

**Valentine de Saint-Point, "Manifesto of Futurist Woman (Response to F. T. Marinetti)" (1912)**

We will glorify war—the world's only hygiene—militarism, patriotism, the destructive gesture of freedom-bringers, beautiful ideas worth dying for, and scorn for woman.

Marinetti "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism"

Humanity is mediocre. The majority of women are neither superior nor inferior to the majority of men. They are all equal. They all merit the same scorn.

The whole of humanity has never been anything but the terrain of culture, source of the geniuses and heroes of both sexes. But in humanity as in nature there are some moments more propitious for such a flowering. In the summers of humanity, when the terrain is burned by the sun, geniuses and heroes abound.

We are at the beginning of a springtime; we are lacking in solar profusion, that is, a great deal of spilled blood.

Women are no more responsible than men for the way the really young, rich in sap and blood, are getting mired down.

It is absurd to divide humanity into men and women. It is composed only of femininity and masculinity. Every superman, every hero, no matter how epic, how much of a genius, or how powerful, is the prodigious expression of a race and an epoch only because he is composed at once of feminine and masculine elements, of femininity and masculinity: that is, a complete being.

Any exclusively virile individual is just a brute animal; any exclusively feminine individual is only a female.

It is the same way with any collectivity and any moment in humanity, just as it is with individuals. The fecund periods, when the most heroes and geniuses come forth from the terrain of culture in all its ebullience, are rich in masculinity and femininity.

Those periods that had only wars, with few representative heroes because the epic breath flattened them out, were exclusively virile periods; those that denied the heroic instinct and, turning toward the past, annihilated themselves in dreams of peace, were periods in which femininity was dominant.

We are living at the end of one of these periods. What is most lacking in women as in men is virility.

That is why Futurism, even with all its exaggerations, is right.

To restore some virility to our races so benumbed in femininity, we have to train them in virility even to the point of brute animality. But we have to impose on everyone, men and women who are equally weak, a new dogma of energy in order to arrive at a period of superior humanity.

Every woman ought to possess not only feminine virtues but virile ones, without which she is just a female. Any man who has only male strength without intuition is only a brute animal. But in the period of femininity in which we are living, only the contrary exaggeration is healthy: we have to take the brute animal for a model.

Enough of those women whose "arms with twining flowers resting on their laps on the morning of departure" should be feared by soldiers; women as nurses perpetuating weakness and age, domesticating men for their personal pleasures or their material needs! ... Enough women who create children just for themselves, keeping them from any danger or adventure, that is, any joy; keeping their daughter from love and their son from war! ... Enough of those women, the octopuses of the hearth, whose tentacles exhaust men's blood and make children anemic, women in carnal love who wear out every desire so it cannot be renewed!

Women are Furies, Amazons, Semiramis, Joans of Arc, Jeanne Hachettes, Judith and Charlotte Cordays, Cleopatras, and Messalinas: combative women who fight more ferociously than males, lovers who arouse, destroyers who break down the weakest and help select through pride or despair, "despair through which the heart yields its fullest return:'

Let the next wars bring forth heroines like that magnificent Catherine Sforza, who, during the sack of her city, watching from the ramparts as her enemy threatened the life of her son to force her surrender, heroically pointing to her sexual organ, cried loudly: "Kill him, I still have the mold to make some more!"

Yes, "the world is rotting with wisdom," but by instinct, woman is not wise, is not a pacifist, is not good. Because she is totally lacking in measure, she is bound to become too wise, too pacifist, too good during a sleepy period of humanity. Her intuition, her imagination are at once her strength and her weakness.

She is the individuality of the crowd: she parades the heroes, or if there are none, the imbeciles.

According to the apostle, the spiritual inspirer, woman, the carnal inspirer, immolates or takes care, causes blood to run or staunches it, is a warrior or a nurse. It's the same woman who, in the same period, according to the ambient ideas grouped around the day's event, lies down on the tracks to keep the soldiers from leaving for the war or then rushes to embrace the victorious champion.

So that is why no revolution should be without her. That is why, instead of scorning her, we should address her. She's the most fruitful conquest of all, the most enthusiastic, who, in her turn, will increase our followers.

But no feminism. Feminism is a political error. Feminism is a cerebral error of woman, an error that her instinct will recognize.

*We must not give woman any of the rights claimed by feminists. To grant them to her would bring about not any of the disorders the Futurists desire but on the contrary an excess of order.*

To give duties to woman is to have her lose all her fecundating power. Feminist reasonings and deductions will not destroy her primordial fatality: they can only falsify it, forcing it to make itself manifest through detours leading to the worst errors.

For centuries the feminine instinct has been insulted, only her charm and tenderness have been appreciated. Anemic man, stingy with his own blood, asks only that she be a nurse. She has let herself be tamed. But shout a new message at her, or some war cry, and then, joyously riding her instinct again, she will go in front of you toward unsuspected conquests.

When you have to use your weapons, she will polish them.

She will help you choose them. In fact, if she doesn't know how to discern genius because she relies on passing renown, she has always known how to rewarm the strongest, the

victor, the one triumphant by his muscles and his courage. She can't be mistaken about this superiority imposing itself so brutally.

*Let woman find once more her cruelty and her violence that make her attack the vanquished because they are vanquished, to the point of mutilating them. Stop preaching spiritual justice to her of the sort she has tried in vain. Woman, become sublimely unjust once more, like all the forces of nature!*

Delivered from all control, with your instinct retrieved, you will take your place among the Elements, opposite fatality to the conscious human will. Be the egoistic and ferocious mother, jealously watching over her children, have what are called all the rights over and duties toward them, as long as they physically need your protection.

Let man, freed from his family, lead his life of audacity and conquest, as soon as he has the physical strength for it, and in spite of his being a son and a father. The man who sows doesn't stop on the first row he fecunds.

In my *Poems of Pride* and in *Thirst and Mirages*, I have renounced Sentimentalism as a weakness to be scorned because it knots up the strength and makes it static.

*Lust is a strength*, because it destroys the weak, excites the strong to exert their energies, thus to renew themselves. Every heroic people is sensual. Woman is, for them, the most exalted trophy.

Woman should be mother or lover. Real mothers will always be mediocre lovers, and lovers, insufficient mothers, through their excess. Equal in front of life, these two women complete each other. The mother who receives the child makes the future with the past; the lover gives off desire, which leads toward the future.

#### LET'S CONCLUDE:

Woman who retains man through her tears and her sentimentality is inferior to the prostitute who incites her man, through braggery, to retain his domination over the lower depths of the cities with his revolver at the ready: at least she cultivates an energy that could serve better causes.

Woman, for too long diverted into morals and prejudices, go back to your sublime instinct, to violence, to cruelty.

For the fatal sacrifice of blood, while men are in charge of wars and battles, procreate, and among your children, as a sacrifice to heroism, take Fate's part. Don't raise them for yourself, that is, for their diminishment, but rather, in a wide freedom, for a complete expansion.

Instead of reducing man to the slavery of those execrable sentimental needs, incite your sons and your men to surpass themselves.

You are the ones who make them. You have all power over them.

*You owe humanity its heroes. Make them!*