

CHAPTER 4



1963: Experiment

4.1. Introduction

For the aspiring theatre director Mario Ricci, 1963 began with a performance at the Roman home of art historian Nello Ponente, where numerous artists, writers and intellectuals had gathered to celebrate New Year's Eve. The cheerful crowd included poets Elio Pagliarani and Alfredo Giuliani, painters Giulio Turcato, Gastone Novelli, and Achille Perilli, sculptor Pasquale Santoro, and scenographer Nato Frascà, among others. Thirty-year-old Ricci, who had recently returned to Rome after a period of more than two years in France and Sweden, saw an opportunity. At Stockholm's *Marionetteater*, under the direction of marionettist Michael Meschke, he had mastered the art of puppetry and struck up a friendship with the German choreographer and kinetic sculptor Harry Kramer. In Paris, he had shared a house with the painter Jean-Claude Vignes and developed a lifelong passion for the ideas of the British theatre pioneer Edward Gordon Craig, as expressed in his *On the Art of the Theatre*.¹ Despite his young age, Rome-born Ricci could already look back to a successful career as a self-taught interior designer, having worked, for example, on the development of a large retail space in Via Appia Nuova.² His decision to return to the eternal city, however, was not inspired by a desire for greater prosperity. Instead, this son of a communist bricklayer from Tuscany dreamt of an independent theatre and a school of drama and puppetry in his hometown — a project that would become reality exactly two years later, on 23 December 1964, when the theatre club *Orsolina 15* opened its doors in a backstreet near Via del Babuino. Ricci, who gave his first solo performance in the early hours of 1963, would soon make history as the pioneer of a theatrical revolution that even now, more than half a century later, still goes by the name of *nuovo teatro italiano* [new Italian theatre].³

Ricci's enthusiasm and his craving for novelty were entirely characteristic of the time. Like many of the guests at Ponente's party, the ambitious puppeteer and future theatre director had reached adulthood during the spectacular economic boom of the 1950s. Rome, for the members of his generation, was a city of opportunity. Thousands of houses, shops, and apartments had been built over the space of just a few years, and huge profits made as Italians flocked to the capital in ever-growing numbers. Urban sprawl and unprecedented wealth created a flourishing market for cheap consumer goods and stylish, mass-produced furniture and fashion.⁴

As an interior designer, Ricci could have made a fortune. But the cultural sector was also in rapid expansion. Since the advent of television, in 1954, Italy had undergone an unprecedented phase of modernization and had witnessed the birth of a vibrant culture industry, with innovative technologies of reproduction and fresh approaches to marketing and distribution.⁵ Encouraged by the wild consumerism of the boom years, publishing houses, magazines, newspapers, cinemas, and radio stations competed for the attention of a newly affluent urban middle class.

By 1963, literature and the arts were no longer the exclusive domain of an educated elite. A wide-ranging, recent reform of the Italian education system had created the basis for widening participation, with a single national curriculum for all children under the age of fourteen, encompassing both primary education (*scuola elementare*) and a compulsory new middle school (*scuola media unificata*).⁶ In preparation for the expected rising demand for education and entertainment, Italy's *imprese culturali* [cultural industries] recruited intellectuals and creative practitioners in large numbers. Professional opportunities abounded.⁷ While previous generations of Italian artists had struggled at the margins of society, the young, self-professed avant-gardists of the 1960s benefited from media exposure, patronage, and national and international networks, and found it easy to enter the cultural mainstream. Over the years, this sense of opportunity would become a central tenet of the *neoavanguardia's* narrative and sense of identity. Like the Futurists (whom they dismissed because of their collusion with Fascism), the Leftist new avant-gardes of the 1960s sought admission and legitimation in the centres of cultural production. Unlike the Marxist ideologues of the post-war Italian Left, from Palmiro Togliatti to Franco Fortini, they did not believe in the power of radical opposition but focused their ambition and attention on cultural institutions, which they aspired to transform from within.⁸

Ricci's first performance, *movimento numero uno per marionetta sola* [movement number one for solo marionette] was an enthusiastically collaborative project. In Stockholm, the Italian artist had crafted a large puppet, which he proudly showed off to his Roman family and friends. Built in the manner of Oskar Schlemmer's *Triadisches Ballett* [triadic ballet], this relatively simple marionette possessed two faces, and therefore could appear to its audience either as a naïve youth or as a 'vecchio satiro' [lecherous old man], depending on the puppeteer's intentions and movements. The idea for the performance itself came from Pasquale Santoro, who was in search of an event that would lighten up Ponente's New Year's party.

Over the space of just a few days, in late December 1962, the project for a short play took shape. While Santoro selected the music for Ricci's performance — a mixture of bossa nova, samba, and jazz — Ricci and Nato Frascà worked on a miniature stage: a merry-go-round, on which four naked dolls circled endlessly, in lascivious poses. Riccardo Paladini, a well-known television anchor man at RAI, lent his voice, and gave Santoro permission to record him while he read one of Ricci's unpublished poems. The actual performance, as Gastone Novelli later recalled, lasted approximately thirty minutes. During this time, the marionette, operated by Ricci, span and danced in circles to the changing rhythms of music,



FIG. 4.1. Mario Ricci, *movimento numero uno per marionetta sola*, 31 December 1962, photo: Mario Ricci; courtesy of Filippo Ricci

while Paladini's deliberately monotonous voice rattled in the background: 'Gira / spara / bum! ... / soldi / gettoni / macchine devoltrici di fortuna. / Folla. / Folla! / sconosciuta / amara / sola disperata / alla ricerca del senso della noia -' [Spin / shoot / boom! ... / money / tokens / fortune-giving machines. / Crowd. / Crowd! / unknown / bitter / desperately alone / in search of the meaning of boredom -].⁹ For the full duration of the play, the puppeteer's legs remained deliberately in full sight, also dancing.

4.2. The Sounds of Everyday Life

Ricci's light-hearted experimental puppet show marked the symbolic beginning of a new phase in the history of Italian theatre, but it was also indicative of the wider mood and cultural context of the early 1960s, when new talents emerged quickly and effortlessly, in the joyful atmosphere of a newly affluent country that looked optimistically into the future. Like many artworks of the period, *movimento numero uno* poked irreverent fun at the perceived moralism and shallowness of Italy's middle class, but also mocked the self-important *gravitas* of the artistic establishment. At a superficial level, Ricci's short play — similarly to the pseudo-Marinetian poem that he wrote in Stockholm — appeared to pay homage to the aesthetics of Futurism, and to genres such as sound poetry or the mechanical ballet.¹⁰ Ricci's understanding of the social role of the artist, however, had little in common with the worldview shared by his influential precursors. The flamboyance and hyperbolic rhetoric of Futurism, for example, were entirely absent from Ricci's surprisingly mundane performance. Whereas Marinetti had fantasized about virile heroes, *movimento* featured an awkward and hopelessly ineffectual libertine, oscillating between immature youth and pathetic old age. While the Futurists celebrated audacity, authenticity and transgression, Ricci's repetitive execution sought to evoke the alienating, predictable, and uneventful patterns of everyday life. In this respect, the play could be seen as a deliberately humorous response, across artistic media, to an important set of demands that had been formulated by another of Ponente's dinner guests, the poet Alfredo Giuliani.

In 1961, Giuliani spearheaded and edited *i novissimi*, a collection of representative works by five young poets, which served, as its editor intended, as a battle cry against traditionalism and commercialization.¹¹ Frequently credited as the first Italian literary avant-garde of the 1960s, the *novissimi* poets — Nanni Balestrini, Elio Pagliarani, Antonio Porta, Edoardo Sanguineti, and editor Alfredo Giuliani — practised a systematic subversion of genre conventions and of syntactic and semantic norms in order to force their readers into what they saw as a more dynamic, critical, and 'vital' attitude.¹² In his introduction to the second edition of the collection, Giuliani described this objective as follows:

Senza dubbio in ogni epoca la poesia non può essere 'vera' se non è 'contemporanea'; e se ci domandiamo: — a che cosa? — la risposta è una sola: al nostro sentimento della realtà, ovvero alla lingua che la realtà parla in noi con i suoi segni inconciliabili.¹³

[Undoubtedly, in every age poetry cannot be 'true' unless it is 'contemporary'; and if we ask ourselves, 'contemporary with what?', we meet with a single response: with our sense of reality, or rather with the language that speaks within us by its irreconcilable signs.]

In search of a new, timely 'sense of reality', the *novissimi* poets embraced all registers of everyday language. Sanguineti, for example, mixed the rhetorical, rhythmic, and syntactic conventions of lyrical poetry with shreds of academic, bureaucratic, and colloquial Italian and with snippets of other European languages, thereby conjuring up a dazzling cacophony of voices. Pagliarani professed the political importance

of a 'demystified' literature and focused his attention on the alienating and degrading linguistic habits of many workplaces.¹⁴ Porta adopted a self-conscious and stilted, faux-lyrical mode, while Balestrini, the group's most uncompromising experimentalist, presented his readers with a Dadaist verbal collage of pre-existing texts: newspapers, technical manuals, and novels of every kind.¹⁵

This provocative widening of literature's semantic and stylistic range triggered new levels of creative inventiveness, beyond the conventions of lyrical poetry, now seen as a 'codice letterario, che conserva l'inerzia delle cose' [a literary code that maintains the inertia of things].¹⁶ For Giuliani and his peers, it entailed 'a composition of texts with heterogeneous materials', in Francesco Muzzioli's terms.¹⁷ This did not mean, however, that the *novissimi* were willing to cater to the needs of mass consumerism. As Giuliani pointed out, poetry had to overcome the obsolete conventions of literary high culture, but even more importantly, it needed to resist 'l'odierno avvolgente consumo e sfruttamento commerciale cui la lingua è sottoposta' [today's enveloping consumption and the commercial exploitation to which language is subjected].¹⁸ This difficult balancing act, for the *novissimi*, entailed an unprecedented attention to different artistic media and inspired new ways of understanding the analogies between literature, painting, and music. North American and British pop artists, for example, were hailed for their ironic engagement with mass-produced cultural objects. As Renato Barilli explains, the *novissimi* practised writing as a form of textual collage and treated language as a set of objects that could be endlessly re-shuffled and re-arranged, in the tradition of the Surrealist *objet trouvé* or in the manner of Robert Rauschenberg's playful ready-mades:

I Novissimi [...] prendono atto che c'è una presenza straripante di oggetti prefabbricati (usciti dalla produzione industriale), nei cui confronti non pretendono certo di avanzare un drammatico e perentorio rifiuto. Gli oggetti, le merci, sia a livello cosale che linguistico, 'ci sono', si tratta di prenderli in carico, magari dando prova, in questo caso, di vitalismo, di appropriazione avida, vorace, accelerata.¹⁹

[The *novissimi* [...] acknowledge the abundant presence of prefabricated objects (coming out of industrial production), and certainly do not react with a dramatic and absolute refusal. These objects and commodities 'are there', both at a physical and at a linguistic level. What matters is how to take control of them, in a display of vitality, and in order to achieve greedy, voracious and speedy appropriation.]

Pop art and abstract expressionism were not the only sources of inspiration for the *novissimi*'s poetic revolution. Experimental music also served as an important model. In a long interview with the musicologist Luigi Pestalozza, Sanguineti described his passion for serialism as 'una sorta di vocazione infantile' [a childhood vocation of sorts].²⁰ For young Sanguineti, the achievements of composers such as Arnold Schönberg, Henri Pousseur, and Karlheinz Stockhausen were more than simply a successful emancipation from obsolete artistic conventions. Their concern with automatism, chance composition and 'pure form' also marked a specific precedent for the poet's own efforts to create a non-referential poetic language and an

‘authentically critical’ verbal art outside ‘the boundaries of bourgeois normality, namely its ideological and linguistic norms’.²¹

Since the heydays of serialism, in the early 1950s, experimental music had been described by its makers as a process of formal variation. According to composer and conductor Pierre Boulez, it was essentially about ‘structure: one of the key words of our time’.²² Form was given systematic priority over reference and content. In one of his most significant publications, *Relevés d’apprenti* [Stocktakings from an Apprenticeship] (1966), Boulez attributed this idea to the painter Paul Klee, whom he described as an important influence on his own creative practice.²³ Klee’s notebooks — which Boulez read in an abridged, posthumous edition by Jürg Spiller, *Das bildnerische Denken* (1956) — were praised by the French musician as an exemplary achievement, which highlighted the stark limitations of artistic ‘specialism’:

Et qu’ai-je trouvé dans *Das bildnerische Denken* qui puisse à ce point séduire un musicien et m’amener plus tard à comprendre d’une autre façon le phénomène de la composition? Cela touche au problème même du langage. Quand on est soi-même impliqué dans une technique et dans son langage, on se comporte en spécialiste [...]. Un musicien qui cherche à fournir une explication va la donner en termes musicaux et elle échappera à son interlocuteur si celui-ci n’a aucune familiarité avec ce langage. Tous les vocabulaires techniques peuvent produire ce même décrochement, cette même incompréhension, on en fait chaque jour l’expérience. Rien de tel avec Klee. Il n’utilise aucun vocabulaire spécialisé, le sien est tellement courant, il prend des exemples d’une telle généralité, d’une telle simplicité de base qu’il est possible d’en déduire une leçon s’appliquant à n’importe quelle autre technique.²⁴

[And what did I find in *Das bildnerische Denken* that could seduce a musician to this point and that could subsequently make me understand the phenomenon of composition in a different way? This has to do with the question of language. When somebody relies on their own techniques and their language, they behave as a specialist. [...] A musician who seeks to provide an explanation [of their work] will do so in musical terms but will not be able to reach out to their audience if the latter has no familiarity with this language. All technical vocabularies produce this same disengagement, this same incomprehension, and we experience this every day. Nothing of the sort with Klee. He uses no specialized vocabulary, his expressions are topical, he picks examples that are widely relevant and of essential simplicity, so that it becomes possible to apply his lessons to any other technique.]

In the early 1960s, Boulez’s understanding of composition and his critique of over-specialization had a direct influence on debates about the future of Italian literature. As Giovanna Lo Monaco has pointed out, many post-war experimental authors in Italy gained their first theatrical experiences not as playwrights, but as librettists.²⁵ This included three *novissimi* authors, who, like Boulez, were deeply fascinated by the creative opportunities afforded by other arts, and intrigued by Boulez’s question of ‘how far automatism would go’.²⁶ In 1959, Elio Pagliarani collaborated with the serialist composer Angelo Paccagnini on the experimental opera *Le sue ragioni*. Nanni Balestrini and the mathematician and composer Vittorio Fellegara co-authored the ballet *Mutazioni*, which was first performed in 1965. Sanguineti,

who shared Boulez's admiration for Klee, was especially keen to experiment with new writing practices that mirrored painting and music, and that subverted conventional ideas of 'readability'.²⁷

Ma è certo che un punto di vista di riferimento, nella mia formazione giovanile, proprio dal punto di vista letterario, era la ricerca dodecafonica come modello di rigore compositivo, che aspiravo a trasportare appunto sul terreno della letteratura [...] un'aspirazione a costruire nuove possibilità tecniche, di ordine diverso, al di là di una certa paralisi del linguaggio convenzionato e pattuito, e della sua cristallizzazione inerte.²⁸

[Undoubtedly, dodecaphonic research was an important reference point for my own early instruction, especially in a literary context: it provided a model of rigorous composition, which I aspired to transport into the terrain of literature [...] it marked an aspiration to develop new technical possibilities, of a different order, beyond a certain paralysis of conventional, established language, and its inert crystallization.]

Sanguineti's first collection of poetry, *Laborintus* (1956), and his experimental novels *Capriccio italiano* (1963) and *Il giuoco dell'oca* (1967), mixed and combined linguistic registers and rhetorical figures — prolepsis, metalepsis, metonymy and repetition — with musical thoroughness and precision. The poet also worked with composer Luciano Berio on a ballet, *Esposizione*, and on a minimalist experimental opera, *Passaggio*, which were both performed in spring 1963.²⁹ These works, we shall see, marked a milestone in the renewal of artistic expression, across media. As musicologist Rossana Dalmonte and literary critic Niva Lorenzini have explained, literary writing, for the *novissimi*, was no longer meaningful as a self-contained artistic practice: 'Il materiale verbale sviluppa la propria specificità non più nel senso dell'autonomia, ma in quello dell'interferenza, si fa strumento duttile di una sensibilità rinnovata' [Verbal material develops its own specificity no longer in a state of autonomy, but through interference; it becomes a flexible tool for a renewed sensitivity].³⁰

Sanguineti was not the only *novissimi* poet to draw inspiration from serialism and atonal music. Alfredo Giuliani similarly associated 'vitality' with John Cage's tape music of the early 1950s, which he saw as a positive example of 'structural disorganization'.³¹ The creative freedom achieved by Cage's chance compositions, for Giuliani, marked a utopian horizon for literary writers, who still struggled with the legacies of Romanticism in lyrical poetry. In a short theoretical essay written for the *i novissimi* anthology, Sanguineti subscribed to a similar view, when he remarked that his first collection of poems, *Laborintus* (1956), was inspired by Arnold Schönberg:

Il mio modello era una poesia che fosse dicibile come lo *Sprechgesang* del *Pierrot lunaire* di Schönberg. Ciò significava tornare indietro nel tempo, ma quella era l'unica strada per adeguarmi a quelle che sentivo come le necessità della contemporaneità.³²

[My model was a type of poetry that could be spoken like the *Sprechgesang* of Schönberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*. This meant going back in time, but it represented the only way to be in tune with the demands of the contemporary period.]

The success of Schönberg's tersely dramatic and fragmentary atonal music, according to Sanguineti, offered a message of hope to the experimental writer: like music, literature held the power to reject neo-romantic platitudes. Writing, like music, could be practised as an abstract game of formal variations, where conflicts and contradictions were expressed only on a purely figurative level. In summary, the breakdown of familiar polarizations between poetry, painting, and music marked an important incentive for literature: it created new stylistic opportunities and invited a fresh consideration of verbal expression.³³ Disdainful of the idea of poetry as a self-contained creative domain, some *novissimi* demanded a complete abolition of genre boundaries. Pagliarani, for example, wrote a theoretical contribution to *i novissimi*, entitled 'La sintassi e i generi' [Syntax and Genres], in which he called for a greater freedom of experimental expression, beyond generic conventions: 'Non ha senso negare l'identificazione lirica = poesia senza una reinvenzione dei generi letterari' [It is pointless to deny the equation lyric = poetry without reinventing the literary genres].³⁴ The provocative force of such declarations was heard well beyond the sphere of poetry. During the early 1960s, Giuliani and his peers became an important reference point for artists working in other media. Just as the *novissimi* had drawn inspiration from pop art, abstract expressionism, and serial music, their poetry, in turn, came to offer inspiration to experimental novelists and playwrights, performance artists, and theatrical innovators like Ricci.

Some of the zeal of this artistic revolution appears dated. Like the work of the *novissimi* poets, Ricci's *movimento numero uno* exhibited an irreverent, mischievous interest in different registers and media, exuberant liveliness, and a grating attention to the most intimate levels of physical experience, beyond what was deemed acceptable by Italy's conservative cultural establishment or its emerging culture industry. Just as typically — and notwithstanding its playful mockery of the conventions of bourgeois theatre — Ricci's performance displayed a crudely heteropatriarchal sense of humour that was presumably shared by many of its original spectators. Despite their efforts to open a space for the culturally repressed, the performer and his friends appeared unwilling to complicate markers of sexuality or to explore categories of femininity that were not defined by male desire. Ricci's ecstatically dancing and incongruously priapic puppet was unequivocally gendered male, while the female objects of his scopophilic gaze — the group of four naked, 'exhibitionistic' dolls — were represented, very literally, as sexual fetishes. The play's ironic celebration of artistic transgression and its rather infantile voyeuristic enjoyment were firmly embedded in a spirit of male, homosocial camaraderie — a mood that also prevailed at many of the *neoavanguardia's* initiatives and encounters. As literary critic Lucia Re has explained, Italian experimental art of the 1960s was marked by a profound tension between two conflicting tendencies: a utopian desire to overthrow the patriarchal bourgeois system, and an emotional attachment to masculinist, 'mercilessly confrontational' discursive modes. This was especially true for *Gruppo 63*, Italy's most influential post-war avant-garde, which was founded in Palermo in October 1963 and which included all five *novissimi* poets. Reflecting on the goliardic temperament of Italy's *neovanguardisti* and on the atmosphere at *Gruppo 63's* official encounters, Re remarks:

In this manly ritual of roughing each other out, authors would receive fierce criticism without batting an eyelash. It was this confrontational style, with rough interventions and aggressive discussions [...] that cemented the group and gave it a sense of its strength precisely inasmuch as it acted and was perceived by the media as a group.³⁵

It is worth pointing out, in this context, that all known guests of Nello Ponente's New Year's party were men, even if it may be assumed that women have been present.³⁶ Likewise, the *novissimi* poets constituted as an all-male group, and women writers and artists remained a small minority in the larger and more interartistic *Gruppo 63*. At the group's first official meeting in October 1963, only two of the twenty-nine participants who spoke or read from their work defined as women: Amelia Rosselli and Carla Vasio.³⁷

4.3. Expanding Horizons

The desire for wider cultural horizons was not only felt among poets, or at the level of high theory. Like Mario Ricci, many Italian musicians, visual artists, and writers of the 1960s had little sympathy for a national cultural establishment, which they perceived as reactionary, provincial and stale. Internationalism became associated with artistic renewal. In his important work on cultural globalization, art historian Jonathan Harris has argued that cosmopolitanism acquired a new, positive significance in the early 1970s, in the context of a growing awareness of ecological vulnerability and planetary inequalities.³⁸ The Italian artistic fascination with international travel, however, predates these developments and crystallized around a substantially different set of values and concerns. Indeed, its origins must be sought in the grave disillusionment of the immediate post-war years. After the collapse of the Fascist regime, many Italians felt that their nation could only redeem itself through introspection and thorough self-analysis. The nationalistic rhetoric of the *ventennio nero* and its hyperbolic notion of *romanità*, according to several cultural commentators, had to give way to a more compassionate, scrupulous, and unbiased analysis of social reality.³⁹

In an influential essay, *Psicologia e destino del nostro popolo* [Psychology and Destiny of our People], neurologist and writer Rosario Ruggeri proclaimed: 'È indispensabile quest'opera di chiarificazione per il nostro popolo, trattato sino a ieri con adulazioni e menzogne' [This effort of clarification is requisite for our nation, which until yesterday was exposed to flattery and lies].⁴⁰ In this intellectual climate, few artists or critics felt inclined to champion values or cultural traditions that were external to the nation, and many chose instead to engage with Italy's specific inequalities and difficult legacies. This was the dominant political mood of neorealism, but, from the perspective of the late 1950s and early 1960s, it appeared like an ideological and creative dead end. In 1956, the Milanese philosopher Luciano Anceschi founded a new interdisciplinary journal, *Il verri*, which gave voice to a different understanding of the arts.⁴¹ Uncompromising originality, theoretical inquiry, and attention to international and intermedia exchange were among the key characteristics of

Anceschi's project. Frustrated by the preponderance of outmoded aesthetic practices and canons, many young authors and intellectuals flocked to the journal.

Art critic Renato Barilli wrote in praise of Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, musicologist Luigi Pestalozza engaged with the latest trends in serial music, and Alfredo Giuliani shared his excitement for T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and Vladimir Mayakovsky. As Elisabetta Mondello has shown, the journal aimed at a careful balance between the arts, and was attentive not only to literature, philosophy, and music, but also to new developments in the study of language and to the achievements of visual artists such as Alberto Burri, Jean Dubuffet, Lucio Fontana, and Edouard Vuillard.⁴² In a well-known article of 1963, 'La gita a Chiasso' [The Trip to Chiasso], novelist Alberto Arbasino voiced his impatience with a generation of middle-aged intellectuals who still appeared to blame Fascist censorship for Italy's cultural backwardness. Even in the 1930s, wrote Arbasino, these writers could easily have visited Chiasso, on the Swiss border, where they would have found not only tasty chocolate, but also the works of Karl Marx, Edmund Husserl, and Ludwig Wittgenstein, among others.⁴³

International travel, for Arbasino and his peers, was an essential prerequisite for intermedia exchange. Inspired by the vibrant cultural life abroad, artists and critics in Milan, Rome, Turin, and Florence started to question the traditional separation of the arts that was still reflected in the work of many cultural institutions.⁴⁴ Paris, in particular, served once again as an important temporary home for some Italian artists and writers, and as a regular meeting point for numerous others. During his frequent promenades on Avenue des Champs-Élysées, between 1959 and 1962, Mario Ricci could have encountered philosopher Umberto Eco or painter and sculptor Enrico Baj, the inventor of *arte nucleare* [nuclear art]. Edoardo Sanguineti and Nanni Balestrini also looked with great interest to the French capital, while others, like the Swiss-Italian author and translator Enrico Filippini, were more drawn to the German-speaking world.⁴⁵ Further afield, composer Luciano Berio and painter Gastone Novelli sought inspiration, respectively, in the United States and in the vibrant international community of Brazil's self-styled art capital, São Paulo.

London also became an increasingly popular destination for Italian artists and intellectuals. As an undergraduate student at the Slade School of Fine Art, the Roman polymath Lorenza Mazzetti had struck a friendship with the painter and sculptor Eduardo Paolozzi, a Scottish-born son of Italian immigrants. In London, Mazzetti gained renown for her experimental films *K.* (1954) and *Together* (1956), which inspired the artistic revolution of British Free Cinema. She eventually decided to move back to Rome, but showed little interest in Italian neorealist cinema, and became a writer instead.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, Paolozzi, a pioneering champion of British pop art, continued to follow the work of younger Italian artists, as a mentor to the Florentine painter and radical architect Adolfo Natalini, a co-founder of *Superstudio*.⁴⁷ From 1961 until the end of the decade, Natalini and his British wife Frances Brunton were frequent guests at Paolozzi's studio in Chelsea, from where they returned with enthusiastic updates about the latest trends in the

British art scene. Some forty miles west of London, at the University of Reading, the novelist Luigi Meneghello — who had left Italy in 1947 with a one-year British Council scholarship — pursued what would become a life-long career in higher education. When the university's newly established department of Italian Studies opened its doors in 1961, Meneghello designed a curriculum that featured language and literature alongside political history and the history of art, without excessive regard for traditional disciplinary boundaries.

In brief, Italy had become fashionable in the United Kingdom — not only its literary classics, but also its cinema, design, *alta moda*, and food. Connected by numerous personal friendships and reciprocal cultural interest, the two countries no longer seemed worlds apart. When the *Times Literary Supplement* decided, in 1963, to dedicate its latest weekly issue to emergent trends in literary criticism, Umberto Eco was delighted, but not particularly surprised, to see his name listed alongside those of F. R. Leavis, Roland Barthes, René Wellek, and George Steiner. As Eco confessed many years later: 'Ritenevo perfettamente normale che gli inglesi mi avessero letto in italiano in 1962 e mi chiedessero un intervento nel 1963. Per la mia generazione, il mondo si era allargato. Non andavamo a Chiasso, ma a Parigi e Londra in aereo' [I considered it perfectly normal that the English should have read me in Italian in 1962 and that they should ask me for a contribution in 1963. For my generation, the world had expanded. We did not travel to Chiasso, but to Paris and London, by plane].⁴⁸

Back in Italy, Rome was not the only major hub of cultural innovation. In the North, the galleries and salons of Milan and Turin were regularly visited by Europe's and North America's leading experimental artists.⁴⁹ The Venice Biennale, which had been suspended between 1942 and 1948, resumed its important role for the international art market. The festival acquired particular notoriety in 1964, when pop artist Robert Rauschenberg unexpectedly won the Grand Prize in Painting as only the third North American in the festival's long history.⁵⁰ Florence also forged new connections, thanks to the composers and painters Sylvano Bussotti and Giuseppe Chiari, who took part in the activities of *Fluxus*, an instantly legendary international network of experimental artists.⁵¹ Noise music, performance art, visual poetry, and architecture featured among the chief interests of a new generation of Florentine radicals. Meanwhile, in the Southern half of the peninsula, Palermo gained similar prominence as a vibrant centre for classical and experimental music: a golden age in the city's tumultuous post-war history, according to musicologist and political scientist Piero Violante.⁵² In October 1963, Italy's most famous post-war avant-garde, *Gruppo 63*, was founded in the Sicilian capital, on the occasion of the city's fourth annual *settimana internazionale nuova musica* [international new music week].

Alongside these well-known cultural capitals, smaller regional centres also played an important role. Guy Debord, Pinot Gallizio, Asger Jorn, and Piero Simondo met in the tiny Ligurian hill town of Cosio di Arroscia in July 1957 and founded the Situationist International in the bar opposite the town hall. Alba and Albisola hosted diverse, international communities of painters and sculptors. But one city, above all,

became a powerful new magnet for artists and intellectuals: Milan. During the early years of the economic boom, Italy's self-styled economic capital had benefited from exceptionally rapid urban growth and mass migration from the rural South. The city's numerous theatres, galleries, design studios and publishing houses could rely on a wealth of fresh talent and on ever-growing demand.⁵³ Milan was also famous for its trendy restaurants, bars, and numerous boutiques, which sold both elegant and everyday clothes. While Florence maintained its reputation as the original home of Italian *alta moda*, Milanese designs were known for their practicality, simple elegance, and more affordable prices. By the end of the 1960s, the city had eclipsed its rival on the Arno, and was widely considered the emergent fashion capital of Europe.⁵⁴ As Edoardo Sanguineti recalls, 'Milano [era] un ambiente molto vivo, con i bar famosi dell'epoca, veri luoghi d'incontro per gli artisti' [Milan, with its famous bars, real hang-outs for artists, was a very exciting place].⁵⁵

4.4. The Discovery of Openness

Umberto Eco, who shared Sanguineti's love for Milan, first moved to the city in the mid-1950s, to work for Italy's newly established state television service, RAI TV. As a contributing editor for RAI's cultural programme, between 1956 and 1958, the young Piedmontese philosopher was thrilled to learn that he had largely free rein to explore different kinds of content. 'Culture', according to Eco's employers at RAI, included the visual arts, literature, and political history, but also religion, children's programmes, architecture, fashion, and cookery shows.⁵⁶ This was a tantalizing discovery for an intellectual raised in the strict tradition of disciplinary expertise that continues to shape Italian academic curricula to the present day. At the University of Turin, Eco had been taught to be suspicious of any aesthetic discourse that sought to generalize across the arts. His mentor, the Catholic hermeneutic philosopher Luigi Pareyson, was among the most vociferous critics of a specifically Italian strand of philosophical idealism, developed and championed since the early years of the century by philosopher Benedetto Croce. Instead of promoting the importance of the aesthetic, Pareyson argued, Croce's insistence on the ontological primacy of imaginative intuition had isolated the study of the arts from its social and political context. Luciano Anceschi, the influential editor of *Il verri*, shared this belief and rejected Crocean idealism, in its mid-century form, as an increasingly dogmatic and sterile pursuit. As Michael Caesar explains, the two philosophers held that Croce

had displayed sovereign indifference to the materiality of the work of art, to the historical conditions of its production, to the processes of conceptualization through which the work of art came into being, to the positive role played by convention and rhetoric (dismissed by Croce as 'precepts', in a rearguard polemic with a long-dead classicism), and to the reception and consumption of the work.⁵⁷

In the wake of Pareyson's and Anceschi's considerations, a new generation of Italian philosophers and art critics set out to establish fresh practices of cross-disciplinary inquiry.⁵⁸ If the relation between disciplinary traditions could not

be expressed in a single conceptual frame, as Croce had assumed, then it needed to be explored at the level of historical difference, methodology, and material practice. At the University of Perugia, Catholic philosopher Pietro Prini launched an ambitious new series of annual, cross-disciplinary conferences: 'Il mondo di domani' [The World of Tomorrow]. Between 1963 and 1969, these regular events would bring together many of the period's leading thinkers, from Italy, Germany, France, Poland, and Spain. Social scientists, philosophers, life scientists, and cultural critics were invited by Prini to discuss, from their respective disciplinary perspectives, what he described as 'gli aspetti salienti della civiltà odierna, dei modi e dei tempi del suo trapasso in quella di domani' [the salient features of contemporary civilization, and the forms and temporalities of its transformation into the civilization of the future].⁵⁹ In Prini's opinion, no academic discipline, by itself, was sufficiently equipped to describe and analyse the modern world. Instead, the contemporary age needed new cross-disciplinary approaches: an intellectual revolution, 'con non minore impegno e radicalità di quanto ha fatto al suo sorgere il pensiero rinascimentale anticipando profeticamente le conquiste e il destino della umanità moderna' [with no less commitment and radicalism than the thinkers of the early Renaissance, who prophetically anticipated the conquests and the destiny of modern humanity].⁶⁰

For his first conference, in 1963, Prini invited Umberto Eco to speak about interdisciplinarity.⁶¹ Predictably, the young theorist moved his attack against Crocean aesthetics and against the figure of the traditional philosopher, whom he mocked, in the words of theoretical physicist Eduardo Caianiello, as 'colui che sa tutto, ma niente altro' [a man who knows everything, but nothing else].⁶² Idealism, according to Eco, had failed to pay attention to technological and social progress, and to their repercussions for the arts. If aesthetic philosophy wished to remain socially and politically relevant, it had to engage more fully with the structural similarities between the arts, science, and technology:

Nel corso [dell'analisi interdisciplinare] il filosofo prende atto delle ricerche compiute dalle varie discipline, e tenta di ridurre i vari metodi e i vari risultati a *modelli descrittivi*, capaci di riflettere la struttura dei vari fenomeni indagati e dei vari procedimenti indagati. È proprio del filosofo condurre questa riduzione interdisciplinare, ed è suo compito rilevare, tra i modelli elaborati, *similarità di struttura*.⁶³

[In this process [of interdisciplinary analysis] the philosopher takes note of the findings of various disciplines, and seeks to reduce their methods and results to *descriptive models*, capable of reflecting the structure of the phenomena and procedures under investigation. It is the philosopher's specific responsibility to advance this interdisciplinary reduction, and to highlight *similarities of structure* across his elaborated models.]

Modern society, according to Eco, had no need for traditional philosophers but required versatile polymaths: 'tecnici della totalità' [technicians of totality].⁶⁴ In the field of linguists, scholars were already exploring the similarities between natural languages to develop a single, theoretical model. Eco believed that this approach was also relevant to the arts and humanities, and especially to the study of

contemporary literature, painting, and music. Each of these arts, as Eco explained to his listeners, had renewed and widened its range of expression by drawing from diverse sources, and by blending artistic and theoretical reflection: ‘un’arte che non si propone più come fatto creativo originale, ma come riutilizzazione di un prodotto che era già artistico’ [art no longer defines itself as original creative expression, but recycles products that are already works of art].⁶⁵ If critics did not wish to be left behind, Eco claimed, they had to be as interdisciplinary and versatile as the artists they studied: ‘Il che tuttavia richiederebbe che il filosofo non fosse più studioso isolato, ma qualcuno che lavora in continuo contatto con altri, per verificare continuamente i modelli che elabora’ [This, however, would require that the philosopher is no longer an isolated scholar, but someone who works in permanent contact with others, and who continuously verifies the models that he develops].⁶⁶

At RAI and in his work for the Milanese publisher Bompiani, Eco had personally experienced the pleasures of collaboration and the excitement of working freely across different media. In 1962, the philosopher chose to relay these experiences in a book that would make his name, and that would soon be adopted by Italy’s new avant-garde as its unofficial manifesto.⁶⁷ *Opera aperta* ranged from experimental literature to action painting, from Edmund Husserl to Werner Karl Heisenberg, and from non-Euclidean geometry to serial music. It was a passionate homage to the omnivorous cultural appetites of Milan’s artistic circles. But it also pioneered a new theoretical understanding of the arts. ‘Openness’ and its related attributes — ambiguity, indeterminacy, discontinuity, and polyvalence — were explained by Eco as ‘structural homologies’ (‘analogie di struttura’): rhetorical and material practices that could be traced across all historical periods and in every form of artistic expression. All works of art, Eco declared, were open to interpretation. But not all forms of openness were equally interesting or innovative. As literary theorist David Seed has pointed out, Eco treated progressive openness as an important cultural achievement that had to be defended and advanced by every subsequent generation of artists: ‘the term “open” is never used neutrally by Eco. It always carries connotations of heuristic freshness, freedom from prescription, and so on’.⁶⁸

Eco believed that the most sophisticated forms of openness could be found in a relatively small set of high modernist experimental works, which he labelled *opere in movimento* [works in movement]. As he pointed out, these works did not simply invite interpretation, but gave performers and audiences an active role in the creative process itself. They could not exist without the reader or spectator, who was literally expected ‘a fare l’opera con l’autore’ [to make the work together with the author].⁶⁹ In one of the central chapters of *Opera aperta*, Eco explained this idea through a discussion of Karlheinz Stockhausen’s famously polyvalent *Klavierstück XI*. First performed in New York on 22 April 1957, this composition consisted of nineteen fragments, spread over a single, large page. The performer could begin with any fragment, and continue to any other, proceeding at will through the labyrinth until a fragment had been reached for the third time, when the performance ended. Markings for tempo and dynamics, at the end of each fragment, had to be applied to the next fragment. Every performance of *Klavierstück XI* was therefore

unique and unrepeatable. Stockhausen's 'openness' was a formal feature that only gained meaning, in the words of comparatist Sangjin Park, through an 'active and conscious dialectical relationship with the conditionings' of cultural context.⁷⁰ The same could be said of Eco's own volume, as Michael Caesar has suggested. Unlike some of the philosopher's later work, *Opera aperta* embraced openness not only at the conceptual level, but also materially and rhetorically: '*Opera aperta* is itself an "open work", subject to change, and above all growth, during its successive editions, particularly in the 1960s; true to itself, it does not offer definitive solutions'.⁷¹

Eco, as we have seen, understood philosophy as a multidisciplinary practice of inquiry. According to Caesar, one of the greatest achievements of *Opera aperta* lay in Eco's ability to challenge 'long established academic barriers' between over-specialized disciplines, and to extend 'the bounds of aesthetics in order to open a dialogue with the emergent sciences of communication'.⁷² But Eco's interest in music had personal roots, too. As the philosopher explained in his preface to the first edition of *Opera aperta*, the book could not have been written without Luciano Berio and the *Studio di fonologia musicale* at RAI: 'Desidero ricordare che le ricerche sull'opera aperta non avrebbero avuto inizio se non ne fossi stato stimolato dalla consuetudine col lavoro creativo di Luciano Berio, e dalle discussioni su questi problemi con lui, Henri Pousseur e André Boucourechliev' [I wish to stress that this research on the open work would not exist if I had not been stimulated by a familiarity with the creative work of Luciano Berio, and by the discussions about these questions with him, Henri Pousseur and André Boucourechliev].⁷³ Indeed, when Eco first arrived in Milan in 1956, Berio was already an influential figure in the city's cultural life.

By 1954, the composer had encountered many of the artists who were to shape his understanding of music and composition: Giorgio Ghedini, his teacher at the *conservatorio*; Luigi Dallapiccola, whom he met in the United States; and finally, during a first visit to Darmstadt in 1953, Stockhausen, Boulez, and Pousseur.⁷⁴ Berio had also been introduced to the composer Bruno Maderna, who encouraged his plans for a new studio of electronic music, to be established in Milan with the support of Italian state television.⁷⁵ When the *studio di fonologia musicale* finally opened its doors in 1955, under Maderna's and Berio's direction, Eco became one of its earliest and most enthusiastic supporters: he was an eager admirer of the music that Berio wrote for radio plays such as Enzo Ferrieri's *Il trifoglio fiorito* (1953) and for the more ambitious *Ritratto di città* (1954), an acoustic portrayal of Milan created by Berio, Maderna, and Roberto Leydi.⁷⁶ By 1957, Eco and Berio were working together on a radio programme entitled *Onomatopea nel linguaggio poetico* [onomatopoeia in poetic language] which, according to Eco's plans, was going to present different uses of onomatopoeia in modern literature. In its final version, the programme contained passages from Edgar Allan Poe, Dylan Thomas, and W. H. Auden, read by Berio's wife, the American-Armenian singer Cathy Berberian. Only a year later, Berio, Berberian, and Eco resumed their fruitful collaboration and gave shape to one of the most significant works of Italian experimental art: the pioneering electroacoustic composition *Thema: omaggio a Joyce* (1958–59).⁷⁷

4.5. Singular Encounters

There are interesting similarities between the stories of Ricci's return to Rome and Eco's arrival in Milan. Both experiences reveal the importance of serendipitous encounter. The 1960s were a period of opportunity and increasing mobility, and being in the right place, at the right time, was of considerable importance. As Sanguineti remarked in an affectionate personal recollection of his friendship with Berio, co-creative collaboration and interartistic networks were often the result of *circostanze* [happenstance].⁷⁸ This was certainly true of Sanguineti's own collaboration with Berio. In her authoritative study of Italian experimental theatre, Giovanna Lo Monaco has pointed out that 'l'incontro artistico tra Sanguineti e Berio avviene quasi naturalmente per una profonda affinità poetica' [the artistic encounter between Sanguineti and Berio occurs almost naturally, as the result of a profound poetic affinity].⁷⁹ Berio read Sanguineti's *Laborintus* in 1961, and promptly decided to write to its author, asking for a libretto. Less than two years later, the pair had already completed *two* ambitious collaborative projects, almost simultaneously. *Passaggio: messa in scena di Luciano Berio ed Edoardo Sanguineti* was first performed at Milan's *Piccola Scala* on 7 May 1963, under the direction of Virginio Puecher. A few weeks earlier, on 18 April 1963, *Esposizione*, an experimental ballet, made its debut at the Venetian *Teatro La Fenice*. Both projects were the result of an intensive collaboration between Berio and Sanguineti, and engaged the support of other like-minded artists. Sanguineti, who had some familiarity with composition, wrote the libretti directly in musical notation, and took a keen interest in Berio's creative practice. The composer, meanwhile, paid homage to Sanguineti's characteristically over-erudite multilingualism with a rich pastiche of citations from classical and popular music: 'feticci musicali' [musical fetishes], in Berio's words.⁸⁰ Musical theatre, for both men, was more than simply a juxtaposition of different media. Like Sanguineti's *novissimi* poetry and Berio's electroacoustic compositions, it marked an opportunity to widen and transform the creative repertoire of established cultural forms. Berio's music, as Sanguineti put it, 'convalida in maniera straordinaria la possibilità di un impiego della voce al di là di tutte le dimensioni tradizionali della recitazione, attraverso il grido, il canto, il mugolamento, tutto il rumore vocale' [endorses in an extraordinary manner the possibility of using the voice beyond all traditional dimensions of acting, through shouting, singing, moaning, every kind of vocal noise].⁸¹

Other artists completed the work of the dynamic duo. When it came to the vocal parts of *Esposizione*, mezzosoprano Berberian was an obvious choice for Berio, who wanted her to be accompanied by a boys' choir. Meanwhile, the choreographic elements of the production were realized by American performance artist and theatre pioneer Anna Halprin, the co-founder of the San Francisco Dancer's Workshop. Six performers, including Halprin herself, interacted on stage with a large cargo net, and recited snippets of Sanguineti's text, which they had received from him without any explanation. In order to heighten the play's dramatic tension, Berio had further insisted that the dancers rehearse without music, and that they

should only hear Berberian's voice on the evening of the performance. This resulted in overwhelming, joyful chaos, as Halprin recalls:

The performers emerged from both outside and within the theatre, burdened by all kinds of luggage, from tires to rolled-up newspapers to a basket of tennis balls. They embarked on a journey through the space, at times making direct contact with the audience. A huge cargo net was stretched up some 40 feet into the opera house from the orchestra pit, and they began climbing it up, carrying all their belongings. Objects and performers would drop and come tumbling down the net. At one point [Halprin's nine-year-old daughter] Rana swung out on a rope from the top, soaring over the audience to screams of 'bambino'. [...] The only trouble with the vocal material was that we never heard it in performance because the audience shouted so much and responded so excitedly.⁸²

Where *Esposizione* focused on chance operations, *Passaggio* began like a more traditional theatrical performance. In fact, Berio's and Sanguineti's second collaboration is best described as a progressive deconstruction of the conventions of opera and spectatorship. Performed on a black box stage, *Passaggio* explicitly evoked Dadaism and the aesthetics of German Expressionist drama. Enrico Baj and the Sicilian abstract painter Felice Canonico created a set of ominous dark containers, overshadowed by bright neon letters that spelt the word 'MERZ'.⁸³ Walking between these props, soprano Giuliana Tavolaccini performed as 'Lei', an unnamed and seemingly archetypal female character who, in the intentions of the two authors, embodied 'feminine historicity' ('uno storico femminile'). For Berio, 'Lei' was meant to resemble the Czech writer Milena Jesenská, while Sanguineti imagined her as a theatrical representation of Rosa Luxemburg.⁸⁴ In the first part of the performance, 'Lei' was insulted, imprisoned, and even tortured by a spectral, sinister chorus (*coro B*), who mingled freely with the audience and who proclaimed the absolute value of social hierarchies and norms:

CORO B: — in noi l'ordine! [...] che qui, ordinati, adesso, / assistiamo qui, / noi, presenti! Presenti nel / silenzio [...] in questa ordinata gerarchia; in his scaenis atque spectaculis; / noi, immagine, dio! Adesso! / [...] di una ordinata società!⁸⁵

[CHOIR B: — in us, the order! [...] here, ordered, now, / we assist here, / we, present! Present in / silence [...] in this ordered hierarchy; in *his scaenis atque spectaculis*; / we, image, God! Now! / [...] of an orderly society!]

A second, invisible chorus spoke out against this idea from the orchestra pit (*coro A*), and urged the woman to resist. After several melodramatic exchanges between the two choruses, *Passaggio* took an unexpected turn in the fourth and final act, when 'Lei' suddenly interrupted her performance, took off her stage costume and prepared to leave, while *coro B*, in a panicky crescendo, ordered her to get back into character: 'buio tutto! / anche qui! / Silenzio! Effetto! [...] al centro! / a destra! / prevalentibus / più gesti! muoversi, / accidenti! / Siamo a teatro!' [all dark! / here as well! / Silence! Effect! [...] to the middle! / to the right / *prevalentibus* / more gestures, / Damn it! / We're in a theatre!].⁸⁶ 'Lei', of course, paid no attention to this.

In a short essay for the programme, Umberto Eco praised the political force of Berio's and Sanguineti's meta-theatrical provocation, which he interpreted in the manner of Berthold Brecht's epic theatre:

[Il coro B] cerca di ridurre a puro spettacolo la vicenda. Non è questa la tentazione del melodramma? [...] Ma in *Passaggio* gli autori vogliono evitare questa suprema ipocrisia: e con un improvviso effetto di straniamento, la donna caccia via il coro e noi che assistiamo.⁸⁷

[[Chorus B] tries to reduce the story to pure spectacle. Isn't this the attraction of melodrama? [...] In *Passaggio*, however, the authors want to avoid such supreme hypocrisy: in an unexpected, defamiliarizing turn, the woman chases away the chorus and us, who are watching.]

Eco's uncharacteristically earnest reading of *Passaggio* acknowledged Sanguineti's and Berio's political convictions, but paid little attention to the ostentatious playfulness of their *coup de théâtre*. As Eco pointed out, *Passaggio*'s surprise ending challenged the conventions of bourgeois spectatorship, in true Brechtian style. But it also questioned the modernist principle of choreographic authorship, which had been fundamental to Brecht's political theatre. Where *Episches Theater* achieved defamiliarization through carefully measured and scripted provocations, Berio's and Eco's musical theatre relished the abandonment of aesthetic control, and the creative potential of unpredictable and spontaneous gestures. In this respect, *Passaggio* appeared closer in spirit to Dario Fo's anarchic television show *Chi l'ha visto?* (1962) or to the theatrical and musical improvisations of Halprin and Cage than to Brecht.⁸⁸ *Passaggio* and *Esposizione* were also reminiscent of Ricci's collaboration with Pasquale Santoro and Nato Frascà. Like *movimento numero uno*, Sanguineti's and Berio's musical theatre did not seek to disguise its spontaneous origins, but exulted at the chance encounter between different artistic forms.

Throughout the early 1960s, poetry, music, and the visual arts joined forces in a carnivalesque mood, in a cheerful celebration of artistic transience. Performative practice marked a radical alternative to the creation of tangible, 'definitive' art objects, which Berio, Sanguineti and others associated with commodification and the demands of mass consumerism. In the context of a society shaped by capitalist expansion, this co-creation of unique and partly spontaneous artistic experiments was experienced, by their makers, as a precarious and dynamic space, reflecting the simultaneous, incommensurate presence of different and diverse personal and disciplinary trajectories. Italy's most influential avant-garde movement of the 1960s, *Gruppo 63*, was inspired by similar ambitions. More than thirty writers, visual artists, musicians, and critics took part in the group's first meeting in Palermo in October 1963. Two *novissimi* poets — Balestrini and Giuliani — were responsible for practical arrangements and would subsequently co-edit the group's first anthology, *Gruppo 63: la nuova letteratura* (1964). Diversity was considered fundamental. While all participants at the Palermo conference shared broadly leftist political views and a strong dislike for representational realism and lyrical intimacy, these positions were never summarized in programmatic statements or official manifestos. According to Sanguineti, 'l'esistenza di posizioni diverse era in sintonia con la struttura del

gruppo che poi era quella adeguata alla situazione: non c'era un manifesto di poetica e non lo si voleva fare' [the existence of different positions was in tune with the group's structure and this was appropriate to the situation: there was no poetic manifesto and we did not want to create one].⁸⁹

Similarly, Eco remarked that the group 'non era una massoneria [...]. Era piuttosto come una festa di paese, in cui fa parte chi è presente e partecipa dello spirito generale e del genius loci' [was not a Freemasonry. [...] It was rather like a country fair, which includes anybody who is present and who takes part in the genius loci].⁹⁰ In one of his rare retrospective accounts of the *neoavanguardia*, experimental novelist Giorgio Manganelli also confirmed this impression:

Il Gruppo 63 non ha mai elaborato dei suoi precetti estetici. In realtà, mi si passi l'espressione, era un gran casino. C'era dentro tutto e il contrario di tutto: gente che barava e gente che non barava e perfino gente che contava i numeri da uno a cinquemila. Ma contare da uno a cinquemila non era mica obbligatorio per tutti.⁹¹

[*Gruppo 63* never expressed its aesthetic principles. Actually, if you will forgive the expression, it was a big mess. The group included a bit of everything, and the opposite of everything: people who cheated and people who did not cheat, and even people who counted from one to five thousand. But counting from one to five thousand was not obligatory for everybody, of course.]

This is not to say that *Gruppo 63* simply ignored the differences between artistic media. On the contrary, each medium, in turn, was exposed to careful scrutiny and creative-critical attention. From 3 until 7 October 1963, the members of *Gruppo 63* divided their days between the Hotel Zagarella in Solunto and the Scarlatti Room of Palermo's *Conservatorio*, where they convened a series of public-facing workshops. Each workshop, in turn, focused on one artistic medium or genre. Gillo Dorfles, Achille Perilli, and Nello Ponente spoke about painting; Giuseppe Bartolucci, Eco, and Luigi Gozzi chaired a session on theatre; Luciano Anceschi, Alfredo Giuliani, and Sanguineti were jointly responsible for the group's poetry event; Renato Barilli, Angelo Guglielmi, and Francesco Leonetti took charge of a workshop on the novel, and Mario Bortolotto and Fedele D'Amico contributed with some reflections on experimental music.⁹² Systematic attention to different media and genres also prevailed in the group's first anthology, *Gruppo 63. La nuova letteratura*, which included textual samples from thirty-four *scrittori nuovi* [new writers], in strict alphabetical order.⁹³ Six theoretical essays introduced the anthology.⁹⁴ Of these, only the first two, written by Anceschi and Guglielmi, defined experimentalism in generally comprehensive terms, while a further three were dedicated, respectively, to the novel, to poetry and to theatre. Dorfles, finally, addressed the relationship between different artistic media, but focused largely on their comparative history, without seriously questioning their respective autonomy.

From the perspective of philosophy, *Gruppo 63's* specific engagement with particular genres and media was indicative of the post-Crocean turn, which Eco had embraced in *Opera aperta* and subsequently explained in his conference paper at the University of Perugia. At the level of creative practice, the group's meticulous

attention to different media prepared the ground for serendipitous encounter. Interartistic exchange was of vital importance, according to the artists and writers of Italy's *neoavanguardia*, but there was no expectation that different media should merge or contribute to the unfolding of a single, teleologically ordained cultural form, in the manner of a Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Instead, it was considered that every artistic form had its own distinctive qualities and history. Media were free to mingle without constraints, like the artists at the Palermo conference. Inside this volatile, dynamic field, every interartistic encounter could be celebrated as a unique moment of co-creative production, which held the power to display and displace established artistic conventions. In a recent, insightful study, Brazilian curator and performance scholar André Lepecki has described this approach to creative practice as a desire for 'singularities', a Deleuzian concept.⁹⁵ Singularities, as Gilles Deleuze argues in *Logique du sens*, resist categorization. They are 'turning points and points of inflection; bottlenecks, knots, foyers, and centres; points of fusion, condensation and boiling; points of tears and joy, sickness and health, hope and anxiety, sensitive points'.⁹⁶ They rejoice in contingency. This also holds true for many of the artists discussed in this chapter. Deleuze's reflections capture a fascination with experimental art that was typical of the early 1960s, and the importance of heterogeneity and openness for a rapidly changing society.

4.6. Conclusions

Like their precursors in Paris and New York — Pierre Schaeffer and Pierre Boulez, Robert Rauschenberg and John Cage, among others — many Italian artists of the 1960s saw themselves as heirs to the historical avant-gardes, but also as members of a new generation, untarnished by the experience of dictatorship and war. A popular new term, 'sperimentalismo' [experimentalism], gained traction in the passionate theoretical debates of the period. Experimental artists still viewed themselves as avant-gardists — often combining the term with the fashionable prefix 'new' or 'neo' — and relished what Berio called the 'liberating effect' and the 'sacrificial and somehow clownish impulse' of avant-garde culture: its sense of freshness, confidence and iconoclastic zeal.⁹⁷ Despite this fascination, however, Berio's generation took little interest in rehearsing the cultural practices or political arguments of earlier decades. Where the historical avant-gardes had directed their wrath against a largely homogeneous and solidly conservative cultural establishment, their self-styled heirs of the 1960s found themselves at the heart of a rapidly modernizing economy, surrounded by new media and a seemingly endless appetite for cultural novelty. Celebrations of heroic transgression à la Marinetti appeared naïve in this context of mass consumerism, proliferating new cultural forms and potentially global communication networks. In his pioneering book-length study of experimentalism, *Avanguardia e sperimentalismo* (1964), Angelo Guglielmi mocked the antagonistic rhetoric of avant-garde discourse and called for more pragmatic forms of cultural and political activism:

La situazione della cultura contemporanea è simile a quella di una città dalla quale il nemico, dopo averla cosparsa di mine, è fuggito. Il vincitore che è alle

porte della città cosa farà? Invierà delle truppe d'assalto a conquistare una città già conquistata? Se lo facesse aggraverebbe il caos, provocando nuove inutili rovine e morte. Piuttosto farà arrivare dalle retrovie i reparti specializzati che avanzeranno nella città abbandonata non con le mitragliatrici ma con gli apparecchi Geiger. E grazie alle nuove strade da essi aperte (strade naturalmente straordinarie, costruite su sedi imprevedute e non tradizionali) la circolazione nella città potrà ricominciare.⁹⁸

[The situation of contemporary culture is similar to that of a city from which the enemy, after laying mines, has fled. What will the winner do, on his arrival at the city gates? Will he send assault troops to conquer a city that is already conquered? If he did so, this would create chaos and provoke new, useless destruction and death. Instead, he will dispatch specialized sections of the rearguard, who will enter the abandoned city not with machine guns but with Geiger counters. And thanks to the new roads created by them (naturally extraordinary roads, built in non-traditional ways, in improvised locations) the traffic in the city will flow again.]

Other theorists and writers agreed with Gugliemi's analysis, even if they did not share his political demands. In 1965, Fausto Curci described *Gruppo 63* as an 'avanguardia fredda' [cold avant-garde] in evident contrast with the alleged revolutionary heat of Futurism.⁹⁹ Similarly, Eco evoked the contrast between a 'generation of Vulcan' and a 'generation of Neptune', and Sanguineti deplored the inevitable transition from a heroic to a cynical age, sanctioned by the triumph of the culture industry and its most tangible avatar, the museum.¹⁰⁰ Experimentalism, for these thinkers, had a strong utopian dimension, which was captured, for instance, by Gugliemi's suggestion, at *Gruppo 63's* third meeting, to see the world as a broken vase or a universe in fragments, which literature must re-arrange into a new, more harmonious order.¹⁰¹ Or by Sanguineti, who famously urged the experimental poet to dive 'nella Palus Putredinis, precisamente, dell'anarchismo e dell'alienazione, con la speranza, che mi ostino a non ritenere illusoria, di uscire poi veramente, attraversato il tutto, con le mani sporche, ma con il fango, anche, lasciato veramente alle spalle' [into the murky pool of anarchism and alienation, with the hope (that I do not consider an illusion) of really getting through, with our hands dirty, but leaving the mud behind].¹⁰² Sanguineti also suggested that creative writing ought to be imagined in radically new terms, as a form of deductive reasoning:

Anziché muovere da un testo, e con sano procedimento venire deducendo infino all'ultima conclusione interpretativa, procederemo a ritroso, e salpando dalla astratta ipotesi di un testo, dalla sua mera possibilità ideale, lo dedurremo criticamente. In questo modo il nostro 'campione', anziché collocarsi a principio, si collocherà, come è necessario, in coda, in funzione di epilogo.¹⁰³

[Instead of starting out with a text and arriving through a healthy process of deduction at its interpretative conclusions, we will proceed in the inverse direction: beginning with the abstract hypothesis of a text, its ideal possibility, we will deduce it critically. Consequently, our 'sample' will not stand at the beginning, but will necessarily come at the end, and take on the function of an epilogue.]

But how original was this idea of experimentalism? From Paris, the mathematician and OULIPO writer François Le Lionnais cautioned his readers that all works of literature were experimental: ‘de Lycophron (peut-être) à Raymond Roussel (certainement) en passant par les Grands Rhétoriciens, la littérature expérimentale accompagne la littérature tout court’ [from Lycophrones (perhaps) to Raymond Roussel (certainly) via the great rhetoricians, experimental literature has always been a part of literature *tout court*].¹⁰⁴ Experimentalism, for Le Lionnais, was not historically situated, and existed independently of political ideology. Writing in 1984, on the occasion of *Gruppo 63*’s twentieth anniversary, Eco reached a similar conclusion. *Sperimentalismo*, as he explained, had been championed by progressive writers and intellectuals who felt uncomfortable with the Manichean juxtaposition of bourgeoisie and avant-garde. Without the avant-garde’s revolutionary fervour, however, experimentalism came to look like a very malleable category: ‘Se sperimentare significa operare in modo innovativo rispetto alla tradizione assestata, ogni opera d’arte che noi celebriamo come significativa è stata a proprio modo sperimentale.’ [If experimentalism describes any innovative approach to established traditions, every work of art that we celebrate as significant is in its own way experimental].¹⁰⁵

Eco’s intervention raises a series of questions that will accompany us in the second half of this volume. Can creative artistic experiments have a political value if they are no longer perceived in the context of a wider struggle for radical social reform? How does intermedia practice thrive without the avant-garde’s deliberately provocative gestures? These questions were not familiar to creative practitioners in the early 1960s, when the popularity of experimental art remained profoundly connected, in common perception, to the cultural *kudos* of the avant-garde, the promise of internationalization and opportunity, and the fascination with new media and new audiences. As this chapter has shown, that nexus relied on an unusually strong and widespread sense of optimism and opportunity, which pervaded Italian society during the 1960s. As we shall see in the next chapter, things would rapidly change when that optimism began to fade.

Notes to Chapter 4

1. Edward Gordon Craig, *On the Art of the Theatre* (London: Heinemann, 1911). On Ricci’s interest in Craig, see Luca Franco and Edoardo Zaccagnini, *La luce solida: sul teatro di Mario Ricci* (Rome: Un Mondo a Parte, 2009), p. 50. For a more general discussion of Craig’s influence on Italian new theatre, see Luigi Gozzi, ‘Di Jarry e del personaggio’, *Il verri*, 25 (1967), 14–33.
2. This account draws on Mario Ricci’s autobiographical recollections, as recorded by Luca Franco in eighteen video interviews, in 2009. See Mario Ricci, *Teatro Immagine*, <<http://marioricci.net/biografia-media>> [accessed 10 August 2020].
3. See Daniela Visone, *La nascita del Nuovo Teatro in Italia, 1959–1967* (Corazzano: Titivillus, 2010). See also Franco Quadri, *L’avanguardia teatrale in Italia: materiali, 1960–1976* (Turin: Einaudi, 1977); Marco De Marinis, *Il nuovo teatro, 1947–1970* (Milan: Bompiani, 1987).
4. See John Foot, *The Archipelago: Italy Since 1945* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), Chapter 2; Valerio Castronovo, *L’Italia del miracolo economico* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 2014).
5. David Forgacs and Stephen Gundle, *Mass Culture and Italian Society from Fascism to the Cold War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).

6. The new law, which made primary education mandatory for all children under the age of fourteen, was officially passed on 31 December 1962. See Maurizio Degl'Innocenti, 'La "grande trasformazione" e la "svolta" del centro sinistra', in *Il miracolo economico italiano, 1958–1963*, ed. by Antonio Cardini (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2006), pp. 249–85.
7. Luciano Bianciardi's autobiographical novel, *La vita agra* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1962) offers a vivid and memorable personal account of this situation.
8. The following examples illustrate the success of this strategy: Renato Barilli, Giorgio Celli, Umberto Eco, Alfredo Giuliani, Luigi Gozzi, Giorgio Manganelli, and Edoardo Sanguineti all held university professorships. Angelo Guglielmi entered the senior leadership team of RAI, the Italian national broadcasting company, and was director of RAI Tre from 1987 to 1994.
9. For the full text of Ricci's poem, see <http://marioricci.net/wp-content/files_mf/1526326001Movimentopermarionettan1.pdf> [accessed 10 August 2020]. For a discussion of Novelli's interest in Ricci's work, see Franco Mancini, *L'illusione alternativa: lo spazio scenico dal dopoguerra a oggi* (Turin: Einaudi, 1980). All translations in this chapter are by Florian Müssgung, unless otherwise indicated.
10. On Futurist stage design and 'robotic acting', see Günter Berghaus, *Italian Futurist Theatre, 1909–1944* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 396–441.
11. The collection was first published by Paolazzi in 1961, with a preface by Alfredo Giuliani. Following the success of *Gruppo 63*, Giuliani wrote an expanded preface and notes for a second edition: *I Novissimi: poesie per gli anni sessanta* (Turin: Einaudi, 1965). All quotations in this chapter are from the bilingual edition, based on the 1965 Italian edition and translated by David Jacobson, Luigi Ballerini, Paul Vangelisti, Michael Moore, Bradley Dick, and Stephen Sartarelli: *I Novissimi: Poems for the Sixties* (Los Angeles: Sun and Moon Press, 1995).
12. See John Picchione, *The New Avant-Garde in Italy: Theoretical Debate and Poetic Practices* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), especially Chapter 1; Fausto Curi, *La modernità letteraria e la poesia italiana d'avanguardia: cultura, poetiche, tecniche* (Milan: Mimesis, 2019).
13. *I Novissimi: Poems for the Sixties*, pp. 18–19.
14. Pagliarani's long poem 'La ragazza Carla' [The girl Carla] first appeared in complete form in 1960, in the literary journal *Il Menabò* and was republished as Pagliarani's contribution to *i novissimi*. It tells the story of a seventeen-year-old girl who works as a typist in a large company office and is sexually molested by a senior colleague.
15. See Nanni Balestrini, *Come si agisce (poemi piani)* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1963).
16. *I Novissimi: Poems for the Sixties*, pp. 18–19.
17. Francesco Muzzioli, 'Subverting Literature: Literary Theory and Critical Discourse in the Italian Neoavanguardia', in *Neoavanguardia: Italian Experimental Literature and Arts in the 1960s*, ed. by Paolo Chirumbolo, Mario Moroni, and Luca Somigli (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), pp. 21–37 (p. 31).
18. *I Novissimi: Poems for the Sixties*, pp. 18–19.
19. Renato Barilli, *La neoavanguardia italiana: dalla nascita del 'Verri' alla fine di 'Quindici'* (Bologna: Mulino, 1995), p. 82.
20. Edoardo Sanguineti, 'Critica spettacolare della spettacolarità: conversazione con Edoardo Sanguineti di Luigi Pestalozza', in his *Per musica*, ed. by Luigi Pestalozza (Modena: Mucchi, 1993), p. 12.
21. We paraphrase a passage from Sanguineti's speech at the *Gruppo 63*'s general debate, in 1963: 'Per essere autenticamente critica, e autenticamente realistica, l'arte deve energicamente uscire dai limiti della normalità borghese, cioè dalle sue norme ideologiche e linguistiche' [In order to be authentically critical, and authentically realistic, art must energetically escape the boundaries of bourgeois normality, namely its ideological and linguistic norms]; in *Gruppo 63: la nuova letteratura*, ed. by Nanni Balestrini and Alfredo Giuliani (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1964), p. 383.
22. Pierre Boulez, *Relevés d'apprentis* (Paris: Seuil, 1966); Pierre Boulez, *Stocktakings from an Apprenticeship*, trans. by Stephen Walsh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 39.
23. On Boulez and Klee, see Ety Martha Mulder, *Het vruchtbare land: Pierre Boulez Paul Klee, zielsverwantschap* (Maarn: Stichting Pierre Boulez, 2015).
24. Pierre Boulez, *Paul Klee: le pays fertile*, in his *Points de repère*, II (Paris: Christian Bourgois, 1981), pp. 725–26.

25. See Giovanna Lo Monaco, *Dalla scrittura al gesto: il Gruppo 63 e il teatro* (Milan: Prospero Editore, 2019), p. 231.
26. Pierre Boulez, *Par volonté et par hasard: entretiens avec Célestin Deliège* (Paris: Seuil, 1975), translated by B. Hopkins as *Conversations with Célestin Deliège* (London: Eulenburg, 1977), p. 55; quoted in Paul Griffiths, *Modern Music and After: Directions since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 38.
27. Selected poems from Sanguineti's earliest collection, *Laborintus* (1956), first appeared in 1951 in the Florentine journal *Numero*, where they were accompanied by reproductions of paintings by Klee and Wassily Kandinsky.
28. *Per musica*, pp. 12–13.
29. See Cecilia Bello Minciocchi, "'Vociferazione" e "discorso ininterrotto": aspetti testuali nelle prime collaborazioni di Berio e Sanguineti (1961–1965)', in her *La distruzione da vicino: forme e figure delle avanguardie del secondo Novecento* (Nocera Inferiore: Oèdipus, 2012).
30. Rossana Dalmonte, Niva Lorenzini, Loris Azzaroni, and Fabrizio Frasnèdi, *Il gesto della forma: musica, poesia, teatro nell'opera di Luciano Berio* (Milan: Arcadia, 1981), p. 9.
31. Picchione, *The New Avant-Garde in Italy*, p. 20.
32. Fabio Gambaro, *Colloquio con Edoardo Sanguineti: quarant'anni di cultura italiana attraverso i ricordi di un poeta intellettuale* (Milano: Anabasi, 1993), pp. 26–27.
33. According to Marshall Brown, the breakdown of conventional distinctions between literature and music was characteristic of Modernism and its tendency 'to substitute embodiment for designation in order to restore expressivity where formal control has been lost'. See Marshall Brown, 'Origins of Modernism: Musical Structures and Narrative Forms', in *Music and Text: Critical Inquiries*, ed. by Steven Paul Scher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 75–92. See also Hayden White, 'Form, Reference and Ideology in Musical Discourse', in his *Figural Realism: Studies in the Mimesis Effect* (Baltimore, MD, and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), pp. 147–76.
34. *I Novissimi: poesie per gli anni sessanta*, pp. 384–85. On this topic, see also Florian Mussgnug, 'Between *Novissimi* and *Nuovo Romanzo*: Literary Genre Categories in the works of the *Gruppo 63*', in *From Eugenio Montale to Amelia Rosselli: Italian Poetry in the Sixties and Seventies*, ed. by John Butcher and Mario Moroni (Leicester: Troubador, 2004), pp. 21–40.
35. Lucia Re, 'Language, Gender, and Sexuality in the *Neoavanguardia*', in *Neoavanguardia: Italian Experimental Literature*, pp. 171–211 (p. 196).
36. As Ellen G. Friedman points out, many mid-twentieth-century cultural commentators paid little attention to intersectionality and employed the gender category 'woman' in essentializing terms. This suggests that a robust critique of the *neoavanguardia's* attitude towards gender must address Re's considerations, but also move beyond the scope of her polemic, and interrogate the explanatory power of binary gender categories as instruments of critical intervention. See Ellen G. Friedman, 'Sexing the Text: Women Avant-Garde Writing in the Twentieth Century', in *The Routledge Companion to Experimental Literature*, ed. by Joe Bray, Alison Gibbons, and Brian McHale (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 154–67.
37. See *Gruppo 63. La nuova letteratura. 34 scrittori*, ed. by Nanni Balestrini and Alfredo Giuliani (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1964). A heavily revised and expanded version of this anthology, also edited by Balestrini and Giuliani, was published in preparation for the fortieth anniversary of *Gruppo 63*, entitled *Gruppo 63: l'antologia*, ed. by Nanni Balestrini and Alfredo Giuliani (Turin: Testo & Immagine, 2002). In addition to Rosselli and Vasio, this volume also includes texts by Patrizia Vicinelli, Giulia Niccolai, and Alice Ceresa. The works of ten additional male authors, reputed to be close to the spirit of *Gruppo 63*, were also included.
38. Jonathan Harris, *The Utopian Globalists: Artists of Worldwide Revolution, 1919–2009* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2013). Similarly, Liam Connell describes mid-century internationalism as a critique of advanced capitalism, and dates the emergence of both phenomena to the socio-economic crises of the early 1970s. See Liam Connell, 'Globalization and Transnationalism', in *The Routledge Companion to Experimental Literature*, ed. by Bray, Gibbons and McHale, pp. 224–37.
39. See Florian Mussgnug, 'The Foreigner's Gaze: Constructions of National Identity and Alterity in Post-War Italian Literature', *Forum for Modern Languages Studies*, 38.2 (2002), 189–212.

40. Rosario Ruggeri, *Psicologia e destino del nostro popolo* (Milan: Arnaldo Mondadori, 1945), p. v.
41. Fabio Gambaro, *Invito a conoscere la neoavanguardia* (Milan: Mursia, 1993).
42. Elisabetta Mondello, *L'avventura delle riviste: periodici e giornali letterari del Novecento* (Turin: Robin Edizioni, 2012).
43. Alberto Arbasino, 'La gita a Chiasso', *Il Giorno*, 23 January 1963. Arbasino's text was subsequently included in *Gruppo 63: critica e teoria* [1976], ed. by Renato Barilli and Angelo Guglielmi (Turin: Testo & Immagine, 2003), p. 180.
44. Experimental musical theatre, for example, rejected the distinction between *teatro lirico* [opera] and *teatro di prosa* [prose theatre]. See Vivienne Suvini-Hand, *Sweet Thunder: Music and Libretti in 1960s Italy* (Oxford: Legenda, 2006).
45. Inge Feltrinelli, 'Testimonianza', in *Il Gruppo 63: quarant'anni dopo*, ed. by Renato Barilli, Fausto Curi, and Niva Lorenzini (Bologna: Pendragon, 1965), p. 16.
46. See Giorgio Betti, *L'italiana che inventò il free cinema inglese: vita cinematografica di Lorenza Mazzetti* (Tortona: Vicolo del Pavone, 2002).
47. See Gabriele Mastrigli, 'Oggetti come specchi: l'utopia critica del Superstudio', in *Superstudio: Opere 1966–1978* ed. by Gabriele Mastrigli, preface by Cristiano Toraldo di Francia (Macerata: Quodlibet, 2016), pp. ix–lxxxv (p. xxii).
48. Umberto Eco, 'Prolusione', in *Il Gruppo 63: quarant'anni dopo*, ed. by Barilli, Curi, and Lorenzini, pp. 20–43 (p. 32).
49. See *Arte italiana, 1960–1964: identità culturale, confronti internazionali, modelli americani*, ed. by Flavio Fergonzi and Francesco Tedeschi (Milan: Scalpendi, 2017).
50. See Enzo Di Martino, *The History of the Venice Biennale, 1895–2005* (Venice: Papiro Arte, 2005).
51. See *The Fluxus Reader*, ed. by Ken Friedman (Oxford: Wiley, 1998).
52. See Piero Violante, *Swinging Palermo* (Palermo: Sellerio, 2015).
53. See John Foot, *Milan Since the Miracle: City, Culture, and Identity* (Oxford: Berg, 2001).
54. See *The Glamour of Italian Fashion Since 1945*, ed. by Sonnet Stanfill (London: V&A, 2015).
55. Paolo Chirumbolo, 'Signs and Designs: Sanguineti and Baj from *Laborintus* to *The Biggest Art-Book in the World*', in *Neoavanguardia: Italian Experimental Literature*, pp. 233–54 (p. 237).
56. Thomas Stauder, *Gespräche mit Umberto Eco* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2004), p. 134.
57. Michael Caesar, *Umberto Eco: Philosophy, Semiotics and the Work of Fiction* (Cambridge: Polity, 1999), p. 6.
58. Pareyson's students at the University of Turin included Umberto Eco, Gianni Vattimo, Mario Perniola, and Sergio Givone, among many others.
59. *Il mondo di domani*, ed. by Pietro Prini (Rome: Edizioni Abete, 1964), preface.
60. *Ibid.*
61. Other speakers included philosophers Paul Ricoeur, Jean Wahl, Guido Calogero, and Bogdan Suchodolski, anthropologist Ernesto de Martino, composer Pierre Schaeffer, literary critic Carlo Bo, futurologist Robert Jungk, and anthropologist Arnold Gehlen, among many others.
62. Umberto Eco, 'La ricerca interdisciplinare', in Prini, pp. 361–66 (p. 362). Eco's assumption of masculinity appears problematic now, but received no particular attention at a conference that ignored the question of gender altogether and that saw interventions by twenty-seven men, but not a single woman.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 363, original emphasis.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 366.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 364.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 366.
67. See Umberto Eco, *Opera aperta: forma e indeterminazione nelle poetiche contemporanee*, 3rd edn (Milan: Bompiani, 1976). A partial English translation by Anna Cancogni was published as *The Open Work*, introduction by David Robey (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989). Two chapters of *Opera aperta* first appeared in Luciano Berio's journal *Incontri musicali*. On the neoavanguardia's interest in *Opera aperta*, see Barilli, *La neoavanguardia italiana*, Part Three.
68. David Seed, 'The Open Work in Theory and Practice', in *Reading Eco: An Anthology*, ed. by Rocco Capozzi (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), pp. 73–81 (p. 78).
69. *Opera aperta*, p. 60; *The Open Work*, p. 21.

70. Sangjin Park, 'Reconsidering the Implications of the 'Pre-Semiotic' Writings in Umberto Eco', in *Illuminating Eco: On the Boundaries of Interpretation*, ed. by Charlotte Ross and Rochelle Sibley (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 123–37 (p. 131).
71. Caesar, *Umberto Eco*, p. 26.
72. *Ibid.*, pp. 26–27.
73. *Opera aperta*, p. 14.
74. See Luciano Berio, *Intervista sulla musica*, ed. by Rossana Dalmonte, 2nd edn (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 2007), pp. 50–61.
75. See David Osmond-Smith, *Berio* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 12–13. For a more detailed description of Maderna's role in the creation of the *Studio*, see Luciano Berio 'Bruno Maderna ai Ferienkurse di Darmstadt', in *Bruno Maderna: documenti*, ed. by Mario Baroni and Rossana Dalmonte (Milan: Suvini Zerboni, 1985), pp. 126–28.
76. See *Nuova Musica alla Radio: esperienze allo Studio di Fonologia della RAI di Milano 1954–1959*, ed. by Angela De Benedictis and Veniero Rizzardi (Rome: RAI-ERI, 2000); Nicola Scaldaferrì, *Musica nel laboratorio elettroacustico: lo Studio di Fonologia di Milano e la ricerca musicale negli anni Cinquanta* (Lucca: LIM, 1997) and Matteo Nanni, 'Luciano Berios Weg zur elektroakustischen Musik: Die Entstehung des Mailänder Studio di Fonologia Musicale', in *Luciano Berio*, ed. by Ulrich Tadday (Munich: edition text+kritik, 2005), pp. 43–65.
77. For a full discussion of Eco's and Berio's artistic collaboration, see Florian Mussgnug, 'Writing Like Music: Luciano Berio, Umberto Eco and the New Avant-Garde', *Comparative Critical Studies*, 5.1 (2008), 81–97.
78. Edoardo Sanguineti, 'Quattro passaggi per Luciano', in *Luciano Berio: nuove prospettive*, ed. by Angela Ida De Benedictis (Florence: Olschki, 2012), p. 51.
79. Lo Monaco, *Dalla scrittura al gesto*, p. 260.
80. *Intervista sulla musica*, p. 118.
81. *Per musica*, pp. 189–90.
82. Anna Halprin, 'Yvonne Rainer interviews Anna Halprin', in Mariellen Sandford, *Happenings and Other Acts* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 145–49, cited in Lo Monaco, *Dalla scrittura al gesto*, pp. 286–87.
83. The word 'MERZ' is a reference to German Dadaist Kurt Schwitters.
84. See Edoardo Sanguineti, 'Parole e musica', in *Forme del melodrammatico: parole e musica (1700–1800)*, ed. by Bruno Gallo (Milan: Guerini, 1988), p. 341; cited in Lo Monaco, *Dalla scrittura al gesto*, p. 273.
85. *Per musica*, pp. 30–31.
86. *Per musica*, pp. 47–48.
87. Umberto Eco, 'Programma di sala di *Passaggio*', cited in Lo Monaco, *Dalla scrittura al gesto*, p. 276.
88. On the origins of Dario Fo's theatre, see Beatrice Tavecchio Blake, *Dario Fo: teatro di attivazione e comunicazione, 1950–1973* (Milan: Mimesis, 2016).
89. *Colloquio con Edoardo Sanguineti*, pp. 70–71. On the manifesto in the 1960s, see Florian Mussgnug, 'Futurism and the Manifesto in the 1960s', in *The History of Futurism: Precursors, Protagonists, Legacies*, ed. by Geert Buelens, Harald Hendrix, and Monica Jansen (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2012), pp. 337–52.
90. Umberto Eco, *Sugli specchi e altri saggi: il segno, la rappresentazione, l'illusione, l'immagine* (Milan: Bompiani, 1985), p. 94. On Eco's changing attitude towards *Gruppo 63*, see Caesar, *Umberto Eco*, pp. 29–36. See also Picchione, *The New Avant-Garde in Italy*, pp. 46–60.
91. Giorgio Manganelli, 'Scrittori d'Italia', *L'Espresso*, 12 January 1986, pp. 80–86; reprinted in Giorgio Manganelli, *La penombra mentale: interviste e conversazioni, 1965–1990*, ed. by Roberto Deidier (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 2001), pp. 164–74 (p. 169). See also Florian Mussgnug, *The Eloquence of Ghosts: Giorgio Manganelli and the Afterlife of the Avant-Garde* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2010), Chapter 1.
92. See Floriana Tessitore, *Visione che si ebbe nel cielo di Palermo: le Settimane internazionali nuova musica, 1960–1968* (Rome: ERI-RAI, 2002), p. 288.
93. Balestrini and Giuliani, *Gruppo 63: la nuova letteratura*.
94. Luciano Anceschi, 'Metodologia del Nuovo'; Angelo Guglielmi, 'Avanguardia e Sperimentalismo';

- Renato Barilli, 'Le strutture del romanzo'; Fausto Curi, 'Sulla giovane poesia'; Giuseppe Bartolucci, 'Tradizione e rottura nel teatro italiano'; Gillo Dorfles, 'Relazioni tra le arti'. All in Balestrini and Giuliani, *Gruppo 63: la nuova letteratura*, Part 1.
95. André Lepecki, *Singularities: Dance in the Age of Performance* (New York and London: Routledge, 2016).
 96. Gilles Deleuze, *Logique du sens* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1969); English translation by Mark Letser with Charles Stivale, *The Logic of Sense*, ed. by Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 52.
 97. Luciano Berio, *Remembering the Future* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 17.
 98. Angelo Guglielmi, *Avanguardia e sperimentalismo* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1964), p. 56. For a comprehensive discussion of Guglielmi's ideas, see Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987), pp. 120–25.
 99. See Fausto Curi, *Ordine e disordine* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1965). On the poetics of 'sperimentalismo' see Vincenzina Levato, *Lo sperimentalismo tra Pasolini e la neoavanguardia, 1955–1965* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2002). For a discussion of *Gruppo 63*'s attitude towards earlier avant-garde movements, especially Futurism, see Andrea Barbato et al., *Avanguardia e neo-avanguardia*, intro. by Giansiro Ferrata (Milan: Sugar, 1966).
 100. See Edoardo Sanguineti, 'Sopra l'avanguardia', in his *Ideologia e linguaggio* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1965); revised and expanded edn, ed. by Erminio Risso (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2001), pp. 55–58; Umberto Eco 'La generazione di Nettuno', in his *Il costume di casa: evidenze e misteri dell'ideologia italiana* (Milan: Bompiani, 1973), pp. 267–74.
 101. *Gruppo 63: il romanzo sperimentalista*, ed. by Nanni Balestrini (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1966), revised and expanded second edition, ed. by Nanni Balestrini and Andrea Cortelessa (Rome: L'Orma, 2013), pp. 27–39.
 102. *I Novissimi: poesie per gli anni sessanta*, p. 204.
 103. Edoardo Sanguineti, 'Il trattamento del materiale verbale nei testi della nuova avanguardia', *Lettere italiane*, 16.5 (1964), reprinted in *Ideologia e linguaggio*, pp. 77–107 (p. 77).
 104. François Le Lionnais, 'À propos de la littérature expérimentale: postface aux *Cent Mille Milliards de Poèmes* de Raymond Queneau' (1961), in *Oulipo, La Littérature potentielle: création, re-créations, récréations* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), pp. 246–49.
 105. Umberto Eco, 'Il Gruppo 63, lo sperimentalismo e l'avanguardia', in his *Sugli specchi e altri saggi*, pp. 93–104 (p. 96).

