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Allies and Enemies: Periodicals as Instruments of Conflict in the Florentine Avant-garde (1903–15)

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Allies and Enemies: Periodicals as Instruments of Conflict in the Florentine Avant-garde (1903–15)

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ABSTRACT

In 1903, Giovanni Papini, a 22-year-old aspiring philosopher who would soon channel his rampant ambition into literary writing, was one of the founders of the philosophy magazine *Leonardo* (1903–07). A group of young intellectuals and artists, here defined as the Florentine avant-garde, gathered around this periodical and its successors *La Voce* (1908–16) and *Lacerba* (1913–15). By drawing on Bourdieu's sociological theory of cultural fields, this essay explores how the intellectuals writing for these periodicals established a powerful intellectual network and criticized the cultural institutions of the period: universities, the press, and the literary and artistic markets. By tracing individual biographies and intellectual trajectories, this essay also highlights the conflicts that arose within the Florentine avant-garde and with the Futurists led by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti.

KEYWORDS

Avant-garde; publishing houses and magazines; intellectuals and journalism; Futurism in the Italian intellectual field

The Florentine Avant-garde

Leonardo was a philosophy magazine published in Florence between 1903 and 1907 and edited by the then 22-year-old Giovanni Papini (1881–1957). In the ‘Allies and Enemies’ section appearing at the end of each issue, contributors discussed books, periodicals, and the works of prominent intellectuals, announcing either ‘alliance treaties’ or ‘declarations of war’. The title of this section suggests the journal’s aggressive take on contemporary Italian culture, a lead followed by its successors *La Voce*, a weekly magazine published in Florence between 1908 and 1916, and *Lacerba*, a literary and arts fortnightly review also published in Florence but between 1913 and 1915. The former was edited by Giuseppe Prezzolini (1882–1982) until 1914, the latter named no editor-in-chief until January 1915 when Papini was mentioned as such.

The editorial staff of the three periodicals constitute the core of what I call the Florentine avant-garde, a label borrowed from a 1993 book by Walter Adamson, *Avant-Garde Florence: From Modernism to Fascism*, although used differently here. According to Adamson, the Florentine avant-garde was one of the Italian expressions of transnational modernism, a well-defined literary period in English-speaking scholarship that has recently also been adopted in Italian academia. My use of the term avant-garde instead derives from the theory of cultural fields developed by Pierre Bourdieu, who conceived of the production of cultural works and of their symbolic value in relational and conflicting terms. From this perspective, avant-garde is a structural rather than historiographical concept: it provides an explanation for succeeding waves of cultural renewal, which Bourdieu ascribes to the actions of new entrants in cultural fields. In order to be recognized and consecrated (that is, in Bourdieu’s terms, in order to acquire symbolic capital), debutant intellectuals strive to overturn the established set of cultural values, since that particular set of values consecrated those currently occupying a dominant position in the field.

The best way to win symbolic capital is not to fight for it alone. Accordingly, historical avant-gardes such as Futurism, Dadaism, and Surrealism are alliances of new entrants in a cultural field, who regrouped in order to gain strength against the dominant values embodied by the works of their living predecessors. For a couple of centuries different groups of innovators, from Romantic poets to neo-avant-garde writers, adopted a set of strategies to obtain literary credit. Manifestos and periodicals were particularly effective, since they create an image of a solid and united cultural front: the ideas and opinions of individuals writing for a magazine or signing a manifesto are perceived as emanating from the group rather than the separate authors.

The Florentine avant-garde had no manifesto and no name, nor was it labelled as an ‘-ism’, but it was no less an avant-garde;¹ periodicals were the principal instrument these intellectuals used to band together, acquire an audience, and ultimately overturn current cultural hierarchies. In the following pages I outline the battles launched by the Florentine avant-garde through its magazines, and against whom they were fought.

1 The reason why the Florentine avant-garde did not resort to the promotional strategy of naming itself with an ‘-ism’, nor to that of producing a manifesto, is probably to be found in the multifaceted nature of the cultural fields where its battles were fought. Nonetheless, histories of Italian literature tend to designate writers debuting in this milieu as ‘autori vociani’ [‘Vocean authors’] participating in a ‘movimento vociano’ or ‘vocianesimo’ [‘Vocean movement’, ‘Voceanism’], thus classifying this avant-garde with an ‘-ism’ label.



ALLEATI E NEMICI

Istituzioni di scienza occulta.

Un grosso volume di occultismo compare nella Piccola Biblioteca di Scienze Moderne. Ne è autore l'avvocato ALESSANDRO SACCHI e porta il titolo magniloquente di *Istituzioni di Scienza occulta*.

Disgraziatamente alla magniloquenza del titolo ed alla gonfiezza di uno stile pletorico e farraginoso non corrisponde una serietà di contenuto, una profondità e precisione di idee, una esotericità di teoria. Il libro è destinato a dare al pubblico una idea falsa dell'occultismo, a danneggiare la causa che prende a difendere; poichè l'autore stesso, se possiede una cultura speciale discretamente accurata, non è affatto penetrato nel vero spirito dell'occultismo.

Nelle quattrocento pagine di cui consta l'opera sua, il lettore è condotto da una breve trattazione del problema critico ad una esposizione della filosofia cabalistica e quindi alle scienze od arti occulte più disparate: l'alchimia, l'oneiromanzia, l'astrologia, la divinazione, la teurgia, la magia cerimoniale e rituale, la taumaturgia ecc.

Per il Sacchi tutta questa roba è occultismo, e non sa che « l'Occultismo differisce dalla scienza magica e dalle altre scienze segrete, quanto la gloria del sole differisce dalla luce di una candela, quanto l'immortale ed immutabile spirito dell'uomo — riflesso dell'assoluto, incausato ed inconoscibile tutto — differisce dall'argilla mortale, il corpo umano ».

Queste parole di un grande occultista moderno sono dirette in special modo a quella scuola di sedicenti occultisti occidentali cui anche il Sacchi appartiene.

Fig. 1 Heading of the section 'Alleati e nemici' ['Allies and Enemies'], *Leonardo* (April 1906)

From *Leonardo* to *La Voce*

As editors of *Leonardo*, *La Voce*, and *Lacerba*, Papini and Prezzolini were keenly aware of the importance of periodicals in renewing cultural fields. Both inscribed their most recent endeavours in a genealogy that amounted, in their opinion, to a succession of innovations and revolutions:

When history, like a winding path, in order to achieve its purpose changes direction and doubles back, [...] ideas become incarnate in some groups of youngsters, who become knights of righteous indignation, prophets of the absolute [...]. First came *La Cronaca Bizantina*, then the early *Marzocco* and *Leonardo*; it is now the turn of *La Voce*.²

Since 1894 the liveliest, freest, most innovative, most revolutionary, most progressive magazines in Italy have come from Florence. *Marzocco* (1894) opened the series [...]. *Leonardo* followed (1903) [...]. Shortly after *Leonardo* came Corradini's *Il Regno* (1903) and Borgese's *Hermes* (1904). [...] Later came Prezzolini's *La Voce* (1908), which selected and put together the theoretical and literary issues inherited from *Leonardo*, and the political and social ones inherited from *Il Regno*. [...] When *La Voce* became too serious and cultural, a group seceded and went on to create *Lacerba* (1913), which [...] was and is the most modern, most ruthless, most dangerous, most innovative and most national magazine our country has ever had since the beginning of time.³

The two genealogies largely overlap. This is not surprising, since Papini and Prezzolini worked together until *Lacerba* was created in 1913. The two met in 1899. Papini, the son of a poor Florentine artisan, had just received a high-school diploma allowing him to teach in elementary schools but not to enrol at university. Prezzolini was the son of a *prefetto* (a local representative of the national government), who on passing away in 1900, bequeathed his son a small income. As soon as his father died, Prezzolini left the *liceo*, the most prestigious Italian high school, without obtaining a diploma: although better off than Papini, he too was unable to enrol at university.

2 'Dove la storia, a guisa di gomito d'una strada, muta direzione e si ravvolge su se stessa, per raggiungere il fine [...] le idee si personificano in un qualche gruppo di giovani, cavalieri del santo sdegno e profeti dell'assoluto [...]. Fu prima *La Cronaca Bizantina*; poi *Il Marzocco* giovane; e dopo *Il Leonardo*; oggi è *La Voce*'. Giuseppe Prezzolini, 'Il Marzocco II', *La Voce* (13 May 1909), p. 86; this and the following translations are all mine. *Cronaca bizantina* (Rome, 1881–86) was a literary and artistic magazine renowned for having hosted Gabriele D'Annunzio's first writings; *Il Marzocco* (Florence, 1896–1932) was originally established by a group of critics and poets interested in French Symbolism. According to Prezzolini, at the beginning of the twentieth century the magazine had lost its bite and seemed to speak 'well of everyone. It contains beautiful ads, and is an essential read for anyone wishing to chat to ladies about our literature' ['dice bene di Tizio, di Cajo, di Sempronio ed anche di Eccetera se potesse, contiene bellissime inserzioni editoriali, è necessario a chiunque voglia parlare con signore della nostra letteratura.']. Libreria della Voce advertisement page, *La Voce* (25 December 1913), p. 1230.

3 'Dal 1894 le riviste più vive, più innovatrici, più rivoluzionarie, più libere, più avanzate son nate e cresciute a Firenze. Apri la serie il *Marzocco* (1894) [...]. Segui il *Leonardo* (1903) [...]. Un po' dopo il *Leonardo* sorse il *Regno* di Corradini (1903) e l'*Hermes* di Borgese (1904). [...] Venne più tardi la *Voce* (1908) di Prezzolini la quale raccolse in parte, vagliata e rifiuta, l'eredità teorica e letteraria del *Leonardo* e quella politica e sociale del *Regno*. [...] Dalla *Voce*, che andava facendosi troppo seria e culturale, si staccò il gruppo che creò *Lacerba* (1913), la quale [...] è stata ed è la rivista più moderna, più temeraria, più azzardosa, più rinnovatrice e nazionale che abbia avuto il nostro paese dal principio dei tempi'. Giovanni Papini, 'Fiorentinità', *Lacerba* (21 February 1915), pp. 57–58. Both Papini and Prezzolini contributed to Enrico Corradini's political weekly *Il Regno* (1903–06), while *Hermes* (1904) was established by the same Corradini and Giuseppe Antonio Borgese, an early contributor to *Leonardo*.

Although lacking a university education, Papini and Prezzolini strongly aspired to an intellectual life and embarked on an ambitious self-education program. At the beginning of the century they both considered themselves philosophers: consequently, *Leonardo* was mostly a philosophy review, although it also featured articles on literature and art. The young editor and his companion were joined by other people at the beginning of their intellectual careers: Giuseppe Antonio Borgese (1882–1952) and Emilio Cecchi (1884–1966) would both become renowned literary critics, and the philosopher Giovanni Amendola (1882–1926) became a member of Parliament and an influential anti-Fascist activist after the First World War. *Leonardo* can be considered a typical *petite revue*: it was published irregularly, and it was mostly funded by the authors themselves and by a limited number of subscriptions. The magazine was lavishly decorated, thanks to contributions by a group of Florentine painters and engravers.

In 1907, Papini and Prezzolini closed *Leonardo* because it was becoming too successful. They did not want the periodical to become a commercial enterprise, nor did they want to settle into their current intellectual roles. In the following year, Papini moved to Milan. He thought he had gained enough prestige to become an interesting author for the main publisher at the time, the Milanese Treves; he also hoped to solve his financial difficulties by being hired by the most important Italian newspaper, also based in Milan, *Corriere della Sera*. He was disappointed in both his expectations, and was obliged to return to Florence within a few months; his ensuing intellectual crisis was resolved by devoting his intellectual energy to literature rather than philosophy. During his brief Milanese period, Papini created a new magazine, *Il Commento*; although only one issue was published, it consolidated the existing links between Papini, Prezzolini, and the Milanese aristocrats of the Catholic modernist movement, a group of religious thinkers and historians of religion who hoped for an intellectual renewal of the Church: Alessandro Casati (1881–1955), Tommaso Gallarati Scotti (1878–1966), Stefano Jacini (1886–1952), Antonio Meli Lupi di Soragna (1885–1971), and the middle-class poet from Liguria, Giovanni Boine (1887–1917).

After *Il Commento* closed down, Prezzolini began planning another periodical. Papini was willing to help organize and write contributions, but he never felt that the magazine would meet his new literary aspirations. When *La Voce's* first issue came out on 20 December 1908, it differed radically from *Leonardo*: the *in folio* format made it resemble a daily, and it was regularly published once a week until January 1914 when it became a fortnightly paper. *La Voce* published articles on a wider range of topics than did *Leonardo*: apart from philosophy, art and literature, it also dealt with Italian and international politics, religion, economy, and social issues. Starting from 1910, *La Voce* also established a book series called *Quaderni della Voce*, then a bookstore, and finally a publishing house named after the Libreria della Voce [*La Voce's* Bookstore]. *La Voce* brought out special issues on sexuality, irredentism, and Italian contemporary philosophy. These were republished and sold separately. Moreover, in 1910, Prezzolini and his collaborators organized the first Italian exhibition of Impressionist paintings in Florence.

Despite the variety of promotional strategies, all of which had already been experimented with in the more developed Parisian periodical market,⁴ the weekly never had a very large audience. *La Voce* printed two thousand copies on average, and could count on a devoted readership of about 1300 subscribers. The advertisements published on the last pages confirm the elitist nature of *La Voce's* audience: most promoted other periodicals (to which *La Voce's* authors contributed) and the Libreria della Voce series.

4 Charles Péguy's *Cahiers de la Quinzaine* (1900–14) served as a model for the magazine; its issues and publishing activity were frequently discussed in *La Voce*.

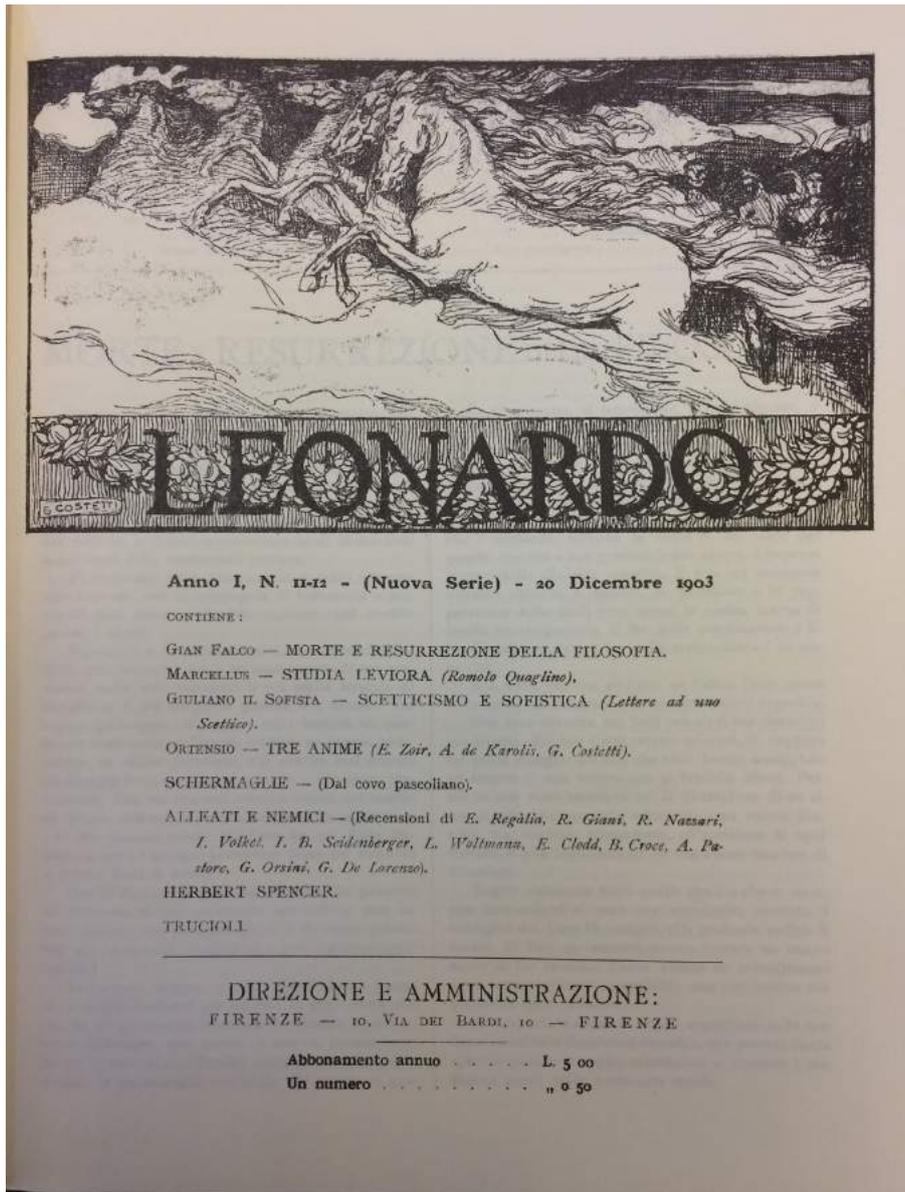


Fig. 2 *Leonardo* (20 December 1903), front page, engraving by Giovanni Costetti

***La Voce* as the Hub of a Multifaceted National Avant-garde**

Starting in 1910, the poorest among *La Voce*'s authors got paid thanks to regular contributions from wealthy Milanese Count Alessandro Casati, who was the main patron of Prezzolini's magazine until 1911. Casati and the other intellectuals of the modernist movement were regular contributors to *La Voce*, especially from 1909, the year their magazine *Il Rinascimento* (1907–09) had to cease publication after the pope threatened them with excommunication.

The modernist movement can be considered avant-garde in the field of religion: it was one of the many alliances of innovators that Prezzolini's *La Voce* was able to attract. The magazine can actually be seen as a national hub, where several avant-gardes, each interested in overturning the hierarchy of a specific social field, met and gained strength by simply banding together. The union of different innovative projects gave the



Fig. 3 Front page of *La Voce's* first issue (20 December 1908)

impression of a general movement aimed at reforming all Italian cultural, political, and social life. Milanese aristocrats and destitute socialists, painters, musicians, psychiatrists interested in Freud's theories, and poets seduced by Otto Weininger's philosophical description of sexuality all came together because, in Prezzolini's words, they were all 'rebels and dissidents'.⁵

La Voce thus published articles by two unorthodox socialists, Gaetano Salvemini (1873–1957) and Benito Mussolini (1883–1945); both left the Partito Socialista Italiano

5 Giovanni Papini and Giuseppe Prezzolini, *Storia di un'amicizia 1900–1924* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1966), p. 139.

***La Voce* and Modern (Parisian) Art**

One of the most assiduous contributors to *La Voce* was the painter and writer Soffici, whose articles dealt mainly with contemporary art, of which he had first-hand knowledge since he had lived in Paris for seven years. Although Soffici came from an impoverished family of Tuscan farmers, he had, nonetheless, embarked on such an uncertain career as the artistic one. In 1900 he moved to Paris, where he soon entered the circles of the latest avant-gardes: he became acquainted with Apollinaire, Picasso, Alfred Jarry, and Max Jacob. After a nervous breakdown, he returned home in 1907, just in time to become the most important living connection between *La Voce* and Paris.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, contacts with the French capital were of foremost importance. Paris was still the capital of the République mondiale des lettres, a city that attracted artists, writers and intellectuals from the world over because it enabled international recognition and legitimation of artistic, literary, and intellectual endeavours. Paris was of particular importance to avant-garde artists and writers: they could accelerate the process of acquiring symbolic capital in their own national fields by gaining prestige and recognition in this global capital of art and literature.

In *La Voce*, Soffici used his knowledge of what was considered new and modern in Paris to condemn Italian culture as provincial and obsolete: he published several articles criticizing the most important Italian art exhibition, the Venice Biennale, and attacking *La Gioconda* as a symbol of traditional painting, while informing his readers about the most recent developments in the Parisian art scene. He wrote about the sculptor Medardo Rosso, an Italian expatriate renowned in Paris but unknown in Italy, and about Impressionism (his Parisian connections were crucial in letting *La Voce* organize the 1910 Impressionist exhibition); he was the first in Italy to chart the ascent of Cubism and establish the importance of works by Cézanne, Picasso, and Braque.

The Alliance with Benedetto Croce against Universities

Last but not least, *La Voce* hosted ‘rebels and dissidents’ interested in renewing the field of philosophy: Benedetto Croce (1866–1952) and Giovanni Gentile (1875–1944). Today it certainly sounds bizarre to conceive of Croce as a ‘rebel and a dissident’, but — I am again using Prezzolini’s words — ‘at that time Croce, too, was rebelling against the philosophy taught in universities, and against positivism, which was still the dominant philosophical trend’.⁶ In the 1910s, Croce was not the hegemonic force in the Italian philosophical, literary, and historiographical fields he was later to become. However, he had already begun to acquire a certain amount of intellectual capital, which he added to other social capital of which he was well endowed. Born in 1866, he was one of the richest men in the country; he was also introduced, through family ties, to a productive web of political and intellectual relationships (his uncles Silvio and Bertrando Spaventa were respectively a senator and a philosopher). Like Papini and Prezzolini, he had no university degree: it was not that he could not afford regular studies, but rather that he could not be bothered with them.

Such a stockpiling of different social capitals is something often found behind the most ambitious intellectual projects, such as Croce’s planned attack on Italian positivism. His first philosophical work, *La storia ridotta sotto il concetto generale dell’arte* (1893), criticized the positivist methods of contemporary historians. He went on to attack the positivist methods of literary scholars in *La critica letteraria* (1894). During

6 ‘Anche Croce, a quel tempo, era un ribelle contro la filosofia delle università e contro il positivismo che ancora imperava’. Papini and Prezzolini, *Storia di un’amicizia*, p. 140.

LA VOCE 279

PRIMA MOSTRA ITALIANA DELL'IMPRESSIONISMO FRANCESE

Dal 15 aprile al 15 maggio 1910 nelle sale, gentilmente prestate, del LYCEUM di Firenze (Via Ricasoli 28), si terrà una mostra di quadri, disegni, acque forti e riproduzioni di pittori francesi impressionisti. Saranno esposte opere e riproduzioni di Degas, Sisley, Cézanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Pissarro, Picasso, Matisse, Forain, ecc.

Una sala sarà dedicata alle sculture di

MEDARDO ROSSO

BIGLIETTO D'INGRESSO LIRE UNA

Per informazioni rivolgersi a "La Voce", * Via dei Robbia, 42

Il foglio di *La Tribune* di martedì 22 Febbraio 1910. Quante copie di più di tiratura? Ma il disegno non basta: si vuol la firma. E dice Gentile: « Come si può possibile che si firmi il mio ritratto? quello è nato così, senza firma. E non si deve giustare. La firma se la fa, ma sopra un altro pezzo di carta ». Parole che sembrano quasi ingiustificabili a Piero, perché è dimostrato che il ritratto ha una grande rispetto per la completezza dei suoi lavori: l'opera sua gli deve costare un essere tormentato... e il ritratto si espone... se è un ritratto che simula... Ma lo che crece così facilmente... E succede, alla gente che bada ai propri affari e non si occupa di scendere V. Gentile esclama: — Non bisogna a meno scendere intorno a lui? E pensa il diavolo e si fa silenzio. Il giornalista.

— Ah! Ah! *su giornalista*! — ha ripetuto Vincenzo Gentile in dialetto, con l'aria di comminare, soddisfatto. Soltanto così almeno interpetra — e tutto si spiega — il giornalista. S. S.

Bianca Segantini si manda questa lettera:

Egregio Signor Direttore,

Da una settimana è uscito in Italia il libro *Scritti e discorsi* di Giovanni Segantini, edito da Basso in Firenze, di questo l'unico risposta che io possa dare a quell'articolo di Silvio Slataper, appena ora più di due mesi, e i figli di Segantini, articolo al quale non risposi, seppio come perché non lo ritenni degno di una risposta. Uguale però, voglio far noto, non a Silvio Slataper, ma alle lettere ed ai lettori del *Vicario* giornale, che se il libro non uscì come era mio vivo desiderio contemporaneamente in Italia ed in Germania, quanto fu semplicemente per la nullità di una piccola ragione, che possono intendersi con me, e non essere causa di molto malumore. Desidero anche far osservare, che da lungo tempo, l'editore tedesco mi aveva richiesto il libro, e che non l'avevo ceduto prima di es-

sermi assicurato un editore italiano, il che non fu facile cosa!

Del resto ognuno fa secondo l'opinione della propria coscienza, il proprio dovere, se qualcuno ha un rimprovero a fare a se non vuol basarsi su (187), lo faccia colta solidità di un uomo degno, poiché qualsiasi rimprovero a qualsiasi critica, per ottenere lo scopo voluto, non debbono mai avere la forma di un'offesa e soprattutto personale.

Vi prego, egregio direttore, di pubblicare questa lettera, e di credermi, coi miei migliori auguri per un serio ed utile avvenire della *Voce*.

Bianca SEGANTINI.

Massimo di Bariore si debbono spiegarli.

Dunque la signorina Bianca non ha potuto pubblicare in italiano gli scritti italiani di Giovanni Segantini che dopo tre mesi dall'edizione tedesca per mille e una ragioni lo le sommandosi: La prego, sarebbe tanto gentile da scrivermi una nota delle mille e una? E anche: E perché non riputare l'edizione tedesca? E anche: Ma scusi, non è stato facile trovare un editore italiano, o invece trovare uno che le pagasse quanto voleva lei? E non le pare — che in tutti i casi sarebbe stato mio dovere pubblicare gli scritti di Giovanni Segantini così soliti lasciati da Giovanni Segantini prima di tutto nella loro lingua?

Ma Bianca Segantini agisce secondo la sua coscienza e il suo è appunto che la sua coscienza non le abbia fatto queste domande prima di me. Non glielo ha fatto: ed io non voglio mai essere il vicino della coscienza di Bianca davvero essere il vicino della coscienza di Bianca. Per anni di Dio! lo ricordo semplicemente a Bianca Segantini che ella ha dimenticato queste cose.

Il che il mio articolo nella *Voce* (n. 25) era intitolato e trattato del « figli di Segantini » e cioè del loro costume agire, e non soltanto del volume pubblicato in tedesco.

Il che conto di lei, Bianca, in un quarto secolo avevo portato altri fatti. Mi sono spietati. Ma il più grave è stato il fatto di ora dall'amico Slataper nella *Voce* (n. 10) di questo anno. Bianca Segantini, la letterata, ha scritto e corretto gli scritti di Giovanni Segantini. E dice che è sua figlia!

Il che se ella è padrona di far tutto ciò che la coscienza le detta, ma noi siamo padronissimi di attaccarla personalmente quando tenne di situazione l'animo nostro verso Giovanni Segantini spronando di costringerci ad accettare e ad appiattire anche la ballata di Bianca Segantini che stupendo e detestando e investigando si mescola con lei, in nome d'una parentela che a noi non importa affatto. Che la da fare con l'acqua lo accede che si fissa tra le penne dell'acqua per essere portato in su?

(V) che gli scritti si svolgono tra i loro respugni e non s'impiccano con l'acqua non c'è nessuno che gli badi. Vigarani poi schoppettarli! Bianca pensi, terra, faccia per conto suo, qualunque cosa. Anche rimandi. Le assicuro che nessuno la disturberà. Ma lasci in pace chi amiamo. E dica lo stesso al suo fratello — qui la parentela bisogna riconoscerla — Guttario. Perché se lui non brontolasse e Finimoro, Giuseppe e in una festa italiana e non fugasse di sue mirabili composizioni pittoriche gli scritti di Giovanni Segantini, chi mai si sognerebbe di ricordare che Guttario è un salutare austriaco, impastatore di teste, socio della *Falschheit*, la società che vuole telegrafizzare il paese dove è nato l'italiano Giovanni Segantini?

SILVIO SLATAPER.

Vito De Bellis, a quanto ammoniti i giornali, ha dato querela contro il nostro amico Silvestri per il volume *Il ministro della salute*, edito, rimpicciando, diffuso da noi.

Ha dato querela, il signor Vito De Bellis, pochi giorni prima che la Camera discutesse la sua elezione: come poteva, san d'alto? Ma noi

che avevamo tanta piacere di veder continuata per noi soltanto la nostra campagna contro la disonestà della vita politica italiana, temiamo che la querela del signor Vito De Bellis sia una commedia da ridere. Ora che i Guaraciani della Camera (una parte, naturalmente — governo dei radicali e repubblicani assenti — uomo onesto e dabbene, e galantissimo, e sciocco e degno rappresentante del paese nostro, il signor Vito De Bellis) non se ambire ancora alla presidenza del tribunale.

Noi lo si vorrebbe, sinceramente.

LA VOCE.

Adolfo Loria. — L'abbiamo veduto, per merito di Umberto Ricci nel n. 10 della *Voce*, illustratore dei rapporti tra mentirismo e malattie veneree. Chi voglia ancora disastri — o meglio i poter disegni per chi pensano e siano l'opera d'un infetto ciarlatano, come certe riviste del bel nostro paese — legga un articolo che gentile, in tutti i sensi, intitolarsi a Adolfo Loria scrittore e, dello stesso Ricci, disse senza lepidamente il commento la soluzione della questione sociale per mezzo dell'aviazione, alcuna idea generale del processo sciamano di Padova. *Giovanni degli Economisti*, gennaio 1910.

Ernesto Ceragi. E avvevato non troppo spesso, ma è avvenuta che si fossero venuti di stampa nella *Voce* due cose naturali, e ognuno merita da se, con un po' di buon senso. Ma l'ultimo è troppo maderato, e profeta troppo degli indovinati, perché possiamo tracciarlo.

Nell'articolo di Giovanni Silvestri — De Gaddis e Sennino e c'è sfuggito — il *Vicario* deve fare appello al *pro...* e il *Vicario* si deve dire « deve fare appello al *pro...* ».

Telefono della VOCE 28-30

GIUSEPPE PERAZZINI, Direttore
ANAGRAFO GOVERNATIVO, presso responsabile
Firenze - Sub. Tip. Atlas, Via de' Bardi, 11 - Tel. 344

Fig. 5 Announcement of the first Italian exhibition of Impressionist paintings organized by *La Voce* (3 March 1910)

the 1890s, he also wrote several essays against Marxism. In 1902 he inaugurated the constructive part of his intellectual project by publishing the first volume of *Filosofia dello spirito*, comprising *Estetica* (1902), *Logica* (1909), and *Filosofia della pratica* (1909).

One year after publishing *Estetica*, Croce founded a periodical, *La Critica* (1903–44), written mostly by himself and by a younger philosopher, Giovanni Gentile, a graduate of the Scuola Normale Superiore of Pisa who was striving for a stable position within academia. In the very first issue of *La Critica*, Croce wrote a review praising another recently created magazine established in 1903 by Papini, *Leonardo*.

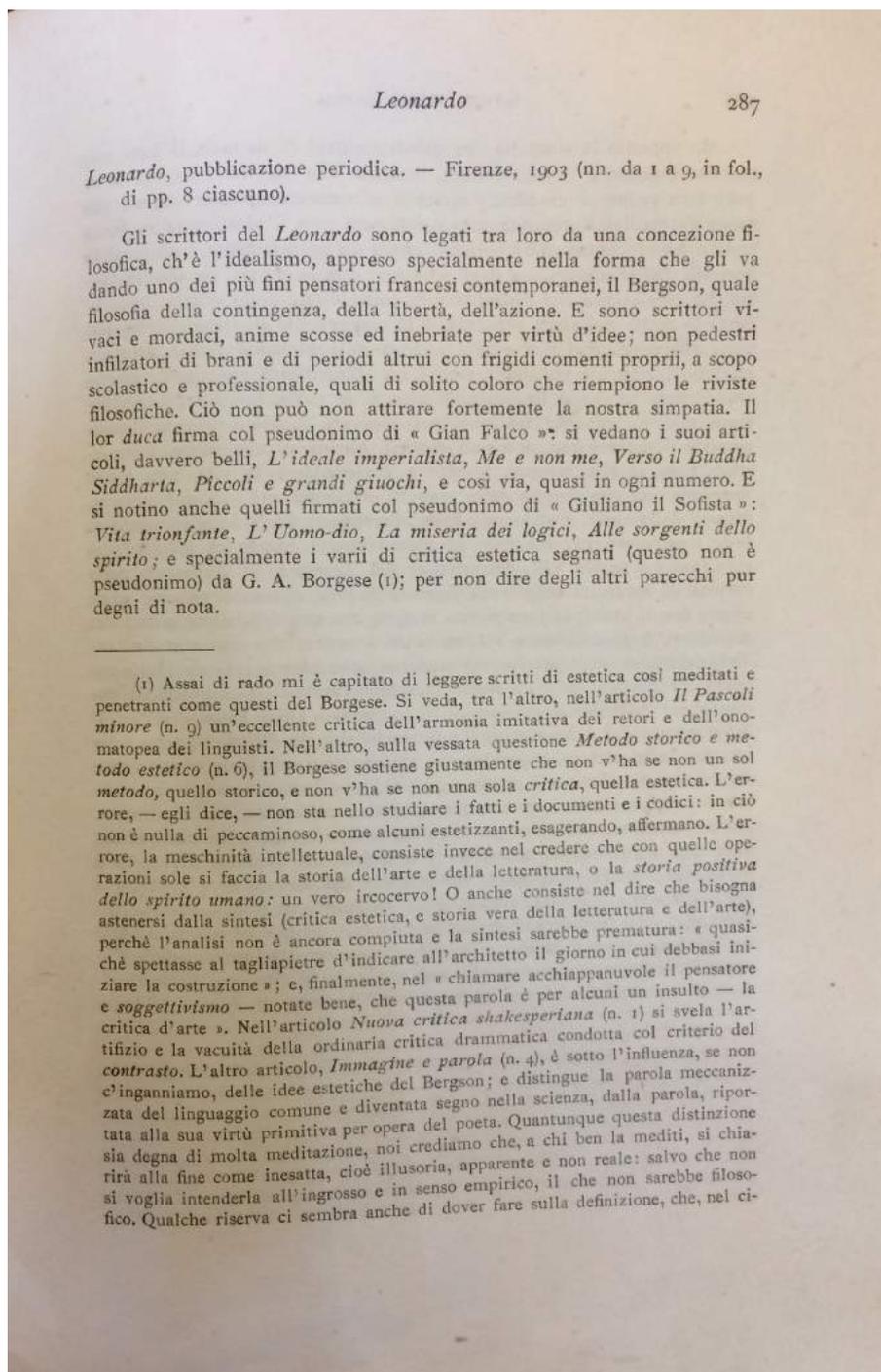


Fig. 6 Benedetto Croce's review of *Leonardo*, *La Critica*, no. 1 (1903)

When *Leonardo* ceased publication in 1907, the relationship between Croce and Papini was already strained, whereas the bond between Croce and Prezzolini was strengthening. In fact, Croce became *La Voce's* most relevant financial supporter after Casati, and was also a source of valuable advice for the young editor of the magazine. In contrast, Papini became, especially during the *Lacerba* years, one of

Croce's most fervid opponents.⁷ The origin of this rivalry can be traced back to their antithetical social backgrounds. Though Papini was no less ambitious or aggressive than Croce, he was forever engaged in a humiliating search for a bread-and-butter job, and could never be as self-assured as Croce. A 1903 letter from Prezzolini to his fiancée helps us get an idea of the way Croce would appear in the eyes of younger, ambitious intellectuals:

He is a man of lively conversation, teeming with anecdotes and ideas. He is a happy man, who has a lot of money, a lot of ingenuity, a very good memory, many friends and many enemies, many books, and well-chosen ones. A man who can bad-mouth anyone, who is feared for his polemics, and has little regard for professors. He travels, he publishes what he wants and as much as he wants, he has a beautiful woman... What else could you wish for?⁸

Why was Croce so interested in Papini's *Leonardo* and Prezzolini's *La Voce*, despite their very different backgrounds? Why did he choose to back them? An explanation may be found in a quote from an article by Prezzolini in an early issue of *Leonardo*. He wrote: '*Leonardo* brings us together more for our common enemies than for our shared goals'.⁹ This is generally true of any avant-garde; that is, of any alliance of intellectuals grounded on the project of renewing a cultural field. At the beginning, intellectuals deprived of symbolic capital find strength in alliance. When some begin to acquire symbolic capital of their own, however, their different goals start to emerge. Those who are able to acquire prestige and recognition begin to distance themselves from the group in order to strengthen their individual positions, creativity, and intellectual projects.

In 1903, Croce saw in *Leonardo* a potential ally in his battle to affirm an idealistic philosophy against positivism. Papini and Prezzolini also saw in Croce an ally, and moreover, a model: although Croce, like them, had no university degree he had nonetheless managed to occupy an intellectual position admired by some, respected by many, discarded by none. In a book published in 1906, *La cultura italiana*, Papini and Prezzolini described with contempt universities, museums, magazines, journals, newspapers, art, and literary criticism, glorifying the liberty and freedom of intellectuals like Croce and themselves, who were not affiliated with any cultural institution, least of all with any university — the main cultural institution of a modern nation.

Academia was one of the favourite targets of the Florentine avant-garde, especially in *La Voce*. Attacks came not only from people excluded because lacking qualifications — for example, Papini, Prezzolini, and Croce — but also from those working within the university, who denounced a corrupt system of recruitment and career advancement. *La Voce* was always willing to discuss the latest academic scandal, to ridicule the most celebrated scholars of the Florentine university, or to mock national

7 Tension between the two intellectuals first emerged in 1905 regarding some editorial work that Croce had commissioned Papini to do and which had not been finished on time. A harsher confrontation occurred in 1909 when Papini launched Rocco Carabba's collection *Scrittori nostri*, which Croce saw as a direct competitor to his own *Scrittori d'Italia*. In 1913, during a *serata futurista* [Futurist evening], Papini cut every residual tie with Croce by pronouncing a discourse 'against Rome and against Benedetto Croce' ['contro Roma e contro Benedetto Croce'].

8 'È un uomo di gradevolissima conversazione, pieno di aneddoti e di idee. È un uomo felice che ha molti denari, molto ingegno, molta memoria, molti amici e molti nemici, molti libri e ben scelti. Un uomo che può dir male di chi vuole, che è temuto per le polemiche, in dispetto ai professori ufficiali. Viaggia, stampa come e quanto vuole, ha una bella donna... Cosa vorresti di più?' Giuseppe Prezzolini, *Diario per Dolores* (Milan: Rusconi, 1993), p. 89.

9 'Siamo accomunati qui sul *Leonardo*, più dagli odi che dai fini comuni'. Giuliano il Sofista [Prezzolini's pseudonym], 'Alle sorgenti dello spirito', *Leonardo* (19 April 1903), pp. 4-5.

positivist luminaries such as Cesare Lombroso (1835–1909). Such attacks reveal a general dissatisfaction with the transformation of the academic system at the time, namely the growing prestige of scientific disciplines, specialization of humanistic ones, and the rise of human sciences. Sociologists, psychologists, and anthropologists seemed threatening to more traditionally educated humanists like those writing for *La Voce*, because they dealt with the same objects (society, human psyche, human relations) and were becoming increasingly influential among the general public.

Against Journalism

Unsurprisingly, academic journals were by no means exempt from the general assault on universities:

Academic journals are no more than science journalism: you either read them and bin them or you go to the library to browse through a dozen in one morning. You leave almost as ignorant as you were before.¹⁰

This quote is suggestive of how the authors of *La Voce* despised journalism as much as academia. At the very start of its publication, *La Voce's* most prominent contributors, that is Prezzolini, Croce, and Papini, wrote three articles trying to dissuade graduates in literature and philosophy from seeking a newsroom job.¹¹ Despite their different perspectives, all three lamented that the journalistic profession had become particularly alluring to aspiring intellectuals, since it seemed to guarantee not only a living but also rapid fame. Journalists were perceived as a menace not only because, together with scientists and human scientists, they were competing with the literati in influencing public opinion; the logics inherent to the journalistic profession was also interfering with the inner workings of the literary and artistic fields. As Prezzolini put it, by being part of a system based on the continuous search for something new and easy to sell, journalists

pollute the field of ideas and art. They delay the career of the honest, glorify the weak, don't attack the successful, ignore the young, traffic in praises, threaten everyone with censure or, more frequently, with silence. And they do so because they often envy what they are not or could not become: poets, philosophers, or simply honest men of taste, discernment, and reflection.¹²

In fact, the most frequent attacks against journalists launched by *Leonardo*, *La Voce*, and *Lacerba* were not aimed at regular reporters or authors of op-ed pieces, but at people like Ugo Ojetti (1871–1966), an influential art and literary critic and a writer who in the 1910s wrote exclusively for the newspaper *Corriere della Sera* after having contributed to the dailies *La Tribuna*, *l'Avanti!* and *Il Giornale d'Italia*, and to the illustrated magazine

10 'La Rivista è il giornalismo della scienza: si legge e butta in un canto, oppure si va nelle biblioteche e in una mattinata se ne scorrono una dozzina. Si esce digiuni, o quasi'. Armando Carlini, 'Le riviste italiane di filosofia', *La Voce* (13 June 1914), p. 33.

11 Giuseppe Prezzolini, 'Il giornalismo e la nostra cultura', *La Voce* (28 January 1909); Benedetto Croce, 'I laureati al bivio', *La Voce* (4 February 1909); Giovanni Papini, 'Il giovane scrittore italiano', *La Voce* (18 February 1909).

12 'Il giornalista [...] inquina il campo delle idee e dell'arte, ritarda gli onesti, gonfia i deboli, non tocca gli arrivati, ignora i giovani, traffica le lodi, minaccia col biasimo e più spesso col silenzio; perché è spesso invidioso di non essere stato o di non potere essere un poeta o un filosofo o semplicemente un onesto uomo di gusto, di discernimento, di riflessione'. Prezzolini, 'Il giornalismo e la nostra cultura', p. 26.

L'Illustrazione italiana.¹³ According to the intellectuals of the Florentine avant-garde, critics like Ojetti jeopardized literary and artistic critique because they adopted a journalistic rationale, thereby undermining the possibility of evaluation based on purely aesthetic criteria.

Those companions who undertook a career in journalism drew even greater censure. 'For many years Borgese [. . .] has squandered his great intelligence on the cultural pages of newspapers', wrote Papini and Amendola in 1910.¹⁴ Five years later, Cecchi was criticized even more severely:

Many years ago, Cecchi strutted about as if he were the purest and sternest anchorite of the arts. He went about saying he would never waste his ingenuity writing for newspapers and magazines, like others did. [. . .] A short time later, Malagodi hired him at *La Tribuna*, and the greatest dream of Cecchi's practical and literary life came true. He already had the soul of a journalist: he then became one through and through.¹⁵

On the eve of taking up the job at the Roman daily *La Tribuna*, Cecchi wrote to Prezzolini: 'It is easy to live in the highest sphere of culture when your name is Casati or Croce. When your name is Cecchi, it is difficult not to become a mercenary'.¹⁶ Cecchi's line of defence is clear: people like Casati or Croce could live a completely disinterested intellectual life thanks to their extraordinary wealth; people like himself, the son of a modest shopkeeper, had to settle for a compromise. Other intellectuals of the Florentine avant-garde had to seek employment in journalism; for example, Slataper or Prezzolini himself, who in 1915 moved to Rome to work for Mussolini's newspaper *Il Popolo d'Italia*. However, the structural opposition between journalism and more autonomous cultural fields gave polemicists like Papini the opportunity to use such individual choices as a weapon against the enemy of the moment: in 1915 it was Cecchi, having just negatively reviewed Papini's last literary work.

Against the Literary Market

La Voce's paraded disdain for journalism did not stop it from considering the press one of the main cultural institutions of the time, along with schools, universities, libraries, publishing houses, art galleries, and exhibitions. During its first year, the magazine published a series of feature articles about leading Italian newspapers authored by

13 'Subscribe to *La Voce!* We will never publish works by: Ugo Ojetti, Domenico Oliva, G. de Lorenzo, Diego Angeli, Luciano Zuccoli...' [Abbonatevi alla *Voce!* Non ci collaboreranno mai: Ugo Ojetti, Domenico Oliva, G. de Lorenzo, Diego Angeli, Luciano Zuccoli...'] Giuseppe Prezzolini, 'I *Cahiers de la Quinzaine* II', *La Voce* (4 August 1910), p. 370. Domenico Oliva and Diego Angeli were both literary and theatrical critics for the Roman newspaper *Il Giornale d'Italia* (Angeli also wrote for *L'Illustrazione italiana*); the successful novelist Luciano Zuccoli was the editor of a newspaper, *La Gazzetta di Venezia*, and also wrote for *Corriere della Sera*. I could find no information about the periodicals to which Giuseppe de Lorenzo, a geologist who also wrote about literature, contributed in the 1910s.

14 'Borgese [...] per tanti anni ha scialacquato il suo grandissimo ingegno nelle terze pagine dei quotidiani'. Giovanni Amendola and Giovanni Papini, 'Per la cattedra a Guglielmo Ferrero', *La Voce* (2 June 1910), p. 333.

15 'Molti anni fa il Cecchi si dava l'aria d'essere il più puro ed austero anacoreta dell'arte e andava dicendo che non avrebbe mai sputtanato il suo ingegno, come gli altri, su per i giornali e per le riviste [...] Malagodi lo scritturò per la *Tribuna* e finalmente il sogno massimo della sua vita pratica e letteraria fu pago. Giornalista era nell'anima e giornalista diventò più che mai'. Giovanni Papini, 'La sor'Emilia', *La Voce* (28 February 1915), p. 359.

16 'È facile vivere nelle venerabili altezze della coltura quando ci si chiama Casati o Croce; è difficile non diventare mercenari quando ci si chiama Cecchi'. Emilio Cecchi, *Saggi e viaggi* (Milan: Mondadori, 1997), p. xli.

Luigi Ambrosini (1883–1929), who wrote under the pseudonym Cepperello for fear that his harsh criticism would harm his career prospects. He need not have feared, for his articles caught the attention of Alfredo Frassati (1868–1961), editor-in-chief of the Turinese newspaper *La Stampa*, who hired him in 1910. Ambrosini's 1909 reportages in *La Voce* dealt with both *La Stampa* and the other Turinese daily, *La Gazzetta del Popolo*, with the Roman *Il Giornale d'Italia* and with the Milanese *Corriere della Sera*, about which he wrote two articles. The second article was entirely devoted to the magazines connected to the newspaper: *La Domenica del Corriere* (a popular illustrated weekly), *Il Corriere dei Piccoli* (a children's magazine), *La Lettura* (a cultural monthly featuring literary previews), *Il Romanzo mensile* (a monthly serializing a novel).¹⁷

The constellation of periodicals revolving around the *Corriere della Sera* is an example of what the scholar of Italian publishing Giovanni Ragone has called an 'integrated system', embracing newspapers, magazines, and publishing houses. The main Italian publishers, Treves and Sonzogno, had been founding dailies and periodicals since the last decades of the nineteenth century; their principal illustrated magazines, *L'Illustrazione italiana* and *Il Secolo illustrato* respectively,¹⁸ published short stories and serialized novels by leading authors of the two houses, along with book reviews and advertisements promoting their most recent published works. In a 1909 article, Prezzolini labelled the writers of this integrated system 'prose suppliers':

[those] who write for newspapers, are accepted by the magazines, write plays and publish short stories, literary criticisms, and political pieces. Because they lack any distinguishing artistic or moral personality or practice, they are all fairly similar, and you find their identical prose wherever you look: in *La Lettura* as well as in *Il Secolo XX*, in *Avanti!* as well as in *Corriere*, in *Ventesimo* as well as in *Marzocco*, in *Il Messaggero* as well as in *Il Resto del Carlino*.¹⁹

The intellectuals of the Florentine avant-garde, while despising this emerging system of mass cultural production, were well aware of the crucial role that publishing played in disseminating ideas. In the same year *Leonardo* was closed, Papini announced to Prezzolini his intent to become a publisher

who is not just a merchant; a thinker who, after preaching action, tries to set an example; a writer who, after realizing that writers are exploited by publishers, aims to create a small company that differs somewhat from the others and in which it will be possible to publish what no other publisher would accept.²⁰

17 Cepperello, 'La famiglia del *Corriere*', *La Voce* (15 April 1909).

18 *Il Secolo illustrato* was an insert in the daily *Il Secolo*, also owned by Sonzogno.

19 'quelli [. . .] che scrivono sui giornali, che sono accettati dalle riviste, che fanno dei drammi, che pubblicano novelle, critiche e articoli di politica, e che s'assomigliano un po' tutti quanti, perché ve li trovate davanti con quella prosa sempre eguale, senza una personalità artistica o morale o pratica ben distinta, dovunque posate gli occhi, dalla *Lettura* al *Secolo XX*, dall'*Avanti!* al *Corriere*, dal *Ventesimo* al *Marzocco*, dal *Messaggero* al *Resto del Carlino*'. Giuseppe Prezzolini, 'Il Viandante', *La Voce* (16 September 1909), p. 163. *Il Secolo XX* was an illustrated magazine owned by Treves; *Avanti!* was the newspaper of the Italian Socialist Party; *Il Messaggero* and *Il Resto del Carlino* were two dailies, based in Rome and Bologna respectively.

20 'essere un editore che non è solo un mercante — un pensatore che dopo aver predicato l'azione cerca di dar l'esempio — uno scrittore che dopo essersi accorto dello sfruttamento editoriale cerca di creare una piccola azienda un po' diversa dalle altre e in cui sarà possibile pubblicare cose che nessun altro editore accetterebbe'. Papini and Prezzolini, *Storia di un'amicizia*, p. 131 (Papini's letter to Prezzolini, 15 April 1907).

The publishing system of other European countries provided numerous examples of what Papini envisaged, from the publishing activities of the Parisian avant-gardes to the German publisher Eugen Diederichs (1867–1930), whose initiatives had been praised more than once in *Leonardo's* columns and whom Prezzolini had interviewed in *La Voce's* very first issue. But there was a closer example of 'a thinker who, after preaching action, tries to set an example': in 1902, Croce had begun to advise the founder of a publishing house in southern Italy, Giovanni Laterza from Bari, for whom he designed several philosophical and literary series. He also arranged for many of the intellectuals with whom he came into contact to work for Laterza: he used them as editors and translators, and made them write prefaces or edit philological publications. Papini, Prezzolini, and Borgese were among these, and they soon emulated their teacher: Papini and Borgese both directed collections for Rocco Carabba, a small publisher from the Abruzzi, and in 1910 Prezzolini founded the collection *Quaderni della Voce*, which soon became the publishing house Libreria della Voce.

Since novels and short stories were the literary products upon which the great commercial publishers of the time relied, Laterza, Carabba, and the Libreria della Voce distinguished their production by translating philosophers, issuing new editions of Italian and foreign classics, producing philosophical essays, volumes of poetry, and lyrical prose. Even when authors like Slataper or Papini wrote something resembling a novel — that is, lengthy books of narrative prose — these were always based on the author's experience and lacked the architectural features of a novel.²¹

Enemies, then Allies, then Enemies: *Lacerba* and the Futurists

The small publishing enterprises, in which Croce, Papini, Prezzolini, and Borgese collaborated, were in opposition to the great Milanese-based, market-oriented houses: they created a space in which books were valued for their cultural worth above all. Such opposition is a constant feature of modern cultural fields, where evaluation of cultural products according to rules established by intellectuals is continually menaced by the interference of other evaluation criteria, among which commercial value is usually the most relevant.

Remarkably, when *La Voce* began its offensive against the newly-emerged Futurist avant-garde (the 'Manifesto del Futurismo' was published in the French daily *Le Figaro* on 20 February 1909), it branded the enterprise of Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876–1944) as nothing more than a commercial product:

The so-called Futurism is one of many attempts to produce a spiritual movement because someone has the *commercial* potential to do it. It was generated from the gross misconception that having the resources to launch an idea is enough to produce it. It is the luxury of literati loaded with money, who believe they can avail themselves of modern Milanese financial power and make it work even within the very disinterested world of art.²²

Slataper's article, insinuating that Futurism was just a commercial phenomenon, a movement gaining reputation because of the advertising provided by Marinetti's money,

21 See Slataper's *Il mio Carso* (1912) and Papini's *Un uomo finito* (1913).

22 'Il così detto futurismo è uno dei molti tentativi di produrre un moto spirituale qualunque perché se n'ha in tasca la possibilità *commerciale*. È nato dal grossolano equivoco che l'aver i mezzi per lanciare un'idea basti a produrla. È un lusso di letterati che, pregno il sangue della potenza finanziaria milanese moderna, han creduto di poterla far valere pur nel mondo disinteressatissimo dell'arte'. Scipio Slataper, 'Il Futurismo', *La Voce* (31 March 1910), p. 295.

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Fig. 7 Advertisement of the Libreria della Voce bookstore and collections, *La Voce* (5 September 1912)

was tendentious but true. Marinetti was making use of his wealth to subsidize the artistic movement he led. However, Slataper neglected to say that Marinetti was pouring funds into his movement with no expected economic return, which put his cultural enterprise outside the realm of commercial publishing.

Marinetti had made his literary debut as a French poet at the end of the previous century. Thanks to his contributions to several periodicals, he was fairly well known, if not exactly highly regarded in Parisian literary circles. In 1905, he founded in Milan the magazine *Poesia* (1905–09), where he published works by Italian and French poets, and the publishing house Edizioni di Poesia (from 1909, Edizioni futuriste di Poesia). He closed *Poesia* in the same year as he launched his manifesto. From then on, he opted for another sort of promotional strategy: he managed the activities of his fellow artists and poets through the ceaseless distribution of manifestos, leaflets, anthologies, and pamphlets. He also organized art exhibitions and *serate futuriste*, that is, Futurist soirées of poetry reading, music, and theatre, which often ended in brawls between the artists and the audience.

Marinetti and other Futurists were no less dismissive of Italian contemporary culture than the Florentine avant-garde: suffice it to recall Marinetti's plea to destroy libraries and museums, and drain the Venice canals. At the beginning, the two groups competed against each other in order to gain hegemony over the desired radical renewal

of Italian culture. Marinetti's most resolute opponent was Soffici, who wrote for *La Voce*. Soffici's commentaries were so ruthless that in July 1911 he was attacked at the Caffè Giubbe Rosse in Florence by a group of Futurists who had come expressly from Milan to beat him up.

However, in 1913, a couple of months after *Lacerba* was established, Papini participated in a *serata futurista* and Soffici began asserting that Futurists were real artists and innovators. What had changed? I mentioned earlier that alliances among new entrants are generally short-lived, since they are grounded more on common enemies than on shared goals. Already in 1904 Borgese left *Leonardo* to found *Hermes*; in 1911 Papini and Amendola created a new short-lived magazine of their own, *L'Anima*; in 1913 Papini and Soffici left *La Voce* to found *Lacerba* along with Aldo Palazzeschi (1885–1974) and Italo Tadolato (1889–1963).

Lacerba was to differ from Prezzolini's *La Voce* in that it was a space for artistic and literary experiments only. It was more iconoclast than *La Voce* had ever been, and readier to *épater le bourgeois*. *Lacerba* was also better positioned than *La Voce* in the European avant-garde field: thanks to Soffici's Parisian relationships, the Italian magazine regularly published contributions by Apollinaire and Max Jacob, in the French original, as well as drawings by Picasso and Cézanne. Tadolato translated aphorisms from Karl Kraus's Viennese *Die Fackel*, and a recurring section listing 'magazines worth reading' included international titles only: *Mercure de France*, Paul Fort's *Vers et prose*, Apollinaire's *Les Soirées de Paris*, the Berlin expressionist magazine *Der Sturm*.

Like many *petites revues*, *Lacerba* was not long-lived. It was closed down when Italy entered the First World War, a political result *Lacerba* had loudly campaigned for during its last months. Its distribution was relatively wide, however: some eight to ten thousand copies were sold, a number large enough for the magazine to break even. But this good financial result was in part achieved thanks to the at least three thousand copies regularly bought by one person, Marinetti, who circulated them among his large network of relations. So although it is true that *Lacerba* received no money directly from the Milanese millionaire poet — something Soffici and Papini often maintained — Marinetti certainly was the principal patron of the magazine, at least while his association with the Florentines lasted.

Papini's and Soffici's alliance with Marinetti cannot be explained just by their desire to distance themselves from Prezzolini's *La Voce* or by their need for a generous patron. They were strongly motivated by something that happened in Paris a year before *Lacerba* was established, when a Futurist exhibition of paintings caused a stir in avant-garde circles. While relating the success of the Parisian exhibition, Soffici wrote in *La Voce* that

Futurism is a movement, and movement is life. [. . .] The same people I have more than once attacked and mocked because their works were silly and outdated could tomorrow gain momentum, and with some greater effort create something of substance.²³

In other words, if Futurism attracted the interest of Parisian avant-gardes, perhaps it was not so silly after all. For Papini and Soffici, therefore, the alliance with the Futurists also meant to become part of an artistic movement that seemed on the verge of acquiring

23 'Il futurismo è un movimento, e il movimento è vita. [. . .] Quelli stessi che io ho altra volta attaccato e sberteggiato perché le loro opere erano scioche e arretrate, possono domani in uno slancio, con uno sforzo maggiore, creare qualche cosa degna di vivere'. Ardengo Soffici, 'Ancora del futurismo', *La Voce* (11 July 1912), p. 852.

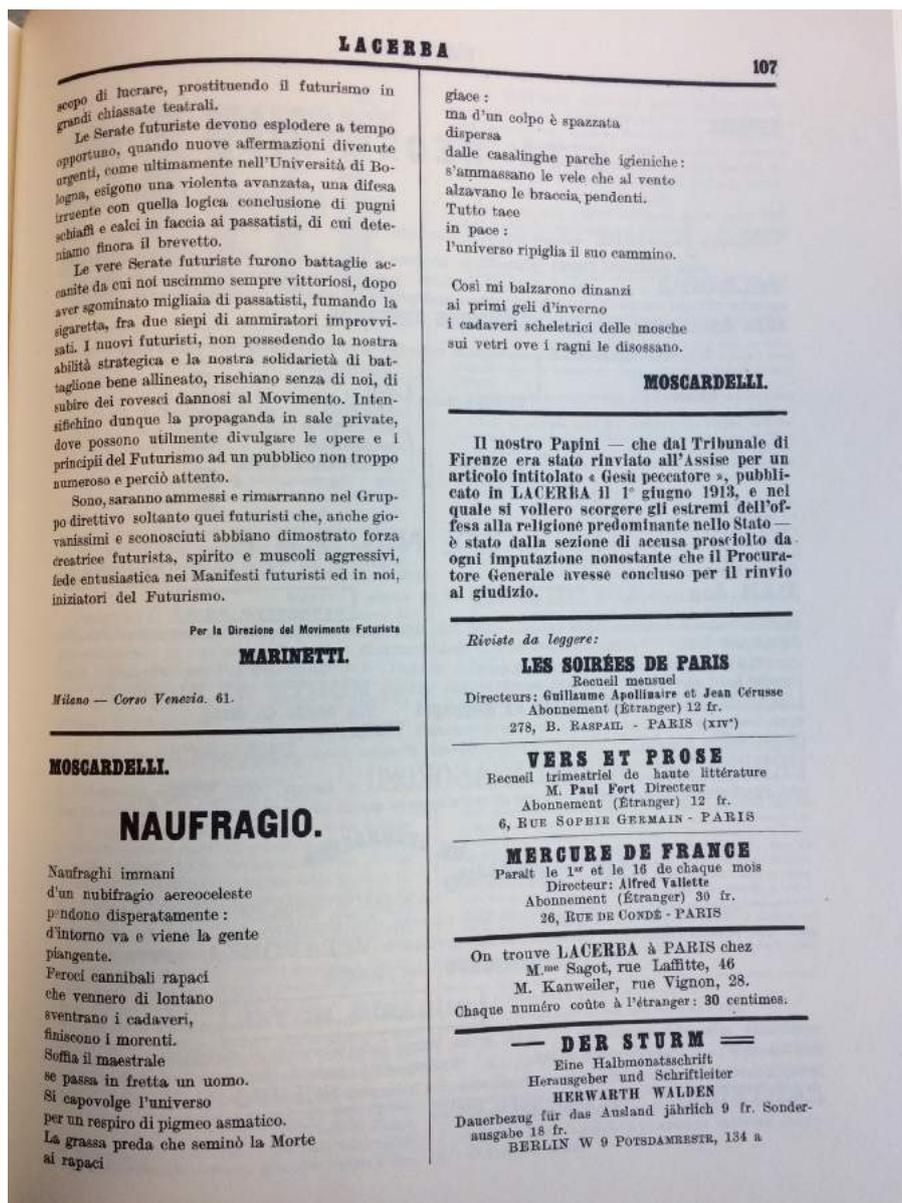


Fig. 8 'Riviste da leggere' ['Magazines you should read'], *Lacerba* (1 April 1914)

international consecration in Paris. Marinetti too had plenty to gain from the alliance: Soffici could help him consolidate the consecration of Futurism among the most advanced circles of the French avant-garde, those gathered around the poet Apollinaire; *Lacerba* also offered Futurism a prestigious and national showcase at a time when its centre of gravity was gradually shifting from Milan to Rome and Naples, where two galleries for exhibitions and *serate futuriste* were opened in 1913 and 1914 respectively.

The alliance between Papini, Soffici, and Marinetti, grounded most of all on reciprocal advantages and on the hostility towards the same enemies (among whom were Croce and Prezzolini's *La Voce*), was short-lived, however. Already in 1914 the two groups had disbanded, and the authors of *Lacerba* began to distinguish their work — which they claimed was true Futurism — from *marinettismo*. They described Marinetti's followers as false innovators, who produced works that were only ostensibly



Fig. 9 'Futurismo e Marinettismo', *Lacerba* (14 February 1915)

groundbreaking. Soffici and Papini maintained that they were in search of an exclusive audience, and described *marinettisti* as enslaved by their desire to appeal to a broader one.

The Futurists and the authors of *Lacerba*, as well as those still faithful to Prezzolini's *La Voce*, would soon be united in a common battle. The First World War broke out on 28 July 1914, and all the avant-garde groups, both Milanese and Florentine, embarked on a new mission: to force the reluctant Italian ruling class to enter the war against Austria and Germany. Prezzolini left *La Voce* at the end of 1914 in order to become a political journalist in Rome. *Lacerba* was closed on 22 May 1915, a day before Italy declared war on Austria: Papini could claim that this outcome was *Lacerba's* achievement, since the magazine had dedicated its last year to an incessant campaign for Italy to enter the war. Many of the protagonists of the two avant-gardes died in the war, many others had their lives turned completely upside down. The First World War ushered in a new era, and with it new avant-gardes — and their new magazines.

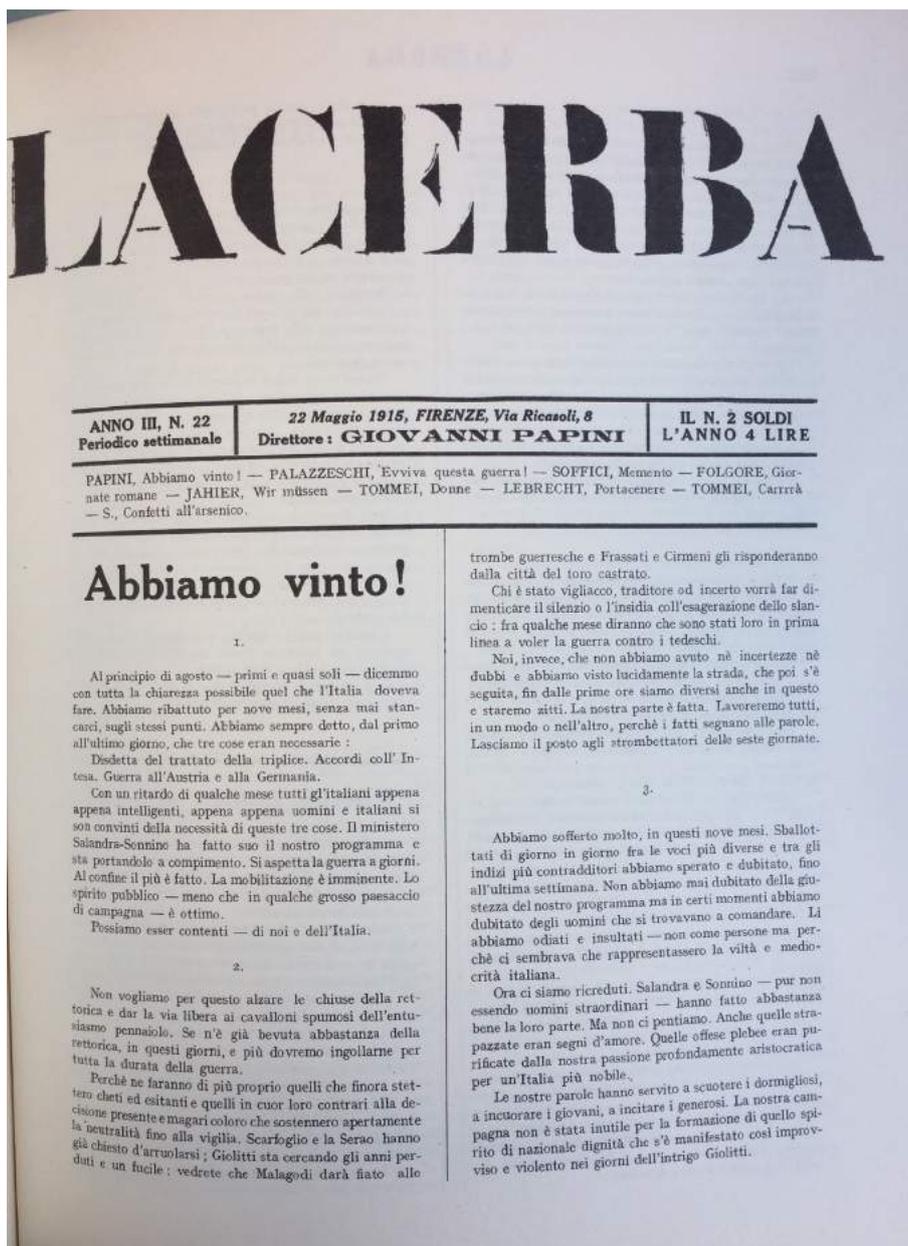


Fig. 10 'We Won', first page of *Lacerba's* final issue (22 May 1915)

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