concepciones con desfachatez casi repugnante. El más materioso de ellos es, sin duda, Kurt Schwitters. ("La etapa alemana. El mundo de las máquinas")

Giménez Caballero goes on to elaborate on the differences between his material aesthetics and those of the "abstractos" of Hanover, specifically in relation to his "carteles literarios," much appreciated by the German painters. I believe this section merits extensive citation:

> Para «los abstractos» (todos ellos pintores) el esquema necesitaba, como única significación, el ritmo de líneas. Mientras para mí todo ritmo de líneas tenía que poseer una significación literaria. Para ellos lo intelectual, lo formal, era un trampolín hacia el goce plástico, mientras para mí lo plástico era una escala hacia un contenido espiritual. Lo mismo ocurría al estimar el concepto materia. En su afán de plasticismo puro dejaban intervenir a la materia apenas inorgánica, de leño, de moldura. Yo no: la materia era para mí alusión. Algo al servicio de algo superior. Eso sí: con una energía de acción directa.
> En nuestras reflexiones sobre la vuelta a la res, a la cosa, a lo material en arte —que ellos interpretaban como algo imponderable—, yo les hacía ver los nexos que existían con toda la más novísima vida del mundo: pragmatismo, deporte, máquina, dictadura, desnudo, alegría: materialismo transcendental. ("La etapa alemana")

[77] This manifesto appears, with curious irony, on the same page as an advance from Giménez Caballero's book, *Yo, inspector de alcantarillas.*

Rather than comment on the very suggestive associations Gecé makes between his new "materialismo trascendental" and dictatorship or nudity, I should like to close this discussion of his "carteles literarios" by situating them in the history, as it were, of the historical avant-garde. 'Transcendental materialism' sounds quite different from the material poetics of non-transcendence that I have thus far treated as the defining characteristic of avant-garde aesthetics in Spain. We have seen how Giménez Caballero's posters are nonetheless indebted to this material poetics, for they utilize techniques of Cubist collage to close Huyssen's "Great Divide" between mass culture and art. Giménez Caballero, true to the earliest and most aggressive avant-garde, is seeking novelty in his posters; he aims for immediate impact and he aims to demystify criticism by making it material and by equating it with commercial advertising.

However, Giménez Caballero's posters are more like Picasso's compositional collage ("material" we might say) than Tatlin's constructional collage ("materioso" in Gecé's terminology). They are allusive, openly metaphorical, and typify the contemporary cultural figures most appealing to Giménez Caballero. This praise comes in the form of "criticism in action," as we have seen, much more original than descriptive analysis. The advertising poster was the ideal active platform from which to launch this new kind of criticism. Torre wrote in 1921 in the quotation that opens this chapter that the commercial billboards of Madrid and other European capitals represented the "floración, apoteosis y estertor" of the avant-garde; at night, for Torre, they took on their final "matiz epilogal y desolador" ("Apoteosis de los carteles"). Giménez Caballero's posters dedicated to Federico García Lorca, Rafael Alberti, or Jean Cocteau certainly have a quality of poetic apotheosis to them. After all, Jean Cocteau's head appears on his

poster as the materially transcendent creator of poetry, cleared of its religious dimension but imbued with a looming artistic greatness. Much more than simple ironic material compositions, the "carteles literarios" aim to encapsulate a poet's aesthetics in the quickly apprehensible material terms of the poster. They represent the fullest closure of the "Great Divide," a closure that Andreas Huyssen describes as the hallmark of the avant-garde. But they close this divide in an act of homage, and specifically by honoring poets like Lorca or Alberti, some of the young poets who would represent Cocteau's 'call to order' in Spain. As Andrew A. Anderson documents, Giménez Caballero's thinking on the avant-garde underwent a rapid and complicated evolution in the last few years of the decade of the 1920s (*EGC* 257-304). He came to see the avant-garde as split into several moments. The first was an early period of rupture and iconoclasm, represented in Spain by Guillermo de Torre, *ultraísmo,* and "deshumanización del arte." Next, the "nueva literatura" which he describes in his "Cartel de la nueva literatura," a document that caps off his poster exhibit in Madrid, corresponds in his mind to Cocteau's "rappel à l'ordre," and, as Anderson notes, to the *gongorismo* of the poets of the Generation of 1927 in a very broad sense (*EGC* 265, 270).

In this historical context, Guillermo de Torre's description of advertising posters as the "floración" of modernity but also as possessing a certain "epilogal" character is particularly apt for Gecé's "carteles literarios." Of the many Gecé's of the decade, the Gecé of this period, the Gecé of the "carteles literarios" is "el *Gecé* de la apoteosis vanguardista" (Selva 93). His "carteles" represent, as Sebastià Gasch wrote, "relaciones plásticas del más alto interés" ("La exposición en Dalmau"), especially as literary documents, but they also occupy the place of a kind of epilogue to avant-garde

typographical and visual experimentation in poetry. Willard Bohn states it explicitly; he writes that "although this brief experiment in visual criticism [the "carteles literarios"] was destined not to bear fruit, it provides an interesting epilogue to the Ultraist adventure" (*Aesthetics* 171). The next chapter will show, however, that the more subdued poetry accompanying the "rappel à l'ordre," often more interested in traditional form and meter, was nonetheless deeply affected by the historical avant-garde and bears the fruit of the typographical and material experimentation of the preceding years.

ENCAJADAS LAS FORMAS: MATERIAL POETICS AND TYPOGRAPHY IN MANUEL ALTOLAGUIRRE

In the first section of his 1927 "Poema del agua," Manuel Altolaguirre places a hidden spring among stones, a motionless sky, prehistory, "muros siempre" (*Poesías completas* 307). In this landscape forms are fixed. We read, "Encajadas las formas," and the scene is set, the forms and shapes of all things are laid in place. Conveniently enough for this study of typography and poetry, both "formas" and "cajas" in Spanish are important objects in a traditional printer's workshop. The former is the wooden frame in which individual lead characters are arranged to compose a page of text, while the latter, as upper and lower cases, are where letterforms are stored.

This link that I make between the line from the "Poema del agua" and typography is not gratuitous, for Altolaguirre was himself a dedicated and prolific printer. His long career as printer and publisher is one facet to his creative personality while his poems are the other, each penetrating and nourishing its counterpart (Neira 19). As Andrew Debicki writes, "[Altolaguirre's] interest in form and in the concrete embodiment of aesthetic meaning is also clear from his career as editor and publisher" (28). The clarity of the connection between poetry and typography may be intuitive for Debicki, but this chapter will submit Altolaguirre's early poetry and his typographical work to an analysis that should make the connection explicit. A reading of Altolaguirre's poetry that takes into account his activity as a printer will reveal new metaphorical resonances in his writing and will offer new terms in which to consider the work of other poets printed by Altolaguirre.

Even where Altolaguirre's work at the press confirms his great admiration for Juan Ramón Jimenez, his choices of fonts, his decisions about layout and numbering, of

color and paper quality, and his poetic praxis must be considered in the context of the material poetics of the historical avant-garde and the conscious 'return' to tradition and away from the "*ismos* de avance" (Diego, "La vuelta a la estrofa") undertaken by Altolaguirre and his peers in the *Litoral* group. To be sure, Altolaguirre was never a convinced Dadaist or a late Andalusian Ultraist. Nor could he have been; born in 1905, Altolaguirre was too young to participate in the wilder manifestations of the early avant-garde. We must read his work in conjunction with his own contemporaries' theories about aesthetics and tradition, especially Jean Cocteau's 1926 book *Le rappel à l'ordre*, mentioned in the previous chapter, and Gerardo Diego's 1927 essay "La vuelta a la estrofa," a sign of the general *gongorismo* of the moment. Altolaguirre's early work as both poet and printer develops in this context of recuperation of tradition, and through his correspondence and editorial decisions his allegiance to Cocteau and Diego is clear. These authors advocate a return to tradition (or a return of tradition) from the position of the avant-garde's previous rejection of any kind of reverence for past practices. Any 'return' to tradition or order, however, implies a knowledge of the path away from it, a knowledge which Cocteau and Diego certainly possessed as active participants in the international avant-garde in the years before Altolaguirre's literary debut. To return the 'forms' to their traditional 'cases' (or something like them), one must be able to find them where they lie. Altolaguirre made earnest attempts to furnish himself with this kind of knowledge by subscribing his Imprenta Sur to the *Nouvelle Revue Française* and *Arts et Métiers Graphiques*, an important periodical on printing, design, and typography, as well as by reading the poets of the avant-garde (Neira 95). From his youth Altolaguirre had two related enthusiasms, literature and printing, and his early interest in Futurism and

Cubism found its outlet in his first serious work as a printer, the little magazine *Ambos* (*Obras completas* I, 39). An oft-repeated anecdote, which includes for Altolaguirre "una de las sorpresas más grandes de mi vida," recounts how the five-year-old Manolito first came to be fascinated with the art of printing (*Obras completas* I, 38). Altolaguirre says in *El caballo griego* that one of his first childhood poems had pleased the household cook so much that she had taken it to her son, Antonio Chávez, who worked as a printer. The next morning Manolito found his very own words printed in gold, adorned with colorful images of butterflies and stars. Altolaguirre reports that same Antonio Chávez guided the young poet in printing his first serious literary project, the magazine *Ambos* (*Obras completas* I, 38).

In this chapter I will undertake close examinations of some of Altolaguirre's printed texts, starting with *Ambos*, from 1923. I will show, following Francisco Chica's and Eugenio Carmona's extensive investigation, that Altolaguirre's work in this magazine documents his debt to avant-garde typography while also heralding the general 'return' to tradition which would define the following years in Spanish poetry. *Ambos* included collaborations from important figures in the international avant-garde, including Picasso, Blaise Cendrars, Gerardo Diego, Ramón Gómez de la Serna, and Jean Cocteau. I will situate some of Altolaguirre's poetry in the context of writings by these authors. For this, an analysis of the structure of metaphor in Altolaguirre's "Poema del agua" and some poems from his first book, *Las islas invitadas y otros poemas*, will reveal his debt to two important innovations in metaphorical language closely related to the historical avant-garde, Ramón Gómez de la Serna's *greguería* and Gerardo Diego's *imagen múltiple*. The theory and praxis of these two kinds of metaphor are important for

discussions of material poetics and typography owing to the visual-material focus of the first, the indeterminacy of the second, and the non-transcendence of both. Especially in my analysis of the "Poema del agua," I will show that Altolaguirre's metaphorical inheritance from the avant-garde is conjugated in practice with his deep interest in typography, both as craft and as an essential component of his poetic imagination.

Finally, as a document of the crystallization of the 'return to order' in Altolaguirre's work, we will take up his best-known contribution to the Spanish poetry of the period, the magazine *Litoral*, which he directed with Emilio Prados. Altolaguirre publishes the final five fragments of his "Poema del agua" in the October 1927 triple-issue dedicated to Luis de Góngora. As we consider the presentation of this poem and two other brief lyrics in the context of this magazine and its contributors (many of whom had been enthusiastic *vanguardistas*) we will see how in *Litoral* the material poetics of the avant-garde coexists with a recuperation of tradition. This analysis will allow me to articulate Altolaguirre's typographical lessons learned, as it were, from the avant-garde.

This chapter should help to situate Altolaguirre's poetry and that of his peers in the historical context of avant-garde typography. As George Bornstein argues, the material parameters of the original texts (paratext, context, and the various versions of a text itself), should bear on our readings of these historical poetic documents. Through my analysis, the fact that "visual materiality pertains in the case of all written forms of language" (Drucker 3), even in typographically more orthodox printing, should come to the fore of our thinking. The 'return to order' then cannot be considered the historical erasure of the material poetics of the avant-garde, but a conscious reevaluation of the issues explored since the first Futurist *parole in libertà.* My analyses will have

implications for the contemporary editing of these works. Supported by George Bornstein's endorsement of a textually conscious criticism, I will argue that the original typography and the materiality of Altolaguirre's poetry (both his own and the works he published) should be important considerations in preparing these texts for twenty-first century readers.

***Ambos* and the Return to Order**

Catalan art critic Sebastià Gasch[78] published a brief historical survey of modern French painting in Madrid's *La Gaceta Literaria* in October of 1927.[79] He lays out developments in French painting in a few simple stages; from Cubism as a technical reaction to Impressionism, to the 'fall' into abstraction, the return to the subject, and finally the advent of Surrealism. Total abstraction yields 'pure decoration' rather than 'pure painting,' says Gasch, and he cites geometrical motifs in architecture or manuscript illumination, going as far back as human creativity's origins. Against falling into the perils of pure abstraction, Gasch applauds the "retorno al asunto." He writes that after abstraction's achievements in reducing art to form, 'pure architecture,'

> Era preciso edificar sobre el andamiaje hallado de nuevo, cubrir la osamenta de carne. Era preciso convertir la esfera en manzana, el cilindro en árbol, el azul en cielo, el verde en prado: todo ello, ordenado según los números, equilibrado según los cánones, armonizado según las leyes de las proporciones.

[78] Gasch was one of the signatories, with Salvador Dalí and Lluís Montanyà, of the 1928 *Manifest groc,* originally composed in Catalan and printed in Spanish in *gallo* in April of 1928.
[79] It is his self-translation of the Catalan original first published in *La Nova Revista* in July 1927.

The color blue, in the new systematic art and its recovery of reason and theme, needed to take on the form and referent of the sky. Green needed to be associated with the meadow.[80]

Altolaguirre followed the same painters as did Sebastià Gasch, probably reading the latter's article on Pedro Flores, Juan Bonafé, and Luis Garay, three artists from Murcia whose works appeared reproduced in the October 1927 issue of *Verso y prosa* (*Epistolario* 113, 126). The general arc spanning from Cubism to Surrealism and passing through a "retorno al asunto" is observable also in poetry at this time, and this recuperation of tradition appears in many critics' work, termed variously, as we have seen in Cocteau's and Diego's titles cited above, as the "rappel à l'ordre" or the "vuelta a la estrofa." In painting as well as in typography and poetry, both a 'neo-classicism' and a 'neo-romanticism,' as Gasch put it, are key components of the new aesthetic. Gasch's general history of recent French painting is also the history of the historical avant-garde; his "retorno al asunto" is the history of the decline of pure abstraction, and it is the context in which Altolaguirre's work as both poet and printer is situated.

Manuel Altolaguirre's first editorial endeavor was the short-lived magazine *Ambos* (1923), which he founded and directed with José María Souvirón and José María Hinojosa.[81] Undoubtedly indebted to the little magazines of Spanish *ultraísmo*, especially *Horizonte* and *VLTRA*, *Ambos* is nonetheless a record of the return to order which characterized the Generation of 1927 in relation to the historical avant-garde, whether

[80] Gasch's mention of the blue sky and green meadow is attractively similar to the final line of the first section of Altolaguirre's "Poema del agua," published in *Verso y prosa* a few months before the art critic's article.

[81] There is some uncertainty as to who of these three took on the greatest responsibility in founding and operating the magazine at the outset (see Neira 41-2; also Carmona and Chica's introduction and commentary to their facsimile edition; and Altolaguirre, *Obras completas* I, 39).

that process was called the "retorno al asunto," the "vuelta a la estrofa," or the "rappel à l'ordre" (Carmona 13, 28, 31). The place of *Ambos* in this context has been solidly established by Francisco Chica and Eugenio Carmona in their facsimile edition of the four issues of the magazine and more specifically, at least concerning Altolaguirre, by Julio Neira in his book on *Manuel Altolaguirre, impresor y editor* (39-52).

The return to order operating on the painting, poetry, and typography of the second half of the decade of the 20s was not an isolated phenomenon in any of those fields. If we compare the cover of a publication like *VLTRA* with a cover from *Ambos* we can see how the affinity between one of the Spanish avant-garde's flagship magazines and the Generation of 1927's precursor publication is visually apparent, in their typography and in their cover art. In format, typography, and content, *Ambos* also has a precursor in *Horizonte*, a magazine initially professing Ultraist aesthetics but which over its five issues moved towards explicitly advocating a 'return to order' (Carmona 28-9). In the return to order following the avant-garde we also see more clearly mimetic artwork in the woodcut on *Ambos*'s cover compared to Wladyslav Jahl's[82] woodcuts on the covers of *VLTRA.* This shift also accompanies greater adherence to the traditional typographical grid.

[82] A frequent contributor to *VLTRA* and one of *ultraísmo*'s most prominent visual artists, Jahl was also the artistic director of *Horizonte.*

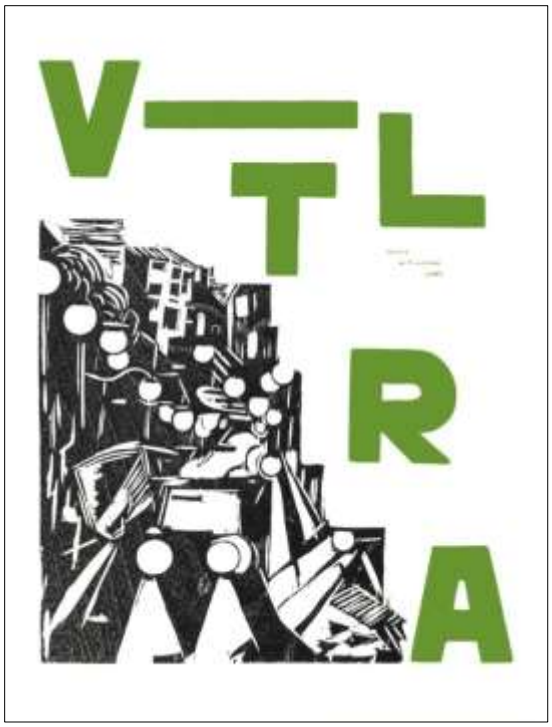


Fig. 14. *VLTRA* #18, 10 November 1921. Woodcut by Wladyslav Jahl. Image courtesy of the Edad de Plata portal at the Residencia de Estudiantes.

Fig. 15. *VLTRA* #24, 15 March 1922. Woodcut by Wladyslav Jahl. Image courtesy of the Edad de Plata portal at the Residencia de Estudiantes.

Fig. 16. *Ambos* no. 1, March 1923 (18cm x 18cm). Anonymous woodcut. Image courtesy of the Edad de Plata portal at the Residencia de Estudiantes.

The Jahl woodcut on the cover of *VLTRA* number 18 presents an urban street scene, with public lighting running down the left of the image and possibly a vehicle in the center. Electric street lamps, motorized transport, and the imposing geometry of the industrialized city convey the kind of excited modernity characteristic of Futurism. Jahl's woodcut for issue number 24 portrays a harlequin, a clown, and a gowned woman dancing on a background of geometric shapes, all very much components of the generally Cubist aesthetics of the historical avant-garde. Both of these woodcuts are crowded and

their mimetic referents are not immediately apprehensible. While the subject matter of each is easy to associate with avant-garde movements, the geometric style and the black-and-white contrast are what give these images their character. Though referential in their subject matter, both woodcuts undoubtedly show the impulse of avant-garde abstraction. The figures are not foregrounded with respect either to one another or to the background shapes. In noteworthy contrast, the woodcut on the cover of the first number of *Ambos* takes a naturalistic dragonfly and a flowering plant as its subject matter.[83] Something akin to traditional perspective is conveyed by the curving of the plant's leaves and their relative sizes; the smaller leaf is sized and shaped in such a way as to suggest its position in real space behind its counterpart.

Both magazines use stark geometric sanserif type for their covers.[84] In the case of *VLTRA*, the title flows freely down the page on the cover of issue 18, while it is split between two axes, vertical and horizontal, for the final issue of the magazine. Meanwhile, all the type on the cover and in the pages of *Ambos* conforms to the traditional grid whereby text follows a straight horizontal line across the entire page or column. Interestingly, the main typeface used throughout the twenty-four issues of *VLTRA,* Kleukens, is the same typeface used for the text in the pages of *Ambos.* This is also the typeface most often used in Ultraism's first major publication organ, *Grecia. VLTRA*,

[83] All of the woodcuts on the four covers of *Ambos* are anonymous. Possibly the work of Manuel Ángeles Ortiz, other candidates have been proposed, including Emilio Prados and even Altolaguirre. See Bonet's "Soledades pintadas" (324), Carmona (21), Neira (51-2). Whoever the artist of the *Ambos* woodcuts was, it seems likely they were familiar with the woodcuts from the covers of *VLTRA*, usually done by Wladyslaw Jahl, Norah Borges, or Rafael Barradas.

[84] This kind of type is associated historically with artistic abstraction, as Sebastià Gasch came close to noting in his mention of "la estética del grupo holandés «De Stijl», defensor de un arte completamente abstracto." *De Stijl* was a magazine directed by poet and typographer Theo van Doesburg. The group and their publication were interested in pictorial abstraction, but perhaps their most concerted efforts were aimed at typographical reform.

however, often mixed many typefaces together in a single page of its three-column layout, while *Grecia* used a two-column format, sometimes splitting the page rather artlessly to accommodate several texts. While *VLTRA*'s poems, articles, stories, or book reviews appear uniformly in Kleukens fonts, headings and titles appear in a kaleidoscopic variety of typefaces seemingly chosen to produce deliberate typographical disharmony and surprise.

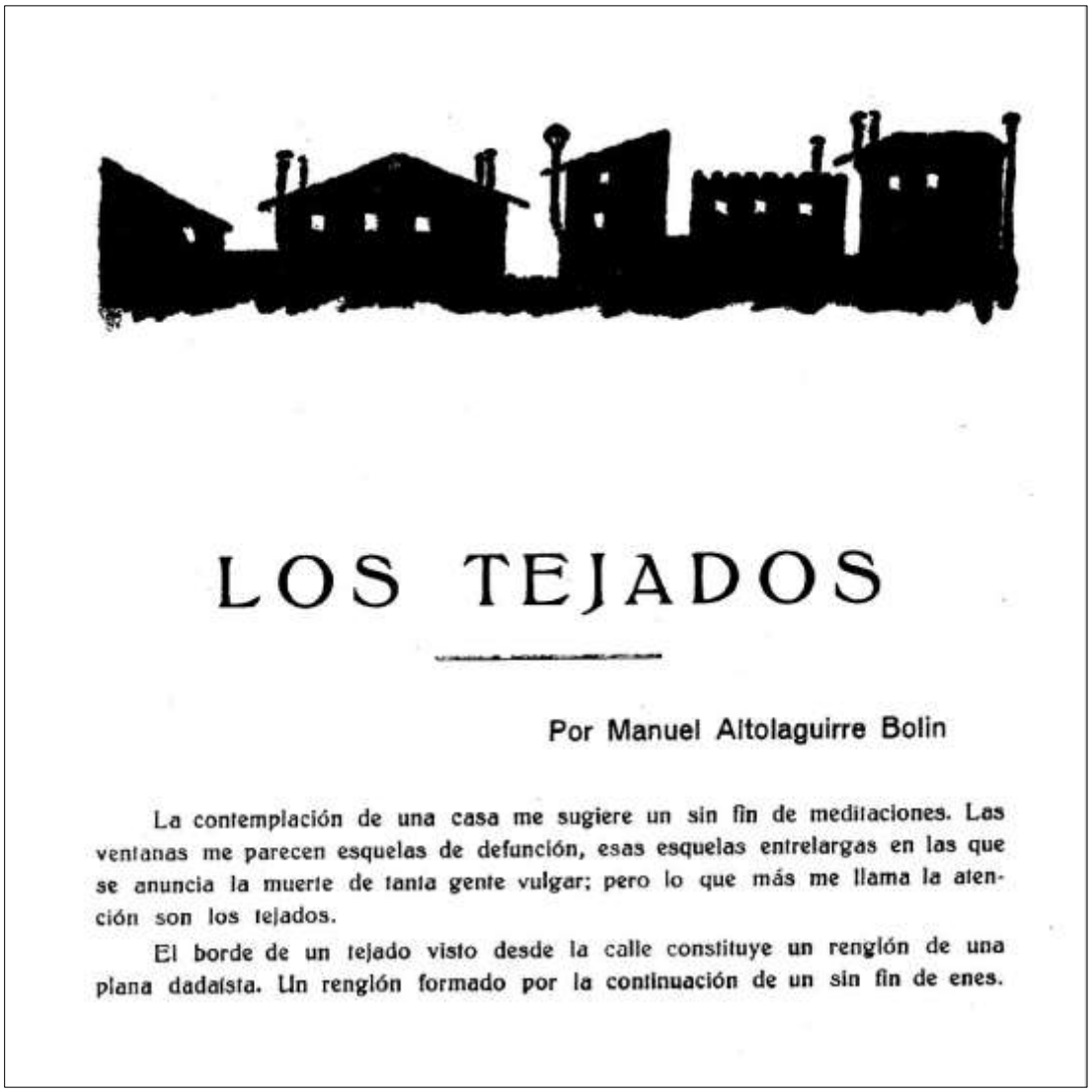
The text of *Ambos* is noteworthy by comparison, when we consider the fact that only two typefaces were ever used in the publication. This could be the result of economic constraints just as much as design decisions, as purchasing a font of text was a serious investment. Nonetheless the text chosen for *Ambos* and the layout of the magazine can tell us something of the aesthetics of its creators. The two typefaces used in the magazine are Kleukens for body text and titles, and a simple sanserif typeface for bylines and occasionally for titles or sub-titles.[85] White space abounds, the text is uncluttered, and italics are even used to reinforce generic categorization: verse is printed in italics while prose gets roman letters.[86]

This magazine is Altolaguirre's first foray into the literary world, as publication designer, printer, editor, and author. In the first issue he publishes "Tejados." Unremarkable literarily, it is nonetheless an interesting document of Altolaguirre's

[85] This typeface, a 'humanist' sanserif, is possibly Akzidenz-Grotesk. I have not been able to identify it definitively. At any rate, it looks like a precursor to Erbar Grotesk, the first geometric sanserif typeface, itself a precedent for Paul Renner's famous Futura, designed in the mid-twenties and released in 1928.

[86] The generic distinction signaled by italics is not total, since verse was sometimes printed in romans ("La quietud llena" by Rafael Laffon in issue 4, for example) and prose was sometimes printed in italics (the translated selections from Jean Cocteau's *El gallo y el arlequín* in issue no. 2, for example).

aesthetic preoccupations and influences and the place of typography in his literary imagination. Here, reproduced, is the first page of this short prose piece.



LOS TEJADOS

Por Manuel Altolaguirre Bolín

La contemplación de una casa me sugiere un sin fin de meditaciones. Las ventanas me parecen esquelas de defunción, esas esquelas entrelargas en las que se anuncia la muerte de tanta gente vulgar; pero lo que más me llama la atención son los tejados.

El borde de un tejado visto desde la calle constituye un renglón de una plana dadaísta. Un renglón formado por la continuación de un sin fin de enes.

Fig. 17. Manuel Altolaguirre. "Los tejados." *Ambos* no. 1, March 1923, n.p. Image courtesy of the Edad de Plata portal at the Residencia de Estudiantes.

The first aspect of this page that we might notice when we compare it to publications like *Cosmópolis*, *Cervantes*, *Grecia*, *VLTRA*, or even *Horizonte*, is the plentiful white space in which the text is set, the calm and unhurried tone of the presentation. In the text itself, the influence of the *greguería* is evident in the visual metaphors comparing city windows to

obituaries (the long rectangular layout characteristic of this genre) and the rooftops of the sky line to a long repeating series of the letter 'n.' Metaphor, typography, and even a passing reference to Dada come together in this text at the outset of Altolaguirre's literary career.

My argument in previous chapters has been that the typographical work of avant-garde poets in Spain was the outgrowth of their poetics of non-transcendence and that the materiality of the text was important for establishing the poem's presentness, its ontological parity with lived reality. Despite the fact that Altolaguirre is not an iconoclastic poet of rupture and irreverence, as many of his immediate predecessors in the avant-garde were, his poetics and his typographical sensibilities sustain and complement one another in just the same way. We can see this here in the text of "Tejados" as well as in Altolaguirre's comments on *Ambos*. Many years later, he recounts the *Ambos* experience in *El caballo griego* as the simultaneous flowering of his life-long interest in printing and his early literary inclinations, a publication where "las más avanzadas expresiones estéticas" left their mark (*Obras completas* I, 38-9). As a printer, Altolaguirre was keenly aware of one of the facets of writing that allowed the avant-garde spirit to form a coherent poetic praxis: textual materiality. In fact, as Eugenio Carmona has amply shown, *Ambos* was the (somewhat naïve) typographical and poetic crossroads of the avant-garde and the impending juanramonian aesthetics of 'pure poetry' that would dominate the Generation of 1927. While it is important to remember that many poets continued publishing work in line with the aesthetics of *ultra* and the first avant-garde (see Anderson, *El veintisiete* 348-9), Julio Neira explains the mixed heritage of the poets of the second half of the 1920s who have since entered the canon: "perdida la capacidad

de sorpresa del ultraísmo, la poesía española va a remansarse en un magnífico equilibrio entre vanguardia y tradición que la caracterizará durante el resto de la década" (45).

Thinking about Altolaguirre's poetry and his work as a printer in this mixed context of avant-garde material poetics and the recuperated 'order' of the Generation of 1927 can afford us new and newly-nuanced readings of his poems and of the work of other poets appearing in *Litoral*, for example, or the books that Prados and Altolaguirre published as supplements to the magazine. We will see the lasting impact of avant-garde material poetics beyond the noisy visual poetry of the late teens and twenties in Altolaguirre's metaphorical language and in his typographical work as printer and editor.

Metaphor, the Avant-Garde, and Altolaguirre's Typographical Imagination

Manuel Altolaguirre's 1927 "Poema del agua," appearing partially in both Juan Guerrero's *Verso y prosa* and in Altolaguirre's own *Litoral*, is fertile terrain for exploring not only the poet's work as a printer, but also his poetic inheritance from the historical avant-garde. Within the context of Altolaguirre's early production, it is also a good point of synthesis since it was, at the time, the work with which he was most satisfied (*Epistolario* 81).

The "Poema del agua" is a good example of Altloguirre's well-documented preference for noun-rich poetry (Breysse-Chanet 185-6). The first of its ten sections in unrhymed hendecasyllables[87] traces the path of underground water through rocks and roots and eventually up to the surface, all without conjugating a single verb in its fourteen

[87] The majority of the lines are unproblematic hendecasyllables, but there are many exceptions. James Valender and Antonio Carreira have considered some possible variants or explanations for these irregularities (*Poesías completas (y otros poemas)* 556-7).

lines. Where verbs are found they appear in gerund or participle form, very much side-kicks to the much more powerful nouns. Many of these nouns carry a specific set of meanings unique to Altolaguirre's poetry. These special connotations have been explored by critics like Laurence Breysse-Chanet and María Luisa Álvarez Harvey, often in the interest of elaborating Altolaguirre's connection to the perceived popular vein of Andalusian poetry of the 1920s exemplified for many by Lorca and Alberti, or in terms of Altolaguirre's own famously genial personality. What interests me here is not the metaphorical weight of these nouns as they have been treated by these critics across the entirety of Altolaguirre's output, though their contributions are doubtless valuable to understanding the poet's aesthetics as a whole. Rather, I would like to consider the effects of the frugal syntax in which these nouns are placed, isolated in grammar and punctuation as they are, and I will also offer a new metaphorical reading of them as an alternative to the ones discussed by Breysse-Chanet.

Altolaguirre's nouns are free from most syntactic obligations in this first section of the "Poema del agua," highlighting their materiality as isolated forms. The movement of the water in the poem is conveyed not through the movement of verbs but by rapidly shifting from one noun to another. Unlike much *modernista* or Symbolist verse, paratactic and sonorous as it often is, the "Poema del agua," especially in the first section, is a terse, densely punctuated, staccato list of objects and materials. The movement here seems to be that of water as it seeps from the igneous rock and solid ore deposits of high mountains, then travels from there in underground arteries, eventually gathering into clear streams and springs in the limestone-fertilized pastures of lower topographies. The long journey of water is told through the enumeration of the nouns which give it form. As

the nouns are each isolated by the poem's syntax, the poem itself, phonically plosive and visually dense, becomes a material object with as crisply defined physical contours as those of the nouns enumerated in it. No true anecdote is referred, for the poem lacks temporality, and indeed all of the moments of the water's journey to the plain are simultaneous. Without verbs or an evident chronology, the reader must posit the relationships of the objects as the text quickly moves from one noun to the next.

The opening three sections of the "Poema del agua" first appear in *Verso y prosa* in March of 1927 under the heading "(Fragmentos)." The first reads:

> Vetas. Rocas. Sonidos caminantes.
> Suelo y techo rozando sus dos planos.
> Encajadas las formas. Locas venas.
> Con negros antifaces los colores.
> Grupo blando. Las raíces bebedoras.
> Muros siempre. Cimientos. La prehistoria.
> Todavía más sonidos caminantes.
> ¡Qué sumergida oscuridad tan dura!
> Para el encuentro el tacto. Filtraciones.
> ¡Oh las respiraciones contenidas!
> Opresos miembros. Manantial. Herida.
> Cita del agua. Luz. Diamante puro.
> Cola del monte. Lengua de cristales.
> Cal. Verde prado. Azul del cielo. (*Poesías completas (y otros poemas)* 307)

According to Laurence Breysse-Chanet, "la preferencia de Altolaguirre por los sustantivos es una prueba de su confianza respecto al lenguaje, de su fe en la posibilidad de alcanzar la trascendencia gracias al verbo," even though "las palabras parecen quedarse más acá del vuelo del alma." (185-6). For Breysse-Chanet, Altolaguirre's nouns give form to his thoughts (185) and so we could read the opening section of the "Poema del agua" as the movement of the speaker's thinking from dark and immobile regions to fluid, colorful, and bright verbal expression. A metaphor like "lengua de cristales" is

especially appropriate for this kind of interpretation, which is perfectly valid considering the continuous treatment Altolaguirre gives to rivers, rain, and the sea in his work, and the running metaphors of life, death, and revelation operating on those terms (Breysse-Chanet 81-6; Valender, "Altolaguirre, Góngora y la poesía pura"). The recurring theme of the island in Altolaguirre's titles and images is also linked to the expression of intimate mental experience (Breysse-Chanet 171). And so, says Breysse-Chanet, in Altolaguirre words are like stones, together forming a bridge to the intimate space of *Las islas invitadas* (189-90). This kind of reading loses some of its traction as we come to the end of this section in the poem. If the water's movement from darkness toward the light communicates the poet's intellectual movement from obscurity and frustration to clear verbal fluidity, we would expect to see an opening of the syntax to correspond with the freedom achieved by the now rushing water. But the final lines are just as terse and densely punctuated as the first.

As an alternative reading, I should like to offer another set of metaphorical coordinates for this section of the "Poema del agua," one set in the area of typography and printing, important to all of Altolaguirre's work. Since Altolaguirre cares for words not only as a poet but as a printer (Breysse-Chanet 170) and "la identidad se funda con las letras, y las letras dominan el tiempo" (Breysse-Chanet 33), it makes sense to read Altolaguirre's poetry with typography and printing in mind. Many critics have hinted at this intimate connection between Altolaguirre's typographical work, materiality, and his poetry, and we already began to see the intersection of these fields in his text from the first issue of *Ambos*, "Tejados."

Perhaps the first critic of the poet's work to draw a connection between his poetry and printing was Altolaguirre's own poetic role model, Juan Ramón Jimenez, who, reviewing *Las islas invitadas y otros poemas*, wrote,

> conciencia e inconciencia barajan sus encontrados planos con las pájinas, en un juego de contrastes, saltante de sólida, de líquida, de fluida belleza contajiosa. Y luego, la piedra, el aire, el metal, la arena, el cristal; lo duro, lo claro, lo frío, están representados juvenilmente en el prismático azabache de estas islas invitadas, de colores, olores, gustos sorprendentes en lo negro. ("Las islas invitadas de Manuel Altolaguirre" 54)

The page and the black ink are the sites of poetry in *Las islas invitadas y otros poemas* rather than any immaterial sphere. Later critics make the same connection between Altolaguirre's verse and materiality. Francisco Chica, for example, states that "sus versos tienden a materializar el ideal que Juan Ramón Jiménez expresa" as the seed of something eternal to be planted in readers' minds (222). For Juan Cano Ballesta, the intense and intentionally non-transcendent focus on objects inherited from the avant-garde allows Altolaguirre to put into practice his "brillante pirotecnia metafórica" in the "Poema del agua," an exercise in poetic "virtuosismo" (7). Altolaguirre himself would write lines that seem to make oblique reference to the material rather than transcendent character of his verse:

> Dicen que soy un ángel
> y peldaño por peldaño
> para alcanzar la luz
> tengo que usar las piernas. (*Poesías completas* 157)

Vittorio Bodini describes Altolaguirre's poetry as similarly concerned with materiality and presence rather than with the disembodied search for transcendent unity. He makes a suggestive reference to typography, writing that Altolaguirre's poetry "conserva todo su peso terrestre, y hasta diríamos, el peso de plomo de sus letras tipográficas" (Bodini 98).

The legitimacy of a typographical reading of the "Poema del agua" in particular is strengthened as the most explicitly printerly metaphor of the whole poem rounds out the tenth and final section. Here, water in the form of a dusting of snow spreads over asphalt like a "fina página brillante" (*Poesías completas* 314), possibly echoing the *ultraísta* poem by Pedro Garfias in which, "sobre el paisaje desnudo / el silencio se extiende como una / página" (*Las cosas se han roto* 207). Thanks to Breysse-Chanet's observation that Altolaguirre's poetry is extraordinarily dense with nouns, the grammatical manifestation of material objects, we can read them metaphorically in conjunction with the typographical materiality that so many have underscored in Altolaguirre's work. With printing now at the fore of our thinking, the words "vetas" and "rocas" of the first line of the "Poema del agua" become open to being read as typographical references to the Greek letters 'beta' (as homophone to 'veta') and 'rho,' as well as the Spanish letter 'ka.' Likewise, "sonidos caminantes" gives us an elegant metaphor for the phonetic alphabet, letterforms stretching across a page. At the same time, of course, it conveys the muffled sounds of water flowing underground.[88]

A "veta" is a vein of crystallized minerals or ore running through the rock around it, differentiated compositionally and visually from the surrounding material. In this poem especially, rather than a "prueba de su confianza en el lenguaje" (Breysse-Chanet 185), Altolaguirre's isolation of the noun, alone as it is behind its period mark, opens the word up to multiple metaphorical possibilities. Free of syntactically imposed semantic

[88] Phonic materiality is, without a doubt, also an important aspect of this poem. Typography is not unconnected to this kind of materiality, but in this study we will restrict our focus to tactile and visual materiality. As I mentioned in Chapter One, María del Carmen Solanas Jiménez's recent thesis on silence and noise in typography in the avant-garde is, in many ways, the phonetic counterpart to this dissertation on the material poetics of the physical substance of the text and its visual presentation.

obligations, the isolated noun offers up a multiplicity of meanings. In the dictionary of the Real Academia Española we find that a "veta" is a "faja o lista de una materia que por su calidad, color, etc., se distingue de la masa en que se halla interpuesta" (DRAE 2293). More specifically, it is often a "filón metálico" (2293). As a common equivalent of "vena," a "veta" could even be a "conducto natural por donde circula el agua en las entrañas de la tierra" (2279). The DRAE also gives "inspiración poética, facilidad para componer versos" as a definition for "vena" (2279), and the corresponding "aptitud de alguien para una ciencia o arte," for "veta" (2293). All of these readings of "vetas" are admissible in this poem given the word's isolation in syntax. Even in the unproductive pursuit of a strictly denotative reading, at least two meanings for the term, as a mineral vein or an underground waterway, are literal possibilities. Breysse-Chanet would likely opt for one or both of these last readings of "vetas," having interpretative recourse to the abundance of metaphors involving earth and water throughout Altolaguirre's work, but her assertion that the isolated nouns in this poem are proof of Altolaguirre's confidence in language seems to stand on shaky ground. The relative isolation of each noun, often bare of modifiers and unconnected to other nouns by verbs, brings us into the realm of material forms, but also allows those forms to take on the metaphorical shades of many possible referents. And thus, thinking in terms of typography, while acknowledging and including all of the possibilities mentioned above, we can read the dark line of ore running through paler rock as a visual metaphor for black letters tracing their path across the white of the printed page.

As sky and earth rub their separate planes together, "Suelo y techo rozando sus dos planos,"[89] ink comes to paper, just as flowing water, nearing the threshold between stone and air, moves inexorably towards the surface. Indeed, a manual platen printing press, like the *minerva* Altolaguirre and Emilio Prados used for their Imprenta Sur in Málaga, operates by quickly pressing an inked block of metallic letterforms into the flat plane of a blank sheet of paper. In the next line, "Encajadas las formas," as I suggested at the beginning of the chapter, evokes letterforms as they are organized in their drawers and boxes in the *chibalete,* the printer's cabinet for holding metal type. It could also refer to the solid forms of the earth and the predetermined shape that water must take as it courses through the cracks in the stone before finding unstructured freedom on the surface. "Locas venas," might speak to the irregularity of the geological patterns, the quickness of the moving water, or also to the heightened heart rate of a printer hard at work at his press. While the water is underground no light touches the scene and so colors are deprived their expression, "con negros antifaces[,] los colores" are hidden in the dark. As the water reaches surface freedom colors abound in the last line of section I: "Cal. Verde prado. Azul del cielo."[90] Of course the bright white of the limestone, the green of the meadow, and the sky's blue, in their typographical presentation, are still hidden behind their "negros antifaces," the 'black masks' of printed letterforms.

Rather than press a typographical metaphor as a possibility for every image in the "Poema del agua," I should now like to stress the visual foundation of many of the

[89] Again, other metaphorical readings of these terms are possible. María Luisa Álvarez Harvey's monograph deals with the instances of earth and sky in Altolaguirre's poetry as metaphors for the span between physical existence and spiritual attainment.
[90] Antonio Carreira even wonders if the color "Blanca" has not been mistakenly omitted. The inclusion of the adjective would remedy the metrical abnormality of the line (*Poesías completas* 556-7).

metaphors we have looked at thus far. We can use the line reading, "con negros antifaces los colores," in particular to launch an exploration into their construction. When we read this line as a typographical metaphor we must pay close attention to the subtle visual irony of printing the word "green," for example, in black letters. Altolaguirre's visual metaphors, much like many of Ramón Gómez de la Serna's *greguerías*, depend upon the visual recognition of the physical affinity between two objects, or the simple irony sometimes involved in the most every-day sights when considered from a new perspective. As a reader comes to witness the visual affinity between the two terms in a *greguería*, a cognitive or spiritual affinity comes to light as well. We could even re-write Altolaguirre's line in the style of a *greguería*: "Cuando escribimos 'verde' o 'rojo,' les ponemos negros antifaces a los colores."

Altolaguirre was familiar with the *greguería* and published a selection in the third issue of his magazine *Ambos*, including this one: "Los pimientos tienen el aspecto de ser las lenguas gordas de la tierra, a veces picantes lenguas de verdulera"[91] (Gómez de la Serna, *Ambos*). Ramón's importance to Altolaguirre should be evident from the prominent place accorded to him also in the very first issue of *Ambos.* Writing on Federico García Lorca, Altolaguirre would later acknowledge the debt that all Spanish poets have to Ramón and his *greguería* (*Obras completas* I, 290-1). And as James Valender notes, metaphors like *greguerías* appear throughout Altolaguirre's "Poema del agua" and his other early poetry ("Altolaguirre, Góngora, y la poesía pura" 28). Such is the extent of their presence that Juan Manuel Bonet, following Luis Cernuda, is able to call Altolaguirre "ramoniano" and his early poetry "gregueriza" ("Soledades pintadas" 331). In section V of the "Poema del agua," for example, the foaming water trailing the

[91] It is from the 1917 volume (104) and appears in Zlotescu's edition in volume III (160).

pylons of a river's bridge turns into flower petals in Altolaguirre's imagination, a visual transformation perfectly at home in the *greguería* form. Consequently, the bridge itself becomes the buttonhole on the lapel of a man's suit, while the banks correspond to the surrounding fabric, and the flowing river takes on the character of the flower's stem (*Poesías completas* 311). More succinctly, single phrases in Altolaguirre are sometimes perfect *greguerías* in themselves. In section VI of the "Poema del agua" we find this one: "Mienten las sumergidas ramas, cuando / sin ser raíces brotan bajo el suelo" (*Poesías completas* 312).[92]

Brevity and visuality are hallmarks of Altolaguirre's poetry just as they are of the *greguería* or the historical avant-garde in general. Language and visual beauty were inseparable for Altolaguirre's mind, an association attested by his appraisal of Gregorio Prieto's artwork. Altolaguirre wrote that each drawing was a "frase de una sola letra." He continues to say that Prieto's drawing amounts to a "caligrafía impronunciable" (*Obras completas* I, 386). In this text from 1931, Altolaguirre praises the instantaneity of the impression of Prieto's work, wishing poetry could achieve the same "simultaneidad de impresiones" (*Obras completas* I, 387). Altolaguirre aspired to this kind of visual simultaneity in his poetry, and Breysse-Chanet says that typographically, phonically, and metaphorically, he came close to achieving it:

> En cada poema de Altolaguirre, late una exclamación tan intensa que lo atraviesa confiriéndole su homogeneidad. No siempre se trata de una exclamación tipográfica. La suma sobriedad del tono lleva a interiorizarla, y su verdadera expresión artística se junta con la importancia del *incipit* en

[92] Very near the end of his life, Altolaguirre came close to extracting some *greguerías* from his poems. In homage to Salvador Rueda Altolaguirre chose from among his works single lines or sometimes pairs which he felt were particularly beautiful and powerful. He called them "versos azules," following Rueda, and some can be read as *greguerías.* See Valender's notes to the *Poesías completas* (552).

> la construcción altolaguirriana del poema. Para crear un espacio sonoro donde se oigan todas las notas al mismo tiempo, Altolaguirre había de conferirle suma importancia al verso liminar de cada poema. (Breysse-Chanet 181)

Before returning to Altolaguirre's "Poema del agua," I will first look at some of his other poems from the same period, illustrative of the *greguería*-type metaphor in his work. Some of these poems build a visual metaphor much like a *greguería* but without direct syntactical linking through verbs like "ser" or "parecer," often the verbal arch that links the terms in Ramón's *greguerías.* Altolaguirre writes instead in "Playa," for example, "Yo y mi sombra, ángulo recto. / Yo y mi sombra, libro abierto" (*Poesías completas* 81). A standing figure and his shadow, forming a ninety-degree angle on the beach, visually invoke the form of an open book. A second possibility also inhabits these lines, as an open book offers the reader the opportunity for quiet reflection; he discovers his intellectual 'shadows' in his reading. Again, as in the *greguería*, nothing more is said. The new perspective on the image is offered but further commentary is withheld. The effect is one of shifting perspective, like a rapid zoom from the larger scale of the scene to the smaller scale of the metaphorical vehicle, in this case the book. Subjectivity in these metaphors is at best unstable (Cano Ballesta 7), since even when we have a speaking subject like the "yo" above, the point of view which recognizes the visual affinity between a book and a figure with its shadow is necessarily outside of and distant to the figure itself. Another short poem which illustrates my point here is "Sin marinero," like "Playa" also from the 1926 collection *Las islas invitadas y otros poemas.*

> Sin marinero,
> ojo sin niña, del mar,
> mi barca dentro del puerto.
>
> Yo en el monte.

Sin pestañas,
ojo sin niña ni remos. (*Poesías completas* 294)

"Yo," as the speaking subject, is explicitly absent. The scene is observed either from the height of the "monte" or from some other perspective.[93] The basic metaphor of this short poem is a visual one, centered even as it is on the image of the human eye. A small rowboat with no oars or rower looks, from above, like an eye with no pupil or lashes. Similarly to the figuratively variable metaphors from the "Poema del agua" which I will take up next, the metaphor of the eye's pupil for the absent rower presents a third dimension beyond the two terms in a simple metaphor or a *greguería*, the rower as tenor and the pupil as vehicle. The third term, in this case, is that of the 'girl.' "Niña" can mean 'girl' or the pupil of the eye, and in this case both readings come to bear on the poem. The absence of the speaker (as absent "marinero") becomes the missing pupil of the eye. Through the dual meaning of "niña," a girl appears in the boat in her own (and the accustomed rower's) absence. The terms of the metaphor, with the anatomical "niña" as vehicle for the absent rower, the tenor, here become inverted and mixed, similar to the metaphorical operation at work in Juan Larrea's "Esfinge," commented on in Chapter Three. For the reading of "niña" as 'girl,' makes this term the vehicle for a referent which was already not literal but metaphorical; the pupil of the eye takes the place of the tenor. In a traditional metaphor, as I.A. Richards defined it, the tenor is the literal element. The inversion of this metaphor produced by its three-term structure means that by the final

[93] "Yo en el monte" lends a particularly interesting ambiguity to the question of subjectivity in this poem since the line could be understood to refer to high terrain from which the speaker looks down on his small boat in the harbor. But "el monte" can also simply mean, "the brush," or "the woods," without necessarily implying any higher ground. If the subject is in the thick of the woods he cannot see his boat and so the subjectivity of the perspective observing the boat is especially diffuse.

line, a human 'girl' sits in the place of the tenor, for there truly is no girl present in the scene as a literal element. Thus, in the last two lines, the metaphor curves back on itself, and the eye itself, explicitly as "ojo" and not as "barca," lacks oars. These extra nuances would not have been possible had Altolaguirre chosen 'pupila' over "niña" to refer to the eye's pupil.

This interplay between disparate elements produces new metaphorical effects beyond a two-term relationship, as we have seen in the typographical metaphors in the "Poema del agua." Similar to their metaphorical variability, the sherperdess's song in section IV becomes "ondas de vidrio," as the invisible ripples of the air produced by her voice or those produced by the flight and call of birds mix with the undulations in the water, her reflection therein, and her voice's echo on the cliffs.

> Arrodillada, mírase en el río
> obteniendo por toda compañía:
> ecos de su figura en los cristales
> cuantos reflejos de su voz en rocas,
> alegre más que el canto, confundido,
> de las aves del alba, con sonoras
> ondas de vidrio que se alejan suaves. (*Poesías completas* 310)

Breysse-Chanet dutifully documents Altolaguirre's metaphorical uses of water, concluding that in *Las islas invitadas y otros poemas* and the "Poema del agua," water in its various forms serves as a metaphorical mediator between life and death (82-3). Noteworthy, however, is the fact that the girl's reflection in the stream, "ecos de su figura en los cristales," is matched by the 'reflections' or echoes of her voice off the stone of the surrounding landscape. She is happier than the mixing songs of the birds, which recall the "longs échos qui de loin se confondent" of Charles Baudelaire's sonnet "Correspondances" (40). Again, as a challenge to the kind of reading of the "ondas" that

would have us fix their metaphorical tenor in the water, we see here that the referent is multiple. The "sonoras / ondas de vidrio" are just as much products of the motion of the birds' wings as they are issuings of the birds' beaks, echoes of the shepherdess's singing, or ripples in the water. The poetic achievement in these lines consists not in the elegant fixity of the metaphorical value of "cristal" or "ecos" as references to the water or the air, but in the swinging cognitive motion between the terms required of the reader. Rosa Romojaro duly notes this kind of "ambigüedad reversible" between the two terms in many of Altolaguirre's metaphors, which she derives, more remotely, from the baroque metaphors of Luis de Góngora (432).

The "Banderas de aluminio," or the "Curvos torsos," in section VIII are similarly indeterminate metaphors (313). Since Altolaguirre isolates these terms by leaving them free of any syntax beyond the noun clause, they could be read in myriad ways. In the context of the moored boats in the approaching storm portrayed in this section, the 'aluminum flags' could be banners stiffened in the growing wind, or even glimmering metallically as they are soaked in the rain. The metaphor could also refer to the gray clouds on their approach, the clang of thunder (as it is often mimicked with a baking sheet or pots and pans), or even the tinny sound of an emergency siren in the port, a kind of sonic warning flag. Likewise, the 'curved torsos' are those of the hunched sailors in their cabins and simultaneously the personified hulls of the boats in harbor. Altolaguirre shifts perspective to achieve novel results by applying adjectives in almost perfect (dis)harmony, as in "náufragas olas" (313).

The juxtaposition of disparate elements, or terms that share some hidden affinity, is a technique inherited from the *greguería*, and indirectly from Cubist collage or even

from the Marinettian destruction of syntax. Thus, just as Marinetti conveys the aggression or speed of man with his combination "uomo-torpediniera" (*Teoria* 47), Altolaguirre's image of the men shifting in their bunks or seats with the motions of the stormy waters could be read for the affinity in juxtaposition of the sailors and their dice. The lines, "Dentro de los barcos / hombres y dados cambian de postura" (313), confer on the hapless sailors the random tumbling of dice by bringing men and dice so close together in syntax. Little different in effect would be the truncated syntax that Marinetti advocated for in 1912 (*Teoria* 47): 'Dentro de los barcos / hombres-dados cambian de postura.' Altolaguirre's line is more conventionally verisimilar, but the cognitive effects of the proximity of "dados" to "hombres" are the same as in the hyphenated double noun in Marinetti. At the same time, it is impossible to tell whether the men and dice move erratically due to the rocking of the boat in the storm, or whether these lines portray an atmosphere of relative normalcy inside the boats, some men sleeping, others entertaining themselves with games. The line could also be read as a metaphorical transformation of the men into potential victims of a chance in a chaotic world. Again, multiple readings are simultaneously possible.

The immediate source of Altolaguirre's metaphors in the interpretatively variable "Banderas de aluminio" or the "Vetas" discussed above is, however, most likely not in Marinetti's "Manifesto tecnico della letteratura futurista" but rather in the work of a poet much closer to the Spanish avant-garde, Gerardo Diego. Diego's concept of the *imagen múltiple* certainly owes much to Gómez de la Serna's *greguerías,* but, as I hope is evident in my treatment of "banderas de aluminio," for example, the possibilities of this kind of metaphor go beyond the usually quite simple linking of two elements that a *greguería*

achieves. The poets of the avant-garde heavily influenced by Ramón Gómez de la Serna could get carried away with the new style of metaphor that the *greguería* offered. A case in point is the poem "Luna llena" by Isaac del Vando-Villar, dedicated to Ramón.[94] A few lines from this piece:

> [¡]Devuélvele sus globos a los niños!
> Redoma de estrellas de colores.
> Espejo de bolsillo para los pensadores.
> Bandeja de oro para las Salomé ultraístas. (*Las cosas* 551)

The rest of Vando-Villar's poem includes more one-liners riffing on the subject of the full moon, including "Sombrilla de seda de equilibrista japonesa." Many Ultraists were as thrilled as Vando-Villar with the novelty of the *greguería.* He was, in fact, the director of one of their magazines, *Grecia*, and many of the poems printed there turn out to be long series of *greguerías.* Ocassionally they will all treat the same metaphorical tenor, as in this case of the "Luna llena," but they often seem to be strings of *greguerías* assembled at random. Diego's *imagen múltiple*, as a tonic to this monotony, is the opposite mechanical operation to Vando-Villar's "Luna llena." In this poem from Vando-Villar's 1924 book *La sombrilla japonesa*, many vehicles, in the form of the parasol, the platter, or the mirror, all refer to one tenor, the moon. Conversely to this fixed-path linking, Gerardo Diego's *imagen múltiple* is indeterminate, allowing for many possible referential destinations for each image. Each of the visible vehicles corresponds to many possible tenors, and so, as we saw with some of Altolaguirre's metaphors above, meaning can never be pinned down.

[94] Juan Manuel Bonet notes that Ramón never really acknowledged the *ultraístas* as his disciples. He was the "hombre orquesta de todas las vanguardias españolas" (*Las cosas* 587).

Rosa Romojaro concludes that the "desdoblamientos" (432) of metaphorical elements in Altolaguirre lead to dual readings, semantic reversibility between two poles. In many cases this is exactly what happens, precisely in the manner of a *greguería*. Neither term takes the hierarchical precedence (tenor > vehicle) characteristic of simple metaphor. But as we have seen in the many metaphorical possibilities for "vetas" or "banderas de aluminio," for example, often a single word can operate as tenor or vehicle in a constellation of connotations, far beyond the sky-water duality put forth by Romojaro.

This semantic indeterminacy is the territory of Diego's *imagen múltiple,* which he defined in the Ultraist magazine *Cervantes* in 1919:

> 1º *Imagen directa*, esto es, la palabra. La palabra en su sentido primitivo, ingenuo, de primer grado, intuitivo, generalmente ahogado en un valor lógico de juicio, de pensamiento […]
>
> 2º *Imagen refleja o simple*, esto es, la imagen tradicional estudiada en las retóricas.[95] La imagen evoca el objeto aludido con una fuerza y una gracia renacidas […]
>
> 3º *Imagen doble.* La imagen representa, a la vez, dos objetos, contiene en sí una doble virtualidad. Disminuye la precisión, aumenta el poder sugestivo. Se hallan aisladas en los clásicos. Los creacionistas las prodigan constantemente.
>
> 4º, 5º, etc. *Imagen triple, cuádruple, etc*. Advertid cómo nos vamos alejando de la literatura tradicional. Estas imágenes que se prestan a varias interpretaciones serían tachadas desde al antiguo punto de vista como gravísimos extravíos, de ogminidad, anfibología, extravagancia, etc. El creador de imágenes no hace ya prosa disfrazada. El creador…empieza a crear por el placer de crear (poeta-creador-niño-dios),[96] no describe, construye; no evoca, sugiere; su obra apartada va aspirando a su propia independencia, a la finalidad de sí misma. Sin embargo, desde el momento en que pueden ser medidas las alusiones y tasadas las exégesis de un modo lógico y satisfactorio, aún estará la imagen en un terreno equívoco,

[95] This is the traditional metaphor of tenor and vehicle, direct substitution.
[96] A restatement of part of Vicente Huidobro's "Arte poética," reproduced in Chapter One.

> ambiguo, de acertijo cerebral, en que naufragará la emoción. La imagen debe aspirar a su definitiva liberación, a su plenitud en el último grado.
>
> *Imagen múltiple*. – No explica nada; es intraducible a la prosa. Es la Poesía, en el más puro sentido de la palabra.[97] Es también, y exactamente, la Música…todo valor discursivo, escolástico, filosófico, anecdótico, es esencialmente ajeno a ella. La música no quiere decir nada […] ("Posibilidades creacionistas" 26-7)

Gerardo Diego puts his theory into practice in two books from the period, the appropriately titled *Imagen* from 1922 and *Manual de espumas* from 1924. In the former, Diego conveys in the poems as well as in notes and epigraphs his aesthetics of the *imagen múltiple,* even reproducing some of the text I have cited above (*Obra completa* 101). A few examples of the suggestive *imagen múltiple* from the book: "Para apagar mi sed / fumé todas las islas." (107); "Sentadas en lo firme de la vida / las cumbres meditan" (113); "Y una lluvia de cartas amatorias / sepultó los bancos del paseo" (117); "Pobre corazón mío / Hoy no le he dado cuerda" (117); "Reflejada en mis arterias / la nube es un arroyo" (126). If we take one of these *imágenes múltiples,* for example, the one involving clocks and hearts, and compare it the *greguería*, we can see how the metaphorical referent is disperse. The metaphor of the heart as a kind of clock has had many iterations, from Poe's "Tell-Tale Heart" to the popular phrase referring to the heart of an unhealthy person as a "ticking time bomb." We could fashion a *greguería* on this old metaphor, writing, for example, "El corazón es un reloj; cuando dormimos le damos cuerda."

What sets the *imagen múltiple* apart from the *greguería* is the multiplicity of possible terms. Today, say Diego's lines, the speaker has not wound his clock-heart, but there is no telling what this operation might consist of. So indeterminate and scattered are the possible meanings that we can easily posit the unconventional reversal of the trope as

[97] That is, *poesis,* creation or 'making.'

the most simple of many possibilities: this simplest reading has the speaker holding his stopped watch, noting that it has ceased to operate, and substituting 'heart' for 'pocket watch.' The usual metaphor of the heart described as a kind of clock is also present; its winding, of course, is what suggests any number of actions not taken by the speaker (sleeping, eating, visiting a lover, meditation?). Underscoring the disparate metaphorical possibilities and the indeterminacy of the *imagen múltiple* is the scattered printing of the poem. In most of *Imagen* Diego breaks up the traditional stanzaic grid by printing two lines side by side, floating lines freely in white space, and problematizing a linear reading order.

Imagen and the poetics it expresses would be important for Altolaguirre. In fact, the terse syntax of the "Poema del agua" that I considered above is very similar to that of the poems comprising one of *Imagen*'s sections, "Zodiaco," or the final lines of the poem "San Juan." In 1925, already a few years after its publication, Altolaguirre writes his new friend to communicate the interest with which he read *Imagen*. The letter Altolaguirre sends Diego after reading this book is very interesting for understanding Altolaguirre's poetics, considering the date, 17 June 1925, and the artistic enthusiasms which criss-cross (some might say contradicting one another) the rather lengthy missive. Altolaguirre, it seems, met Diego in Málaga in the spring of 1925 during the latter's visit to several Andalusian cities (*Epistolario* 30). He seems totally overwhelmed by not only the poetry in *Imagen* but also by Diego's ideas on aesthetics gleaned from the older poet in conversation in Málaga. He says that the kind of metaphors in *Imagen*, created not through the five senses but through a "sentido poético, atributo anímico, cualidad del verdadero artista," could mark a new path for poetry in Spain (*Epistolario* 29). Curiously,

Altolaguirre also congratulates Diego in this letter on the recent announcement of his winning the Premio Nacional de Literatura with *Versos humanos.* The prize was awarded *ex aequo* to Diego and to Rafael Alberti, for *Marinero en tierra,* and judged by Antonio Machado, José Moreno Villa, and Gabriel Miró.

The interest of these facts is that they corroborate Francisco Chica's contention that "las vanguardias siguen resonando en la obra de Altolaguirre" throughout his production as both printer and poet of the Generation of 1927 (Chica 200).[98] In fact, it seems that in 1925 and 1926 Altolaguirre explored the avant-garde, Juan Ramón Jiménez, and 'rehumanized' poetry with equal enthusiasm and at the same time, discovering much of the avant-garde rather late.[99] Instead of as an eclipsed past moment in Spanish poetry, the avant-garde came to bear on Altolaguirre's thinking at the same time as Juan Ramón Jiménez's poetry or popular Andalusian song. All in the summer of 1925, Altolaguirre meets Gerardo Diego and becomes familiarized with his poetry informed by the *ultraísta* and *creacionista* aesthetics of the *imagen múltiple* and typographical experimentation; he founds with Emilio Prados the Imprenta Sur and lays plans for *Litoral*; and he reads with great interest the popular lyrics of Alberti and the traditional stanzaic forms then taken up by Diego and other poets of the Generation of 1927. This fits well with what Díez de

[98] Still in 1948, exiled in Mexico, Altolaguirre calls Diego's *Imagen* and *Manual de espumas* "obras maestras." Juan Manuel Bonet rightly points out the important material and plastic connection between Altolaguirre's enthusiasm in this regard and his appreciation for Manuel de Falla's music and especially Juan Gris's painting (Bonet in Valender 327-8).

[99] While James Valender considers the death of Altolaguirre's mother in September of 1926 the catalyst for his rejection of 'avant-garde' poetics and the 'rehumanization' of his verse ("Cronología" 112), Altolaguirre's own recollection is that Prados, considering Atlolaguirre's fixation on his mother's death unhealthy, reanimated his interest in Ortega's *deshumanización.* Altolaguirre and Prados did not agree on *deshumanización*, but they discussed the topic at length and shared mutual enthusiasms (*Obras completas* I, 52).

Revenga documents as the huge variety among the poets, the various, changing, evolving aesthetics that they share, disagree upon, adopt, and shed (30).

As well as the very obvious echoes of Golden Age verse, one aspect of Altolaguirre's poetry which may seem to distance it from the historical avant-garde is the intimacy and emotional preoccupations it often conveys. James Valender affirms that the distinction truly exists when he writes that Altolaguirre, after the death of his mother in 1926, "le daría la espalda a los versos vanguardistas recogidos en su primer libro [*Las islas invitadas y otros poemas*] y se orientaría instintivamente hacia una poesía más íntima, más acorde con la pena que ahora le embargaba ("Cronología" 112). The perceived dichotomy separating avant-garde formal innovation from emotion is evident also in Juan Ramón Jiménez's condemnation of Ultraism: "el ultraísmo es la imagen por la imagen," intellectual acrobatics of little emotional import (Arizmendi 20; Cervera 35), or worse, meaningless typographical jumbles. It turns out, however, that Diego's theory of the *imagen múltiple* already addressed this problem in 1919. He wrote:

> Sin embargo, desde el momento en que pueden ser medidas las alusiones y tasadas las exégesis de un modo lógico y satisfactorio, aún estará la imagen en un terreno equívoco, ambiguo, de acertijo cerebral, en que naufragará la emoción. ("Posibilidades creacionistas" 27)

When the Ortegian "álgebra superior de las metáforas" (74) only amounts to an "acertijo cerebral" emotion is 'shipwrecked,' he says. This is reminiscent of Mallarmé's famous lines about suggestion and indeterminacy, but with the important modification to allow plural referents and plural "exégesis," as Diego puts it. Thinking in accord with Diego's poetics we could modify Mallarmé's lines: "*suggérer* [les objets], voilà le[s] rêve[s]" (*Oeuvres complètes* 869). This suggestion can be achieved through metaphorical or typographical indeterminacy. Abstraction and materiality, contributions of Cubism, were

the avenues to achieve suggestive indeterminacy, and they could be pursued semantically, syntactically, and typographically at the same time.

Altolaguirre is essentially an 'intimate' poet for Breysse-Chanet, while for Valender he becomes one as he sheds his earlier 'avant-garde' poetics. When we look at that poetics, however, in the person and the work of one of Altolaguirre's most important guides, Gerardo Diego, it seems that emotion and the indeterminate avant-garde metaphor went hand in hand. Many poets and critics would not agree, and we already saw that Juan Ramón Jiménez's complaint about Ultraism was essentially about the lack of emotion, criticizing overzealous metaphor-making as an intellectual trick.

Jean Cocteau seems to agree that the historical avant-garde disregarded emotion in its frenzy of formal experimentation. An important figure in the international avant-garde, he lectured on 3 May 1923 at the Collège de France on 'order' as a new prerogative for literature, saying at the outset of his remarks, "Hier, ce matin encore, l'émotion ne se portait pas" (*Le rappel* 239). This lecture was published with other of Cocteau's essays in the book *Le rappel à l'ordre* in 1923. Cocteau says that he learned a great deal from Apollinaire, Max Jacob, Raymond Radiguet, and Picasso, but that the moment of Apollinairean delight in chance, advertising language, and jaunty iconoclasm was focused on destroying literature (244). He advocates now for a new, constructive approach, building on the formal experimentation of the avant-garde. He says in *Le rappel à l'ordre* that when he has called for "la réapparition de la rose" he has been misunderstood to have meant "le retour à la rose," when he really meant the opposite (246). Cocteau's hope is a return *of* tradition and emotion, not a return *to* nineteenth-century models. Within this framework, he says, he can appreciate both the Comtesse de

Noailles and Tristan Tzara (254). Cocteau writes that poetry "est une tour de cartes exécuté par l'âme. Elle habite des ruptures d'équilibre et de divins calembours" (255).

At the same time as this lecture, Altolaguirre's magazine in Málaga, *Ambos*, publishes a brief text by Cocteau discussing precisely this shift in aesthetic orientations. This text, by classifying different literary audiences according to their attitudes toward tradition and innovation, expresses many of the same ideas as Cocteau's lecture at the Collège de France. "Públicos" appeared in the final issue of the short-lived periodical, in August of 1923.

> Los que defienden el hoy sirviéndose del ayer y que presienten el mañana (1 por 100).
> Los que defienden el hoy destruyendo el ayer y que negarán el mañana (4 por 100).
> Los que niegan el hoy para defender el ayer, su hoy (10 por 100).
> Los que se imaginan que el hoy es un error y se citan para el pasado mañana (12 por 100).
> Los de anteayer que adoptan el ayer para probar que el hoy se sale de los límites permitidos (20 por 100).
> Los que no han comprendido todavía que el arte es continuo y se imaginan que el arte paró ayer para proseguir su marcha, acaso mañana (60 por 100).
> Los que no comprenden ni el anteayer, ni el ayer, ni el hoy (100 por 100). ("Públicos")

The first category, naturally, is the one to which Cocteau belongs. It is the most exclusive (only 1%) and the most thoughtful, from his point of view. Clear-eyed creators of the present, aware of the past, and in control of the future. Not far behind, however, are the avowed avant-gardists, rabid defenders of the present and attackers of the past. I cannot be sure what to make of the arithmetic here, but we can see that aesthetes, Aristotelian prescriptivists, and Philistines of several kinds fill out the rest of humanity.

A few years after this text, while Altolaguirre was busy with his next editorial adventure, the Imprenta Sur and the magazine *Litoral*, Gerardo Diego writes an article

similarly reclaiming tradition for the use and benefit of modern poets. His text, "La vuelta a la estrofa," published in *Carmen* in December of 1927, makes the same clarification as that of Cocteau, that is, that the return to the stanza is really a return *of* the stanza, not an aesthetic backtracking. Diego says that at a time when poets started taking pleasure in free verse and irregular meters based on traditional ones, *l'esprit nouveau* arrived and carried everyone off in "el magnífico huracán de los *ismos* de avance." Experimentation with free verse and the energetic renunciation of tradition led to typographically audacious works, firmly grounded in the materiality of their printing. In the avant-garde, writes Diego, "Preocupa la materia. La novedad del contenido. Imposible lograr a la vez la armonía del continente." After this productive period of disharmony, however, he says, "Renace la calma, y decimos: hay que crear. O lo que es lo mismo, hay que poseer, domeñar, tener conciencia." The artistic freedom born of the calm following the avant-garde, says Diego, also means the freedom to recuperate tradition, to serve no master or many.

This context of recuperation of tradition and endurance of the avant-garde is the context in which Altolaguirre gets his start as a poet and printer in the middle of the decade of the 1920s. The metaphors we have analyzed from the "Poema del agua" and *Las islas invitadas y otros poemas* are inheritors of avant-garde material poetics of visual affinity and non-transcendence through semantic variability. They are also, as we have seen, closely linked to Altolaguirre's material concerns as a printer, and to the contemporary reaffirmation of the importance of tradition starting around 1925 and including "metáforas gongorinas articuladas con gran desparpajo lúdico" (Valender, "Cronología" 111). Altolaguirre often writes in traditional meter, uses the refrains and

arte menor of popular song, and even, as Breysse-Chanet documents, possibly recovers images from Islamic Al-Andalus such as the eye-rowboat trope discussed above (Breysse-Chanet 175). In fact, Gerardo Diego himself locates Altolaguirre very intelligently within these shared aesthetic milieux. He calls Altolaguirre a "poeta vertical," in the tradition of the poet as celestial visionary, a lighting-rod of inspiration like Rubén Darío and Juan Ramón Jiménez, but he also says Altolaguirre sometimes writes "cantejondamente" and that his "poemas no son dibujables" ("Poeta vertical" 65, 66).[100] They are not mimetic, but rather exist as poems, in their metaphorical indeterminacy pertaining materially and visually only to the printed page and intellectual reconstruction. Diego continues in his piece on Altolaguirre: "Poesía concreta, concretísima, la suya en cuanto al sentimiento, pero tan honda en su raíz humana, que por ello llega a lo abstracto, eterno, universal" (66). Altolaguirre may be for Diego a "romántico" but he is not "sentimental" (66). Emotion in Altolaguirre's poetry, for Diego, is in fact the result of abstraction and not its antithesis.

Altolaguirre's own critical writings are relatively few, but in one review of another poet's work we see that he values this same kind of materially emotional poetry. He writes in 1936 on Luis Cernuda's *La realidad y el deseo*

> concreta poesía, que no es abstracción pura, sino evidente presencia espiritual, definida por el poeta con tan justos límites, que este libro, *La realidad y el deseo*, es de las creaciones más logradas de nuestra poesía, creación merecedora de materia, de eternos mármoles, de inextinguibles fuegos, de perennes e inmortales corazones vivos. ("La realidad y el deseo")

[100] I would qualify this assertion by Diego. He meant they are in many cases predicated on linguistic abstraction. Certainly true, but I would add that Altolaguirre's printed poems are drawings of themselves.

Altolaguirre believed that poetry needed the appropriate material apparatus to convey properly the emotions built around indeterminate (and thus partially abstract) metaphors. In the next section we will take up and analyze some of the poet's work towards building, out of paper and ink, the "eternos mármoles" for his own verses and for those of other poets. These material constructions will naturally reflect in their typography both the avant-garde poetics of indeterminacy and the purposeful recuperation of tradition that characterize Altolaguirre's work.

Avant-Garde and Order in *Litoral*

Throughout his later work as both printer and poet, Altolaguirre would be keenly aware of how the material parameters of a text come to bear on its reading. And so, "Formas" for Altolaguirre were necessarily objects, images, and letters. As opposed to some of the more eccentric typographical experimentation of the avant-garde, fonts rest easy in Altolaguirre's work, with all of their constituent forms grouped together. Uniformity reigns. The page is presented in a clean and simple design and sobriety rules over novelty and transgression. In the second half of the 1920s, after the clamorous avant-garde experiments in typography, in Altolaguirre's poetry as well as in his practice as a printer "las formas" are carefully and quietly "encajadas," and to great effect. Altolaguirre and Emilio Prados, with their Imprenta Sur, would make many of the most famous poets of Spain's twentieth century known to the world. Despite the great attention paid by Julio Neira to Altolaguirre's work as a printer and other critics' cognizance of the 1927 group's common connection to the historical avant-garde which preceded them,[101]

[101] Francisco Javier Díez de Revenga's *Panorama crítico de la generación del 27* gives an overview of the critical work done on the avant-garde's presence in Spain's Generation of 1927 (especially 30-33, 38-39). Also see Anderson's *El veintisiete en tela de juicio*.

however, close attention to avant-garde material poetics and its typographical expression is rare in discussions of Altolaguirre's work.[102]

Altolaguirre's first magazine, *Ambos*, certainly owes a great deal to *VLTRA* and *Horizonte*, but it is not an *ultraísta* publication, as Julio Neira firmly reminds us (43-4). Altolaguirre learns to think consciously about type and layout from the avant-garde's violation of conventions in these areas. Meanwhile he also learns to value harmony and simplicity by observing Juan Ramón's printing work, in his books, his magazine *Índice*, and in the work of other poets published through this enterprise. Not only does Altolaguirre follow Juan Ramón Jiménez's poetic production avidly, he also requests that the Madrid bookseller León Sánchez Cuesta send him a copy of anything in which Juan Ramón had a hand in printing (*Epistolario* 33, 111). Interestingly, however, it seems Altolaguirre was more familiar with the avant-garde aesthetics of *ultraísmo* than with Juan Ramón's print work during the *Ambos* period (Neira 52). It is only in the last issue of the magazine where the Malagan friends review Antonio Espina's *Signario*, printed by Juan Ramón in the Biblioteca Índice, and Altolaguirre would only become familiar with many of Juan Ramón's other publications in the following years (Neira 52).

As he reads and learns, Altolaguirre becomes very sensitive to typographical issues in poetry. Testimony of Altolaguirre's thinking with regard to these issues is to be found in some pieces of his correspondence. In one letter, for example, he assures Luis Cernuda that for his contribution to *Litoral*, "el tamaño se ajustará al texto y carácter de lo que nos envíe" (*Epistolario* 55). Similarly concerned with how the material positioning

[102] Eugenio Carmona's introductory study to his facsimile edition of *Ambos* is the only text I know of that duly considers Altolaguirre's work as a printer in relation to avant-garde typographical experimentation. In Díez de Revenga, Altolaguirre is one of the "otros poetas del 27," unworthy it seems of his own chapter.

of a poem on the printed page affects its reading, Altolaguirre asks Gerardo Diego not to print two of his poems consecutively in Diego's magazine *Carmen*, since the poems use the same assonance (*Epistolario* 126). The rich variety in color, text, and layout in the books printed by Prados and Altolaguirre in the Imprenta Sur is also evidence of their commitment to unifying typography and poetry. Original typographical composition especially characterizes book covers like Altolaguirre's own *Las islas invitadas y otros poemas* (1926), Prados's book *Tiempo* (1925), or César M. Arconada's very *ultraísta*-flavored *Urbe* (1928), all printed at the Imprenta Sur in Málaga.[103]

Emilio Prados's and Altolaguirre's magazine *Litoral*, along with the books of poetry that the friends printed as supplements to the magazine, set the new standard for the publication of poetry in Spain, as the bookseller León Sánchez Cuesta quickly saw and eagerly expressed from Madrid (*Epistolario* 57, 61-2). The magazine and the Imprenta Sur were the fruit of Altolaguirre's and Prados's contact with the other poets who would form the Generation of 1927 group, their admiration for Juan Ramón Jiménez, and Altolaguirre's early experience with *Ambos.* They were also typographically indebted to the historical avant-garde, both Spanish and international (Bonet, "Soledades pintadas" 328). But the juanramonian typographical aesthetics and that of the Futurist, Cubist, or Dadaist avant-garde are often not so easy to separate and indeed happily coexist in many of the Sur publications. Altolaguirre seems perfectly content with this 'mix,' telling Diego that the *décimas* he sends to his friends at the Imprenta Sur, "en la impecable construcción de su metro clásico, tienen mezclado el fino

[103] Neira's book includes over one hundred pages of color reproductions, including the covers I cite here, as well as Altolaguirre's abundant later production, which falls outside the purview of this chapter.

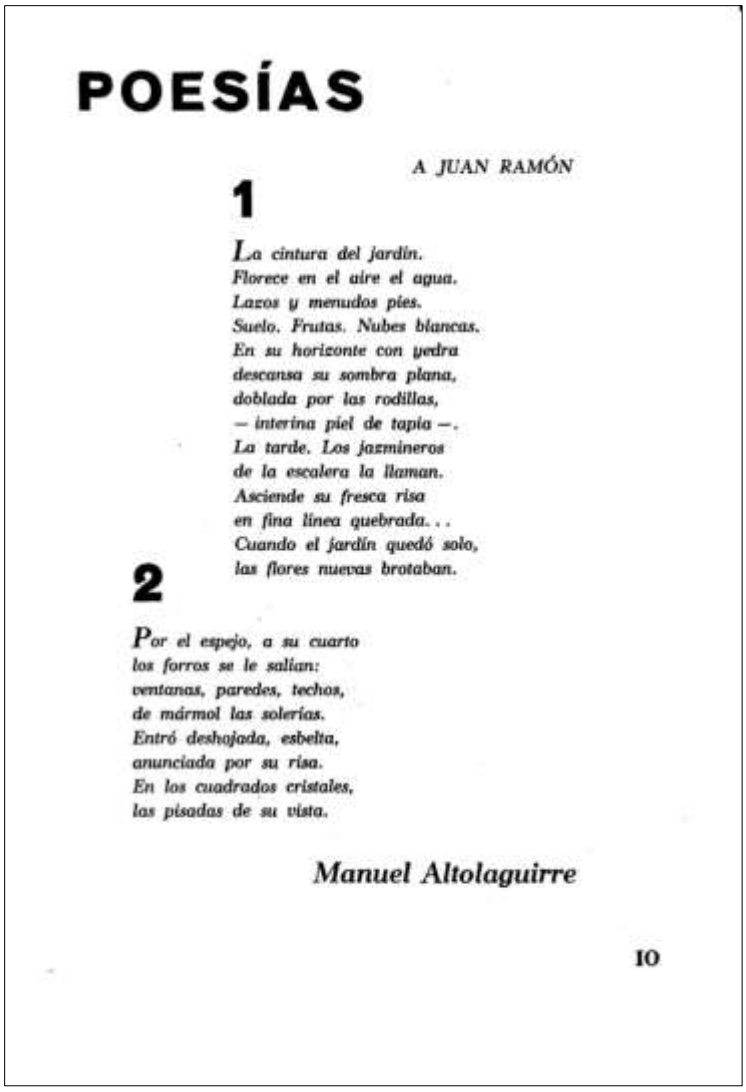
espíritu moderno de su autor" (*Epistolario* 31). At the same time he congratulates Diego on his much more avant-garde prose poem "Cinco. Poema en prosa," which is included in the first number of the magazine (*Epistolario* 43). Altolaguirre prints the poem in Bodoni letters, his favored typeface for *Litoral* as well as for many of his future projects, using bold upper case type for the title, "**CINCO**", bold italics for the subtitle, "***poema en prosa***" and italics for the text of the poem. He also leads into each stanza/section with careful use of boldface, capitalization, and small caps. The opening line of each of the three sections is repeated: "***UNO, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco piratas*** […]." The text of each of these prose 'vignettes' reads almost like a joke or a fable, but the narrative is inconclusive and certainly presents no clear logic in its development or resolution. The text is justified so that it forms a clean block in each section, squarely aligned rather than ragged at line ends.

In the letter in which Altolaguirre enthuses over "Cinco," he also writes to Diego, "Yo siempre he sido un entusiasta de su novísima literatura. Leí con gusto lo de Larrea, *Favorables* [*París Poema*], muy bien (no tipográficamente, soy impresor), y sobre todo lo de usted" (*Epistolario* 45).[104] The Diego poem to which Altolaguirre refers here is "Pepito," a poem in which increased line spacing and irregular line length contribute to changing rhythm and implied intonation. As Ellen Lupton advises her students of typography, "As leading [line spacing] increases, lines of type become independent graphic elements rather than parts of an overall visual shape and texture" (108). A word

[104] James Valender, the editor of Altolaguirre's correspondence, remarks that Altolaguirre does not mention the other collaborators in this second and final issue of *Favorables París Poema*, among whom we find César Vallejo (Larrea's partner in running the publication), Vicente Huidobro, Tristan Tzara, and Pierre Reverdy, all central figures of the historical avant-garde (*Epistolario* 45).

printed apart or set in different font from the text around it becomes an "independent graphic element," implying concomitant emotive and phonic independence as well. In Diego's "Pepito," for example, drawing on Futurist *parole in libertà* and Creationist typography, the word "Bandidos" is set apart from the previous line and heavily indented to indicate that it is yelled in accusation.

The effects of the use of multiple fonts across a page, layout, contiguity or difference, and varying text density, were not lost on Altolaguirre, who by the time he and Prados launched *Litoral* had accumulated a significant store of experience as a printer and as a reader of typographically distinctive texts. His distinctive printing of Diego's "Cinco" is the fruit of this experience. A few months after this poem, in *Litoral* no. 4, we find an example of some of the ways Altolaguirre controlled the printing of his own work to important effect.



POESÍAS

A JUAN RAMÓN

1

La cintura del jardín.
Florece en el aire el agua.
Lazos y menudos pies.
Suelo. Frutas. Nubes blancas.
En su horizonte con yedra
descansa su sombra plana,
doblada por las rodillas,
— interina piel de tapia —.
La tarde. Los jazmineros
de la escalera la llaman.
Asciende su fresca risa
en fina línea quebrada. . .
Cuando el jardín quedó solo,
las flores nuevas brotaban.

2

Por el espejo, a su cuarto
los forros se le salían:
ventanas, paredes, techos,
de mármol las solerías.
Entró deshojada, esbelta,
anunciada por su risa.
En los cuadrados cristales,
las pisadas de su vista.

Manuel Altolaguirre

10

Fig. 18. Manuel Altolaguirre. "Poesías a Juan Ramón." *Litoral* no. 4. April 1927. Page 10. Image courtesy of the Edad de Plata Portal at the Residencia de Estudiantes.

The page presents a distinctly balanced asymmetry. Altolaguirre's name and the page number at the bottom offset the dedication to Juan Ramón and the leftward-extending weight of the heading "POESÍAS." The two short poems float within this loose frame delineated by the paratextual material. The solid sanserif numbering of the poems contrasts sharply with the soft Bodoni italics in which the verse is set. These features confer material, almost tactile differences to the different kinds of texts on this page: hard, dark, geometrical sanserifs structure and arrange the page while the verse is

given the supple treatment of italics. The numbers indicate that we are dealing with two separate poems, and while the "1" and "2" seem to indicate order, Altolaguirre resists a linear presentation to avoid the poems falling into a sequential hierarchy.

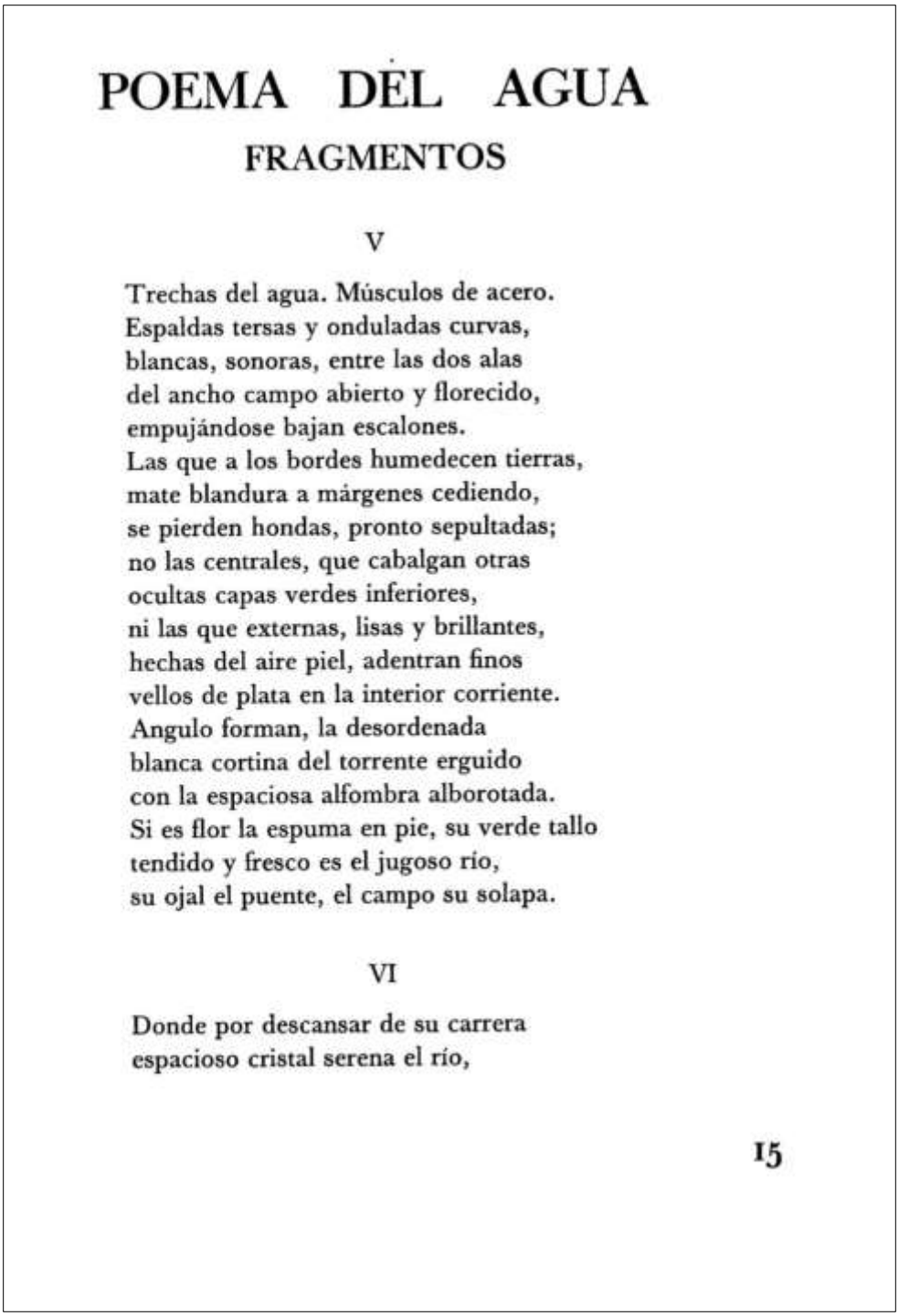
Another interesting detail is the internal organization of the poems. Both of these compositions are *romances*, a form of indeterminate length, comprised of octosyllabic lines with assonant rhyme on even-numbered lines. Apparently the original versions of these poems included stanzaic breaks and a significant number of variants, especially in the case of the second poem (see Hernández de Trelles 173-4; *Epistolario* 63n, 67). In his recent edition of the *Poesías completas (y otros poemas)* James Valender chooses to follow the versions of the poems as they were printed in *Litoral*, since he considers them to be 'better' (555-6). What does these versions' 'superiority' consist in? Valender does not offer any comparative analysis, but such an analysis, while I am not sure it will return any definitive ranking, will certainly help us to see how the different versions of the poems, in their various printings, can be read according to varying typographical conventions.

When Carmen D. Hernández de Trelles reproduced the two poems in her study of the life and work of Altolaguirre, she surmised, by their presence among Juan Ramón Jiménez's papers, that they had originally been included in letters to both Juan Guerrero and Juan Ramón (173). Valender considers it more likely that Juan Guerrero was the original recipient, having passed the poems on to Juan Ramón for consideration sometime after he received them from Altolaguirre. Hernández numbers the poems "I" and "II" and includes the stanzaic separations and the second poem's refrain. These are repeated in Valender's reproduction of the poems in his edition of Altolaguirre's

correspondence (*Epistolario* 67). Valender, however, numbers the poems roman numeral "I" and Arabic "2" (*Epistolario* 67). In Valender's edition of the *Poesías completas (y otros poemas)* they are included one following the other, but the only mention of their mutual genesis and previous printings comes in the notes at the end of the volume.

These differences are significant because the large-font sanserifs and the asymmetrical printing of the poems in *Litoral* recall the typographical style of the avant-garde, the politically and socially revolutionary advent of sanserif typefaces, and the non-linear reading practices of the avant-garde stemming from Stéphane Mallarmé's *Un coup de dés.* The block printing of the poems, without stanzaic separations, also contributes to a sensation of textual density and lends the poems a texture quite different from the lighter quality of less compact printing. Where the manuscript version might include a period mark followed by a stanza break, for example where we read, "Por el espejo, a su cuarto / los forros se le salían. // Barniz, cristal y violetas," the *Litoral* version uses a colon to achieve the kind of pause that would otherwise be indicated by white space: "Por el espejo, a su cuarto/ los forros se le salían: / ventanas, paredes, techos." (*Epistolario* 67; *Poesías completas* 306). Similarly, in the first poem, the ellipsis in the antepenultimate line corresponds to a period mark and stanza break in the manuscript version sent by letter to Juan Guerrero. The numbering in *Litoral* contrasts not just editorially but poetically with that used by Hernández, "I" and "II," and even with Valender's "I" and "2," since the roman numerals and the stanza breaks are unmistakably similar to Juan Ramón's aesthetics of printing. The broad sanserifs and the offset numbering of the *Litoral* versions is however reminiscent of avant-garde magazines like *Horizonte* and *VLTRA*, drawing originally on Futurist and Dadaist type compositions.

These poems are dedicated to Juan Ramón, a poet who never committed himself to the avant-garde project. But when we consider the characteristics of the printing of these two poems a certain allegiance to avant-garde typography on the part of Altolaguirre is implied visually. Consequently, it becomes evident that in printing the final five sections of the "Poema del agua" with different typographical characteristics to those we have just seen surrounding the poems to Juan Ramón, Altolaguirre likewise suggests different poetic resonances. The final five fragments of the "Poema del agua" appear in the commemorative issue of *Litoral* dedicated to the fourth centenary of Luis de Góngora's death. Here, the first page:



POEMA DEL AGUA

FRAGMENTOS

V

Trechas del agua. Músculos de acero.
Espaldas tersas y onduladas curvas,
blancas, sonoras, entre las dos alas
del ancho campo abierto y florecido,
empujándose bajan escalones.
Las que a los bordes humedecen tierras,
mate blandura a márgenes cediendo,
se pierden hondas, pronto sepultadas;
no las centrales, que cabalgan otras
ocultas capas verdes inferiores,
ni las que externas, lisas y brillantes,
hechas del aire piel, adentran finos
vellos de plata en la interior corriente.
Angulo forman, la desordenada
blanca cortina del torrente erguido
con la espaciosa alfombra alborotada.
Si es flor la espuma en pie, su verde tallo
tendido y fresco es el jugoso río,
su ojal el puente, el campo su solapa.

VI

Donde por descansar de su carrera
espacioso cristal serena el río,

15

Fig. 19. Manuel Altolaguirre. "Poema del agua." *Litoral* no. 5,6,7. October 1927. Page 15. Image courtesy of the Edad de Plata Portal at the Residencia de Estudiantes.

Even as Altolaguirre's poems in *Litoral* no. 4 reflect typographical lessons from the avant-garde, these "fragmentos" of the "Poema del agua," with their roman numerals

and their sober Bodoni letters, seem to confirm an allegiance to tradition. The poem itself is written in hendecasyllables and is published in a special issue of *Litoral* dedicated to Luis de Góngora. The presence of tradition in the text and in the material surrounding it is strong, then, but the avant-garde is also well represented in the issue and in its typography. Juan Gris's Cubist collage dedicated to Góngora adorns the cover. Picasso and Ángeles Ortiz also contribute artwork, while former *ultraístas* and/or *creacionistas* Rogelio Buendía, Adriano del Valle, Pedro Garfias, Juan Larrea, and Gerardo Diego contribute poems. The homage to Góngora had a huge impact on poetry in Spain, and this special triple number of *Litoral* seems to be the culminating moment in what was actually a long series of acts, dedications, emulations, studies, and mentions of Góngora. Don Luis shows up in Juan Ramón's *Índice* in 1921, and even in epigraph in Guillermo de Torre's book of Ultraist poems, *Hélices*, from 1923 (Bonet, *Diccionario* 302).

It seems by 1927 the slow return of tradition has been fully realized. Adriano del Valle's poem in the Góngora issue of *Litoral* is a meditation on a rainbow, written in measured eight-syllable lines with regular assonance. The same poet had published poems in the Ultraist vein of expressive typography eight years before.[105] The persistence of the avant-garde and its shared presence with Góngora is evident, however, in Valle's diction in the poem printed in *Litoral*: "kikirikí de herrumbre," "celuloide," and "mah-jongg" appear alongside "nácares" and "aljófares" (Valle 58-60). Along with the presence of the baroque in these last two terms (Portuguese "barroco" in fact means "aljófar"), the presence of Rubén Darío is also palpable, while terms like "celuloide" place us firmly in the physical twentieth century.

[105] See Valle's "De la radio" in *Grecia* number 33 for 20 November 1919, for example.

Typefaces in publications of the period reflect this same ambivalence. The Bodoni letters in which Altolaguirre's "Poema del agua" appears in the Góngora issue of *Litoral* merit some comment in this respect. Giambattista Bodoni was an eighteenth-century type designer whose unornamented style "carried with it a vision: that of a shedding of rococo baggage, a return to fundamentals and to the order of the classical age" (Kinross 29). Typographers working in the Arts and Crafts aesthetic in England, championed by William Morris, spurned Bodoni and Didot faces at the end of the nineteenth century because they saw them as lacking in humanity, emotion, devoid of sensual qualities (Kinross 46). The Arts and Crafts and *art nouveau* faces developed by Morris and those who shared his vision represented precisely the historicizing Aestheticism against which the avant-garde positioned itself at the outset of the twentieth century. Accompanying the avant-garde interest in abstraction, mechanization, and intellectual rather than spiritual aesthetics, typographers at the beginning of the twentieth century made two important developments in typeface design: bold and sanserif fonts (Kinross 38).

As Robin Kinross explains in his history of modern typography, the sanserif, introduced in the nineteenth century, was based on ancient inscriptions and thus shares a lineage and a style with typefaces like Bodoni. Sanserif was however originally conceived of as even more ancient than classicist letters like Bodoni or Didot. Kinross explains that "it was seen as a kind of ur-letter, ancient and elemental, and thus, in the context of early-nineteenth-century neo-classicism, it possessed a kind of modernity" (38). This modernity would be exploited by typographers in the twentieth century who felt type design should reflect the reality of the industrialized world; sanserifs became geometric rather than calligraphic, and an entire method and philosophy of typography,

known as The New Typography, aligned itself with Cubism, Futurism, Dada, and the sanserif letter (Kinross 104).

The new typography, as we have seen in previous chapters, flourished in the 1920s, but by 1935 even its most prolific theorist and practitioner, the Bauhaus-inspired Jan Tschichold, had dropped much of the "missionary zeal" of his avant-garde approach to typography (Kinross 126). His book published that year, *Typographische Gestaltung*, was set in Monotype Bodoni, making it clear, as Robin Kinross writes, that the proscription of anything rooted in tradition in favor of anything and everything violently new was no longer valid. Following the alternatively destructive and constructive avant-garde, in the period of a 'return to tradition,' "typefaces could be mixed for aesthetic effect and without much regard for their historical provenance" (Kinross 126).

Altolaguirre's choice of Bodoni letters is then an ambivalent one, and could partially be the result of financial or logistical restrictions. The appearance of Bodoni at turns reflects the return to order effected in European art, poetry, and typography towards the end of the decade. It was, after all, one of the first typefaces designed without reference to pen forms (Tschichold 19) and so shares roots and characteristics with the most intentionally modernist faces of the period, the geometric sanserifs. The kind of freedom that Tschichold advocates for in typography, combining traditional typefaces and compositional techniques with modern mechanized ones, is the parallel to Diego's and Cocteau's poetic formulations for a return to order, or Gasch's celebration of a "retorno al asunto" in painting. Harmony of form and content and an attention to precedents are not to be construed as hindrances to originality. In the context of the return

to order we must then read Bodoni letters or traditional hendecasyllabic lines differently from how they should be read in a publication from twenty years before.

Litoral is the intersection of avant-garde material poetics and a new consciousness of and respect for tradition. As such, it is an important historical document as well as the vehicle for individual poems. The poems in *Litoral* are the manifestations of shifting artistic attitudes, including the avant-garde's fading insistence on foregrounding materiality in its poetics. As such they are largely determined by their context(s), material and information which we cannot ignore when reading Altolaguirre or members of his peer group. As George Bornstein writes, "textual scholarship must necessarily always remind us that any embodied form of a text is a contingent product of concrete historical and economic institutions rather than a transparent conduit of an author's unmediated words" (8). This is true of modern editions like Valender's and it is also true of the original works and the material form they took in the first decades of the twentieth century.

The presence of avant-garde material poetics in Altolaguirre's poetry is important on the level of semantics, indeterminacy, and the visual focus of his metaphors. The legacy of the avant-garde is also detectable on the level of implied inheritance and affinity in typography, density of type, and order of reading, as we have seen in examples from *Litoral*. We must remember not to lose these details in reading Altolaguirre and in considering how works from the Generation of 1927 should be reedited in the future. It bears repeating Johann Drucker's words: "visual materiality pertains in the case of all written forms of language and […] acknowledging this is central to placing visual language within the historical context of its production" (3).

CONCLUSION

Many of Ramón Gómez de la Serna's *greguerías* fit so well in the economical space of a 140-character "tweet" that no fewer than three profiles on Twitter, the popular social networking site, are dedicated to posting *greguerías* in Ramón's name. One of these profiles, @GmezDeLaSerna, has over 8,000 followers. For a new volume out in 2009, the French Hispanist Laurie-Anne Laget recovered four hundred unpublished *greguerías* from Gómez de la Serna's papers archived at the University of Pittsburgh. The volume pairs the *greguerías* with photographs by the well-known contemporary Spanish photographer Chema Madoz. Spanish publishing house Calambur's 2007 anthology of twentieth-century visual poetry, much of it very recent, includes quotes from Tristan Tzara and Vicente Huidobro on the inside cover flaps. Considering these examples, can something be said for Jorge Luis Borges's participation in Ultraism in the context of his huge prestige as a short-story writer throughout the twentieth century? Or Agustín Fernández Mallo's interest in Borges for his controversial 2011 book, *El hacedor (de Borges), Remake*? Are these isolated affinities or do they represent some profound connection between contemporary art and literature and the historical avant-garde?

The works considered in this dissertation certainly belong to the historical avant-garde, 'historical' because we know the period ended. Perhaps on some levels it even failed. In the final two chapters we have seen that many of the most distinguished figures of the avant-garde, like Jean Cocteau or Ernesto Giménez Caballero and Manuel Altolaguirre, chose to advocate for a 'return of tradition'; a new call to order rallied the artists of the second half of the 1920s around the banners of artistic harmony rather than

the battle-standards of artistic antagonism and tumult. This was, however, also the period of Surrealism's greatest and most original productivity. Returning to a metaphor of Elmer Peterson's cited in Chapter Two, the historical avant-garde artists' relentless attack on the institution of art might have steered their efforts into "an inevitable cul-de-sac" (28). They had hoped to reconcile art and life, to unite them fully and make art a part of lived experience. As Domingo Ródenas notes, some of the artists of the avant-garde succeeded perhaps only in reconciling *their own* lives with *their own* art, but not in revolutionizing all of society (*Los espejos* 66). I believe, nonetheless, that the historical avant-garde persists in a great deal of late twentieth- and twenty-first-century artistic practice. As I conclude this dissertation, I should like to consider how the historical avant-garde continues to be relevant today and suggest possibilities for research into the period which would not treat it as an extinct curiosity of the past but as key to understanding the arts of the present.

It has become common in criticism of digital poetry to establish a lineage linking Mallarmé, Marinetti, and Apollinaire with the graphic experimentation and indeterminate readings common in poetry written (and coded) for the screen (Golding 249). Technological advances not available to the poets studied here certainly have allowed twenty-first century poets to produce works that move, change color, and unfold in ways which would have delighted the poets of the historical avant-garde. The implications for material poetics are quite complex, for a digitally composed poem that makes use of the typographical experimentation of the avant-garde is a new kind of material 'phenomenon' and not so much an object as, for example, a copy of Marinetti's *Zang Tumb Tumb* would be. N. Katherine Hayles explains,

> in digital media, the poem has a distributed existence spread among data files and commands, software that executes the commands, and hardware on which the software runs. These digital characteristics imply that the poem ceases to exist as a self-contained object and instead becomes a *process,* an event brought into existence when the program runs on the appropriate software loaded onto the right hardware. (181-2)

If poets in the historical avant-garde were interested in their poems existing in physical reality rather than in a kind of Platonic eternal sphere, digital poets of the twenty-first century are able to make their poems operate as repeatable but variable 'events,' ephemeral products of the here and now. Avant-garde presentness and simultaneity are fully realized in the possibilities offered by computing. And so, El Lissitzky's words on the new typography from 1923 ring almost prophetic in the age of the World Wide Web:

> 6. The continuity of page-sequence – the bioscopic book.
> 7. The new book demands the new writer. Ink-pots and goose-quills are dead.
> 8. The printed page transcends space and time. The printed page, the infinity of the book, must be transcended. THE ELECTRO-LIBRARY. (Tschichold 60)

But the technology of the personal computer and the Internet are not the only reasons for digital poetry's lineage tracing back to the typographical experimentation of the historical avant-garde. Whether in print or digital format, Marjorie Perloff argues in her book *21st-Century Modernism* that "the aesthetic of early modernism has provided the seeds of the materialist poetic which is increasingly our own" (3). Perloff argues that "as we move into the twenty-first century, the modern/postmodern divide" of the second half of the twentieth century "has emerged as more apparent than real" (*21st-Century* 164). This situation is very clearly visible in Spanish in the work of an author like Agustín Fernández Mallo, whose 2009 book-length essay, *Postpoesía*, argues for a recuperation

of the historical avant-garde's interest in experimentation, something he sees as having been abandoned and spurned by the two 'currents' he identifies in late-twentieth-century poetry in Spain, "poesía de la experiencia" and "poesía de la diferencia." He writes, "es típico de estas dos escuelas poéticas echar mano del aparato teórico de las vanguardias históricas para valorar cualquier poema que consideren «extraño» a su poética" (65).

Discussed in Chapter One, Perloff's idea of "the poetics of indeterminacy" as the "other tradition" and her idea of the historical avant-garde's persistence in much "postmodern" writing return now to make it clear that a chronological division between modernism and postmodernism, with the former completely preceding the latter (as the terminology suggests it does), is not a fair model for the dynamics of twentieth-century poetics. As Perloff demonstrates in her book on *The Poetics of Indeterminacy* or as Ihab Hassan argues in *The Dismemberment of Orpheus*, "postmodern" art takes up a great deal of the aesthetics of the historical avant-garde, contemporaneous to the high modernism of the early twentieth century. Andreas Huyssen's "Great Divide" between high art and popular art, closed by the historical avant-garde, remains closed for a great deal of art produced today and in recent decades. Domingo Ródenas's thorough historical argument shows that postmodern "happenings," pop art, and concrete poetry owe a great deal to the historical avant-garde, even though this debt has rarely been acknowledged (*Los espejos* 56-60). Ródenas quotes a few brief words from Brian McHale as a succinct summary of his argument here: "the postmodernism which so dramatically detaches itself from the modernist background largely repeats or extends the innovations of the excluded modernist avant-garde" (qted. in Ródenas, *Los espejos* 57).

This reappearance of modernism or of the historical avant-garde in contemporary writing received very recent treatment in an article in *PMLA* by David James and Urmila Seshagiri. They write that they do not wish "to imply that fiction's most striking advances today occur solely under the mantle of modernism, but rather to highlight the stakes of modernism's presence for contemporary writers as both a moment and a movement" (93). James and Seshagiri designate this "presence" of modernism in contemporary writing "metamodernism" at the same time that they fail to recognize important distinctions between the historical avant-garde and what has been traditionally denominated "modernism," while they also set "postmodernism" behind the contemporary works they study as a fully eclipsed mode (93). As Ródenas writes, we may not be sure then what to call contemporary writing, perhaps "metamodern" or perhaps something else; "que ésta se llame posmoderna o hipermoderna [Bovero 1993: 111]…importa ahora poco, porque de un modo y otro se denota la crisis de la episteme moderna" (*Los espejos* 37). Many other commentators have noticed postmodernism and contemporary writing's debt to the historical avant-garde and the uninterrupted presence of the latter in contemporary writing, but this notice, especially in Hispanic literatures, has not resulted in studies recuperating the poetry of *ultraísmo* or *creacionismo*, for example, within the context of the practices of twenty-first century readers and writers.

Critics as well as poets can look to the historical avant-garde to help them understand how the material poetics of the period made new kinds of poetry possible in an effort to better understand works created in our digital culture. The technological revolution in media and communications starting in the late twentieth century and currently outpacing its own recent advances has a corollary in certain inventions of the

early twentieth century. The wireless telegram, the photograph, linotype, monotype, and color printing, not to mention the explosion of new typeface design, revolutionized the way people in the West spoke, wrote, and read in the space of a few short years. We are currently experiencing a similar expressive revolution, one in which the ubiquity of email, text messaging, and the screen as a medium largely determines the way we read, write, and think, even when we use conventional media to communicate. Further research could follow Marjorie Perloff and Domingo Ródenas's contention that the historical avant-garde is the source for a great deal of contemporary literary practice. As critics analyze poetry like Charles Wright's typographically dispersed lines which I cited at the outset of this dissertation, they would do well to take into account avant-garde typographical experimentation as well as the new parameters of digital composition, reading, and distribution, all of which contribute to Wright's (and his editors') choices. Likewise, the aesthetics of Manuel Altolaguirre's and indeed a general style based around the Imprenta Sur, *Litoral*, and Juan Ramón's *Índice* continues to inform literary publishing in Spain.

As custodians of texts from the historical avant-garde, critics should also be mindful of the importance of the material artifact of the poem or the book when preparing new editions of works from this period. The Residencia de Estudiantes hosts an excellent resource in its web portal *Revistas de la Edad de Plata*, where clear and simple digital transcription of texts from the little magazines of the historical avant-garde is accompanied by high quality digital scans of the originals. In fact, without the magazines digitized in this archive and on the pages of the Spanish National Library I would not have been able to write this dissertation. Critical attention to these resources, only

available in relatively recent years, should help scholars to produce textually responsible editions that take into consideration the important material qualities of the original texts. Likewise, critics who pay attention to these qualities will be able to perform new readings of canonical poets like Jorge Guillén, Federico García Lorca, and Juan Ramón Jiménez. These poets' work can be contextualized historically and aesthetically by reading it as it first appeared. It is my hope that the work I have done in this dissertation and other research like it will help future scholarship do honor to the poetry of the historical avant-garde by reprinting and analyzing it in full conscience that the poems do not exist outside their physical iterations.

Another direction for scholarship to which I hope my work here can contribute would be towards better informed and more careful efforts to make sense of the explicit presence of the historical avant-garde in twenty-first century writing. The citations of Tzara and Huidobro in Calambur's anthology mentioned above would benefit from more critical work towards understanding the poetry of these authors' historical moment and what their presence alongside contemporary work might mean. Each time the historical avant-garde appears in more recent writing, such as in Roberto Bolaño's novel *Los detectives salvajes*, we need to consider what the aesthetics of the avant-garde movements means not only for *real-visceralistas* like Bolaño's characters Arturo Belano and Ulises Lima, but for contemporary real-life readers. When twenty-first century readers come across the "Directorio de Vanguardia" from the first issue of the magazine *Actual*, consulted by the two wandering poets in Bolaño's novel under the guidance of Amadeo Salvatierra, they might easily think that many of the names there listed are completely original novelistic inventions of the great Chilean author (218-20). "Juan Las"

for example merits a "Vaya nombre" from Salvatierra (219), and presumably also from Bolaño's readers, who are almost certainly unaware that it is a pseudonym of Rafael Cansinos Assens's. Not that this knowledge would clarify much for them; they are just as unlikely to know anything about this figure from the historical avant-garde in Madrid. Nonetheless, the task of recuperating the poetics of the historical avant-garde for contemporary readers can fertilize the criticism of works such as Bolaño's *Los detectives salvajes* and other texts informed aesthetically or thematically by the historical avant-garde.

This dissertation is not the place to take on such tasks those as I have just described, but I hope that the readings I have performed on the poetry of the historical avant-garde in Spain, along with the theoretical treatment I have given the period's material poetics, will allow us to see the affinities between the historical avant-garde and more recent literary efforts, whether they be called postmodernism, *postpoesía*, simply 'digital-age poetry', or something else. As we read Ramón's *greguerías* on Twitter or consult works from the historical avant-garde on interactive websites like Kenneth Goldsmith's *UbuWeb* or the Residencia de Estudiantes's portal *Revistas de la Edad de Plata*, we must consider how the avant-garde's typographical experimentation has historically conditioned the production of print text as well as digital and digitized texts and likewise how our twenty-first century digital savvy affects our reading of the material poetics of the last century's poetic innovators.

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