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FUTURISM AND THE ABJECTION OF THE FEMININE

Introduction

The relationship between Futurism and women, not to mention Futurism and the feminine, was always a paradoxical, complex, far from straightforward one. Marinetti's oft-quoted reference to the need for a Futurist "disprezzo della donna" dates from the 1909 manifesto (6), so overtones of a negative view of women hang around the movement from its inception. The rapid disavowal of this "scorn for women" enunciated by Marinetti in his preface to *Mafarka il futurista* (also from 1909 in the original French) is somewhat problematic. On one level, it would appear to clarify a "disprezzo" for a certain kind of woman — for a certain notion of femininity which was, in fact, unreal, no more than a poetic construct effectively imposed on women. Marinetti's disavowal would, itself, appear to indicate as much:

Quando io dissi loro: "Disprezzate la donna!" tutti mi lanciarono improprii triviali [...] Eppure io non discuto già del valore animale della donna, ma dell'importanza sentimentale che *le si attribuisce*. Io voglio combattere l'ingordigia del cuore, l'abbandono delle labbra semiaperte a bere la nostalgia dei crepuscoli [...] Io voglio vincere la tirannia dell'amore, l'ossessione della donna unica, il gran chiaro di luna romantico. (iv, my italics)

So far, so good, perhaps. This apparently willed scorn for a certain image of the feminine is closely linked to Marinetti's rejection of the literature of the past, as well as to his equally willed optimism about the future.¹ In fact, Marinetti's rather curiously worded disavowal of any real scorn for women per se (curiously worded insofar as the only value he ascribes to women centres on their most basic physicality) may have been, in part, what made it possible for a considerable number of women writers to align themselves with Futurism (particularly in the later phases of the movement). If Futurist scorn for women is simply tied in with scorn for the literature of the past, itself a construction, then there can be nothing to object to in it, surely? In any event, as Walter Adamson points out: "Futurism was a project which excited both men and women; even if we suppose that Marinetti wanted to make Futurism an all-male club, he was increasingly unable to do so" (91).

To return to *Mafarka*, though, and the representation of women in its pages, it would appear that here Marinetti is not only engaged in an overturning of lyricism in relation to femininity, but in taking on and undoing that which he claims to value in the preface to the work, the “valore animale della donna” (iv) as well. The novel is, after all, the tale of a mechanical son born of male parthenogenesis, as Barbara Spackman puts it (89). Marinetti, indeed, makes this the very core of his narrative; in his preface to *Mafarka*, he describes his hero’s desire to create as follows: “vuol creare e crea in una lotta sovrumana *contro la materia* e le leggi meccaniche, il suo figlio ideale, capolavoro di vitalità, eroe alato a cui trasfonde la vita *in un bacio supremo senza il concorso della donna*” (xxxii, my italics). Woman is closely linked here with physical matter and, even in that context, is ideally dispensable.

Lucia Re notes, in her germinal article on “Futurism and Feminism” that: “woman represents [...] the negative ‘other’ of futurist man, an ‘other’ that must be repressed and exorcized if futurist man is to develop his revolutionary potential” (254). I would go a little further than Re here; I would suggest that what happens to woman, and especially to that which is associated with the feminine, in much Futurist writing (certainly that of Marinetti and even, to some extent, that of Futurist *women* writers) is not so much a repression and an exorcism, but rather an abjection, as it is understood in the terms used by Julia Kristeva. Kristeva’s *Powers of Horror* is subtitled *An Essay on Abjection*, and it is here that she teases out what she means by abjection, often through employing examples from different twentieth-century texts. Most notably, her focus is on Céline, and she posits, through her investigation of his work, a link between abjection and totalitarianism, which would be worth reflecting on in any consideration of Futurism and Fascism. For Kristeva, the abject is that which is both fascinating and disgusting. “Apprehensive”, she says, “desire turns aside; sickened, it rejects” (1). That would seem to be precisely what Futurism advocates in its outright rejection of heterosexual love, of the sentimental and of the feminine. Marinetti has but one use for women really — and he wishes he hadn’t. In his *L’uomo moltiplicato e il regno della macchina* of 1910, he states that, for the purpose of maintaining the human race, “contatti femminili rapidi e disinvolti” are necessary (42) — but they are not conceived of as desirable. Desire has turned aside and it would reject if it could. Indeed, Kristeva specifically describes abjection as a “confrontation with the feminine” (58), and that is just what we meet with in many Futurist texts.

Specifically, that which is abjected by Futurism is, I suggest, the feminine as it is literally *embodied* in the maternal. It is, as we have briefly seen, that without which Marinetti cannot do (women are needed for the continu-

ance of the species, precisely in their function as child-bearers), and yet, it is that without which he most wants to do (hence the male parthenogenesis in *Mafarka*). The maternal is problematic for women Futurists too, as we shall see, in my discussion of Enif Robert and Rosa Rosà a little later. As Kristeva puts it, “fear of the archaic mother turns out to be essentially fear of her generative power” (77). In her discussion of Céline, Kristeva notes his representation of the “baleful power of women to bestow mortal life” (158); that seems to be what troubles Mafarka, too — hence his giving birth to a mechanical son whose immortality he is at pains to stress repeatedly in the novel. As Re has already noted: “woman is for the futurists the living reminder of man’s biological destiny, and of his subjection not only to decay and death, but also to the evolutionary and genetic laws of an eminently conservative force: nature itself” (254-55). In Futurist texts, the feminine is repeatedly linked with the physical, with matter in that sense,² with the maternal. As such, it is figured as frightening, uncontrollable, disgusting, and it must be abjected, cast out; it is absorbed only to be regurgitated. There is more than a suggestion of generalized somatophobia in Futurist texts, as we shall see. Both male and female bodies are subject to abjection, though this is more true of the latter than the former, and especially so in their maternal manifestations. One of the reasons why Gazurmah is so admired by his mother-father, Mafarka, is because he is not subject to decay and, in his artificiality, he represents an escape from the physical and from the human condition itself.

I’ll begin my consideration of the relationship between abjection and the feminine in a selection of Futurist texts with an overview of *Mafarka* and I’ll then move on to see how two Futurist women writers attempt to negotiate representations of femininity in their work, and to what extent they associate femininity and abjection. My main focus here will be on *Un ventre di donna* (1919), authored mainly by Enif Robert, but parts of which were also written by Marinetti; and I’ll briefly discuss *Una donna con tre anime* by Rosa Rosà (1918), as well as making reference to a number of her articles.

Marinetti’s Mafarka:

Mafarka tells the tale of Mafarka-El-Bar, a king who defeats an army of Africans, dethrones his uncle, and desires to conquer Africa in its entirety. His greatest desire, however (and it would come as a surprise in the reading of the text, if one hadn’t read the preface, with its indications of what is to come) is to generate all by himself an immortal son, a mechanical being, and he succeeds in doing this, rather suddenly, towards the end of the

novel. The preface, addressed to Marinetti's "fratelli futuristi" makes clear that this parthenogenesis is, in fact, the crux of the novel:

io vi annuncio prossima l'ora in cui uomini dalle tempie larghe e dal mento d'acciaio figlieranno prodigiosamente, solo con uno sforzo della loro volontà esorbitata, dei giganti dai gesti infallibili ... Io vi annuncio che lo spirito dell'uomo è un'ovaia inesercitata... e noi lo fecondiamo per la prima volta. (5)

And so begins the reader's journey alongside the protagonist through a tale of graphic rape and carnage, often executed in lascivious, not to say abject, detail on the female body (though male bodies in the text come to, literally, sticky ends as well).³ One typically abject example of this is to be found in the following reference to Mafarka's army: "Costoro avevano stese nella melma tutte le negre, peste e guizzanti, sulle quali puntavano dei membri nerastri, affumicati, contorti come radici" (28). As Barbara Ehrenreich notes in her incisive introduction to Klaus Theweleit's *Male Fantasies*, and in terms that are applicable to Mafarka too, the male soldier comes thrillingly close to his female victim and to "the horror of dissolution" in the moment of penetration but afterwards, he is "intact, erect [...] and she [...] a bloody mass" (xiv). Kristeva's description of Céline's literary output would suffice equally well for a description of what it is that *Mafarka* deals with; in Céline, she says, "inhumanity discovers its appropriate themes, *contrary to all lyrical traditions*, in horror, death, madness, orgy, outlaws, war, the feminine threat, the horrendous delights of love, disgust, and fright" (137, my italics). Mafarka is a super-sexually potent hero, though relatively restrained in his exercise of his sexuality, as befits one who mistrusts sexual congress with women. The mistrust of sexuality is linked to a general mistrust of the body per se — there is more than a touch of somatophobia in Futurism, and particularly in Marinetti. This potent hero, it's worth noting in passing, carries echoes of his creator, in his address to the virgins who (of course!) are literally dying to have sex with him upon his victorious return from battle: "Come vedete, non vi disprezzo affatto [...] Vi amo e vi comprendo" (95), he tells them. The language here is strikingly reminiscent of that of the preface where Marinetti sets out, in part, to reassure his Futurist women friends on his views of women. Returning to Mafarka, though, we see that the prospect of having sex with women upsets him — he feels both "delizia" and "terrore" (114-15). We see his desire turning aside, rejecting, literally abjecting: "D'un balzo si rizzò, e, respingendo la donna, urlò: 'Basta! ... Vattene! Vattene!'" (114).

The physical, the sexual, the natural, the feminine (all of which are linked for Marinetti) are all replaced here by the will of the hero. After the death of his beloved brother, Mafarka wills his mechanical son into being: “dal mio cuore covato dal Sole nascerà il mio figlio dalle ali melodiose” (139). The gestation period is not very long, but it is accompanied by a lyrical longing that it would be hard to find an equivalent for in even the most maternally-focussed texts by women writers of the nineteenth century, for instance.⁴ Mafarka feels movement (near his heart, as it happens) and gushes: “‘Figlio mio! Figlio mio! [...] Sei tu, che domandi di nascere’” (148). Interestingly, as the time for the birth approaches, Mafarka returns to his own mother — literally, to his mummy — she is both dead and embalmed as Barbara Spackman humorously notes (92), and he presents his dead brother’s body to her, along with the promise of a grandchild, his son. He is at pains to point out the difference between the mortal children his mother has given birth to, and his own immortal son: “‘Un figlio nascerà di me ...un figlio di carne e d’ossa! ... Ma sarà immortale, sai? ... Immortale, o madre mia!’” (154). The mother here is rejected, though she is still a figure of fear — Mafarka is terrified that she will blame him for his brother’s death.⁵ Maternity is wholly abjected: “ho concluso che è possibile procreare dalla propria carne senza il concorso e la [puzzolente] complicità [della matrice] della donna, un gigante, immortale dalle ali infallibili” (163). Mafarka goes even further, and states clearly that he can “impossessarsi della materia e modificarla” (163). Thus matter, associated here primarily with the maternal, is to be taken over and re-worked by this early version of the Futurist hero.⁶ The narration of birth is, however, beyond our author; this is, perhaps, in keeping with the disturbing quality attributed to the physical in this work. Mafarka finds his son, in the end, rather than giving birth to him. And he also finds himself returning to his dead mother, and to a re-evocation of his childhood — the mother, in the end, is inescapable. In becoming a kind of male mother, Mafarka is, moreover, conceived of in terms of self-sacrifice: “sarò veramente degno di dare la mia anima a mio figlio!” (203). It is as though he has been contaminated by his experience of “maternity.” Indeed, following the homo-erotic and incestuous kiss Mafarka proffers to his son, the latter unfolds his wings, comes fully to life and casts his male mother-father off so violently that he kills him. As Kristeva says, “Essentially different from ‘uncanniness’, more violent, too, abjection is elaborated through a failure to recognize its kin [...] I imagine a child who has swallowed up his parents too soon” (5), and that is, in essence, what we have in Mafarka’s son, Gazurmah. *Mafarka* is, then, a novel in which femininity in the form of sexuality is made abject, and in which

maternity, too, is graphically abjected, but the maternal nonetheless proves to be inescapable in the dizzying proliferation of real and imaginary mothers at the close of the text. Mafarka's painful dialogue with his mother/mummy, his argument with Colubbi, who insists that she is Gazurmah's mother and undermines the protagonist's "maternity", point to another fantasy — what Ehrenreich terms the "fascist fantasy" of "a dread of engulfment by the 'other,' which is the mother" (xv).

Enif Robert and Un ventre di donna

Given the influence of Marinetti on Enif Robert's *Un ventre di donna* (his works are listed in the frontispiece; his name comes before Robert's as co-author; letters from him — both real and imaginary — punctuate the narrative, especially towards its close; he "unconditionally approves" the first section of the novel, as he states in the preface "Coraggio e verità," and as his signature confirms; most importantly, perhaps, in terms of inter-textual reference, Robert's autobiographically-constructed protagonist is reading *Mafarka* aloud to a friend in the course of the novel) — given all of this, how does Robert deal with the feminine and the maternal here? As the subject of the novel is, essentially, the female body and a specifically female illness (uterine cancer) and as its subtitle is "un romanzo chirurgico," one might expect instances of abjection in the text — and it does not disappoint, in that respect. The body is repeatedly evoked as problematic, at the very least, and this is especially true of the maternal body. Robert's alter ego looks at the mothers she sees by the sea-shore with their children, early in the work, and describes them as follows: "Nulla di comune fra me e quelle flaccide, enormi matrone napoletane in costume da bagno, nere, viscide e stemperate come foche sulla sabbia, con la loro prole che guizza e bolle scodellata intorno" (4). There is, again, a sickened turning away here, and it's interesting, too, that the narrator feels the need to mark a clear distinction between herself (for she, too, is a mother) and these other women. For Robert, the threat of absorption into a certain kind of femininity is always there and should be avoided. As Kristeva puts it, neatly, "devotees of the abject, she as well as he, do not cease looking [...] for the [...] abject inside of the maternal body" (54). As the novel progresses, however, Robert's appalled fascination (a good definition of abjection in itself) with her own body, inalterably female in its illness, locates abjection specifically within the self. As the protagonist thinks of Marinetti at the front, she exclaims: "Che schifo, essere un utero sofferente, mentre tutti gli uomini si battono!" (25). Instances of abjection accrete around the body. The protagonist feels "sezionata" by her doctors (37), and,

indeed, describes her surgeon as “Jack lo sventratore” (68); she is attracted, as much as repulsed, by the surgical instruments which will be used for the operation which is to be performed on her: “il fascino dei ferri, una inspiegabile attrazione verso il terrore, [...] il giuoco del pericolo fin sull’orlo della vita [...] mi tengono lì inchiodata: sono più forti della mia antipatia istintiva” (43-44). She offers minutely detailed descriptions of the preparation for the operation, outlines how her removed organs are, unaccountably, presented to her afterwards in a jar and indulges in lengthy analyses of the aftermath of the operation (which is not a recovery, as she repeatedly suffers from fevers and infections). What Kristeva says of Céline is, again, highly apt here:

[The] whole narrative is a narrative of suffering and horror, not only because the themes are there, as such, but because [...] the whole narrative stance seems controlled by the necessity of going through abjection, whose intimate side is suffering and horror its public feature. (140)

It’s interesting, too, that Robert’s character, prior to the operation, asks her surgeon to sterilize her. The expression of her desire to avoid motherhood again (she has just one son) is couched in abject terms: “Mi spaventa l’idea di mettere al mondo altri esseri, in condizioni anormali” (53). Moreover, her own doctor’s diagnosis of her illness accords with her view of herself; “ecco”, he tells her, “dirò che lei mi sembra un cervello troppo virile in un corpo troppo femminile” (97). All of the female bodies in this text appear, in fact, to be “too feminine.” There is, then, in this work a clear abjection of the feminine, and of the body, especially the maternal body. So far, one might say, so Marinetti-like. And yet, there are occasional glimpses here of something else. Robert’s abjection of the body, though most clearly detailed in her evocations of the female body, finds expression, too, in an abjection of the male body and, particularly, in an abjection of the male body as matter (that position normally accorded to the female body). Her protagonist, recently widowed and recently involved in another relationship, fantasizes, in fact in the course of a passionate embrace with her lover, about “un’altra realtà, un’altra gioia, un capriccio senza forma, un altro uomo, senza corpo e senza voce, un tipo astratto” (4). This outright rejection of the male body is so unusual as to be remarkable. Occasionally, too, alongside the plethora of negative images of the maternal body, there are positive evocations of maternity, and these evocations are rooted firmly, and rebelliously, in the body itself rather than in abstractions: “Ricordo [...] la gioia profondamente carnale che provai otto giorni dopo il mio parto,

quando il mio spirito fissò nettamente questo pensiero: ‘Ecco la mia creatura, nata da me, voluta da me, portata da me, nel mio ventre’” (4). For Lucia Re, in her reading of the novel, this is a reactionary stance. Re holds that here, specifically in this passage: “it is only when woman is impregnated with man’s seed and [...] seen in her natural role as *generatrix* that the heroine is able to overcome her sense of self-deprecation” (270). I am not entirely convinced of this. There is no reference whatsoever to impregnation. Indeed, this passage is all about the mother and her creation. A different kind of parthenogenesis from that evoked by Marinetti is suggested here. This brief, but powerful, positive evocation of motherhood is so at odds with the rest of the narrative that it seems to me both significant and indicative of another possible position for the futurist woman writer, one that is neither anti-matter nor anti-maternal. This aside would seem to me to tie in with the occasional very brief, emotionally-laden, and even sneaky references to the protagonist’s son (22, 37, 54, 74) - sneaky because they are always at odds with the main thrust of the narrative and with its anti-maternal stance. In the same way, the protagonist’s occasional dreams of children are at odds with each other. During one of the surgical procedures she undergoes, the protagonist dreams of children: “Sono come ubriaca. Un’ebbrezza tutta fremiti. Ho sognato bene ... Una lunga fila di bambini [...] in pieno sole [...] Adesso capisco le morfinomani” (107). The “bambini calpestati” (217), evoked in a dream near the close of the narrative, would seem to tie in with Robert’s earlier virulent diatribe against her illness: “Tu mordi i miei figli, quelli che aspetterei formarsi e vivere sotto il getto raggianti della creazione. Tu distruggi il mio fervore materno e mi dilanii!” (201). The text is riddled with contradictions, then, around femininity, around maternity, around the body. Kristeva, again on the theme of suffering-horror, of which that last citation from Robert is surely a further example, seems highly relevant here once more. She says:

the theme of suffering-horror is the ultimate evidence of [...] states of abjection within a narrative representation. If one wished to proceed still farther along the approaches to abjection, one would find neither narrative nor theme but a recasting of syntax and vocabulary. (141)

In this context, we might think of paroliberismo, perhaps, to which Robert turns in the depths of her evocations of her illness in her narrative, in a desperate attempt to get the better of it.

Rosa Rosà:

Rosa Rosà is often seen as the most feminist of futurist women writers; indeed, Re describes her as “the only futurist woman writer who decidedly opposed Marinetti’s misogynist views and took a feminist position in both her critical and creative writing” (263). It is undeniably the case that Rosà took issue with many of the Futurist truisms on women. In her famous response of 1917 to Marinetti’s “Come si seducono le donne,” she loses patience with male-female generalizations:

Smettiamola di spaccare l’umanità in uomini e donne (divisione che mi sembra balorda come se ci venisse in mente di dividere il genere umano in biondi o bruni) — ma incominciamo a dividerlo in individui superiori, forti, intelligenti, sani, validi, contrapposti ai deficienti cretini monchi fiacchi. (115)

She carefully rejects feminism, but implicitly also futurism, when she defines herself as follows: “Sono un’ista’ per cui la prima parte della parola ancora non è trovata” (116). And, in her “Le donne cambiano finalmente”, also of 1917, she seems to lose patience with futurism, and its representations of “la donna-oggetto” as well as “la donna indipendente, affrancata, brutta [...] sgradevole” (120). There are definite shades of abjection here. Her rejection of the Futurists centres, however, precisely on their misogyny. “Pare”, she concludes, “che gli uomini siano ancora al punto di vista degli antichi Israeliti, che negavano l’anima alla donna” (121). So far, so polemical in relation to mainstream Futurism’s representations of women. But what does Rosà offer us instead, in her best-known novel, *Una donna con tre anime* of 1918?

This short, fantastical, metamorphic novel tells the tale of one Georgina Rossi, a conservative, hyper-domesticated, indeed boring, housewife, who finds herself transforming, as the novel progresses, into three different characters. Her metamorphoses, we discover, are the result of her being affected by waves of magnetic fields. The first of these metamorphoses, the first stage in her evolution into a different being, involves an intensification of her femininity: “una crescita vertiginosa di tutte le sue sensibilità femminili, un’esplosione improvvisa di un caldo fascino sensuale” (45), which radically alters her relationships with a number of the male characters in the novel. She is here a version of the ideal Futurist woman, sexually available and sexually-charged at all times. The narrator comments that she has “le tendenze tipiche della donna dell’avvenire” (69). Her next metamorphosis, however, involves a shift to a masculine energy: “non era più la donna magneticamente sensuale e amorale della notte scorsa. Il suo profilo era diventato energico e duro. I suoi gesti erano violenti, angolosi e precisi”

(60). The narrator notes that she is “più maschile che femminile e in ogni caso, enormemente evoluta” (69). Ultimately, Georgina “evolves” still more, to a state of “superamento della sensibilità materiale” (69), where she exists only as a philosophical consciousness. Thus, the protagonist “improves” all the time: from the domesticated female that she is at the start, she “graduates” to a highly sensual, almost stylised, femininity; from there she acquires a masculine, intellectual, strength and then moves to surpass it all, to bypass the material and, not coincidentally, the physical altogether. The hierarchy here is fascinating with its shifts from one kind of femininity to another, from femininity to masculinity and, ultimately, beyond matter. It appears that Rosà values the masculine over the feminine here, and would reject the body altogether, if that were possible. There is little abjection in Rosà, but much rejection — of femininity, sometimes of masculinity and of physical matter itself. Further evidence of Rosà’s discomfort with femininity, this time as it is seen specifically in maternity, is to be found in her article, “Le donne del posdomani II” of 1917. Here she suggests that mothers of the future will be more like fathers: “gli istinti femminili [...] lentamente ma sicuramente si stanno mutando verso il *tipo superiore* [...] Le donne stanno per diventare uomini” (125-26). There is certainly a turning away from a variety of images of femininity here, and a concomitant valorization of masculinity, that would suggest that Rosà, no less than Robert, though in a different and often less extreme fashion, struggles with futurist images of the feminine, and finds it hard to construct viable alternatives. Perhaps the only Futurist woman writer who succeeds in offering other visions of femininity, especially around the vexed question of maternity and embodiment, is Benedetta.⁷

The feminine is, I should say in conclusion, not the only locus of abjection in futurism. The movement, in fact, returns incessantly to what Kristeva calls “the three major categories of abomination: 1) food taboos; 2) corporeal alteration and its climax, death; and 3) the feminine body and incest” (93).⁸ There are fascinating connections between futurism and abjection in general, which have yet to be fully explored. Kristeva herself identifies abjection as a quintessentially modern phenomenon:

“subject” and “object” push each other away, confront each other, collapse, and start again — inseparable, contaminated, condemned, at the boundaries of what is assimilable, thinkable: abject [...] modern literature unfolds over that terrain. (18)

In this respect, in its concerns around the various manifestations of abjection, the movement is resolutely of its time.⁹

¹ See Shirley Vinall, "The Emergence of Machine Imagery" for a discussion of this willed element in Marinetti's thought, where she notes: "the willed repression of his past which was a fundamental element [...] in his unconditional option for his own violent image of the future" (92).

² Matter can conversely, of course, equate for Marinetti to the mechanical — a very different and much more positive proposition. Gazurmah is doubly valued, therefore, in his non-physical, mechanical, immortality in *Mafarka*.

³ See Klaus Theweleit's *Male Fantasies* for fascinating discussions of fantasies very similar to those found in *Mafarka*, on such topics as "The Reduction of Women to the Vagina" (346-50), as well as the more generalized "Slime" (393-94) and "Pulp" (394-95). I should like to thank Andrew Uroskie of Stony Brook University for pointing me in the direction of Theweleit following the discussion of my paper.

⁴ I am thinking here of the writings of Neera, Carolina Invernizio and Matilde Serao in particular. See Cristina Mazzoni, *Maternal Impressions*, for a striking discussion of pregnant desire in women's writings of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially 11-59.

⁵ In this context of rejection and fear of the mother, it is worth noting the autobiographical elements undeniably present in *Mafarka*. See Giovanni Lista and Giusi Baldissoni for discussions of Oedipal features in Marinetti's work and how these relate to his life.

⁶ See Shirley Vinall, "*Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore* and the *Teatro sintetico futurista*" for a discussion of the later undoing and mocking of the dynamic Futurist hero from within the movement itself (56).

⁷ Erin Larkin, of Southern Connecticut State University, is currently working on Benedetta's reconceptualization of the maternal. She argues in her paper "Benedetta: La 'volontà eroica' and the Futurist Woman" that Benedetta uses the issue of maternity to subtly subvert woman's status in both the movement and society from within.

⁸ Motherhood, of course, is an obvious example of extreme corporeal alteration.

⁹ See my "Aspects of Abjection" for a discussion of abjection in Pirandello's work.

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