

FROM 'NEW AESTHETIC OF WAR'¹

The new Aesthetic of War leads to

- 1) A shift in martial virtues capabilities responsibilities courage now possessed by the supreme Head of the armed forces by construction companies by commanders of mechanised units by complex and therefore autonomous machines by factory workers by pilots by motorists by women by children by the elderly by the injured and by the sick all of whom are exposed to danger
- 2) A shift in the notion of the heroic moment that surfaces in the declaration of war in the industrial initiative in the personal decision to train for a specialised role in the comprehension of the workings of a machine and in the execution of a military command
- 3) A shift in or metamorphosis of the notion of Military Glory with a cheering Return or a kneeling No Return for the aeroplane or tank or submarine or torpedo-boat worthy of glory independently of the soldiers contained within
- 4) The triumphant acknowledgement of machines as military Personnel all having their own highly distinct thoughtful astute intrepid personalities as prophesied by the Futurist aviator and aeropainter Fedele Azari who founded the first Society for the protection of machines twenty years ago in Milan taking account of the fact that upon climbing into his machine each soldier enriches the machine itself and his military command with a part of his own personality
- 5) The novel splendour of the human projectile *picchiatello*² or *picchiatuffo*³

¹ Marinetti, 'Nuova estetica della guerra', unidentified publication, 26 October 1940 (Cra.2.141).

² My italics. Loosely meaning 'crackpot', *Picchiatello* was the nickname given to those Ju 87 dive-bombers (Stukas) used by the Regia Aeronautica during World War Two.

³ My italics. A neologism, presumably coined by Marinetti (although see below, n. 6), combining the words / concepts *picchiare* (to strike or hit) and *tuffo* (dive); it also evokes – and reinforces the meaning of – the word *picchiata*, signifying both 'battering' and 'nose-dive'.

6) The necessity of glorifying with aeropoetic magnificence all of the soldiers who die anonymously in their machines only the latter initially being mentioned on the radio that accelerator of glory

7) The precise examination of patriotic sentiment in every citizen whether male or female in order to ascertain the extent to which the Fatherland transcends the individual's own interests pride affections sympathies antipathies

8) The deification of speed as occurred in the seven-month Ethiopian war and the twelve-day conquest of Somalia⁴ deified speed of tanks inside which the armoured human body hurls itself forward without fear of injury to the point of inevitable death and deified speed of tri-motor bombers that render armoured cavalries and large breaches in the enemy front useless substituting them with small breaches for tanks⁵

9) Aeropoetry of war the ultra-discussed long-acknowledged masterpieces of which include Marinetti's 'War Sole Hygiene of the World' 'The Pope's Aeroplane' 'The Steel Alcove' 'The Aeropoem of the Gulf of La Spezia with Battle of Land Sea Sky' 'The African Poem of the 28 October Division' and 'The Bombardment of Adrianople' Benedetta's 'Astra and the Submarine' Bruno Sanzin's 'Optimism at All Costs' Gaetano Pattarozzi's 'Futurist Aeropoem of Sardinia', Pino Masnata's 'Poetry of Surgical Instruments' Geppo Tedeschi's 'Accelerated Songs' Emilio Buccafusca's 'Fascist Students Sing like This' Elio Balestreri's 'March Better than the Romans Black Shirts'

10) Aeropainting of war by the Futurist aeropainters Prampolini Benedetta Crali Oriani Rosso Menin Andreoni Caviglioni Peruzzi Acquaviva Ambrosi Belli Favalli Di Bosso Tato Forlin Fasullo Monachesi who transfigure aeroplanes (wrongly called sailplanes by passéists when in fact the word *velivolo* from Ovid's 'Mar velivolus' that is to say covered with sails can only be used in relation to gliders)⁶

⁴ Marinetti presumably refers here to Italy's swift, yet fleeting, occupation of British Somaliland in the August of 1940.

⁵ A clear reference to the principles of Blitzkrieg.

⁶ Here and elsewhere in this section, my italics. Marinetti's fascination with neologisms was of long standing, and tended to be motivated by patriotic concerns. See, for instance, his *Futurist Cookbook* (cit., pp. 171-75) in which he suggests substituting the terms *quisibeve* ('drink here') and *traidue* ('between

In works of aeropoetry aeroplanes can only be compared to themselves or to other machines never to eagles falcons vultures or other creatures symbolic of the old poetry

In aeropaintings aeroplanes are depicted as flown by pilots just as automobiles are driven by motorists since medically speaking the word *autista* means narcissist

Futurist aeropainters transfigure torpedo-boats submarines tanks battleships torpedoes with the simultaneous internal life of hydrostatic plates and gyroscopes squadrons formations of war (the word formation is substituted for the word column which lies down or stands erect and is therefore unable to march) forts and camps which being besieged like that of the Warieu Pass are aeropoetically and aeropictorially comparable to circularplates machine-guns an atmosphere of boiling ash hammering sun cannons cartridges water intrepidity the dead the injured outside inside their emplacements.

11) Aldo Giuntini's synthetic aeromusic of war and an aeroscience of war that is indisputably Italian by virtue of its masters Volta Galvani Pacinotti and Marconi.

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two') for the English words 'bar' and 'sandwich'; see also above, Chapter Five. However, it is interesting to note the relationship between the present text and a series of brief articles that appeared in the journal *Primato* between 1940 and 1943 concerning the new terminology introduced to the Italian public by the war. Indeed, in 'La guerra e il vocabolario' (15 August 1940) Bruno Migliorini noted a 'revival of the use of [the term] *sailplane* alongside that of *aeroplane*' – something condemned outright by Marinetti here. See Luisa Mangoni, ed., *'Primato' 1940-1943* (Bari: De Donato, 1977), pp. 61-66 (p. 65). In the same feature Migliorini also observed that 'a new characteristic of naval warfare is the intense collaboration between the navy and aviation: whence the popularity of the compound adjective *aerial-naval* (or, less correctly, *aero-naval*)' (ibid., pp. 63-64); all original italics. Again, the Futurists tended to favour the latter term over the former.