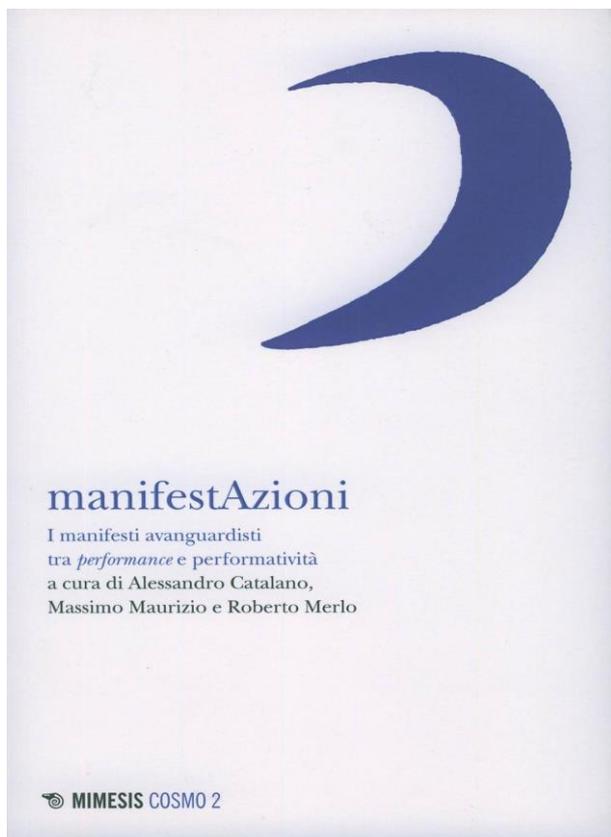


ManifestAzioni. I manifesti avanguardisti tra performance e performatività

edited by Alessandro Catalano, Massimo Maurizio e Roberto Merlo

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ManifestAzioni. I manifesti avanguardisti tra performance e performatività, edited by Alessandro Catalano, Massimo Maurizio e Roberto Merlo, Milano-Udine: Mimesis, 2014, re-evaluates, from a comparativist and pragmatic perspective, the avant-garde literary manifesto in terms of theatricality (*performance*) and its actional rhetoric (*performatività*). Out of ten chapters, representing communications delivered on the occasion of the homonymous conference organized on the 2nd and 3rd of March, 2012, by the University of Turin, two are Romanian, signed by Rodica Ilie (“Transilvania” University of Brașov) and by Emilia Parpală (University of Craiova). The volume opens with the pluri-perspectival definition of the manifesto and continues with its exemplification in six cultural areas: Latin America (Anna Bocuti), England (Rebecca Beasley), Czech Republic (Alessandro Catalano), France (Eleonora di Mauro), Italy (Barbara Zandrino), Poland (Alessandro Ajres), Romania (Emilia Parpală) and Russia (Sergej Birjukov, Nadia Caprioglio). These contexts

define the differences as well as the identity of the manifesto, a species which is characteristic of historical avant-garde.

For Rodica Ilie (*The Literary Manifesto – Text, Discourse, Action*, pp. 9-23), specialist in avant-gardism within Romance space, the avant-garde manifesto operates in two directions: the polemic imposing of an artistic ideology and the imposing of a new type of literature; consequently, it must be analyzed both from the perspective of doctrine contents, and of effects, as *speech act*. As specific act of literary communication, the manifesto has an intentional and teleological character, being an autonomous and self-referential event which detaches itself from its author. Ilie maintains the dual perspective in the definition of the manifesto as paradoxical text / discourse, built upon the tension between nihilism and constructive dynamism which re-establishes the order.

Barbara Zandrino (*Declamazioni Futuriste*, pp. 119-132) analyzes the specificity and the impact of futurist declamations, emphasizing the importance of contributions by F.T. Marinetti and Francesco Cangiullo. She concentrates on the peculiarities of declamation (where the multiplication of points of view and inventive playful solicitations are commonplace) and on the active participation of the public, attracted into the performative game. The dynamic and synoptic futurist declamations have gained notoriety in the culture of the 20th century and have undergone ulterior developments, anticipating the *happenings*, as well as the performance art of the 1960s and 1970s, especially the research in *body art*. Zandrino further refers to the masochist and Freudian regressive practices with Vito Acconci, to the violent experiences on one’s own body with Gina Pane (1972),

to the transvestitism with Luigi Ontani, to the emergence of *Fluxus* in the 1960s – a movement focused on expressive freedom, interdisciplinarity, multimediality and the idea of total antibourgeois art (132).

Sergej Birjukov (*Manifesto e “Manifestività” nell’Avanguardia Storica Russa*, pp. 39-46) brings into discussion the concepts of “manifesto” and “manifestivity” in Russian historical avant-garde. He discusses several types of programmatic declaration specific to Russian avant-garde, mentioning amongst others, Aleksej Kručenyč, Velimir Chlebnikov, V. Majakovskij. He argues that we can recognize challenging and provocative elements in these general manifestos which also contain a poetological program as well as the definition and assertion of well-defined goals. The author concludes that these manifestos, conceived as declarative and explicit artistic texts, exhibit clear procedures; they have immediately become “subject of discussion”, of debate, of comprehension and misunderstanding, and have consequently animated reflections on behalf of supporters and detractors. That is why the manifestos are worth our attention and they still continue to raise our interest nowadays.

In Chapter 4, Nadia Caprioglio (*Šklovskij, Kručenyč, Malevič. Una Forma Nuova Genera Un Nuovo Contenuto*, pp.47-58) starts from the assertion that “a new form generates new content”, and tackles the specificity of several futuristic manifestos, highlighting contributions by Šklovskij, Kručenyč and Malevič, who all try to answer essential questions of Russian avant-garde at the beginning of the twentieth century. Malevič, for example, tried to find a reply to the Russian avant-garde issue of referential words, seen as charges of objects, used by old masters, which are by now incapable of expressing raw emotions or aspirations of new art revolutionaries (poets, painters and so on) (56).

It is a common assertion that Russia exported avant-garde. Before analyzing the constructivist, integralist and surrealist (meta)manifestos of the historical Romanian avant-garde, Emilia Parpală (*Rhetorical Acts, Performative Acts. Urmuz and the (Meta)Manifestos of Romanian Avant-garde*, pp. 59-73) proposes the concept of “implicit manifesto”, which she illustrates with a “forerunner of the Revolt” – Urmuz; the rhetoric model of his *Weird Pages* had a decisive impact on the first wave of Romanian decanonization. In conclusion, Emilia Parpală states that Romanian avant-garde manifestos have both advertising and poetic character, therefore “their literarity attenuates their performativity”. From a pragmatic perspective, the distribution of speech acts shows preference for directive and declarative illocutions, for the over-exposure of the group ethos, for strong, redundant structuring (73). The research outlines the moderation, synthesis and specificity of the Romanian artistic insurrection.

Eleonora di Mauro (*Attimi di Sub Specie Aeternitatis, ovvero Gli Scritti Programmatici della Modernità Letteraria Francese*, pp. 25-38) grasps instants of *sub specie aeternitatis* or, better said, she seizes the specificity of programmatic writings of French literary modernity. She starts from the premise that the creative fervour and enthusiasm which animated literary circles during the 19th and the 20th centuries is sign of a unique reshaping movement resembling a “reforming nebula”. She contends that the last years of French 19th century are characterized by the proliferation of numerous writings endowed with programmatic traits, writings that are to be found within the pages of literary reviews and take the form of articles announcing a new creed, of forewords, pamphlets or polemic columns with explicit prescriptive intent; they all initiate movements such as *Verslibrisme*, *École Romane*, *Impulsionnisme*, *Somptuarisme* and so on. Taking into account the aesthetic research that enlivened the atmosphere of literary circles at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, the author argues that it is worth searching for the substratum which lead to the emergence of meta-literary discourses and which, if it did not “equal the performativity and the experimental charge of manifestos of great historical avant-gardes” (26), still “presented some manifesto effects” (26) construed by a powerful perlocutory force. Di Mauro agrees that the programmatic texts of literary modernity claim a “creative” language and demand astounding expressive forms, able to “answer to the appeal of a generation constrained to interface a new world” (34); it is all about a reality that only art can represent on

condition to give up the supremacy of the form and to “convey a powerful ideological message” (34). The author concludes that the advantage behind the attempts of the “modern reforming nebula” is that we can acknowledge the pioneering spirit claimed by an art that turns out to be a “field of hypotheses” (37) and the capacity to forerun the “laboratory of a factory of experimentation and trial” – which will be the great historical avant-gardes of the 20th century.

Alessandro Ajres (*Il Ruolo del Manifesto nei Movimenti che Anticipano la Prima Avanguardia Polacca*, pp. 75-94) emphasizes the role of the manifesto in the movements which anticipate the first Polish avant-garde, highlighting the impact of the literary manifesto in inter-war Poland during the period 1918-1939. During this period, the literary manifesto proves to be a very popular genre. Ajres punctuates the most important moments for the Polish historical avant-garde: the first review interested in futurism – *Zdrój* (representing Polish literary expressionism and expressionism in painting organized around *Blunt* group); the first cycle of publications of *Zwrotnica* review (which marks the birth of the first Polish avant-garde); Katarynka group manifestos; *Gga. The First Polish Almanack of Futurist Poetry*; the *Manifesto of Primitivists*; the *Immortal Volume of Futurizations*; the *Unique Numbers of Futurists* (such as the *Knife in the Stomach*) and the issue of the first number of *Nowa Sztuka*. The author argues that the Polish literary manifesto is a “form of communication linked to the futurist movement in common imaginary”; with Polish futurists, one of the landmarks consists in the constant negotiation and renegotiation of traditions. Ajres is convinced that the Polish futurist experience and manifestos are concluded in 1923; as a theoretical frame, he pleads for the classical equilibrium between form and content: “the contents cannot be limited to be a pretext for art; it must be instead the supreme value of a work of art to which the form submits”. (94).

Alessandro Catalano (*Avanguardia/Avanguardie: Il Lungo Cammino dell'Arte Moderna Ceca dal Cubismo al Poetismo attraverso I Manifesti Letterari*, pp. 95-118) follows the long path of Czech modern art from cubism to “pietism” across literary manifestos, while clarifying the oscillation in modern language between the existence of “a Czech avant-garde” or of several “Czech avant-gardes”. Several halts mark essential instants of Czech modern art: modernism (with the first Manifesto of Czech Modernism); cubism and futurism; the First Appeal of Czech Writers in 1917; the Proletarian Art (with its first manifesto – *Proletářské umění*) and poetism. The inter-war period is characterized by an “original theoretical analysis of modern art based on the binominal poetism / constructivism. Alessandro Catalano draws the attention that Czech avant-garde found its most consistent expressive form in the programmatic manifestos and texts by K. Teige – the main theoretician of Czech avant-garde. Besides having conceived a system based on the opposition constructivism / poetism, he helped raising, in the Czech literary context, the literary manifesto at the level of an “autonomous genre” (117); most of his texts published in the 1920s can be read as a “manifesto in progress”.

In *Radical Realism: Ezra Pound and the Vorticist Manifestos*, pp. 133-143, Rebecca Beasley contends, against M. Puchner, that the modernist manifesto was not deprived of its avant-garde content, was not simply an attempt to “catch up with the extreme modernism” of the Continental avant-gardes” (133). The British modernist magazine *Blast* published manifestos of Britain’s only avant-garde art modern movement – vorticism. The author argues that the vorticist manifesto has influenced the subject matter and method of Pound’s never-to-be finished poem – *The Cantos*, suggesting that the earliest drafts of the poem hint to the fact that Pound borrowed from vorticism a method of representing history through vortices. The impact of the manifesto on the poetry of Ezra Pound was not merely formal, but it provided a model of what Pound called “realism”.

Anna Boccuti (*Esordi Avanguardisti in America Latina: Non Serviam di Vicente Huidobro*, pp. 145-156) analyzes *Non Serviam* by Chilean poet Vicente Huidobro, a manifesto inaugurating the birth of Creationism, the avant-garde beginning in Latin America in 1914. Justifying the founding value of the creationist word, Huidobro “expresses his will to become a demiurge” (152), a will that is rendered obvious in his *Poetic Art*. Boccuti concludes that the transformation of the

poet into an Artist-God as well as the dissolution of the human figure of the poet became constants of his production and that *Non Serviam* is nothing but a “precocious programmatic” assertion which does not lack in contradictions, thus revealing the “complexity that characterizes the creationist adventure of Huidobro and the Hispanic-American avant-garde multiforms” (152).

By bringing together studies dedicated to the avant-garde manifesto across different linguistic and cultural areas, this volume draw a panorama of historical avant-garde and stimulates the rethinking of cultural epiphenomena by fresh pragmatic approaches highlighting the actional potential of literature.