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Christine Kanz & Adam Cmiel

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EX-CORPORATION: ON MALE BIRTH FANTASIES

AUTHOR • CHRISTINE KANZ
ARTIST • ADAM CMIEL

Between 1890 and 1933, male birth fantasies became a widespread phenomenon in European culture. One of the key examples of male birth fantasies is Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's "African" novel *Mafarka the Futurist*. The novel's protagonist, Mafarka, gives birth to a child by his will power and by drawing on diverse formations of knowledge, from alchemy to theories of evolution. In addition to the consideration given the psycho-historical, cultural, and scientific contexts of male birth fantasies in the avant-garde, the contribution reflects on sibling encryptment within the relationship to the mother as one more aspect of a span of genealogy one might term "Maternal Modernity."

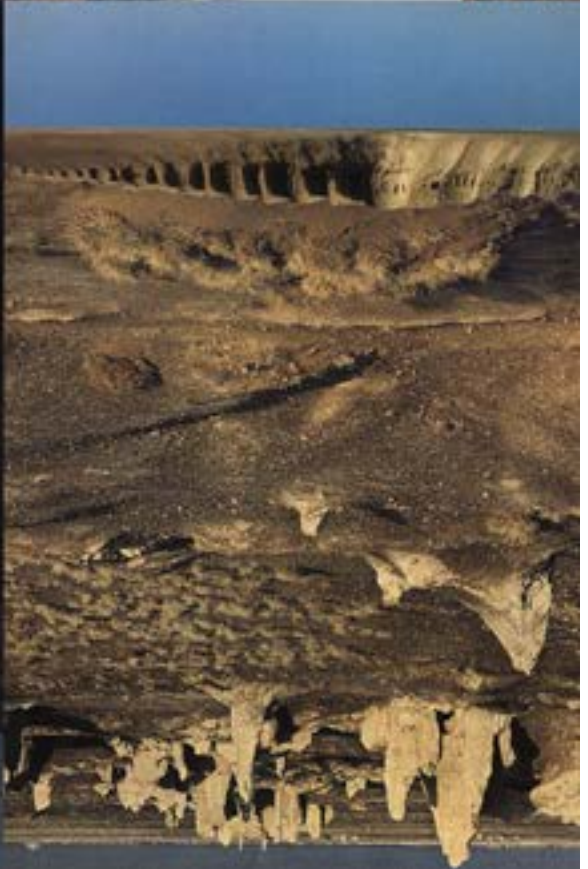
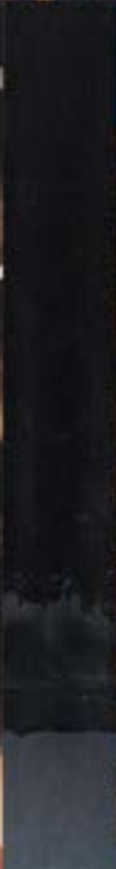
Christine Kanz is Professor of German Literature at Ghent University in Belgium. Her contribution refers to her 2009 book *Maternale Moderne. Männliche Gebärdphantasien zwischen Kultur und Wissenschaft, 1890-1933*. In addition she edited several collections and authored another book on Ingeborg Bachmann, and numerous articles and reviews in the area of interdisciplinary studies.

Before entering the Academy of Fine Arts Karlsruhe, class of Daniel Roth, in 2008, Adam Cmiel trained in various media in Bad Dürkheim, Hamburg, Mannheim, and Trier. He has participated in nine exhibitions since the onset of his studies in Karlsruhe.

Le fantasme du *male birth* se répand dans la culture européenne entre 1890 et 1933. Un exemple-clé du fantasme du *male birth* est le roman « africain » *Mafarka le Futuriste* de Filippo Tommaso Marinetti. Le protagoniste du roman, Mafarka, donne naissance à un enfant à travers sa volonté, mais aussi en faisant appel à diverses connaissances de l'alchimie jusqu'aux théories de l'évolution. En plus de considérer les contextes psycho-historique, culturel et scientifique du concept du *male birth* dans le cadre de l'avant-garde, cet article considère l'encodage de la fratrie à travers la relation à la mère comme un autre aspect de l'intervalle généalogique qu'on peut appeler « la modernité maternelle ».

Christine Kanz est professeur de littérature allemande à l'Université Ghent en Belgique. Son article se rapporte à son livre *Maternale. Moderne. Männliche Gebärdphantasien zwischen Kultur und Wissenschaft, 1890-1933*, publié en 2009. Elle est éditrice de plusieurs collections et auteur d'un autre livre sur Ingeborg Bachmann, ainsi que de nombreux articles et de nombreux comptes-rendus dans le domaine des études interdisciplinaires.

Avant de s'inscrire à l'Académie des beaux-arts de Karlsruhe sous la direction de Daniel Roth en 2008, Adam Cmiel poursuit diverses études à Bad Dürkheim, à Hamburg, à Mannheim et à Trier. Après le début de ses études à Karlsruhe, il prend part à neuf expositions.



In Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's "African" novel *Mafarka il futurista* (*Mafarka the Futurist*), male omnipotence is fortified by male creativity; or rather, male omnipotence should be supported by a certain kind of male creativity. Mafarka, the protagonist of the novel (which was first published in French in 1909), is an Egyptian dictator who commands thousands of black prisoners. At the same time, he alone in the text gives birth to a child. This creative, maternal act, then, cannot be described as only a triumph over the senses and nature in general. The birth of Gazourmah, who is at once Mafarka's son and a new futuristic superhuman being, ultimately lets Mafarka himself become superfluous. Although the super baby's face has the features of a black male, Mafarka, whose own "face was the colour of beautiful terra-cottas" (8) and who scorns and humiliates black people, finally adores his son as a deity.

Mafarka il futurista is set in Egypt, a deeply ambiguous Egypt. Take, for instance, the double-image of Mafarka as a Muslim, on the one hand, and as an Ancient Egyptian, on the other hand. Or consider the double-image of Mafarka as a wild, handsome, erotic Arab warrior and, at the same time, as a caring mother. Clearly, Mafarka is fascinated by femininity and maternity in a negative, but also in a positive, sense. He is depicted as an aggressive womanizer, whose exaggerated sexual drive, on many occasions, turns into sadistic violence. However, he is also characterized as motherly, as having maternal feelings towards his younger brother, as well as towards his newborn son. Mafarka is filled through and through with femininity. The image in the foreground of the modern athlete, who is cruel and omnipotent, is undermined behind that scene by traditional female attributes based on emotions, the body, and the senses.

The very introduction to *Mafarka il futurista* culminates in a sort of male birth manifesto, according to which "men [...] give birth prodigiously" and "the mind of man is an unpractised ovary [...]" (3). But at first Marinetti exhorts his "futurist brothers" to "scorn woman" (1). The "brothers" should "fight the gluttony of the heart, the surrender of parted lips" (2). In the same vein, Mafarka opposes monogamy, fearing the love for and of a single woman: "I want to conquer the tyranny of love," he declares, "the obsession with the one and

only woman, the strong Romantic moonlight bathing the front of the Brothel" (2). His "brothers" should not be like "miserable sons of the vulva" who "strangle the roaring Future and incalculable Destiny of man" (3).

Mafarka's mysteriously produced child embodies the significance of male birth fantasies in the context of the early twentieth century avant-garde. Gazourmah not only has a black face, but also, and perhaps even more striking, Gazourmah is a machine—an airplane, to be precise. Gazourmah spreads the wings of an airplane, which enable him to produce "total music" (205), music made from factory noise or the sounds of traffic.¹ The standard reception of the novel sees the figure of Gazourmah as the embodiment of Nietzschean ideas of the *Übermensch*. Certainly, the fascination with airplanes, machines, speed, energy, space and noise, around 1900, was a key trope of the European avant-garde, yet also an utterly male affair. But there are, I believe, further aspects to the crisis of the modern Western male subject, and the role of the Futurists therein, that cannot solely be accounted for within the conventional framework of a European *history of ideas*, but rather, are infused with ambiguities generated by dichotomies, such as art/science, man/woman, nature/technics, and last but not least, by the colonial encounter.

While these elements can be easily recognized as stemming from the cultural archive of early twentieth century Europe, their combination with male birth seems unusual. Yet upon closer inspection, male birth fantasies are actually quite common in the culture of the time. They are present, for instance, in the psychoanalytical construct of male "envy of pregnancy," a term coined by psychoanalyst Karen Horney (365), and that was thought of as a parallel alternative to Freud's identification of female "penis envy."² Male birth fantasies also remind us of the phenomenon of male child bed (*couvade*), as described by the philologist Johann Jakob Bachofen and later anthropologists. Male birth fantasies also figure in texts by Franz Werfel, Frank Wedekind, Else Lasker-Schüler, Ernst Weiß, Ernst Jünger, and Franz Kafka. In film, we find Rotwang, the mad scientist in Fritz Lang's and Thea von Harbou's *Metropolis* (1927), devising a technology that 'gives birth' to a female double within the blank of a robot. In Robert Wiene's *Das*



Cabinet des Dr. Caligari (*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* 1919), Cesare is, if not born to, at least adopted by Caligari. Birth fantasies/male motherhood fantasies are also discernible in sculptural work; for instance, Max Beckman's Adam and Eve revalorizes the Genesis account of Adam as the creator of Eve, by depicting Adam as Eve's male mother. Jacob Epstein's 1915 *The Rock Drill*, identified as "a living entity"³ by the artist himself, shows an embryo in its belly, while in Erwin Blumenfeld's *Self Portrait*, a man gives birth to a woman, or at least, to a picture of a woman. Finally, we can also discern male birth fantasies in the Mannequins or Wax-dolls used by the Surrealists to figure as male mother or as male Madonna with child (e.g. Lucien Vogel with a mannequin puppet or Hans Bellmer with his doll), and similar fantasies in some paintings, especially by Umberto Boccioni.

Male Birth as Analogy of Art Production

Given Mafarka's blatantly racist views, it is certainly odd that the lighter-skinned Mafarka gives birth to a

son whose face is black. Indeed, in a moment of post-partum depression, Mafarka considers his own creation a failure. Gazourmah disturbingly resembles his black prisoners more than himself, thus casting doubt on Mafarka's ability "to give [his son's] face the ideal harmony" (186). But what is the significance of the artist's desire to project the alienation from his work onto the image of a bastardized, black child? The face is modeled after African masks, which were becoming increasingly available and valuable in the European art market. Consider, for example, the front cover of Carl Einstein's 1915 monograph *Negro Sculpture*, a text that was extremely influential at the time. In fact, the original cover image selected for Einstein's book matches the description Mafarka gives of his son: "I was able to design your wide almond eyes, your straight nose with its big mobile nostrils, your thick, insolent lips and broad jaw!" (186). Like Einstein's African sculptures, Gazourmah is formed out of an amorphous black mass. And just as Africans, according to Einstein, adore their sculpture-like deities, Mafarka ultimately adores his own work, his son.

There are other parallels, too. Carl Einstein, as is well known, valorized the potency of the African art object over the beholder's weakness and insignificance. Much in the same vein, Mafarka celebrates the annihilation of the artist-subject in favor of a greater force embodied by Gazourmah. "The oldest of us is thirty," Marinetti says in one of his manifestos, "so we have at least a decade for finishing our work. When we are forty, other younger and stronger men will probably throw us in the wastebasket like useless manuscripts—we want it to happen!" (Marinetti, "Founding" 43). How does this half-male, half-female form of creativity support male omnipotence? And why are black stereotypes so important in mediating between male omnipotence, motherhood, and artistic creativity?

One main reason for Marinetti's paradoxical appropriation of maternity as a source for a new form of creativity lies in the specific material itself that is required for this superhuman act: an organic, amorphous material outside of the tradition-laden Western canon, or in short, a virgin material. Thus, it is no surprise that Mafarka, creator of the dead female slime and pulp, gains inspiration from a mass of undifferentiated black females. Af-



rica becomes the (muse-like) material that will provide Mafarka with the power to form the ultimate sculpture: a sculpture with “negroid” (23: “negress’s”) features.

There is an uncanny parallel between Marinetti’s use of the traditional triangulation ‘mass—fluidity—femininity’ (and here also: ‘blackness’) and Klaus Theweleit’s analysis of *Freikorps* constructions of femininity. Male bodies, Theweleit famously suggested in his book on male phantasies, become geometric because the soldiers’ armored bodies have to be understood as a defense against boundlessness and flood, which is traditionally linked to femaleness. In much the same way, Mafarka’s creations take shape out of the fluidity of black female bodies as a protection against ‘femininity.’

In *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Edward Said deduces the cultural crisis of modernity and its deep ambiguity from the modern artist’s colonial experience. The artist’s quest for a new formal language, Said claims, led him to draw on elements from both his own culture and that of the Other, a strategy Said calls “new inclusiveness” (189). Hence, much like Said’s torn modern artist, Mafarka creates a new being from the mass of despised black females. In the end, like the Western artist, Mafarka can relate to both cultures only with a mixture of “familiarity and distance”; he is at home in neither, never developing “a sense of their separate sovereignty.”⁴ Ambiguities such as these illustrate that the modern

project of cementing male autonomy can never be fully completed.

In the colonial contact zone—probably more so than in the heart of *Freikorps* Germany—there is no end to the project of fortifying the male. Between bronze and black, between Egypt and Sudan, black and white, the abject female never re-ally disappears. That the female can never be totally erased takes a specific form for Mafarka, who cannot let go of his beloved deceased mother. This love relation is so powerful and symbiotic that its constitutive ambivalence causes anxiety.

The Presence of the Past (Golem, Pygmalion, Prometheus and Alchemy)

One can question this text’s futuristic impulse by demonstrating the presence of the past within it. This persistence of the past is inherent in the very ambiguity of modernism, as Walter Benjamin demonstrated throughout his work. Man’s “desire” to give birth to children is as old as mankind itself. As noted, the creation of “Man,”⁵ as described in Genesis 2:7, can be read as a male birth fantasy while the gods Kronos, Zeus, Prometheus, and Pygmalion are known to have conceived the fantasy into reality.

That the extraction of matter from dead bodies of black women provides the inspiration for the creation of

black-faced Gazourmah recalls the Jewish legend of the Golem. According to this legend, the Golem is a product of mother Earth and the Divine Spirit turned creative word. It is especially during the twentieth century that the Golem myth resurfaced in a number of texts and films, including Gustav Meyrink's *Golem*-novel and Paul Wegener's silent movies featuring the *Golem*. The Golem is linked to motherless birth, to unformed mass, or even is referred to as embryo (Huet 243). He comes to life through the word and proves, in modern incarnation, a giant who kills his own creator—again like Gazourmah, who finally kills Mafarka, his mother-father.

Passatismo, the obsession with things past, was for Marinetti the worst insult. Instead, he aimed for an “unwritten beginning” that would free him from the authority of all literary predecessors. Marinetti was intent on developing a new kind of poetics, without traditional tropes. For Marinetti, ‘birth’—both as a metaphor and as a metonymy—belongs to the male sphere. Birth is often used as a traditional metaphor for the process of writing, and as such, it opposes woman to man as the producer of the work of art. Hence, in evoking this gender stereotype, Marinetti did not overcome *passatismo* at all. At the same time, ‘birth’ is a matriarchal trope, standing for a primary female domain. And so, as Mafarka's desire to create a new world without the help of the ‘vulva’ inevitably entails men capable of giving birth to children, Gazourmah's birth must be read literally, as enacting a shift toward the male sphere that ruptures what historically has been a biologically argued metonymic chain: birth—woman—domestic sphere—family.

Clearly, a re-writing of the female trope “birth” is only possible by a return to the past. Marinetti networks a variety of traditional images of motherless birth within the history of science, specifically, the history of alchemy as precursor to chemistry. Marinetti also invokes the theory of evolution, while (fictionally) foregrounding modern bioengineering methods. Considering Gazourmah's superhuman or, if you will, post-human qualities, one is struck by two extraordinary features: his oversized male sexual organ and the airplane wings attached

to his body. Both pieces of bodily armature render him especially fit for the male technological future Mafarka envisions. But this idea of acquired bodily modifications was actually not so completely out of order at the time—at least not when viewed from a certain evolutionary biologist's standpoint, namely that of Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (1744-1829).⁶

In his *Zoological Philosophy* (which, though first published in 1809, was most influential around 1900), Lamarck formulated two new evolutionary rules, which were based on the following assumptions:

Nature has produced all the species of animals in succession, beginning with the most imperfect or simplest, and ending her work with the most perfect, so as to create a gradually increasing complexity in their organization; [...] and every species has derived from its environment the habits that we find in it and the structural modifications which observation shows us. (126)⁷



Lamarck's first law states that often used organs will "gradually" strengthen, "develop," and be "enlarged" while disused organs will weaken and shrink in the course of time, "and progressively diminish [their] functional capacity, until [they] finally disappear"(113).⁸ The second law states that these acquired characteristics will be "preserved by reproduction to new individuals [...]" (113),⁹ meaning: it states the inheritance of acquired characteristics. If necessary, certain new organs would be present immediately after birth—just so as to fit the needs of the individual in his or her specific environment, "as a result of efforts" (108).¹⁰ And so, as a result of Mafarka's efforts, Gazourmah is endowed with acquired characteristics, in this case airplane wings, which are necessary for living in a futurist world.

But Gazourmah also shares other features with the Lamarckian individual, such as being the product of a union of his father and the sun. In one scene of the novel, for instance, she-Mafarka lies stretched out on a lawn (131). Allowing herself to be penetrated by the rays of the he-sun, she-Mafarka seems to confirm Lamarck's view that the sun's light is the source of all life.¹¹ Marinetti's text on "Multiplied Man and the Reign of [the...] Machine" (which became part of his later infamous text *From War, the World's Only Hygiene*, 1911-1915) actually describes the superman model of the future by explicitly referring to Lamarck:

It is certain that if we grant the truth of Lamarck's transformational hypothesis we must admit that we look for the creation of a nonhuman type [...] We believe in the possibility of an incalculable number of human transformations, and without a smile we declare that wings are asleep in the flesh of man. [...] This nonhuman and mechanical being, constructed for an omnipresent velocity, [...] will be endowed with surprising organs: organs adapted to the needs of a world of ceaseless shocks. From now on we can foresee a bodily development in the form of a prow from the outward swell of the breastbone, which will be the more marked the better an aviator the man of the future becomes. (91)

In the same text, Marinetti also declares that the new futurist human being will be the fruit of the male *will*¹²,



which revalorizes, as much as it contradicts, the earlier inclusion of Lamarckian evolutionary development.¹³

Conclusion: Mother's Mourning and Will

This turn to the will is another manifestation of ambivalence—towards technology, Woman, and the Maternal. Man has to bring everything under his will power. But the male *will* so often invoked by Marinetti cannot be the will of the male subject alone. In *Mafarka il futurista*, it is Mafarka's late mother's painful mourning over her other son, Mafarka's late little brother Magamal, that triggers and enforces Mafarka's reproductive act, and thus the creation of the new futurist human being. Gazourmah is created according to his late mother's will or testament, which Mafarka internalized. Before and after Gazourmah's birth, Mafarka's mother appears as a sort of *Fata Morgana* to mother-Mafarka (34, 193). His dead mother talks to him—grieving over his late little brother. Finally, Mafarka believes that she gives him the order to give up his life for his son, the son that was created by her order and will. His potential motherliness fades away under the eyes of his mother and becomes a valuable good, taken over by his own mother. In sum, it is his mother who is the dominant figure throughout his life unto death.

Following Laurence Rickels' mourning-and-incorporation-theory, there must have been a dead and not yet or not adequately mourned sibling of the author himself behind the incorporated body and birth in this text.¹⁴ Already a reading on the fictional level (still following Rickels' main idea) could lead to a different interpretation: from this perspective it would not only be the mother, but also his dead little brother Magamal, whom Mafarka could not mourn adequately. The mother then would have shared her part in this unconscious mourning:

The mother is always in a position to hide secret treasure in her child's body which she has trained, arranged, and mapped out; she can thus deposit the unmourned corpse of one of her children in the body of another little one who survives. The mourning that never took place is covertly and ambiguously entrusted to a surviving child who must carry a dead sibling and





mourn in the mother's place. (11)

Is the birth of Mafarka's son the result of an ex-corporation? Is his son's body the formerly incorporated "unmourned corpse" of his late little brother, an encrypted result of aberrant mourning, and thus the young *Übermensch* of the future a remnant of the past?

A full adaptation of Rickels' psychoanalytic-autobiographical mourning-model would require looking for a possibly inadequately mourned sibling of the *author* himself.¹⁵ Consequently, a closer look at Marinetti's biography would be necessary. Indeed, Marinetti did lose a brother two years his senior, who died shortly after Marinetti commenced his study of law in Pavia and Geneva. Marinetti then immediately gave up his studies and focused on his own preference: he began writing.¹⁶ Günter Berghaus insists on the imminent influence of this family disaster on the onset of Marinetti's writing, stressing that brother Leone's death was also important enough to be included in Marinetti's autobiographical text "Wonderful Milan—Traditional and Futuristic": "My brother Leone, beautiful boy of genius, [...] stopped in his tracks [...] by heart disease [...] my inconsolable mother spent her life weeping at his tomb stone at Cimitero Monumentale" (58).¹⁷

It is key to Rickels' theory of unmourning that the encrypted loss not so much contradicts as virally replicates and dismantles the unicity of thematic readings of works of mourning (whether Oedipal or pre-Oedipal in focus). Haunting is always multiple occupancy. In the *Mafarka* novel, Magamal's death as unacknowledged is carried forward as the wish to give birth, which the loss of the mother conceives. It is not Magamal, but the undead mother who is the identifiable remnant in the text, haunting Mafarka day and night. Thus, in my reading of Marinetti's novel, but also of texts by Kafka and selected German authors of that time,¹⁸ it is the dead mother who carries the weight of those who never really disappear.¹⁹ Mafarka cannot let his dead mother go; the abject female can never be totally erased, and the modern project of cementing male omnipotence can never be fully completed. The idealization of motherhood and maternity is the key feature of Cultural Modernism. It finds its most cogent expression in male birth fantasies

and, implicit in these fantasies, in the rejection of fatherhood. What is more, Mafarka's ambiguous relationship to his 'product,' Gazourmah, the machine man who is half-human half-airplane, even suggests that the Futurists' technophilia—destined to produce new and improved overmen—is not free of fear. The secret of birth, otherwise the exclusive property of women, the organic, material process that takes place inside, gives way to a masculinist crypto-technology of the dead (to which, according to Rickels, actual mothers are, in fact, given to contribute over their dead children). Male birth fantasies represent the turn toward the organic that must be brought under control. In playing on a variety of traditional images of motherless birth (for example, the construction of an artificial womb; Marinetti, *Mafarka* 151), Marinetti foreshadows modern technologies of reproduction, in which, by the looks of it, the perennial fantasy attributed to men will cease to be fiction.

Notes

¹ This suggests a parallel with Luigi Russolo's *Arte dei rumori* and the Futurist fascination with noise and machines.

² See Sigmund Freud, *Das Medusenhaupt* 47.

³ See Arnold Lionel Haskell and Jacob Epstein 42.

⁴ According to Said, members of a colonizing nation/culture see and feel the other/the abject culture/nation, "with a combination of familiarity and distance, but never with a sense of their [the different cultures'] separate sovereignty" (xxi).

⁵ See "Das 1. Buch Mose"/"Genesis" 2:7, 6.

⁶ It flourished after having been published as a German "Volksausgabe," or folk's edition, in 1909, furnished with an introduction by famous Ernst Haeckel (1834–1919) who did his best to direct general attention to this in his view important evolution model. Nowadays, it seems, this theory that had been regarded for so long as containing remarkable errors, has become interesting again after genetic research has acknowledged a certain truth in epigenetic theory and in the hereditary of acquired characteristics or even acquired *genetic* modifications.

⁷ Thus, all in all he assumes “that by the influence of environment on habit, and thereafter by that of habit on the state of the parts and even on organization of any animal may undergo modifications [...]” (Lamarck 127).

⁸ “FIRST LAW. In every animal which has not passed the limit of its development, a more frequent and continuous use of any organ gradually strengthens, develops and enlarges that organ, and gives it a power proportional to the length of time it has been so used; while the permanent disuse of any organ imperceptibly weakens and deteriorates it, and progressively diminishes its functional capacity, until it finally disappears” (Lamarck 113).

⁹ “SECOND LAW. All the acquisitions or losses wrought by nature on individuals, through the influence of the environment in which their race has long be placed, and hence through the influence of the predominant use or permanent disuse of any organ; all these are preserved by reproduction to the new individuals which arise, provided that the acquired modifications are common to both sexes, or at least to the *individuals which produce the young*” (Lamarck 113, emphasis mine).

¹⁰ “We shall shortly see [...], that new needs which establish a necessity for some part really bring about the existence of that part, *as a result of efforts*” (Lamarck 108, emphasis mine).

¹¹ See Wolfgang Lefèvre 52.

¹² “On the day when man will be able to externalize his will and make it into a huge invisible arm, Dream and Desire, which are empty words today, will master and reign over space and time” (Marinetti, “Multiplied” 91).

¹³ Hal Foster suggested a different reading of this contradiction: “For Marinetti the futurist subject must accelerate this process, speed this evolution, for only then might man ‘be endowed with surprising organs: organs adapted to the needs of a world of ceaseless shocks’ [...]” (122).

¹⁴ See Laurence A. Rickels: *Aberrations of Mourning: Writing on German Crypts*.

¹⁵ This statement references a personal conversation

with Rickels following my public talk at the University of California, Santa Barbara, February 20, 2007 on which this paper is based.

¹⁶ See Luce Marinetti Barbi, “Reminiscences of my Father” 52.

¹⁷ My translation, from the Italian original: “La grande Milano tradizionale e futurista”: “Mio fratello Leone bel ragazzo geniale [...] frenato [...] da malattia di cuore [...] Mia madre Amalia inconsolabile viveva piangendo fra la sua tomba al Cimitero Monumentale [...]”

¹⁸ See e.g. my Kafka interpretation in Christine Kanz, *Maternale Moderne* 90ff.

¹⁹ An interpretation of Kafka’s texts by Rickels also focusing on the birth theme might add plausibility to the importance of the mother figure—in spite of the fact that Kafka also had an unmourned late brother. Rickels’ reading implies a male pregnancy in Kafka’s text *The Judgement*. Here it is Georg who gave birth to the “friend”: “The ‘birth’ Kafka achieves with the writing of *The Judgement* is conveyed within the story as Georg’s creation of a phantom friend also to the extent that both deliveries circumvent while holding the mother’s missing place. The phantom friend embodies ‘the connection between father and son,’ Kafka writes in his own exegesis of the story. This embodied connection is shadowed by the post—the friend is phantom precisely to the extent that he is exclusively a letter-writing friend—just as it embodies the loss between father and son, the two-year-old loss of the mother” (258). Moreover, also Georg’s father would have participated in this pregnancy, at least this is how Kafka’s comment concerning the “birth” of the “story” and regarding “the common ground” between father and son could also be read: Their biggest common ground or hidden bond (“ihre größte Gemeinsamkeit”) the text says, is their connection (“Verbindung”) (Kafka, *Tagebücher* 491, my translation). It must be a shared production or even their child on what is commented here—at least this is suggested by the biological hint to the blood ties by Kafka himself: It is the friend that is, one can read in his diary notes, who belongs to the blood circle surrounding father and son (“Blutkreis, der sich um Vater und Sohn zieht”) and to which Georg’s bride will never get access

(Kafka, *Tagebücher* 492, my translation).

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