

◆ **Afterword**

Vicente Huidobro's Futurity Is Now; ¿Por qué?

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An anecdote, which happens to occur about 12–18 months after the Fateful 1968 (and—as you have probably guessed—although 1968's Tet Offensive, the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, most of Paris and Prague, two parks, one convention hall, and various streets in Chicago, as well as numerous other international locales and events inform what follows, the most crucial reverberations and aftermaths emanate—for our purposes—from Mexico City's Plaza de Tlatelolco, during the armed forces' October 2 massacre of protesting university and secondary students and their allies):

A twenty or twenty-one year old New York poet, translator, and critic named Eliot Weinberger gets himself to Pittsburgh to meet Octavio Paz, who has just begun teaching at the University of Pittsburgh, and whom Weinberger has been reading and translating since high school and has been corresponding with for the last couple of years, after Paz—having been shown some of Weinberger's translations of him—had asked Weinberger to translate *¿Águila o sol?* (1950) into English (which eventually appears, in Weinberger's translation, as *Eagle or Sun?* in 1976). Paz, shocked when it emerges in their Pittsburgh conversation that his precocious American translator has never heard of, let alone read the Chilean poet Vicente Huidobro, recites to Weinberger from memory the extraordinary, complexly but indisputably lyric, “golondrina” passage from Huidobro's epic poem *Altazor*:

Al horitaña de la montazonte
La violondrina y el goloncelo
Descolgada esta mañana de la lunala
Se acerca a todo galope
Ya viene viene la golondrina
Ya viene viene la golonfina
Ya viene la golontrina
Ya viene la goloncima
Viene la golonchina
Viene la golonclima

Ya viene la golonrma
Ya viene la golonrisa. (105)

Somehow capable even then of being simultaneously blown away yet able to imaginatively access invaluable resources of chutzpah, Weinberger discovers—and expresses shock at the discovery—that Paz for his part has neither read nor heard of the American poet George Oppen. Paz gives Weinberger *Altazor*; Weinberger reciprocates by giving Paz Oppen's *Of Being Numerous* (which had just been awarded the Pulitzer). Paz apparently never wavered through the years from his assessment that “Huidobro's great poem is the most radical experiment in the modern era. It is an epic that tells the adventures, not of a hero, but of a poet in the changing skies of language”; several decades later, the work of the young American to whom he had introduced *Altazor* had allowed him to add that “the English translation of this poem that bristles with complexities is another epic feat, and its hero is Eliot Weinberger.”

The history of any Latin American poet hardly needs completion—or for that matter, evidencing—through his or her translation into English and dissemination to a U.S. readership. But certain features of the sometimes barely visible U.S. poetry world's Huidobro-reception fit intriguingly with one of the themes rightly emphasized in most, if not all of the rich, provocative essays that editors Luis Correa-Díaz and Scott Weintraub have gathered into this volume, whose title is itself that theme writ large: *Huidobro's Futurity*. What that futurity is, means, or might be is of course also ours to consider here in the country in which this book is to be published. The apparent ubiquity of the question about Huidobro's futurity—inside these pages as well as in larger communities of poetry, scholarship, and criticism—hardly absolve us from attempting further-specifying answers.

At any rate, this volume's remarkably diverse contributions to Huidobro scholarship—featuring meditations on, to take just a few representative examples, the question and status of poetry's and the other arts' autonomy; the poetics of translation; relations among poetry and the other arts (literary and extra-literary); the impacts of contemporary scientific developments in, among other fields, quantum physics, and gravitational theory; Huidobro's *creacionismo* and recent environmentalism or eco-criticism; the Spanish Civil War and linked crucial moments in twentieth-century social and cultural history—seek historically to judge poetry's possibilities of proffered agency, and then perhaps to gauge, no less historically, its measurable impact. In various instances they are more—or, as the case may be, less—explicit about being led to make another judgment or two, judgments that can seem equally necessary to make and that appear necessarily to involve, to risk again stating the obvious, Huidobro's futurity. Why? And how might U.S. poetry's history vis-à-vis Huidobro help us better understand just why

assessments of Huidobro so often become assessments of his so-called futurity?

One way into the problem is to momentarily leave suspended, or get back to the particular contextual realities of that 1968-and-just-after, world-turning-upside-down situation in which Paz introduced Weinberger to Huidobro, and observe that, at least since the 1920s, Left artists, critics, and audiences more generally—by no means limited to Latin America—who found themselves attracted to avant-gardist and/or modernist poetics were frequently, if not constantly drawn into the problem of how to relate aesthetic and sociopolitical agency. Most specifically, how could formally difficult, experimental artworks create anything but dilemmas for those who believed that Marx, and Left culture and aesthetics more generally, had insisted that philosophy, theory, and also art should “change” rather than merely “interpret” the world?

More shortly on change, interpretation, and aesthetic semblance. For now, however, it behooves us to ask in a somewhat different formulation how to account for Huidobro’s apparently longstanding, glaring absence from the action in the U.S. poetry and poetics scene? The answer cannot just be Huidobro’s uncompromising avant-gardism, or that his poetry is written in Spanish and French, or even the conjunction of these factors. For other Latin American and European avant-gardist, experimental-modernist poets, writing in languages other than English, have been and continue to be part of U.S. poetry-culture, from questions of artistic influence to matters of aesthetic, theoretical, and critical approaches taken up by contemporary poets and critics alike. The counter-examples of poets like Vallejo, Paz, Neruda, the Brazilian *concretista* poets, and many others come quickly to mind, and lead us to wonder all the more that Huidobro has been so little known in the U.S. And one could add that Huidobro’s seeming absence in U.S. poetics is made all the stranger by his own emphasis on such crucial American figures as Emerson and Whitman, who were famously important to Huidobro (as they were to many of his Latin American contemporaries) in terms of both his verse and his *creacionista* aesthetic.

What if we took an alternate path into the inquiry, and asked how many U.S. poets and critics of, say, the last 40–50 years know the name and work of one of Huidobro’s first great critical champions, Volodia Teitelboim? It has far too often been the case in Left criticism that linkages between radical poetics and radical politics—including linkages made with the intention of arguing for causality-by-omission—have unthinkingly assumed a parallelism or even intersection between the aesthetic and the sociopolitical. But if ever there were a case where poetic justice at least *appeared* to demand the equation of causality in question, surely it would be Huidobro and his interpreter Teitelboim. For Teitelboim is probably the apotheosis not only in Latin America, but perhaps globally, of the radical conjunction

whose existence is at issue: the defender, through the decades, of the genuinely revolutionary character of Huidobro's challenging, sometimes hermetic-seeming verse (starting most crucially with formal and stylistic matters), Teitelboim goes on not only to become an important Left Chilean or Chilean Marxist intellectual, but the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Chile (PCC) itself, a position almost always held, in countries with historically large and influential communist parties (like Chile), by a person known above all for trade-union and related forms of organizing. The great Mexican muralist David Alfaro Siqueiros may have taken a decade away from art to organize trade unions, but neither he nor anyone else in México thought of him primarily as a trade-unionist: he was a painter, albeit one who sacrificed years of art-making to organize workers. He was also, of course, a militant communist, but no one—least of all, Siqueiros himself—imagined him as *secretario general del partido comunista mexicano*; and how much less would this have been the case for any of Siqueiros's great Left critics? Yet the opposite holds in this conjunction of Huidobro, Teitelboim, and Chile.

The reasons for that conjunction no doubt have much to do with Chile's particular histories of art, criticism, intellectual-cultural life, and politics; and I do not wish to suggest that some unlikely acute awareness, on the part of U.S. poets and critics, of Left Chilean, and specifically Communist excitement about Huidobro's decidedly *un-socialist-realist* verse, somehow has meant that Huidobro's absence from U.S. poetry-discourse has in any important way resulted from the pressures of McCarthyism and its legacies. But one might rightly identify in both Huidobro and Teitelboim a fundamental stance of uncompromisingness, starting with a militant refusal to compromise on what might be called form's own needs: a desire to get at roots without thereby declaring this always-experimental process to have discovered some essential substance, content, or property. In Huidobro's *creacionista* verse, this entails, as various contributors to *Huidobro's Futurity* underscore, the meeting of an astonishing formal constructivism with extraordinary lyrical voicing and dance-movement, the inculcation of a veritable sense of *paracaídas* lift-off, indeed, of aesthetic agency-effect, a sense of what it is "to create, to create, to create," in Huidobro's memorable triple iteration. In Teitelboim's political-philosophical and literary-critical analysis, this finds articulation as a sort of Kantian-Marxist awareness of a humanely rationalist-constructivist capacity nonetheless brought home through—brought home *as*—the most profoundly *affective* lyricity, so that sensuousness and constructive capability are experienced, for a generative moment (i.e., in a recognized-as-aesthetic, recognized-as-"true-fiction" or "necessary-fiction" *imago*, *illusion*, or *semblance*), as being united, inseparable, threaded or composed through one another.

This is what, incipiently from that encounter with Paz onward, Weinberger began to understand, and what he has shared—in beginning to bring Huidobro’s poetics, along with those of kindred artists, into the mix—with the U.S. poets who also insert Huidobro into the conversation, perhaps especially Robert Duncan, Jerome Rothenberg, and Michael Palmer. Significantly, these and kindred poets have tended toward activist Left politics and decidedly formalist, lyric, modernist commitments to artistic-aesthetic experiment, while almost militantly insisting that there might well be no theorizable, nor even empirically demonstrable, causal link among the realms of activity and types of agency at issue. Once could do worse, in searching for examples, than citing Weinberger’s own searing, immediately influential “What I Heard About Iraq”—a long text composed almost entirely of Bush Administration statements about the war, whose constitutive issues include the question of whether this is a poem at all, and, if so, of what type. Read in conjunction with his passionate manifesto-critiques undertaken under the sign of both Vallejo and Oppen (written just before the war began), here he insists on the difference between poetry and even the most urgently needed, invaluable, use-or-purpose-oriented, conceptually predetermined writing.

Without it being in any way utopian—indeed, probably the opposite case holds—this more developed, sustained understanding, and practice of sometimes overlapping but certainly never unifiable poetry and politics may sit at the conjunction of some thirty years of the too-slow (but nonetheless thankfully ongoing) introduction of Huidobro and other Latin American and European avant-gardists into the poetry world of a country that, unlike most other national situations where a significant early-mid twentieth-century modernism and avant-gardism existed, did not have a mass Left party able to contend for a third or more of the electorate, and whose role in cultural matters would then be far more influential than was ever the case in the U.S. In fact, it is a kind of Left anti- (or non-) utopianism that has helped allow Huidobro’s futurity to begin to be grasped in the U.S., as it earlier has been grasped in Latin America and Europe, as most powerful when its futurity is seen as nothing more than the quite substantial reality of the conjoined present that is the poem’s writing and re-writings, publication and re-publication, translation and re-translations, reading and re-readings. In this sense, like all authentic poetry and art, the act of exceeding the meaning of extant concepts—of stretching past conceptual determination—was basic. Like Vallejo, Huidobro came to know in his bones and marrow that far from being what Marx had critiqued, this was what Marx had argued for—a notion of art, of aesthetic experience, and especially of lyric as having fundamental value in our ability to sense and utilize our critical agency. How so?

It is actually right at the heart of the final movement in *Das Kapital's* historical critique of exchange value and commodity form. For *Das Kapital* initially makes Enlightenment economist David Ricardo the virtual hero of its commodity story, emphasizing the progressive character of Ricardo's demonstration that what defines the commodity is not use value but production for and as exchange value—based not on particularity's inextricable relation to use, but on a treated-as-universalizable abstraction of labor time, hence, value derived vis-à-vis an abstraction of the labor-time necessary for each product produced over against all other products within the market. Marx then steps past Ricardo, and past what has already begun to identify itself as left-Ricardian, labor-theory-of-value socialism. Marx notes that the commodity's value derives not only from the conceptual abstraction of labor time but also, crucially, from an ongoing, sociohistorical, and now contestable judgment that this abstraction of labor time must or should be the final basis for valuation—rather than a judgment-process capable of holding that the abstraction of labor time should be a significant, but not necessarily the ruling or determining, basis for valuation, so that value finally would not need to remain determined by, but would be free to transcend (free to *not* be determined by) labor time.

Marx shows that this ability to transcend the conceptual abstraction of labor time as ultimate determinant of value would break open—initially, via Kantian aesthetic judgment!—exactly what Kantian aesthetic judgment by definition offers the *form* or *semblance* but not the *substance* of: an already-extant, determined, determining *concept*. In this breaking-open, stretching-past, or sidestepping of extant, substantive-objective conceptual determination, aesthetic quasi-conceptuality lets subjects feel-experience their semblance-play with conceptual form as if this play already *were* substantive-determinative-objective conceptuality, though a conceptuality somehow freely chosen rather than determinatively, coercively compelled. In the Kantian terms discussed above, aesthetic judgment thus begins to enact, in form or semblance, the experience and process of forming, making, or constructing something not conceptually predetermined. Marx's historical critique of Ricardo ultimately stresses that it has been and continues to be capital's decision—not labor's—to make the conceptual abstraction of labor time the final, untranscendable basis, limit, or horizon of socioeconomic value. In doing so, capital ideologically proclaims the concept of exchange value (along with exchange value's embodiment in/as commodity form and its enactment in/as mechanical reproduction) to be a matter of natural or scientific, determinate judgment. Marx reiterates (again in a quite Kantian analysis that grasps semblance-experience as what enables thought to stretch past extant conceptual determination) the need to break open this seemingly already-adequately-conceptualized question of value when he insists that socioeconomic valuation be subject to ongoing judgment (that it be subject

not to predetermined but to reflective judgment). From *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847) through *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (1875) and beyond, Marx will remain adamant that labor socialism's goal of simply expropriating, nationalizing, or "socializing" exchange value and commodity production is woefully inadequate to labor's own most pressing sociocultural, let alone socioeconomic, needs, starting quite formally with labor's need to make, and then to take action to realize, valuations arrived at through reflective—not already conceptually determined—judgments.

Humming just beneath this analysis is something about exchange value, commodity form, and *conceptualization* that might otherwise go unheard. Economic modernity until his moment, Marx argues, has largely involved the emancipation of exchange value, which has made central not just this concept and practice—exchange value—but also the socioeconomic takeoff or initial triumph of determinate conceptualization itself. For the first time in history, Marx emphasizes, neither an unpredictable (because particular) individual use nor an unpredictable (because powerfully arbitrary) feudal or authoritarian diktat or set of directives, but rather a single predetermined conceptual operation—the abstraction of labor time (predictable in its operational formula if not in the yield of its case-by-case data)—has a major, if not *the* major say in determining socioeconomic value. This holds enormously generative possibilities for socioeconomic productive capacity; but aside—or flowing—from the new mode of production's tendency, in an era of emancipatory and egalitarian discourse, greatly to expand the social character of production and amount of goods produced while simultaneously intensifying the disparities of wealth and resource-distribution, comes too an increasing disappearance (related to if not wholly caused by the disappearance of use as a determinant of value) of particularity. This loss-of-particularity theme, already developed by Marx and Engels, famously becomes in Benjamin's and then Adorno's writings "the crisis of experience," wherein subjectivity, reflective judgment, and critical agency confront a felt evisceration of the capacity for the provisionally spontaneous, not-already-conceptually-determined experience presupposed in the ability to project more than mechanistic relations between the individual and the collective, the particular and the potentially universal. Furthermore, because of the close if not synonymous relationship between conceptual abstraction and exchange-value abstraction (in which the latter and its embodiment in commodity-form appear as the apotheosis of conceptuality and conceptual determinacy themselves), and *then* given that language is deemed (certainly by Marx and Engels and then the Frankfurters) the medium for significantly communicable conceptuality, there is already in Marx and Engels the noteworthy intensification of a high romantic theme (rooted deeper still in classical poetics and aesthetics): lyric poetry bears a special, radical relationship to conceptuality as such and, in modernity, to determinate

conceptuality's socioeconomic identity as exchange-value and the commodity.

Romantic art and theory already thus begin to take as subject matter modernity's problematic apotheosis of determinate conceptuality—and the turn, with Baudelaire, from Romanticism towards what will become modernism itself likewise indicates that both its apotheoses of natural beauty and its tortured explorations of the dangers of infernal, experience-denying modern determinism register an abiding threat in contemporary reality: the non-experience of human beings for whom judgment is by definition becoming—by the very definition of exchange value and the commodity—an already conceptualized, predetermined affair external to them and to any version of their subjectivity that would imply the importance of their capacity for reflective judgment and critical agency. Romanticism and its modernist successors consequently begin to wager about whether, starting if not concluding with sheerly formal artistic-aesthetic dynamics, a significant modern lyric poetry can emerge just when the experiential preconditions for it are starting to seem like they have gone missing—and the modern poets likewise start wagering that such a poetry might *have* to inculcate critique of socioeconomic modernity's concept of concepts, the superconcept *exchange value*. For would not such artistic-aesthetic activity likewise constitute, enable, or begin to enact a sensed recognition of renewed possibilities for conceptually undetermined experience and judgment?

Art or semblance, the argument goes, is critical precisely in its formal character of aesthetic *illusion*, as opposed to unknowing *aestheticist delusion*. In marking itself as illusion (as the form rather than substance of conceptuality, as the Kantian generative “misattribution” to or “misrecognition” of “as-if” objectivity to subjective judgment-experience), in advertising its illusion-character to its audience, art signals the interaction and interdependence of, but also the difference between, itself and the world (whereas *aestheticist delusion* tends toward the collapse of the different identities—at times under the pressure of good-faith, radically-intended assumptions of responsibility for sociopolitical or ethical engagement, for changing the world—and *aestheticist delusion* can thus contribute unwittingly toward an inability to distinguish between artwork and world). Critical aesthetic illusion pivots on a formal dynamic or dialectic of, to paraphrase Benjamin, *charged distance*: the artist's, artwork's, and audience's intense engagement and correspondence with—amidst an awareness of difference from—the empirical, sociohistorical and political, Real.

The audience that participates in the semblance-character at the core of Kantian-Romantic, and often Kantian-modernist, aesthetics and poetics on the one hand provisionally treats the semblance, the artwork or our aesthetic experience of it, as if it were real or had the dignity of the real—or, what

amounts to the same thing, the audience judges it as such and feels it can cognitively make such a judgment, that it can experience or know the feeling of this judging agency. On the other hand and virtually at the same moment, the audience also knows—indeed, dynamic, constructivist semblance *demand*s that the audience know—that this is only an as-if, fiction-generated experience, because, despite the real subjective feelings of agency engendered, nothing, or at least nothing much, has yet been done to the empirical world. In other words, semblance-character's formal, protocritical dynamic constructs the true fiction whereby one feels the capacity for cognizing, and then for acting on and changing, the world, while, at the same time, aesthetic semblance-character negatively, in its *anti-aestheticist* vocation, reminds the subject that however much it might seem or feel otherwise, this capacity has yet to be practically applied and realized.

In the quite explicitly Romantic-Kantian traditions of poetics and aesthetics that Marx and then the Frankfurters inherit, lyric's special role derives not from its being better, nobler, or more right on than other kinds of literature, art, or cultural works, but from the otherwise almost unremarkable fact that, as a formal matter, lyric maintains a special relationship to the presumptive medium for significantly communicable conceptuality: language. Each art has its own unique character; lyric's is to take language, the presumably bottom-line medium of objectivity (in the Frankfurters' and others' philosophical-theoretical vocabulary for the attempt to cognize reality, of *conceptuality*) and, first, to subjectivize it, affectively to stretch conceptuality's bounds in order to make something that seems formally like a concept but that does something that ordinary, "objective" concepts generally do not do: sing. For lyric song to reach and give pleasure to a significant audience, it must then construct its own form of objectivity or coherence, though the logic is that of art—here especially involving poetic art's relationship to musicality—rather than strictly mathematical-conceptual logic. Each of the arts has its mode or modes of semblance. In lyric, semblance primarily involves making speech acts appear, feel, as if their very logic has compelled them somehow to burst—naturally, justifiably, as it were—into song, which suddenly seems necessary but certainly had not yet felt predetermined, and which in its bursting (in a manner inseparable from pleasure) the formal contours of extant conceptuality, allows for a renewed sense of capacity or agency vis-à-vis *materials* that can eventually be grasped as reconceived or newly-conceived sociopolitical, historical, and/or ethical *content* within the newly-stretched form or formal capacity.

In ways that the Romantics anticipate, twentieth-century Left modernist and avant-gardist artists and critics will theorize that the age of art's technological reproducibility ("mechanical reproduction") is characterized not by the aesthetic aura (or semblance character, illusion character, appearance character [*Scheincharakter*]) that operates through charged

distance, suspension, or negation. Rather it operates by the commodity form's version of aura or semblance, wherein a privileged concept—the superconcept called exchange value—pretends (by means of what Benjamin initially and influentially thinks of as phony aura) that it *is not* an already determined and determining concept, that its particular instantiations are free, are not predetermined and subsumed under this concept-practice that presumes to have already conceptualized the way to arrive at the value of anything and everything socioeconomically significant. Commodity aura is thus the photo-negative of aesthetic aura's (and, especially relevant to conceptuality because of its linguistic character, *lyric* aura's) genuinely distanced-yet-charged (because generally openly acknowledged) semblance character; this specially-charged distance of recognized or admitted aesthetic semblance is to be grasped as a critical (though only formal) negation, a provisional negation or suspension emerging from the process in which aesthetic thought-experience phenomenally takes the form of conceptual thought—though it takes only the form, and is thus only the semblance, of a determinant, substantive-objective concept.

The commodity, on the other hand, attempts positively to sell or serve up auratic luminosity as genuine, free immediacy, and the commodity does not wish to admit that its seeming freedom from conceptual determination is illusory. That is, commodity form does not present aura, illusion, in or as charged distance; hence commodity-form does not really proffer its aura through *the* aesthetic's thought-and-felt *as-if*, where semblance is simultaneously engaged as if it were reality, while also being marked consciously as mere aesthetic semblance, inherently distant from reality. Rather, the commodity presents aura through *aestheticization* (where the audience is meant to lose sight of the status or character of illusion, and thus to have the illusion meld in identity and immediacy with reality), and the commodity does this in lockstep with *aestheticization's* march towards its own logical endpoint: the collapse into pure immediacy of the *as-if's* constitutive tension of charged distance, so that semblance or illusion is no longer critically, simultaneously enjoyed and also recognized *as* illusion but instead now produces the *delusion* of literal, immediate, particularized presence that supposedly never was illusion, or that has somehow left illusion, semblance, mimesis and judgment-play behind. This collapse, of charged aesthetic illusion into delusion, leads to or is itself the concomitant collapse of the experiential preconditions for reflective judgment and critical agency.

In sum, its offering of a seeming, apparent, merely formal or semblance-version of substantive-objective conceptuality is what makes the aesthetic effectively quasiconceptual. Presented to the subject himself or herself as if it were a logical substantive-objective concept, but actually characterized by a fundamentally affective experience of conceptuality (*feeling* rather than

intellectually understanding what appears to be objective, what appears to be, what is the semblance or illusion of, an objective concept), precisely this aesthetic experience or Kantian quasicontceptuality permits and can even propel the eventual expansion of objective conceptuality. For its mere semblance-character, its mere formal, mimetic activity rather than any genuinely substantive instantiation of an extant concept, is exactly what allows aesthetic thought-experience to avoid determination by that extant (and therefore substantive, “objective”) concept. The semblance-character of art and aesthetic experience underwrites their relative lack of responsibility to—their relative freedom from determination by—already established concepts. This does not mean freedom from the sociohistorical or political; it means freedom from determination by extant governing (or, for that matter, extant oppositional) *concepts* of the sociohistorical or political. (The difference between the two—between sociohistorical/political determination and conceptual determination—has consistently been collapsed in variants of Marxian, neo-Marxian, and post-Marxian Left critique. But the difference is what makes Marx possible—what makes a human subject, conditioned by the sociohistorical and subjected to reigning concepts and ideologies, nonetheless capable of thinking through and past existing concepts and ideologies—in the first place).

Semblance-character’s freedom from substantive conceptual domination permits the aesthetic’s inherently experimental stretching—its stretching past those already known, determined and determining concepts that it is not bound by—to feel not like dutiful work but rather, to a highly significant degree, like play. Since by definition aesthetic thought-experience has only the form, only the semblance, of objective, content-filled conceptuality, aesthetic work with conceptual form literally becomes play-work, the mere form or semblance of conceptually-determined intellectual operations: from the affective get-go, one plays around with, and is free to recombine, stretch, or extend the conceptual materials, in ways not usually sanctioned where an already-determined conceptual content necessarily delimits the acceptable range of results. All of which points towards the reasons that for classic Left and Marxian artists and critics, a kind of art and aesthetic experience distinct from *aestheticization* but also from thematized political interventionism is highly, maybe even supremely, valued; it is valued for its ability to provide a provisional, formal suspension or negation of extant ruling concepts, and thus for its ability to stimulate the type of imaginative and affective experience that can allow for the emergence, into the field of perception, of those materials that can in turn eventually provide a basis for the postaesthetic construction of new concepts and the new social dispensations that would correspond to them.

And one thus could perhaps not too strongly insist that what lyric semblance and other kinds of artistic semblance effect, in their semblance-

character, is protocritical illusion: their aesthetic *as if* announces and identifies itself *as* illusion or semblance, so that both the semblance, and the reality it relates to but differs from, are simultaneously registered. Again this aesthetic experience is to be distinguished from aestheticization, where illusion and reality are not simultaneously registered but collapsed, so that what was once aesthetic illusion, now no longer asking to be seen in tandem with the reality it differs from, ceases to be the critical or protocritical phenomenon of aesthetic illusion and instead becomes the sociopolitical or ethical *delusion* that art or criticism has already counted as, or towards, real-world commitment or engagement, has already counted as an *action* in and on the world, as change rather than interpretation or the agency-inculcating sense of aesthetic engagement. From Romanticism onward, and especially in twentieth-century experimentalism, what advanced art, criticism, and, especially, lyric continuously re-make and rediscover is *how* art (poetry above all) discovers critical (not consolatory or redemptive but probing) formal means to wrest a sense of aura from aura's absence; it discovers how to particularize particularity's disappearance, how to invest the seeming unavailability of reflective experience with the charge and force *of* reflective experience (so that one might be enabled to reflect, for starters, on what it means to appear to have lost reflective capacity itself). In short, experimental modern poetry discovers how—in, as, *lyric* (and therefore suffused with lyric's history of constructing-presenting the semblance of a singular, particularized voice that, emerging from play with language's ostensibly determined-objective-universal character, offers the possibility of others' hearing that voice as theirs and their voices as the poem's)—to sing song's impossibility.

But all that takes much too long to say, and it is not all that pleasurable; far more efficient, arresting, and plain delightful—plain creationist!—to get the point across by having your *golondrina* become the *golonfina*, *golonclima*, *golonrima*, and to have such a bird-*rima* bring you—presently, yet in a way that just a few moments before would literally not have been happening, and so could only have been a possible future—to a *golonrisa*. Yes, *creacionismo* was a movement of one, but a movement of one intended—and successfully executed to become, as it did—one and one and one and one, millions of times over. Left-critique decrying, in Marx's name, the particularism or aesthetic individualism of Huidobro's and kindred poetics, has frequently missed, in terribly unintended irony, precisely what Marx was getting at in the hopeful moments not only of *Das Kapital*, and not only in Marx's unstinting praise of the revolutionary formal innovations (and the right, as poet, to be a "strange fish!") of Dante, Milton, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Goethe, Shelley, and Heine, but likewise in the earlier text obviously underwriting so much of the present essay, the *Theses on Feuerbach* (which, rather than insisting that theory or philosophy be

integrated with change, rather more brilliantly critiques the very idealist insistence on, and category-mistake of, their unification, a unification that is aestheticization itself). The belatedness that still characterizes U.S. poetry's muted and muting relationship to Huidobro has begun to have the unexpected side-benefit of coinciding with a burgeoning international awareness, not so much new as re-discovered, about how to know Huidobro's futurity as a present being made and re-made now, not in the mistaken, deluded belief that extant society has thus been made into a *golonclima*, but that, having sensed our imaginative capacity for critical agency, we can know we might indeed *have* the ability to alter, modify, or transform this and that—and to do decide to act on that sense of capacity.

Note

1. Weinberger's Introduction to his 2003 re-translation of *Altazor* briefly mentions the 1968 conversation with Paz. I am grateful to Weinberger for expansively discussing with me by correspondence the contexts and contents of that first meeting with Paz, including Weinberger's having introduced Paz to Oppen's poetry. See Vicente Huidobro, *Altazor*. Trans. and Intro. Eliot Weinberger. Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2004. xii and back cover.

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