

From Gowns to Uniforms and from the Palace to the Brothel: Women's Lives and Political Allegory in D'Annunzio's Rijeka, 1919-1921

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In this article, I consider the role of women and allegorical female characters in the political life of Rijeka during the occupation by Gabriele D'Annunzio, 1919-1921. In doing so, I look into letters, diaries and small newspaper articles of and about women who were in the city during this period. Making use of these sources, I explore how these women experienced life on a daily basis and the traces of female networks and activities. This inquiry reveals that women were depending on their nationality, class and age-affected by political unrest to various degrees and had different levels of access to the public sphere. A heterogeneous set of materials comprising newspaper caricatures, political speeches, propagandistic materials and avant-garde artworks that personify cities and nations as female figures exemplify the rhetorical framework. This paper does not only restate with new examples what has already been established about public monuments, political rhetoric and women, but it also focuses on instances where the allegorical female figure is disempowered, and also brings into question claims that D'Annunzio's Rijeka was a place of sexual freedom. The juxtaposition of the 'real woman' and 'allegorical woman' shows that in political narratives, Italy and Rijeka were portrayed as female figures; however, women were, for the most part, excluded from public life.

Key words: Occupation of Rijeka 1919, Gabriele D'Annunzio, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, political rhetoric, allegory, Futurism, satire, *Koprive*, Maria Meniconi Bracceschi Papafava, Zora Blažić, public sphere, prostitution.

Introduction

In 2019, the centennial of Gabriele D'Annunzio's occupation of Rijeka (Fiume in Italian) on 12 September 1919, the topic was the subject of two exhibitions, one in Rijeka and one in Trieste.¹ Showing female garments, portraits, newspaper caricatures, diaries and photographs, the exhibition in Rijeka-*D'Annunzijeve mučenica (D'Annunzio's Martyr)*-looked into the position of women during the occupation and the treatment of the female figure in allegory. The Trieste show-*Disobbedisco. La rivoluzione di D'Annunzio a Fiume 1919-1920 (I disobey. D'Annunzio's Revolution in Fiume 1919-1920)*-exhibited weapons, military paraphernalia, cars, flags, official documents and uniforms. The two exhibitions presented counter-narratives, not just in the male-female dichotomy but more importantly in their methodological approaches to the topic and political framing.

This article is a continuation of the narrative presented in the exhibition in Rijeka and further elaborates on this somewhat underestimated part of this moment in history. Previous scholarship using as its primary sources the writings of the Italian male military elite concludes that D'Annunzio's Rijeka was a revolutionary place of sexual freedom and emancipation. The results of such a methodology move in the direction of feminism by acknowledging the presence of educated and influential Italian women but do so by mapping them into the existing narrative based on male-dominated sources.² While there certainly were instances of progressive and subversive practices, these claims are in need of a further elaboration. Drawing on letters, diaries, memoirs and small newspaper articles of and about women who lived in Rijeka in this period shows that the way in which they experienced the city was far more nuanced than stated above; with class and nationality making for differences in accessibility to public life. This selection overcomes the limitations of national historiographies by recovery of primary sources written by women regardless of class and nationality to understand the complex position of women in the city and attend to the unexplored differences in their experience of an urban space during an occupation. As yet unexamined sources or documents rarely used outside of Croatian scholarship provide compelling details regarding the everyday life of women in Rijeka during D'Annunzio's rule. To situate these sources more contextually within their period, I first consider the role of the female figure in political speeches and their allegorical representations in propaganda, art and satire. The rhetorical framework that the female figure occupied is then juxtaposed with women's eye-witness documents. This will

All translations of long quotes are by the author.

1 I am referring here to the exhibitions and following catalogues: Tea PERINČIĆ and Ana-Maria MILČIĆ, *D'Annunzijeve Mučenica*, exh. cat, Rijeka: Maritime and History Museum of the Croatian Littoral, 12 September 2019-31 January 2021; Giordano Bruno GUERRI, *Disobbedisco. La rivoluzione di D'Annunzio a Fiume 1919-1920*, exh. cat., Trieste: Salone degli Incanti, 12 July-3 November 2019.

2 See, for example: Claudia SALARIS, *Alla festa della rivoluzione: Artisti e liberatori con D'Annunzio a Fiume*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002.

reveal that the sexualized generic female figure is a repeated trope across borders and groups with different political and artistic affiliations. The juxtaposition of the 'real woman' and 'allegorical woman' shows that in political narratives, Italy and Rijeka were portrayed as female figures; however, women were, for the most part, marginalized and their access to public life was primarily determined by class and nationality.

Much historical research has already been done on D'Annunzio's occupation of Rijeka, its relationship to different political ideologies from fascism to anarchism, and the role it played in Mussolini's seizure of power in 1922; this article limits itself to an essential summary.³ In the 1915 Secret Treaty of London, the Allies promised Italy certain territories in return for entering the First World War. Italy also demanded Rijeka (then a separate semi-autonomous location under the rule of the Austro-Hungarian Empire on the side of the Central Powers), but the request was denied. After the dissolution of the Empire in 1918, the newly formed Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (SHS, later Yugoslavia) and the Kingdom of Italy both laid claim on the city. Apart from strategic military and commercial importance as a port, Rijeka enjoyed centuries of foreign investment (Italian included) and industry flourished: it was home to the first torpedo factory in the world, a shipyard and produced rolling paper, tobacco, sugar and chocolate. In 1919, D'Annunzio, the lauded Italian poet-soldier, famous pilot, war hero and public figure, occupied Rijeka, going against the Italian Prime Minister Francesco Saverio Nitti. D'Annunzio arrived with an army of two thousand Arditi (Royal Italian Army elite special force). He proclaimed the city the Italian Regency of Carnaro, but the Treaty of Rapallo of 12 November 1920 did not recognise it, ending the occupation and establishing Rijeka as an autonomous city, a decision supported by the Italian Chamber of Deputies. The poet-soldier held power until the five-day battle of Bloody Christmas in December 1920, when he was defeated by the Italian Regular Army and forced to leave the city in January 1921.

3 See, for example, but not only: Michael A. LEDEEN, *The First Duce: D'Annunzio at Fiume*, Baltimore, London: John Hopkins University Press, 1977; Renzo DE FELICE, *D'Annunzio politico: 1918 - 1938*, Rome: Laterza, 1978; Hans Ulrich GUMBRECHT, Friedrich KITTNER, Bernhard SIEGERT, eds., *Der Dichter als Kommandant: D'Annunzio eroberet Fiume*, München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1996; Mihael SOBOLEVSKI, „Egzodus Hrvata iz Rijeke u vrijeme D'Annunzijeve vladavine (rujan 1919. - siječanj 1921.)”, *Rijeka*, vol. 4, no. 1-2 (1998-1999): pp. 67-86; Ljubinka TOŠEVA-KARPOWICZ, *D'Annunzio u Rijeci: mitovi, politika i uloga masonerije*, Rijeka: Izdavački centar Rijeka, 2007. For a short historiography of D'Annunzio occupation of Fiume (and its relationship to fascism) until 1996 see: Hans Ulrich GUMBRECHT, „I redentori della vittoria: On Fiume's Place in the Genealogy of Fascism”, *Contemporary History*, Special Issue: The Aesthetics of Fascism, vol. 31, no. 2 (April 1996): pp.253-272, pp.254-255. Gumbrecht is convinced by Emilio Gentile who formed a connection between the Risorgimento and Garibaldi's March on Rome, D'Annunzio's on Rijeka and finally Mussolini's on Rome. Italian research is divided over this connection, while Croatian scholarship follows this line of thought. When viewed according to national borders, there has been considerably less contribution from Croatian than Italian sources in the reconstruction of this topic. A methodology that would combine Italian and Croatian primary sources and secondary sources from different national scholarships via a feminism inquiry might prove a productive approach, as research outside of Croatia rarely takes into consideration Croatian and Yugoslav sources.

D'Annunzio's Rijeka: an 'Unredeemed' Family Matter

During the nineteenth century, irredentism (*irredentismo*, from the Italian word *irredento*-unredeemed) was a movement that promoted the unification of Italy with territories that had a significant Italian minority or majority (such as the Adriatic territories under the control of the Austro-Hungarian Empire), with supporters coming from moderate and nationalist circles. Later, irredentism became part of a more conservative discourse and subsequently an element of foreign policy during Fascism and Rijeka an important reference point.⁴ D'Annunzio's speeches in Rijeka show a heavy reliance on allegorical solutions which blend irredentism with the idea of nations as women, family values and Christian virtues. Nations allegorically embodied as generic female figures was a widespread phenomenon with a long history in Europe. In most Indo-European grammatically gendered languages, the words for nations, republics and virtues such as justice and liberty are female.⁵ In addition, women did not yet participate in politics, and generic female figures could be used for allegorical representations of political concepts because these could not be tied to an actual political figure.⁶ D'Annunzio's speeches in Rijeka, Barbara Spackman notes, mix such notions of nationalism with the rhetoric of virility and the rhetoric of motherhood, and all framed within a Christological vocabulary. In other words, in D'Annunzio's rhetoric the 'subject of virility can either be masculine or feminine' which then interestingly 'produces a mixture that will be inimical to the regime's [Fascism] attempts to enforce the stability of gender.'⁷

Others have also noted that during the First World War masculinity and re-masculinization were driving rhetorical forces, with modern masculinity reaching its climax with Fascism and manliness the central national symbol.⁸ This was mapped onto the 'regeneration myth', a key aspect of Italian politics resting on the notions of renewal and rebirth.⁹ Gabriele D'Annunzio referred to Italy's condition in the aftermath of the First World War as one of 'mutilated victory'. (The Italians contributed to winning the war and suffered huge losses of people and resources but did not gain all of the territories promised by the Allies in return for entering the conflict in 1915.)

4 On Italian irredentism and the eastern Adriatic coast see, for example: Marina CATTARUZZA, *L'Italia e il Confine Orientale: 1866-2006*, Milan: Il Mulino, 2007; Zdravko DIZDAR, „Italian Policies toward Croats in Occupied Territories during the Second World War”, *Review of Croatian History*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2005): pp.179-210.

5 Marina WARNER, *Monuments & Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985.

6 Ibid.

7 Barbara SPACKMAN, *Fascist Virilities: Rhetoric, Ideology, and Social Fantasy in Italy*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, p.17.

8 George L. MOSSE, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 155; Silvana PATRIARCA, *Italian Vices: Nation and Character from the Risorgimento to the Republic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

9 Emilio GENTILE, „The Myth of National Regeneration in Italy: From Modernist Avant-Garde to Fascism”, in *Fascist Visions: Art and Ideology in France and Italy*, eds. Matthew AFFRON and Mark ANTLIFF, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997, pp. 25-45, p. 28.

With the feeling of victory being mutilated, the need for 'renewal' and 'redeeming' of specific territories, the city of Rijeka becomes a place of regeneration and sacrifice. Issues of sacrifice, martyrdom, family connections and finally sexuality serve as lenses through which the city is presented. For D'Annunzio, Rijeka was Italy's 'best daughter', the most 'pure and saintly Italian', which the 'Great Mother' was not allowed to know.¹⁰ Through notions of sacrifice and family loyalty to a 'mutilated' mother (Italy) and the 'sacrificial' daughter (Rijeka) he formed an umbilical connection between his soldiers in Rijeka and the anthropomorphised Kingdom of Italy. For example:

Italy that «alone is great and alone is pure», the disappointed Italy, the betrayed Italy, the poor Italy turning again to the East where the gaze of its proudest centuries was fixed. Does she not hear the call of the Arabs and oppressed Indians precisely by those righteous people who hold our Malta and our Fiume? To the appeal for love, a response of love, which cannot be if not winged, that is to say spiritual. [...] Now is a few weeks, Fiume seemed the spasm of Italy as Italy was the spasm of Fiume. For Pentecost, which is the feast of the Spirit and the Flame, we naively believe to celebrate the day of the holocaust city for «all the Italians of any belief». «Fiume today blows in the face of all of us Italians, blows our faces with its breath; and tells us: Receive the Spirit, receive the Flame». [...] The enemy has penetrated the intimate flesh of Italy; because Italy is not in those who live by trafficking her and falsifying her without shame but in those who live only for her and for her alone they suffer and for her alone they are ready to die.¹¹

D'Annunzio referred to Rijeka as a *città di vita* (the city of life) and *d'amore* (of love), but also as *città olocausta* (from the Latin *holocaustum*: a type of religious offering where the sacrifice would be wholly consumed by fire; the term was already used in Italian literature to refer to an 'extreme sacrifice'). He used the term *olocausta* in reference to the city already after the bombings of the First World War, and then connected it to the idea of martyrdom during the occupation, but also giving a sense of an incomplete sacrifice: 'I kiss for you in these creases the name of the martyrs still without a palm: Fiume, Zara, Sebenico, Traù, Spalato, Almissa, Ragusa, Cattaro, Perasto, all the names, all.'¹² In the speech *Non abbiamo sofferto abbastanza* (*We have not suffered enough*), where a Christological vocabulary mixes specific geographical references and cities, figures of daughters and mothers are agents

¹⁰ Quote taken from: Ferdinando GERRA, *L'Impresa di Fiume: Nelle parole e nell'azione di Gabriele D'Annunzio*, Milan: Longanesi & C, 1966, p. 83.

¹¹ Gabriele D'ANNUNZIO, „L'ala d'Italia è liberata'ati", 9 July 1919, reprinted in *La penultima ventura: scritti e discorsi fiumani*, ed. Renzo DE FELICE, Milan: Mondadori, 1974, p. 97; D'ANNUNZIO, „Italia o morte", 9 September 1919, reprinted in *ibid.*, p. 104-105.

¹² D'ANNUNZIO, „Dalla ringhiera dal Campidoglio", 6 May 1919, reprinted in *ibid.*, p. 56.

in eschatological and patriotic rituals.¹³ He recalls the myth of a fifteenth-century Italian noblewoman Caterina Sforza. When her children were held hostage, she exposed her genitals to the capturers and told them to go ahead and kill her children because she has everything to make more. And in *Italia o morte*:

Fused to the cynical and emblematic womb of those who astonish and deceive her, of those who moralise her and corrupt her, of those who exhort her and move her, Italy does not even turn to the filial cry that reminds her, from the bottom of Carnaro, of a promise of love and honour, a pact of love and honour, a sworn and unpayable pledge.¹⁴

His widely distributed flyer *Alle Donne di Fiume* is an ode to the women's strength and sacrifice for the cause of Rijeka, he wonders how to repay them, but takes female persistence and patience as given qualities: 'But the name of all the Fiuman women is Ardour; but the name of all the women of Fiume is Patience; the name of all Fiuman women is Resistance. Today the name of all women of Fiume is Salvation.'¹⁵

Loving Rijeka and Italy: Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's lust and patriotism in *Il Poema di Fiume*

A supporter of the Rijeka cause and the leader of the avant-garde movement called Futurism, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti was at the forefront of the Italian cultural modernization.¹⁶ Famous for his glorification of modern machines, speed, war, violence and promoting a break with the past, he supported the necessity of violence for political progress. Throughout the movement's 40 years of activity it was affiliated with different political groups, although the tightest association was with fascism.¹⁷ The movement also had a contradictory attitude towards women, perpetuating established misogyny along with supporting female artists.¹⁸ Issues of irredentism, though, stayed a stable constant and support was expressed both in art (see, for example,

13 D'ANNUNZIO, „Non abbiamo sofferto abbastanza”, 11 September 1919, reprinted in *ibid.*, p. 177.

14 D'ANNUNZIO, „Italia o morte”, 9 September 1919, reprinted in *ibid.*, p. 106.

15 Gabriele D'ANNUNZIO, *Alle donne di Fiume*, 1919, Gabriele D'Annunzio Collection (MS 763). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

16 This section and the following one are based on my text in: MILČIĆ, *D'Annunzijeva mučenica*, pp. 37-71.

17 For a comprehensive outline of Futurism and politics see, for example: Günther BERGHAUS, *Futurism and Politics: Between Anarchist Rebellion and Fascist Reaction, 1909-1944*, Providence, R.I., Oxford: Bergahn Books, 1996; Emilio GENTILE, „Il futurismo e la politica. Dal nazionalismo modernista al Fascism (19-9-1920)”, in *Futurismo, Cultura e Politica*, ed. Renzo DE FELICE, Torino: Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, 1988, pp. 105-60.

18 See: Lucia RE, „Maria Ginanni vs. F. T. Marinetti: Women, Speed, and War in Futurist Italy”, *Annali d'Italianistica: A Century of Futurism: 1909-2009*, vol. 27 (2009): pp. 103-24; Paola SICA, *Futurist Women: Florence, Feminism and the New Sciences*, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

Marinetti's collage *Irredentismo*, 1914-15) and activism. Marinetti campaigned for a realisation of an 'astute foreign policy' as well as for 'colonial expansion' and 'irredentism-panitalianism'.¹⁹ After being arrested during an anti-Austrian demonstration around the time of the First World War, he was profiled as an 'irredentist without a pronounced political tendency but sometimes driven to the extremes, especially when this can give more prominence to the Futurist ideas he propagates'.²⁰

Rijeka and D'Annunzio found their places in the Futurist universe; about a dozen artists participated in the occupation.²¹ They grouped in the *Fascio Futurista Fiumanese*, published the newspaper *La testa di ferro* and some of them were also Arditi, such as Mario Carli, the editor-in-chief. According to Emilio Gentile, Rijeka was identified by the Futurists as an ideal location for an Italian revolution even before 1919; according to Carli it was 'a Futurist city', and indeed a place where many Futurist ideals were put into practice.²² Crossing the border without his passport, Marinetti was in Rijeka already on the 16th of September 1919.²³ Extracts from his diary show his satisfaction over the 'Futurist cheerfulness' in the city, the energising atmosphere, the music and parties. '... I had never dreamed', he publicly declared, 'of such a red volcano of heroism and *italianità* [Italianity]'.²⁴ He experienced a frenzied love for Italy and was pleased to see Arditi singing marching songs with lyrics combining the Futurist glorification of war with religious imagery.

Marinetti's unpublished and undated *Poem of Rijeka (Il Poema di Fiume)* is framed with the same approach to foreign policy as his pre-war demonstrations.²⁵ In terms of style, it is a hybrid work that uses prose and poetry, experimental poetic language, direct dialogues, dialect, humour, war reports, political pamphlets and transcriptions of historical documents and letters.²⁶ Marinetti used the typewriter to divide texts freely by long lines, scattering words on the page, avoiding punctuation, as well as starting and finishing sentences anywhere on the paper. The poem takes the reader through

19 Filippo Tommaso MARINETTI, „Programma Politico Futurista”, (1913), reprinted in *Teoria e invenzione futurista*, eds. Luciano DE MARIA and Aldo PALAZZESCHI, Milan: A. Mondadori, 1968, p. 292.

20 See the transcribed documents in BERGHAUS, *Futurism and Politics*, p.52.

21 On Futurism and D'Annunzio's occupation of Rijeka, see: Günther BERGHAUS' small section 'The Futurist Revolution in Fiume, 1919-1921' in *Futurism and politics*; SALARIS, *Alla festa della rivoluzione*; Daina GLAVOČIĆ, „D'Annunzio i riječki futurizam”, in *Moderna umjetnost u Hrvatskoj, Moderna umjetnost Hrvatskoj: 1898.-1975.*, eds. Ljiljana KOLEŠNIK and Petar PRELOG, Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti, 2012, pp.66-89. All of the mentioned sources see the Futurists engagement with Rijeka as an intense moment of art and politics coming together when the movement put many of its ideals into practice.

22 GENTILE, „Il futurismo e la politica. Dal nazionalismo modernista al Fascism (19-9-1920),p. 148; Mario Carli, “Fiume Citta Futurista”, *Roma Futurista*, Rome, 8 February 1920, p. 2.

23 For Marinetti's stay in Rijeka see his diary entries: Filippo Tommaso MARINETTI, *Taccuini 1915-1921*, ed. Alberto BERTONI, Bologna: Societa editrice il Mulino, 1987, pp. 432-444.

24 Ibid., entry dated 20 September 1919, p.436.

25 There are two versions of the poem: Filippo Tommaso MARINETTI, *Il Poema di Fiume*, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti Papers, *Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University*, GEN MASS 130, box 25, folder 1316 and GEN MASS 130, box 33, folder 1512.

26 Another source that mentions the poem: Patrizio CECCAGNOLI, „Il Poema di Fiume: Un Inedito Marinettiano”, *L'Ellisse: Studi Storici di Letteratura Italiana*, vol. 5 (2010): pp. 209-39.

the most important historical moments relating to the occupation and establishes a connection between the occupation of Rijeka and Mussolini's March on Rome in 1922.

A pronounced feature of the poem is the eroticisation of warfare and the amalgam of military, corporal, political and historical imagery: fervid nationalism and sexual pleasure become synonymous. Eroticising war and treating it as a celebratory and jubilant event is a recurring thread in Marinetti's oeuvre, and corresponding examples can be found in D'Annunzio's writings.²⁷ Another of Marinetti's strategies was equating the female body with territory; women were equated to nations and nature, each of which needed modernisation, curing, control or war.²⁸ Battle itself becomes an erotic scene, which is constructed through both allusions and direct references. The *Poem of Rijeka* shows that the eastern territories have 'redeeming' qualities for Italian masculinity, 'tired' soldiers toast with D'Annunzio and exclaim in joy: 'Hurray for the vulva, the *abbeveratoio* [water basin] of the heroes.'²⁹ Women are included in the poem in three different ways. First, by anthropomorphising Italy as D'Annunzio's companion and the object of both his sexual desire and patriotism. Second, describing anonymous female characters to create a background of war and eroticism. The anonymous Croat, Slav and Hungarian women compete with the Fiuman women in their sensuality, as all want to be loved by an Italian man, while the Italian soldier is ordered to 'cheer up the Fiuman homes with [his] heroic Italian spirit.'³⁰ Third, mentioning two real women by name because of their status as a national symbol (the Duchess of Aosta) or giving ode to their patriotism (Nicolina Fabris, a school teacher called the 'mother of the legionaries'). The second one appears in the poem because her home became a hiding place for Italian prisoners during the First World War.

The poem also stresses the need for the *italianizzazione* (to make Italian) of foreigners in Rijeka, which corresponds to Marinetti's *Futurist Political Programme* from 1913 when he stressed the need for an 'aggressive foreign policy'.³¹ In his novel, *The Steel Alcove* (*L'alcova d'acciaio*, 1921), love for a woman is turned into a love for Italy, which is then again anthropomorphised as a woman, and Marinetti expresses his devotion to the woman/Italy by driving his car across the country. The geography of Italy and the female body become intertwined when Marinetti states in *How to Seduce Women* that 'the earth, the sea, the sky and the woman demand war as a natural complement' because, like all of nature, the woman is 'incomplete and hungry for war'

27 See: Mario ISNENGI, *Il mito della grande guerra. Da Marinetti a Malaparte*, Bari: Laterza, 1970; Marja HÄRMÄNMAA, „The dark side of Futurism: Marinetti and technological war” in *Back to the Futurists: The Avant-garde and Its Legacy*, eds. Elza ADAMOWICZ and Simona STORCHI, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013, pp. 255-271.

28 SICA, *Futurist Women*, pp. 59-92.

29 MARINETTI, *Il Poema di Fiume*, p.13.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

31 MARINETTI, „Programma Politico Futurista” (1913), reprinted *Teoria e invenzione futurista*, p. 292.

and women fall in love with Italian men simply because of their nationality.³² In the two mentioned novels, eroticism, prostitution and adventure are core elements of the First World War.³³ Constructed around female figures, lust, patriotism and battle morph into each other also in the *Poem of Rijeka*, as can be seen from certain excerpts:

Going beyond

and the grenadier patrol not exhausted by thirteen
 days of marching sings happily at the discovery of the fantastic unforeseen
 continent the city that already exists alive but ignored and
 of which everybody carries in his arms a carnal delightful consanguineous
 piece and then endlessly reshape it cut with geometric ranks of the
 two grey-green silver Regiments that strange blue-vermilion-yellow
 orchard
 of beautiful women leafed with cheeks hands
 cries branching wildly into the Venetian silver tongue

– how cute they are ...

– how beautiful ...

– my soul kiss me ...

in a circle to force to squeeze to drink everything and everyone with lips
 greedy
 desiring
 tentacular
 clutching
 singing singing singing smiling laughing singing singing singing
 tears looking at combed-ruffled hair
 in a conflict of fingernails and hairpins to scratch the air and to
 hug it
 fill with words words kisses sighs sweet torrid saliva repeat
 insist
 love love loveeeee

On the chest of all women the words pant in publicity

ITALY OR DEATH

...

The women who gave themselves in that expansion of intoxication brazier
 of visions feelings perfumes and epidermal magnetism and shameless sex
 were fertilized and married

...

³² Filippo Tommaso MARINETTI, *Come si seducono le donne e si trasicsono gli uomini*, Milano: Sonzogno, 1920. First published in 1916 as *Come si seducono le donne*.

³³ HÄRMÄNMAA, „The dark side of Futurism: Marinetti and technological war”, p.260.

Dust clouds

Immense blond curls of the carefree summer languishes

yearns desires

stripped half-naked with open arms clutches

the ripe fruits of the harvest

and her belly is scorching

of sand crystal

begging among the modest sighs of the wet

autumn

...

Great images come to the Poet in the form of living

sweet flags surly swollen sails or caressing scarves of pleasure

Many and many images come to you but all of surprising

slender odorous originality

– I burn do you feel it? and I want you

I am your military glory

made of wheels and gunner parables

– You want to freshen up, I fan out and become the Adriatic laminated

with invitations to spark to open the arms but not too much

to close them without stinginess to reopen them and ask

if you want

it

and if you want me

or if you like me,

it crushes me

and sighing

sadly

I make love with the pebbles

...

Oh d'Annunzio

the joy of bodies in pleasure among delicate fabrics and

perfumes and the wildness of the landscapes angry and drunk from the sun

with Madonnas and saints that take pity on all the human

woes

and the great lust and familiarity with the sky

become a hundredfold love for

Italy the only woman to perpetually love.³⁴

³⁴ MARINETTI, *Il Poema di Fiume*, p.2,3,9,10,17. The transcribed passages retain Marinetti's original structuring.

Rijeka and the Yugoslav Satirical Magazine *Koprive*: Repeating Tropes in Satire

The female body becomes the territory across which D'Annunzio, the Futurists and the Yugoslav satirists laid claims over contested borders. *Koprive* (*Stinging Nettle*), was a Yugoslav satirical magazine published bi-monthly since 1906 as a supplement to the already existing newspaper *Pokret* (*Movement*). The magazine was started by a small, short-lived, radical and informal Croatian political youth group called *Naprednjaci* (*The Progressives*), formed as a reaction to the authoritarian Hungarian regime.³⁵ *Koprive* paid close attention to how Yugoslav politicians were handling the question of the Adriatic territories, and during the year 1920, D'Annunzio and Rijeka feature prominently in the magazine. Although *Koprive* opposed D'Annunzio's occupation and supported Yugoslav unification, they perpetuated the representation of nations and cities as female. In the European tradition, nations, states and positive virtues were often personified as glorious, monumental and strong female figures. However, apart from following this tradition, *Koprive* put the city and the country through a series of violent and sexually exploitative acts in vulgar illustration to express political dissatisfaction over the position of Rijeka, Croatia or Yugoslavia, in relation to D'Annunzio and the Adriatic question.

Italy became 'soft from the transatlantic foment of Dr Wilson [Woodrow Wilson] and is amputated by the transalpine surgery of Dr Clemence [Clemenceau]', D'Annunzio said in an annexationist speech after the First World War and just a few days before the Paris Peace Conference officially started on the 18th of January 1919.³⁶ *Koprive* echoed D'Annunzio's medical reference in an illustration titled *Yugoslavia at the Peace Conference* (Fig. 1, *Jugoslavija na mirovnoj konferenciji*, 1920) by one of their chief illustrators, Slavko Vereš. Only this time the female body is not Italy, but Yugoslavia tied to a Medieval-looking torture machine. Here, the 'doctors' are D'Annunzio in the foreground playing a lyre, and the Italian Prime Minister Vittorio Emanuele Orlando in the background sharpening his knives to cut off one of Yugoslavia's legs. The caption reads: 'Because Yugoslavia did not want to acknowledge the justification of the London treaty, which ordered to cut off one of its legs, the peace conference entrusted that mission to Italy.'³⁷ *Koprive* was not satisfied with the way Yugoslav politicians were handling the question of Adriatic territories, particularly in relation to Rijeka, here embodied as a leg. Vereš continues the story in a later illustration for the same magazine. Under the title *At the Feet of the Old Serenissima* (Fig. 2, *Uz podnožje mletačke starice*, 1920), the Croatian politician, Stjepan Radić,

35 For more on *Koprive* see: Frano DULIBIĆ, *Povijest karikature u Hrvatskoj do 1940. Godine*, Zagreb: Leykam international, 2009.

36 D'ANNUNZIO, „Lettera ai Dalmati”, 15 January 1919, reprinted in *La penultima ventura*, p. 16.

37 See the illustration by Slavko VEREŠ titled „Jugoslavija na mirovnoj Konferenciji”, *Koprive*, Zagreb, 7 February 1920, p. 5.

the founder of the Croatian People's Peasant Party often mocked by *Koprive* for not being patriotic enough, gives the amputated leg to the Republic of Venice saying: 'Here you go great Italy, so eager to get a pound of young Yugoslavian flesh, that we, the Yugoslav politicians and journalists were able to obtain for you through our wise politics.'³⁸ While not overtly violent, in a caricature signed by Motovilec and titled *Political Pimp* (Fig. 3, *Politička svodilja*, 1920) Radić procures a young woman, embodying Croatia, for the customer D'Annunzio, who observes her with aroused eyes. Both Rijeka and Croatia are understood here as D'Annunzio's female companions, as Radić's statement under the caricature proves: 'I'm bringing you the young Republic of Croatia as a bridesmaid alongside your "Regenza"' [Regenza Italiana del Carnaro, i.e. Rijeka].³⁹

These are just some of many examples from *Koprive* where Yugoslavia and Rijeka are tortured or sexually exploited. Numerous propagandist examples with regard to the city in this period can be found in Italian paintings, newspapers, postcards and posters, often in a powerful and glorified position, usually draped in the flag. However, when a specific moment in politics was considered oppressive, she will appear with no power and subjected. For example, the local Italian newspapers *La Vedetta d'Italia* and *La testa di ferro* both show men sitting on a defeated woman (Rijeka) in 1919 and 1920. The city will again appear stretched on an x cross or stabbed in the illustration by the Futurist artist Mario Sironi for *Il Popolo d'Italia*.

Italian Noblewomen, Nurses and Singers: Precarious Hidden Power

Female characters were not just a focal point of D'Annunzio's or Marinetti's narrative and of political illustrations; others have already noted that women had an essential role in the city's propaganda and activism.⁴⁰ Rijeka in this period saw not only exciting developments in degrees of engagement that women had with the public sphere but also the participation of a few exceptional women. For example, divorce had been legalized while Rijeka was still part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and in the October 1919 election for or against the Italian National Council (which supported annexation) in Rijeka there were 10 300 people on the electorate list, for the first time in Italy also including women and the illiterate, reports *Corriere della Sera*.⁴¹ For the London based *International Woman Suffrage News*, the elections were a success; the Italian National Council received the majority

38 See the illustration by Slavko VEREŠ titled „Uz podnožje mletačke starice”, *Koprive*, Zagreb, 19 November 1920, front page.

39 See the illustration by MOTOVILEC titled „Politička svodilja”, in *Koprive*, Zagreb, 17 December 1920, p. 4.

40 See: PERINČIĆ, *D'Annunzijeva mučenica*, pp. 11-35.

41 No author, „Gli ostacoli e le prospettive per Fiume: Il signification delle elezioni”, *Corriere della Sera*, Milan, 28 October 1919, p. 1.

of the votes and three women were elected as members of the Municipal Council: Olga Kucich, a bourgeois woman; Ofelia Nascimbeni, a teacher and Antonia Verson, a cigar maker.⁴² It was also a local women's association that got the double-headed eagle reinstated in the Clock Tower (only for D'Annunzio's soldiers to decapitate it later). Under the pseudonym *Fiammetta*, Margherita Keller Besozzi, a Milanese noblewoman based in Rijeka during the occupation, contributed feminist articles to *La testa di ferro*. She boldly wrote in another publication: 'Women, it is time for your awakening! [...] The woman of Rijeka is nothing but the mother of the modern woman.'⁴³ One of the most modern women in the city was Margherita Incisa di Camerana, a Red Cross nurse who held the role of Lieutenant in Rijeka. She was also the only female member of the *Federazione Nazionale Arditi d'Italia*. When traces left by women from the microcosms of Rijeka are approached across cultures and classes, they reveal a significant amount of political power in some cases and disenfranchisement and vulnerability to border change in others. What these sources show is that the kind of modernisation that Besozzi encouraged was only accessible to a minority but also disapproved off by those very members of D'Annunzio's entourage that are usually cited for making claims of a revolutionary experimental society. In addition, compared with the flattened female allegorical character, the women of Rijeka were more often than not marginalised or operated in a semi-public sphere.

An influential person was Maria Meniconi Bracceschi Papafava, a noblewoman from Padova, who came to Rijeka in her forties following her supposed lover Carlo Reina (Supreme Commander in the city) and her son Novello Papafava (writer, journalist and Reina's assistant). Upon arrival, after taking care of political matters, one of the first things that Papafava does is to go out and buy clean underwear for her son. Despite her devotion to the two men, her acute and at times witty *Il diario sincero di impresa fumana* (*The sincere diary of the Fiume endeavour*, 1924) reveals that she was there primarily for her country.⁴⁴ Papafava was a patriot well connected with the highest political figures of Italy and with a significant amount of influence over some of the key protagonists of the occupation. When she arrived at the demarcation line in late September 1919, Marshal Pietro Badoglio would not let her pass at first, so as not to 'set a precedent' but after two days had to comply with her wishes. Soon, other women arrived and worked as nurses, teachers and telephone operators.

As a patron and member of different women's organisations (*Fascio Femminile di Resistenza* and *Consiglio Nazionale delle Donne*), she tried to establish a connection between women's associations in Italy and Rijeka. She

42 M. ANCONA, „Women Vote at Fiume: Three Elected”, *International Woman Suffrage News*, London, 5 December 1919, p. 11.

43 The complete text is transcribed in: Claudia SALARIS, *Le futuriste. Donne e letteratura d'avanguardia in Italia*, Milano: Edizioni delle donne, 1982, p. 152-153.

44 Archivio di Stato di Terni, Maria Meniconi Bracceschi PAPAFAVA, *Il diario sincero di impresa fumana*, 1924, in Passavanti: Fiume 1919-1963, box 34, folder 2.

met with patriotic women from the city such as Nicolina Fabris, told her doubts to Ernesta Battisti (the widow of the prominent Italian politician, geographer and irredentist Cesare Battisti) and often socialised with di Camerana. Her influence was not just restricted to her son, her lover and female friends; she would also meet with Ludovico Toeplitz and Leon Kochnitzky and not refrain from giving advice on military and political matters. When support for D'Annunzio started to weaken, and he failed to be taken seriously, she travelled to Paris and London to campaign for Rijeka with the highest echelons of Europe. Regardless of the influence she exercised over the people around her, her behaviour in public spaces reveals the liminal space in which the women of D'Annunzio's Rijeka operated. When Papafava wanted to attend a political speech at the Teatro Fenice she did not see any other women and therefore did not 'have the courage to enter'.⁴⁵ Similarly, she went to one of the poet-soldier's speeches and felt the need to hide behind the plants, but stated that 'behind the plants I saw and heard everything'.⁴⁶

As supportive as Papafava was initially of the cause, she was highly sceptical of D'Annunzio from the start. The endeavour was disintegrating into anarchy and becoming a farce dangerous for Italy because D'Annunzio was, she thought, just living out his fantasy and the city was '*veramente olocausta*' [truly sacrificed].⁴⁷ Some examples of this loss of faith, and hints at the poet-soldier as a womanizer can be found in the following passages:

[...] those who think here are a few, and I fear, starting from D'Annunzio, whom I have known well for many years. I would not have called him; if Reina had told me, I would have advised him against it. For such gestures the genius of Poetry, culture, etc. etc. is not enough. It takes a noble spirit that the Poet does not have. [I hope] now that he does not treat Italy like a woman: this is my dismay. [...] Now I hope in change that the war must have procured, otherwise poor us, poor Fiume, poor Italy! [...] encouraging indiscipline and artificially creating disorder, this is what D'Annunzio loves and there is no need for it [...] Italy comes before Fiume, which many here seem to forget.⁴⁸

Instances of Italian women in the military are another example of the ambiguity of the female condition in Rijeka. Women could be named honorary legionaries, and some proudly posed for photographs while carrying daggers and other military symbols, such as Lina Iglioni, the wife of an Ardito. Di Camerana, a marquise and Red Cross nurse from Torino who was often in Papafava's company, held the vital role of Lieutenant during the occupation of Rijeka. (Di Camerana would also become more disappointed with the

45 Ibid., diary entry 26 September 1919.

46 Ibid., diary entry 28 September 1919.

47 Ibid., diary entry 26 May 1919.

48 Ibid., diary entries 25 September 1919, 27 September 1919 and 8 October 1919.

endeavour, as she noted in her letters to Papafava when the latter returned to Italy). While many welcomed such changes and earnestly so, others were adamant. 'He told me about a Marquise Incisa', the socialist politician Filippo Turati wrote to his feminist and Marxist partner Anna Kuliscioff, 'who is dressed as an Ardita and even wears a dagger. Unfortunately, for the honour of Italy, he cannot tell the Parliament all of these things.'⁴⁹ The Italian writer Giovanni Comisso-whose writings serve as one of the key sources when exploring the atmosphere of D'Annunzio's Rijeka and claiming subversion-also found women dressed as Arditi to be ridiculous transvestism. Comisso remembers a singer called Grethe wearing an Ardito uniform as follows: '[...] it was an ugly Grethe and an ugly Ardito, she tried to strike a proud pose by squeezing the handle of the dagger, but she only appeared clumsy and ridiculous.'⁵⁰

The Italian-American Red Cross nurse Madeleine Witherspoon Dent Gori-Montanelli came to Rijeka following her husband, a propagandist photographer who worked for D'Annunzio. In the letters Gori-Montanelli sends to her mother, she likes to point out that she is the 'first female volunteer in the army [in Rijeka]'. She admires D'Annunzio, is easily impressed by uniforms and medals and hopes to get a silver medal herself. Highly impressionable to the military spectacle she notes that: 'In my whole life I have never seen such great enthusiasm'.⁵¹ Gori-Montanelli tells her mother about being overworked, problems with access to potable water and having marital problems, but still assures her that:

Don't believe what you read about the terror that reigns in the city, that the Arditi are always drunk and shoot like madmen through the streets and so on. (These are all rumours spread by Nitti). An absolute calm reigns everywhere and since the French have gone, not even one drunk-I say one-has been seen! Even the Yugoslavs are respected. Three or four of their party leaders were only arrested because they were found with bombs in their pockets.⁵²

The famous Italian pianist, Luisa Baccara, was also entangled in the political life of Rijeka, but more in an aesthetical propaganda role. She would often play patriotic songs that boosted morale and D'Annunzio found her presence productive and her absence demoralising. 'My friends are very restless. They say that when you were here, I was calm and working like never before. Is

49 See transcribed letter in: Filippo TURATI and Anna KULISCIOFF, *Cartaggio. V: Dopoguerra e fascismo (1919-1921)*, Torino, Einaudi, 1977, p. 431.

50 Giovanni Comisso, *Il porto dell'amore*, Milano:Mondadori, 1983 (original: Treviso: Vianello, 1924), p. 162.

51 See transcribed letters in Madeleine Witherspoon DENT GORI-MONTANELLI, *Vedette fumane: l'occupazione vista e visuta da Madeleine Witherspoon Dent Gori-Montelli, crocerossina Americana, e da Francesco Gori-Mantelli capo del Genio e dal Reparto fotografico*, ed. Jeffrey T. Schnapp, Venice: Marsilio, 2000, p. 40.

52 Ibid.

it true?⁵³ D'Annunzio stated in the letter and also lamented that: "The palace is empty. Fiume is without music. They never thought that you might be the element of such profound life here."⁵⁴ Others found her influence distracting and planned a festivity called *Castello d'amore* which would mimic a battle, and the pianist would be kidnapped and then left on a deserted island.⁵⁵ Luckily, this was never enacted, and Baccara fondly remembered Rijeka and the 'nights of inebriated love' where D'Annunzio 'wondered anxiously if I loved you [him], took me and kissed me.'⁵⁶

Yugoslav Housewives and Prostitutes: Forgotten Vulnerabilities

Traces left by non-Italian women show difficulties in relation to job insecurity under Italian rule. 'In Rijeka', a Croatian woman called Zora Blažić wrote in her diary, 'they are constantly demonstrating, the entire city is festooned in all manner of banners.'⁵⁷ Blažić did not share Gori-Mantelli's enthusiasm for the atmosphere in the city or Papafava's status and only noted: 'This city is dead since the Italians arrived, a lot of them are without work here, we had to rent a shop because they would not give us a workshop. This is how we get by.'⁵⁸ Similarly, in the summer of 1919 the local tobacco factory was under the control of the Italian National Council and Yugoslav female workers were dismissed and replaced with those of Italian or Hungarian nationality.⁵⁹ According to some sources, the Arditi remained in the city even after D'Annunzio left, and some local shop owners were forced to dismiss their old staff and employ the Arditi.⁶⁰ At the time, Blažić was in her early twenties and engaged to a man who worked in a different city. She did not get along with her in-laws, witnessed her mother-in-law beating her sister-in-law, noted the lack of coal and problems with the water supply and would get into such a low mood that she contemplated suicide. She summarised the year 1920 as follows:

53 See transcribed letter dated 8 March 1920 in Gabriele D'ANNUNZIO, *Il befano alla befana: l'epistolario con Luisa Baccara/Gabriele D'Annunzio*, ed. Paolo Sorge, Milano: Garzanati, 2003, p. 49.

54 See transcribed letter dated 7 March 1920 in D'ANNUNZIO, *Il befano alla befana*, p. 47.

55 See, BERGHAUS, *Futurism and Politics*, p. 140.

56 See transcribed letter from Luisa Baccara to D'Annunzio in D'ANNUNZIO, *Il befano alla befana*, p. 306.

57 Zora BLAŽIĆ, *Rijeka, 1918.-1928.*, diaries and letters, archive of the Maritime and History Museum of the Croatian coast, Rijeka, PPMHP KPO-PZ 18642, p. 53.

58 *Ibid.*, entry dated 1 November 1920, p. 70.

59 Based on a conference paper that the author shared with me, see: Francesca ROLANDI, "Women Transitional Experiences in Fiume/Rijeka and Sušak after the First World War", paper presented at the conference *Cities and Regions in Flux After Border Change. Reconfiguring the Frontier, Reshaping Memory, and Visualising Change in Twentieth Century*, University of Rijeka, 10-11 July, 2019.

60 No author, "Arditi ne odlaze iz grada", in *Za Našu Rijeku: izvadak iz „Jutarnjeg lista”*, Zagreb: Tipografija, 1921, p.14-16.

The year 1920 finished, that year full of misery and pain, I wish her a goodbye and may a year like that never come again. The whole year was worthless, from beginning to end. December was the worst, we had a terrible day. Namely, with his legionnaires D'Annunzio had to leave the city by the 24th of December but because he did not want to, the Italian government set a blockade around the city and D'Annunzio reacted by announcing war on Italy. It was awful, the shops had to be closed already on Christmas Eve, people were not allowed on the street only the army, which was regulating the city. [On the] front, which was on Kantrida, the conflict started the same evening, rifles were being shot, the cannon thundered, and you could constantly hear the rattle of machine guns [...] The battle lasted for 5 days, on the 28th gen. [General] Caviglia ordered D'Annunzio and his army to surrender, or he would bomb the city [...] It was agreed that the army would leave the city after the 5th of January. Today the fleet has already left, and the army should start leaving tomorrow. But many have changed into civilian clothes and I guess they plan on staying here and spreading propaganda. I do not know what else will come of this. May God help us!⁶¹

Although not speaking for themselves, there are traces of other Yugoslav women from the same period that show even greater levels of marginalization. Marinetti mentions briefly seeing a young Croatian woman referred to only as TS in his diary.⁶² He does not record much about her, only some physical attributes and details about their sexual intimacy. During their first night together, she is happy to answer his questions about Dalmatia and Croatians, and by the next one, she is singing Italian songs, almost seeming to have undergone a process of *italianization* as understood in the *Poem of Rijeka*. Alongside issues of food shortage, problems with the water supply, changes of trade routes and the harassment, muggings, imprisonment and murder of the local population, a collection of articles from and letters sent to the *Jutarnji list* newspaper a small part is dedicated to the female experience with the Arditi:

They attacked and imprisoned as many as they could and including the best and the most patriotic women of Rijeka, among them Ruža de Emili, the most respected and praiseworthy educator of the people of Rijeka [...] They have betrayed the good faith and the honest trust of so many poor young women, victims of their flattery and promises [...]. They have violated, contaminated and infected even girls from 12 to 16 years of age [...] they organized night parties with prostitutes [...]. They disgraced the name of the good women of

61 Entry dated 4 January 1921 in BLAŽIĆ, *Rijeka, 1918.-1928*, pp.76-77.

62 MARINETTI, *Taccuini*, pp. 432-444.

Rijeka treating them as though they were prostitutes, who are their lovers and friends.⁶³

The ease with which Papafava moved across borders was different from some of the most vulnerable groups in Rijeka at the time, the illegal prostitutes. Earlier research about the First World War has already confirmed that in some locations, Paris for example, an increase in military presence demanded an increase in the facilitation of sex workers.⁶⁴ Also, Klaus Theweleit's pioneering work on paramilitary groups explored the violent subtext of male fantasies and their attitudes towards the female body.⁶⁵ With D'Annunzio's arrival prostitution became more widespread in the city and some women exposed to more violence, which was similar to the contexts of the above-mentioned research. Indeed, Turati confirms that: 'Fiume has become a brothel, a den for gangland and prostitutes of a more or less high standard.'⁶⁶ Called *farfalline* (little butterflies) in Italian or *ptičice* (little birds) in Croatian; Rijeka had both legal and illegal prostitution with the majority of the illegal prostitutes coming from Yugoslavia.⁶⁷ If they were arrested and had a sexually transmitted disease they would undergo forced hospital treatment, were then imprisoned in Rijeka, then sent over the border to Sušak, detained there and some finally deported to their Yugoslav hometowns only to be smuggled back into Rijeka again (a certain Antonia L. had been through this process about a hundred times by her early twenties).⁶⁸

Violence is also noted in Marinetti's diary when he records an unusual reaction to a bomber attack when visiting a 'Slavo-Croatian' brothel in Polveriera Street, popular among the Arditi. A Croatian threw a bomb from the window, and Ardito rushed up the stairs and cut off the breast of one of the prostitutes and a Futurist known only as Barbesti, after intercourse with another prostitute took her to the police.⁶⁹ Comisso records the high prevalence of venereal diseases and also mentions another murder of a prostitute when the Arditi and the French troops got into a fight in a brothel.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, he concludes that: '[...] the affairs were truly limitless: the city [Rijeka] was really Italianized in blood.'⁷¹ Other sources described Fiuman women as having a 'reputation of being beautiful and not difficult'. So much so, that D'Annunzio needed to tell his soldiers to control themselves.⁷² There was also high-end

63 No author, „NE ZABORAVIAMO: Zasluge naših „osloboditelja“, reprinted in *Za Našu Rijeku: izvadak iz „Jutarnjeg lista“*, p. 42-43.

64 Susan R. GRAYZEL, „Mothers, Mairaines, and Prostitutes: Morale and Morality in First World War France“, *The International History Review*, vol.19, no. 1 (1997):pp. 66-82.

65 Klaus THEWELEIT, *Male Fantasies Volume 1: Women, Floods, Bodies, History*, Cambridge: Polity, 1987.

66 See transcribed letter in: TURATI and KULISCIOFF, *Cartaggio. V: Dopoguerra e fascismo (1919-1921)*, p. 431.

67 ROLANDI, „Women Transitional Experiences in Fiume/Rijeka and Sušak after the First World War“.

68 Ibid.

69 See: MARINETTI, *Taccuni*, p. 433.

70 Giovanni COMISSO, *Le mie stagioni*, Milano: Longanesi, 1963, p.44.

71 Ibid, p. 70.

72 See SALARIS, *Alla festa della rivoluzione*, p. 182.

prostitution: the singer Lili de Montresor who would leave D'Annunzio's room with 'five hundred liras in her purse', and others documented as Barbarella, Bianca, Gr. Bruna and a 'school teacher of Merano'.⁷³

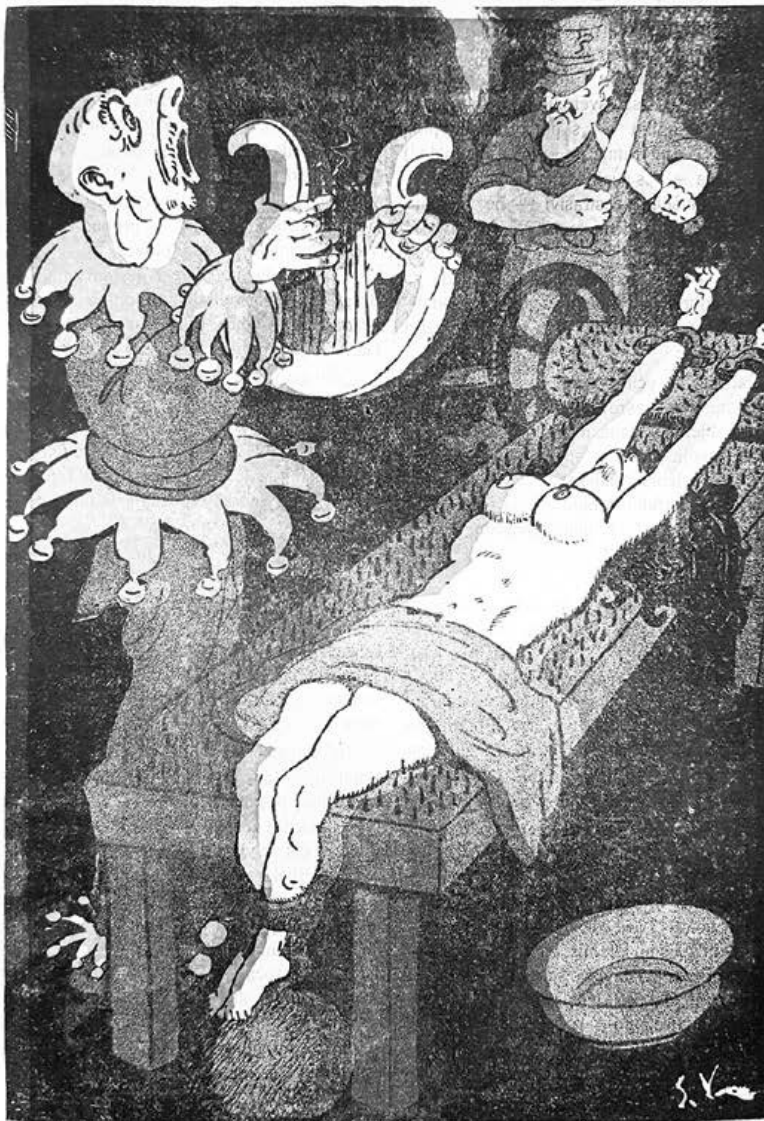
Epilogue

D'Annunzio's rhetoric, Marinetti's poem and *Koprive's* illustrations often centre on the female character; however, during the occupation, for real women access to political life was not as straightforward. Going beyond the often-cited primary sources, female sources, especially those of non-Italian women, complicate the accounts that reconstruct the atmosphere in Rijeka as a place of liberties and sexual freedom and show a far more complex set of negotiations when assuming public roles. Papafava's and Blažić's diaries attest to the liminal space that women occupied and demonstrate how this space was further heavily defined by class and nationality. Marinetti's jubilant eroticisation of warfare similarly to the vulgarity of *Koprive's* illustration or the encounters with prostitutes described in the primary sources, establish these moments as encounters between soldiers or politicians, who have the right and freedom to pleasure, and the real or imagined bodies of women who have to provide it. This article is by no means a complete and comprehensive study of the female position and experience in Rijeka, but it does shed some light on the complexity of the issue. It also poses the question of whether this event in history was primarily a paramilitary male adventure and fantasy. With the recent interest in the topic, given the centennial and Rijeka as the European Capital of Culture 2020, future scholarship would benefit from a critical rereading of primary sources via a feminist inquiry that transcends national borders and loyalties.

73 Ibid.

Jugoslavija na mirovnoj konferenciji.

S. Vereš.



Pošto Jugoslavija nije sama htjela da prizna opravdanost londonskog ugovora, po kojem joj se ima odrezati jedna noga, povjerila je mirovna konferencija tu misiju Italiji.

Fig 1: An illustration titled *Yugoslavia at the Peace Conference* by Slavko Vereš from the newspaper *Koprive*, 7 February 1920.

KOPRIVE

POŠTARINA PLACENA.

CIENA, 6 KRUNA

GOD. XVII.

ZAGREB, 19. STUDENA 1920.

BROJ 46.

UZ PODNOŽJE MLETAČKE STARICE

S. Vereš



STIPICA RADIĆ:] — „Evo ti, velika Italijo, toliko željene funte mesa mlade Jugoslavije, koju ti pribavimo mi, jugoslavenski političari i novinari, pomoću naše mudre politike.“

Fig 2: An illustration titled *At the Feet of the Old Serenissima* by Slavko Vereš from the newspaper *Koprive*, 19 November 1920.

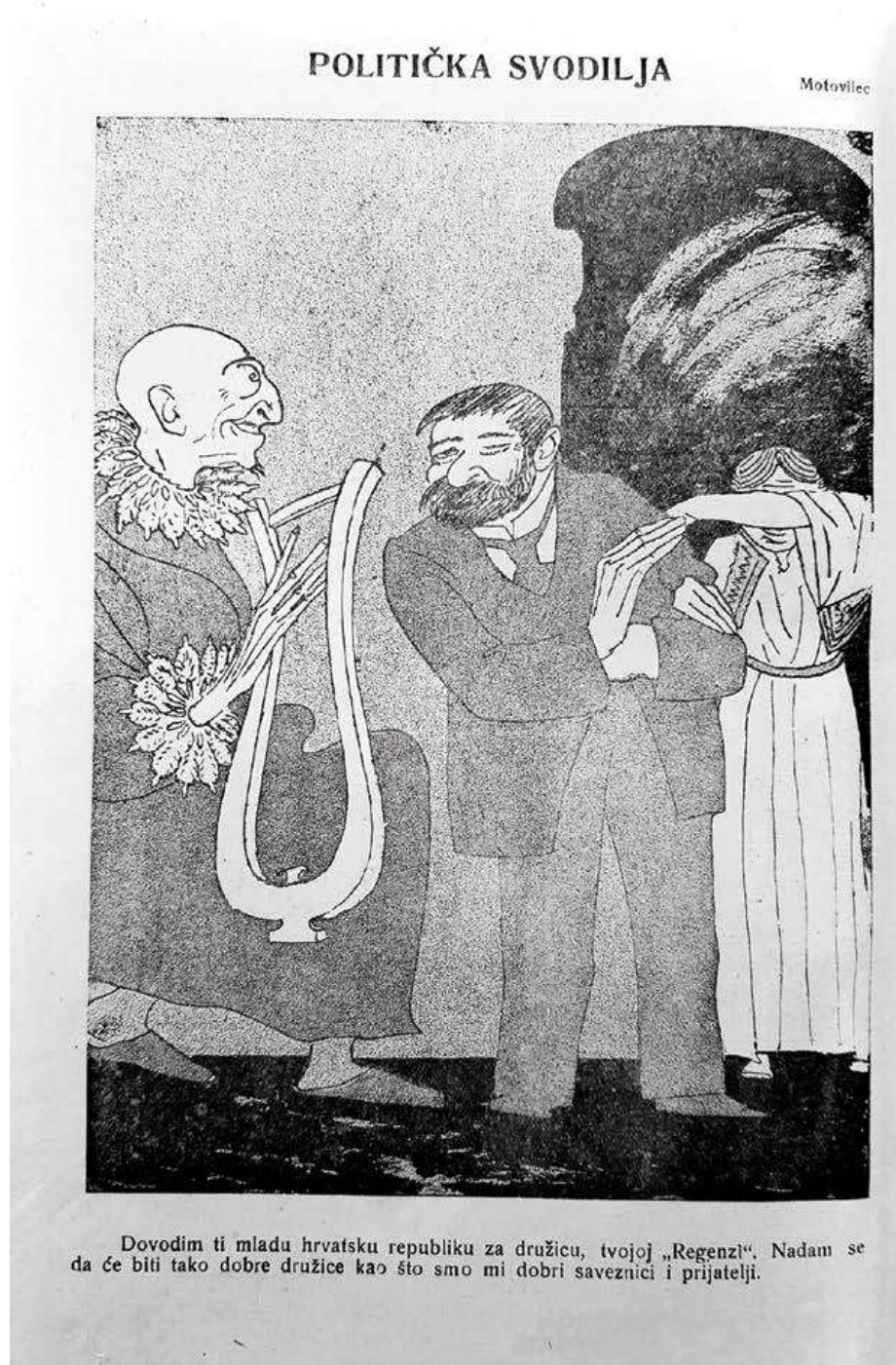


Fig 3: An illustration titled *Political Pimp* by Motovilec from the newspaper *Koprive*, 17 December 1920.

Sažetak

OD HALJINA DO UNIFORMI I OD PALAČE DO BORDELA: ŽIVOT ŽENA I POLITIČKA ALEGORIJA U D'ANNUNZIJEVOJ RIJECI, 1919.-1921.

Ana-Maria MILČIĆ

Kroz studiju pisama, dnevnika i kratkih novinskih članka o ženama koje su živjele u Rijeci između 1919. i 1921., članak razmatra ulogu žena i alegoričnih ženskih likova u političkom životu grada za vrijeme okupacije Gabriela D'Annunzija. Koristeći navedene izvore, istražujem svakodnevni život žena te tragove ženskih mreža i aktivnosti. Ovo istraživanje otkriva da je politička nestabilnost utjecala na žene u različitoj mjeri te da je pristup javnoj sferi ovisio o nacionalnosti, klasi i dobi. Retorički okvir rekonstruiran je kroz heterogeni odabir materijala koji se sastoji od novinskih karikatura, političkih govora, propagandnog materijala i avangardnih umjetničkih djela koja personificiraju gradove i nacije kao ženske figure. Ovaj rad ne ponavlja samo kroz nove primjere ono što je već utvrđeno o povezanosti javnih spomenika, političke retorike i žene, već se fokusira i na slučajeve gdje je alegorijska ženska figura oslabljena i time dovodi u pitanje ranije istraživanja koja tvrde da je D'Annunzijeva Rijeka bila mjesto seksualne slobode. Uspoređivanje „prave žene“ i „alegorične žene“ pokazuje da su u političkim narativima Italija i Rijeka prikazivane kao ženske figure; istovremeno, žene su u najvećem dijelu bile isključene iz javnog života.

