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READING PERFORMATIVITY, GENDER AND THE FRAGMENTATION OF NARRATIVE VOICE IN MINA LOY'S TEXTS AND ARTWORKS

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ABSTRACT

READING PERFORMATIVITY, GENDER, AND THE FRAGMENTATION OF NARRATIVE VOICE IN MINA LOY'S TEXTS AND ARTWORKS

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The work of Mina Loy, a unique and innovative modernist writer, artist, and feminist figure of the early twentieth century, poses various challenges for the reader, not only because of its unusual approach to the work of other modernists, the Futurists in particular, and its unique perspective on feminism, but also because of its multiple, shifting narrative voices and its idiosyncratic and fragmentary style. This study approaches Loy's textual and visual legacy from an interdisciplinary perspective, performatively engaging with its structural, semiotic and intertextual aspects to create and construct a narrative of the complex arguments it represents.

The focus is on Loy's selected poetry and prose ("Lions' Jaws" [1919], "Feminist Manifesto" [1914], "Aphorisms on Futurism" [1914], and "Parturition" [1914]) as well as on some of her artworks, *Househunting* (1950), *Christ on a Clothesline* (1955-59) *Ansikten* [ca. 1910s] and *Surreal Scene* (1930); these are considered in terms of their intertextual relations to her other works as well as to works of her contemporaries that are thematically or visually analogous. The purpose is to rediscover and explore Loy's works in dialogue with contemporary authorial, feminist and modernist trajectories, and, against the critical tradition, to question and consider their biographical contexts (the assumptions made about Loy's personality and life experiences) not as reflections of psychological or historical realities, but as fictive elements of intertextuality. This study's implicit frames of reference therefore include conceptions of modern art (Marinetti, Bréton, de Chirico, Berger); aspects of gender

theory, particularly performativity and maternity (Butler, Kristeva, Ettinger); and theoretical engagements with authorship (Barthes, Foucault), intertextuality (Riffaterre), structuralism and semiotics (Saussure, Peirce).

Loy's texts shift not only between gender identities, but also between concepts of Futurism and Modernism; and these shifts and transformations are enacted stylistically through her use of fragmentation, interruptions of punctuation, and complex juxtapositions of words or images in the literary and artistic forms through which they are expressed: the poem, the aphorism, the manifesto, the assemblage, and the modernist and Surrealist painting. Loy's works thus engage with almost every avant-garde movement and genre of the early modernist era; and its mental and corporeal female representations are enacted not only thematically, but through theme, style and genre as well.

Close semiotic analyses of the texts and artworks reveal their intertextual connections to each other and to other contemporary texts; through these connections, this study focuses on the construction of shifting voices of narrators hidden between signs, as well as on the ways these personas act and evolve throughout the texts. It explores how gender performativity and ambiguous structures of female identity run through these fictive narrative voices, and how ambiguous sexualities (from the androgynous to the feminine) shape Loy's narrators' mental and corporeal identities. These identities satirically fragment into different forms through argumentative personas, anagrammatical names, and an idiosyncratic iconography—on the one hand critiquing stereotypical female roles and manufactured consent, and on the other hand, questioning and displacing the male hegemony represented by Futurism by defining a new version of the "Futurist," and developing a broader, evolutionary feminist agenda for the corporeal, psychic, intellectual and artistic development of culture and society.

In Loy's "Lions' Jaws," entanglements between visual and verbal images are investigated in their historical, structural, intertextual and performative aspects; the complex links between the narrators and their engagements with Futurism and feminism are traced through the fragmentary connections of the anagrammatical characters. "Feminist Manifesto" is considered in semiotic relation to two of Loy's artworks, *Househunting* and *Christ on a Clothesline*, with a focus on the visual and textual narrators' questioning and displacement of male hegemony and their critique of the contemporary feminist movement: the iconography of *Househunting* reveals

how the visual narrator subverts the manufactured consent of stereotypical domestic roles through a representation of mental space, while *Christ on a Clothesline* represents the downfall of male hegemony by corporeally subverting the religious image. A chapter on Loy's fragmentary "Aphorisms on Futurism" rearticulates and semiotically links the aphorisms to reveal the dialogical nature of the narrative voice, in relation both to herself and with the implied readers: the "Aphorisms" argue for destroying and transcending retrospective aesthetic forms to construct new ones, and for attaining freedom of consciousness through shifting between Futurism and Modernism. The arguments brought out in these analyses are then developed through a detailed performative reading of Loy's poem, "Parturition," which is taken as representing three embodiments of labor: physical childbirth, artistic creation, and poetic production. In these representations, the narrators fragment into multiple identities—a Feminist-Futurist mother who resists the social domestication and classification of women, an artist who subverts the traditional aesthetic forms, and a creative poet who overthrows conventional language—and these identities undergo various transformations, eventually merging to construct new forms and achieve psychological and physical self-realization. The dissertation concludes with an exploration of semiotic threads and chains of signification in Loy's painting, *Surreal Scene*: the analysis performs a logic of linking and intertextuality between visual and textual narrators in the painting, and in the other works analyzed, as well as with other artworks of Loy's and of her contemporaries; this represents a first step towards developing an iconography of Loy's art.

This study, through its performative interaction with the works in their structural, semiotic and intertextual aspects, provides an alternative to the currently widespread biographical-historical and psychological approaches to Loy, and opens a path for new, alternative constructions of "authorship" and meaning in modernism through the critical performance of reading. And through its focus on the evolutionary nature as well as the polyphonic structures of the narrators, it provides several starting-points for further intertextual studies on Loy's works as well as the works of other modernist and feminist artists and writers.

Keywords: Mina Loy, modernism, avant-garde, futurism, feminism, semiotics.

ÖZ

MINA LOY'UN YAZINSAL VE GÖRSEL YAPITLARINDA BÖLÜNMÜŞLÜK VE PERFOMATİF VE TOPLUMSAL CİNSİYET AÇISINDAN ANLATICININ ROLÜ

KARABULUT, TUĞBA

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Feminist ve modernist yazar ve sanatçı kimliği ile yirminci yüzyılın başında Mina Loy'un yapıtları, Fütürist yazarlar başta olmak üzere diğer modernistlerin yapıtlarına kıyasla, alışılmadık bir yaklaşım içermesi ve feminizme farklı bir bakış açısı getirmesi nedeniyle dikkat çeker. Loy'un yapıtlarındaki çoklu ve değişken anlatıcılar ve kendine özgü parçalanmış biçemi de okuru zorlar. Bu çalışma, Loy'un yazınsal ve görsel yapıtlarında yer alan karmaşık izlekleri ve tartışmaları yapısal, göstergebilim ve metinlerarasılık açılarından ele alarak bir anlatı oluşturmayı amaçlar.

Bu çalışma, Loy'un seçilmiş şiir ve düzyazıları ("Lions' Jaws" [1919], "Feminist Manifesto" [1914], "Aphorisms on Futurism" [1914], and "Parturition" [1914]) ve bazı sanat yapıtları (*Househunting* [1950], *Christ on a Clothesline* [1955-59], *Ansikten* [ca. 1910s] ve *Surreal Scene* [1930]) üzerine odaklanır; bu yapıtlar hem yazarın hem de onun çağdaşlarının, içerik ve görsel olarak benzerlik gösterdiği diğer yapıtlarla metinlerarası ilişkileri açısından incelenir. Tezde, Loy'un yapıtları yazarlık, feminizm ve modernizm çerçevelerinde tartışılarak, yazarın kişiliği ve yaşam deneyimleri ilgili otobiyografik bağlam, metinlerarasılığın kurgusal unsurları olarak değerlendirilir. Bu çalışma, Marinetti, Bréton, de Chirico ve Berger'in modern sanat kuramlarını, özellikle performatiflik ve annelik başta olmak üzere Butler, Kristeva ve Ettinger'in toplumsal cinsiyet kuramlarını, Barthes ve Foucault'nın yazarlık

kuramlarını, Riffaterre'in metinlerarasılık ve Saussure ve Peirce'in de yapısalcılık ve göstergebilim kuramlarını dolaylı bir çerçevede ele alarak incelemeler yapar.

Loy'un yapıtları yalnızca farklı cinsiyet rolleri arasında değil, aynı zamanda Fütürizm ve Modernizm kavramları arasında da değişimler gösterir; bu değişimler ve dönüşümler, yazarın sözcük ve imgeler aracılığıyla ifade ettiği parçalanmışlık kavramı, imla bölünmeleri ve karmaşık dizilimler yoluyla, yazınsal ve sanatsal türe göre, şiir, aforizma, manifesto, asamblaj ve modernist ve sürrealist sanat eserleri olarak ve biçimsel şekilde ortaya konur. Loy'un yapıtları erken modernist dönemin tüm avangard hareketleri ve türleri ile ilişkilidir ve zihinsel ve bedensel kadın temsilleri, içeriğin yanı sıra, biçem ve türde de görülür.

Loy'un yazınsal ve görsel yapıtlarının göstergebilim açısından yapılan yakın çözümlemeleri, onların birbirleriyle ve çağdaşlarının diğer yapıtlarıyla metinlerarası ilişkilerini ortaya çıkarır ve bu bağlantıları kullanarak, bu çalışma, simgelerin ardına gizlenmiş değişken anlatıcıların yaratılmasına ve değişimlerine yoğunlaşır. Aynı zamanda tez, metinlerdeki anlatıcıların performatif toplumsal cinsiyet ve basmakalıp cinsiyet rolleri dışında (örneğin çift cinsiyetli olmanın) nasıl kurgulandığını ve Loy'un anlatıcılarının bedensel ve zihinsel kimliklerine nasıl şekil verdiğini de araştırır. Bu anlatıcılar, tartışmalı kişilikler, isimlerdeki sözcük oyunları ve kendine özgü imgeler yoluyla, farklı kimliklere bölünerek, basmakalıp kadın rollerini ve kadınların toplum kurallarına rıza göstermesini alaycı bir dille eleştirir. Ayrıca anlatıcılar, kültür ve toplumun, bedensel, zihinsel, düşünsel ve sanatsal gelişimi için yeni bir fütürizm ve daha kapsamlı ve evrimsel bir feminizm tanımlayarak, Fütürizm'in temsil ettiği erkek hegemonyasını sorgular ve devirmeye çalışır.

Loy'un "Lions' Jaws" adlı yapıtında, görsel ve yazınsal imgeler, kendi tarihi, yapısal, metinlerarası ve performatif bağlamlarında incelenir ve anlatıcılar ve onların Fütürizm ve Feminizm ile olan karmaşık ilişkileri, kişi adlarıyla yapılan oyunlar ve parçalanmış karakterler yoluyla ele alınır. "Feminist Manifesto" ise, Loy'un *Househunting* ve *Christ on a Clothesline* adlı sanat yapıtlarıyla kurduğu göstergebilimsel ilişki çerçevesinde ele alınır ve görsel ve yazınsal anlatıcıların erkek egemenliğini sorgulamasına ve çağdaş feminizm hareketini eleştirmesine yoğunlaşır. *Househunting*, görsel anlatıcının, kadınların basmakalıp ev kadınlığı rolleri ve onların toplum kurallarına rıza göstermesini, zihinsel temsil yoluyla nasıl altüst ettiğini ortaya çıkarırken, *Christ on a Clothesline*, Hristiyanlığı sorgulayarak, erkek egemenliğinin

çöküşünü bedensel temsil yoluyla betimler. Loy'un, parçalardan oluşan "Aphorisms on Futurism" adlı yapıtı, aforizmalar arasındaki göstergebilimsel bağlantıları ele alarak, anlatıcının hem kendisi hem de ima edilen okuyucularıyla olan diyaloğunu vurgular. Aforizmalar, Fütürizm ve Modernizm arasında yön değiştirerek, geçmişe ait sanat türlerini yok edip yeni türleri oluşturma ve böylelikle bilinç özgürlüğüne ulaşmayı ele alır. Aforizma analizlerinde ele alınan tartışmalar, Loy'un "Parturition" adlı yapıtının ayrıntılı performatif incelemesi ile geliştirilir. Bu yapıtta, doğum eylemi, fiziksel doğum, sanatsal yaratı ve şiirsel yapıtın ortaya çıkarılması olarak üç şekilde anlatılır. Bu temsillerde, anlatıcı çoklu kimliklere bölünür: sosyal olarak kadını eve hapseden düşünceye ve kadının sınıflandırılmasına karşı gelen feminist-fütürist bir anne, geleneksel sanat formlarını altüst eden bir sanatçı ve alışılagelmiş dilsel formları yıkan yaratıcı bir şair. Bu bölünmüş kimlikler, çeşitli değişimlere uğrar ve yeni türler oluşturmak için sonunda bir araya gelerek zihinsel ve bedensel bir farkındalığa ulaşırlar. Bu tez, Loy'un *Surreal Scene* adlı tablosundaki simgelerin, göstergebilimsel bağlantılarını araştırarak son bulur. Yapılan tüm incelemeler görsel ve yazınsal anlatıcıların, Loy'un başka yapıtlarıyla ve aynı zamanda Loy'un çağdaşlarının yapıtlarıyla bağlantılarını ortaya koyar ve böylece, Loy'un sanatsal betimlemelerini geliştirmeye yönelik ilk adımı atmış olur.

Bu çalışma, Mina Loy'un yapıtlarının yapısal, göstergebilimsel ve metinlerarası bağlamda incelenmesi yoluyla, biyografik-tarihsel-psikolojik eleştiri akımlarına karşı, yazarlık ve okurluk kavramlarını sorgulayarak yeni bir okuma edimi sunar. Anlatıcıların evrimsel ve aynı zamanda çoksesli doğasına yoğunlaşarak hem Mina Loy'un hem de diğer modernist ve feminist sanatçı ve yazarların çalışmaları için, metinlerarası bağlamda çeşitli çıkış noktaları sunar.

Anahtar kelimeler: Mina Loy, modernizm, avangard, fütürizm, feminizm, göstergebilim.

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INTRODUCTION

The British avant-garde poet, artist and feminist Mina Loy (1882–1966) emerges as an extravagant and revolutionary female figure illuminating the aesthetic, literary and political concerns of the early modernist period. Her works usually explore various social and feminist politics, especially as they relate to women and revolve around issues of gender, motherhood, investigations of the female body and mind, sexuality and human consciousness. Loy's poems feature unusual typography, striking themes, and occasionally shocking imagery breaking the poetic and grammatical conventions of the era, and her artworks maintain an eclectic attitude reflecting Futurist, Dadaist and Surrealist ideas. During her lifetime, she was very well known in Britain, Europe and the U.S., and considered a unique female figure in modernist art and literature, as well as a significant feminist voice among the prominent avant-garde artists and writers. As Roger Conover, Loy's biographer and literary executor comments in his *The Lost Lunar Baedeker*, "Mina Loy's goal was quite simply to become the most original woman of her generation" (xiii).[1] In her *Becoming Modern*, Carolyn Burke, Loy's biographer, also praises her multi-faceted identity defining her "as a woman peculiarly responsive to the social and artistic movements of her time" (vi). Loy epitomized her age through her works and, at the same time, questioned and contradicted it. However, today, most people are not familiar with Loy's works—in Turkey, for example, at the time of my writing the thesis, I have not been able to locate any articles or dissertations about her—although she was certainly ahead of her era, the early modernist period.

Definition of the Era

The early modernist period (roughly 1900-1930) is characterized by a variety of literary, artistic, technological and philosophical revolutions; as Kolocotroni, Vasiliki, et al. explain in their anthology, "Modernism is not a movement. It is a term that masks conflict and upheaval and any number of contradictory positions. . . . Modernism comprises numerous, diverse and contesting, theories and practices which first flourished in a period that knew little of the term as it has now come to be

understood" (xvii). Many critics see modernism as a variety of attempts to break away from Victorian conventions, from realism and Enlightenment thought. Chris Baldick, for example, remarks that "[m]odernist literature is characterized chiefly by a rejection of 19th century traditions and of their consensus between author and reader" (159). Chris Rodrigues and Chris Garratt point out that "[a]ll works that can be accommodated under the umbrella of modernism—or, as we'll see, schools of modernisms—share a relationship to the modern world which is peculiarly new and exceptional to any other previous cultural and historical conditions" (4). And T. J. Clark notes that "'Modernity' means contingency. It points to a social order which has turned from the worship of ancestors and past authorities to the pursuit of a projected future—of goods, pleasures, freedoms, forms of control over nature, or infinities of information. . . " (7).

Thus, in line with Ezra Pound's slogan "Make it new," (95),[2] the era witnesses the development of various avant-garde and experimental styles, and the emergence of groundbreaking theories in different disciplines: Sigmund Freud's "The Interpretation of Dreams" (1900) and Albert Einstein's "Theory of Relativity" (1905) provided new perspectives on human behaviour and the physical world; and other changes and revolutions in technology, politics, philosophy, visual art, music, cinema, literature, and architecture gave rise to new ways of thinking and forms of expression. In the fields of literature and art, Filippo Marinetti's "Futurist Manifesto" (1909), Marinetti and C. R. W. Nevinson's "The English Futurist Manifesto" (1914), Ezra Pound's essay "Vortex" (1914), his edited anthology on Imagism, *Des Imagistes* (1914), Tristan Tzara's "Dadaist Manifesto" (1918) and André Breton's "Surrealist Manifesto" (1924) declared the global applicability of contemporary aesthetic experiments.

The First World War also affected modernist views of society. Upon the outbreak of the war in 1914, artists and writers started to reflect on how their societies experienced it physically, psychologically and socially. The traumatic consequences of the war had different impacts on men and women since their roles were different: women did not fight in the armed forces, but they worked in munition factories and hospitals, while men battled in the fields, and many were either wounded or lost their lives. Thus, the relationship of the war to the politics of gender attracted the attention of many writers and artists including Loy, and they echoed its effects in their visual

and poetic works. As Bonnie Kime Scott comments, modernism "has wide appeal, constituting a historic shift in parameters" (4). In such an iconoclastic era—the beginning of the twentieth century—Mina Loy stands out as a revolutionary and intellectual avant-garde figure, questioning and responding to the forms and structures that shaped Modernism, and seeking to reform its attitudes through language, aesthetics and individuality.

Mina Loy: Futurist, Modernist and Feminist

Mina Loy was not only a poet and a scriptwriter, but also a painter, an actress, and a designer of lampshades and clothes; she actively became involved with almost every avant-garde movement of the early twentieth century, from Futurism and Dadaism to Surrealism. Even though Loy allied herself with visual art more than writing, and once claimed "I was never a poet" (*LLB* xii), she produced a remarkable quantity of literary works in various genres until her death. Loy's close affiliation with the literary milieu—writers and poets such as Djuna Barnes, Marianne Moore**,** Gertrude Stein, James Joyce, Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, T. S. Eliot and Tristan Tzara—undoubtedly functioned as a catalyst, shaping her poetic personality. Her literary works include about eighty poems, a Surrealist novel, *Insel* (ca. 1930), four dramas—*The Sacred Prostitute* (ca. 1914), *Two Plays*: *Collision* and *Cittàbapini* (1915), her experimental play *The Pamperers* (1916)—and about twenty prose works such as essays, memoirs, pamphlets, and reviews.[3]

Produced and published at the focal points of the transnational avant-gardes, Loy joined the Futurists with Marinetti; engaged, sometimes antagonistically, with Futurism and versions of early twentieth century feminism; was involved in the initiation of the Dada movement with Tristan Tzara and Marcel Duchamp; and later shifted to Surrealism, inspired by Andre Bréton and Giorgio de Chirico. Her artistic output consists of numerous paintings and assemblages, drawings and sketches;[4] through her close connections with the avant-garde, Loy exhibited her visual works in various exhibitions in Florence, Paris and New York. The international circle of acquaintances she was involved with in London, Florence, Paris and New York—which included the avant-garde Futurists, Dadaist and Surrealist artists such as Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Umberto Boccioni, Gabriele D'Annunzio, Giovanni Papini, Marcel Duchamp, Joan Miró, Tristan Tzara, Giorgio de Chirico, Man Ray, Peggy

Guggenheim and Jean Cocteau—had a significant effect on her artistic career (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Mina Loy with the avant-garde circle, at the Opening of Jockey Club. Paris, 1923. Front: Man Ray, Mina Loy, Tristan Tzara, Jean Cocteau Middle: Kiki de Montparnasse, Jean Heap, Margaret Anderson, Ezra Pound Back: Bill Bird (left), …, …, …, …, Hilare Hiler, Curtis Moffir (right) [5]

Loy's Biography as a Fictional Source

According to the biographical accounts, Mina Loy, born Mina Gertrude Löwy in 1882 in London, was the eldest daughter of a Jewish Hungarian father, Sigmund Löwy, and a protestant English mother, Julia Bryan Löwy. She first used the name 'Loy' in her first watercolour exhibition at the Salon d'Automne in Paris in 1914. In *Becoming Modern*, Carolyn Burke, describing Loy's adoption of a new surname for her unsteady personality, comments that "'Loy' was only the first in a series of verbal disguises. Her name changes would mark formulations of identity. The anagrammatic shifts of Löwy into Loy and later Lloyd symbolize her attempts to resolve personal crises" (Burke vi).

Loy studied art and painting in Munich and London between 1900-1902. Then, in 1903, she moved to Paris where she married Stephen Haweis, and gave birth to her first child, Oda Haweis, who died a year later. At this time, she entered the circle of modernist artists and writers, that included Gertrude Stein. In 1907, the couple moved to Florence, where Loy had two more children, Joella and Giles, one year apart. During her ten-year stay in Florence, the epicentre of the Futurists—particularly F. T.

Marinetti and Giovanni Papini, with whom she had both intellectual and romantic relationships—Loy became closely involved with Mabel Dodge Luhan, who introduced her to expatriate New Yorkers like John Reed and Carl Van Vechten, among others. With her entry to the avant-garde climate, her first published work appeared in Alfred Stieglitz's *Camera Work* and Carl Van Vechten's *The Trend* in 1914; she continued sending her poetic and prose pieces to Mabel Dodge and Carl Van Vechten to be published in the other little New York magazines during her years in Florence. Some of her early paintings were also exhibited in Rome.

After getting divorced from Haweis in 1916, Loy moved to New York, where she entered the circle of artistic and literal expatriates of World War I, including Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray, and in 1918 she married the Dadaist poet-boxer Arthur Cravan (born Fabian Avenarius Lloyd); she was welcomed by the New York bohemian circle including Alfred Kreymbourg, Marianne Moore, Man Ray, Marcel Duchamp and William Carlos Williams. However, when the couple arrived in Mexico in 1918, with Loy pregnant, Cravan disappeared, and was never seen again. In 1919, Loy sailed to England to deliver her baby, Fabienne Lloyd, and then, moved to New York in 1920. Three years later, she returned to Paris where she ran a lampshade business with Peggy Guggenheim, organized exhibitions, and befriended Henri Matisse and Picasso. Her poetic works were published in various New York magazines, and her aesthetic works were supported by Julian Levy, an art dealer and the owner of the Julien Levy Gallery in New York, who married Loy's daughter Joella in 1927. In the 1930s, Loy met the Surrealist painter Richard Oelze, who is thought to have inspired her posthumously published Surrealist novel, *Insel*. After returning to New York in 1936, she continued to write poetry and prose pieces until her death, and displayed her artworks in the exhibitions of Julien Levy. She died an American citizen in Aspen, Colorado in 1966.

The Aim and Hypothesis of this Study

In this dissertation, I regard Loy's biography and life story as fictive documents, and analyse Mina Loy's texts by way of an intertextual and semiotic reading. I perform close readings of Loy's four poems[6]—"Lions' Jaws" (1919) (See Appendix 1), "Feminist Manifesto" (1914) (See Appendix 2), "Aphorisms on Futurism" (1914) (See Appendix 3) and "Parturition" (1914) (See Appendix 4)—and interpret several of her artworks, mainly *Househunting* (1950), *Surreal Scene* (1930),

Christ on a Clothesline (1955-59) and *Ansikten* [ca. 1910s] semiotically—outside of biographical and historical accounts, to investigate the intertextual relations between her visual and literary works in connection with her other works as well as the works of her contemporaries; and, in the contexts of contemporary feminist theories, to explore how gender performativity and the fragmented female identity are developed in them, and how they problematize the ideas of Futurism. This study also aims to illuminate how the "author" as a fictive character or function rather than an actual figure can be constructed, by treating her biography as a fictionalized text and not as a normative source to refer to. Through the reading process, I closely explore the fragmented narrative personas in Loy's textual and visual representations, and navigate the connections as well as the juxtapositions between the visual and verbal signs and what they represent—without adhering to Loy's life story or its psychological effects on her art and poetry.

Projecting the intertextual connections semiotically in Loy's poetic and artistic works outside of the biographical perspective is a challenging task: "Mina Loy is not for everyone . . .'Difficult' is the word that has been most often used to describe her. Difficult as a poet and difficult as a person. And certainly difficult to place. Her works never attracted casual readers. . . In order to read her with profit, you need at least four things: patience, intelligence, experience, and a dictionary," Conover comments (*LLB* xix). Rediscovering and disentangling Loy's literary and visual representations is not easy, due to her use of unusual grammar, puzzling typography and graphic illustrations, as well as her experimentation with genres and engagement with almost every avant-garde movement of the era. However, this active performance of reading provides a much more dynamic and detailed perspective on the texts, and enables the construction of an alternative figure of "Loy," to set against the "author" which the critical tradition has constructed on the basis of biography.

Loy's Innovative Poetry

"If [Loy] could dress like a lady, why couldn't she write like one," (xvi)[7] was the view of Alfred Kreymborg, one of Loy's editors, commenting on her idiosyncratic and unique writing style; and Stephen Haweis, Loy's first husband, similarly warned his wife: "Keep writing that way, Mina Haweis, and you'll lose your good name" (xvi).[8] Loy's poetic works are known as innovative experimentation with unusual

typography, free verse and punctuation, and for the themes she investigates, such as female experience, sexuality, the female body and mind, reproduction and procreation, self-discovery and human consciousness. In her critical essay "Modern Poetry," published in *Charm* (ca. 1925), Loy defines poetry as "prose bewitched, a music made of visual thoughts, the sound of an idea," and she comments that "more than to read poetry we must listen to poetry" (*LLB* 157), echoing Ezra Pound's remark on the parallel relationship between musicality and poetry: "Poetry is a composition of words set to music. Most other definitions of it are indefensible, or metaphysical" (331).[9]

Recognition of Loy as an avant-garde poet largely depends on her early writings, which were produced between 1914 and 1920, and centered on Futurist and feminist concerns. Her poetic works were published in numerous significant New York magazines of the early 1900s such as *Camera Work*, *The Trend*, *Rogue, Dial*, *The Little Review*, *Others,* and *Transatlantic Review*, and her several prose works in *Charm* and *The Blind Man*, before being published in a book. Loy's first poetry collection was printed by Robert McAlmond's Contact Press in 1923 with its title misspelled—*Lunar Baedecker.* Then, in 1958, a new and corrected edition of her poetic works was published by Jonathan Williams: *Lunar Baedeker and Timetables*. Her poems were found shocking, and aroused considerable interest in the New York avant-garde circles due to their idiosyncratic language and expressions, striking themes, discursive rhetoric, vivid imagery considered to be obscene, and scientific terminology, all of which broke with the poetic and grammatical conventions of the era.

Gertrude Stein praised Loy's poetic artistry in *The Autobiography of Alice Toklas* declaring that "Mina Loy . . . was able to understand without the commas. She has always been able to understand" (145) In fact, Stein's experimental techniques such as lack of punctuation and plot had a significant influence on Loy's unconventional poetic style, because Loy often read and commented on Stein's unpublished manuscripts;[10] Carolyn Burke comments in her article, "Getting Spliced: Modernism and Sexual Difference," that "[Loy] was a sympathetic reader of Gertrude Stein's unpublished manuscripts. . . [and] reached conclusions much like Stein's" (106) because "Stein's writing had prepared the way for Loy's response to Futurism while Marinetti's volatility and contradictory assertions about woman's role in the transformed future stimulated her to write" (107). Ezra Pound also valued Loy's experimental poetic style; in his column in *The Little Review* in 1918*,* he used the word

"'logopoeia' to characterize her poetic language, defining her poetry as 'poetry that is akin to nothing but language, which is a dance of intelligence among words and ideas'" (55) (Figure 2). "Pound saw Marianne Moore and Loy as equals," Conover comments in *LLB* (xix); Pound ranked Loy among the most promising writers, and wrote to Marianne Moore in a letter: "Also, entre nooz: is there anyone in America besides you, Bill [William Carlos Williams], and Mina Loy who can write anything of interest in verse? And as for prose???" (167-168).[11]

Figure 2. Jean Heap, Mina Loy, Ezra Pound, *Little Review* Reunion, ca. 1923[12]

Loy's early texts engage with the literary and artistic movements which began with Futurism. The Futurist movement, launched in Italy with the publication in a French newspaper, *Le Figaro,* of Marinetti's 1909 "The Manifesto of Futurism," fascinated poets, sculptors, musicians, and painters in the early twentieth century, and it continued with the parallel movements that emerged in England and Russia. In his suggestive book, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*, Renato Poggioli claims that Futurism "belongs to all the avant-gardes and not only to the one named for it" (68-69). Strongly influenced by Cubism's form and energy, Futurism had a great influence on succeeding art styles such as Dadaism, Vorticism and Surrealism. Futurist poetry served as the first avant-garde model of questing for liberation from the constraints of the traditional poetic and grammatical forms; it enabled poets to experiment with free verse, and manipulate rhythm, syntax and typography by challenging the conventions of their

time. Marinetti, in "The Manifesto of Futurism," declares "the essential elements" of the Futurist poetry to be "courage, boldness, and rebelliousness," (49) and in the "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature," he prescribes Futurist literature as a form which has to "destroy syntax, scatter nouns at random. . . use verbs in the infinitive [and] abolish all punctuation" (119-120).

Inspired by the revolutionary style and energy of the movement, Loy performed Futurist strategies in her earlier poems, and commenced her literary career, as Burke comments in her *Becoming Modern,* "as the only English-language Futurist poet, even though she denied membership in that band of aesthetic radicals and later satirized their theories and behaviour" (106). In pursuit of searching for her individual and intellectual freedom as a Futurist poet, she "was intrigued by Marinetti's *parole-in-libertà*, or words-set-free, a poetic form. . . which liberated language from the patterns of linearity [and] found herself responding to his writing's dynamism" (Burke 160). Virginia Kouidis notes: "Within each stanza [she] creates the inner movement of the scene through typography, colloquial speech, verbs, and small-scale juxtapositions. . . Marinetti's literary theories seem influential in her creation of motion" (160). Loy's Futurist tendencies can be seen in her "Aphorisms on Futurism"—"HERE are the fallow-lands of mental spatiality that Futurism will clear—" (Loy, *LLB* 152)—where she stresses the psychic effects of Futurism that will make changes and lead people to self-realisation.

Loy's works shift from Futurism to Dadaism, a transformation which coincides with her moving to New York, where the Dada circle formed, and where she met her second husband, a poet-boxer and a forerunner of Dada, Arthur Cravan, who was the publisher and editor, between 1911-1915, of the critical Dada magazine, *Maintenant*: *A Journal of Contemporary Dada Writing and Art*.[13] Tristan Tzara, who launched the movement with his *Dada Manifesto* (1918), places her—naming her "Mina Lloyd"—in his "List of 'Presidents of the Dada Movement'" (*Dada-Almanach*, Berlin, 1920), along with Marcel Duchamp, Arthur Cravan, André Breton, Francis Picabia, Jean Arp and Alfred Stieglitz.[14] The literary climate of Dada was more open to women artists: Loy also contributed to a Dadaist New York journal, *The Blind Man*, initiated by Marcel Duchamp and published by Henri-Pierre Roché in New York in 1917; two pieces of her prose were published in *The Blind Man*: "In . . . Formation," printed in the first, 'Independents' Number' issue of the magazine[15] alongside the photograph of

Duchamp's *Fountain,* and "O Marcel- - - otherwise I also Have Been to Louise's," printed in its second issue.[16] Some of Loy's artworks are also recognized as Dadaist by art critics: her two large collage pieces of artworks, for example, *Christ on a Clothesline* (ca. 1955-59) and *Communal Cot* (1950), are housed in "Daughters of New York Dada" at the Francis Naumann Fine Art Gallery, New York, along with her contemporaries.

In fact, Loy's works are not limited in their contexts to Futurism and Dadaism. Their focus also shifts to themes such as investigations of the unconscious human psyche, the disintegrated body and mind, and dreams and free associations; her later textual and visual representations, such as her posthumously published Surrealist novel, *Insel*, set in 1930s bohemian Paris, and some visual works such as *Surreal Scene* (1930), which depict fragmented bodies and psyches, exhibit many of the features of Surrealism.

Loy's works' engagement with various aesthetic and literary styles made her poetic and artistic products stunning and elusive pieces of the early twentieth century; however, most of her poetic and artistic works gained recognition only posthumously. Roger Conover points out that "[f]or a brief period early in the twentieth century, Mina Loy was the Belle of the American Poetry Ball. But by the end of the century, most had forgotten she was there at all" (*LLB* xi). "It is not by accident that [Loy's] work has been misplaced. . . It is easiest simply to ignore her. . . Once discovered, if her poems do not immediately repel, they possess" (xix). Thus, she was almost invisible for decades, and remained partly in the shadows of critical notice: Carolyn Burke notes that "Mina Loy was rediscovered and reforgotten for decades. The recent revival of her work owes much to [Kenneth] Rexroth, who carried on a one-man campaign to make it available" (*Becoming Modern* vi). In his 1944 essay, Rexroth praises Loy's uniqueness: "It is hard to say why she has been ignored. Perhaps it is due to her extreme exceptionalism" (195). This uniqueness is precisely what makes Loy worthy of attention today: she was at the center of the groundbreaking enthusiasm of the early 20th century British and American avant-gardes, and her works in many ways anticipate the arguments of second- and third-wave feminisms.

Loy's Early Textual Works

Loy's first published work, "Aphorisms on Futurism," in which she drafted the Futurist rhetoric in her own version, is a long prose-poem that appeared in the January 1914 issue of Alfred Stieglitz's influential New York magazine, *Camera Work*, when she was living in an expatriate community in Florence. It breaks down the barrier between prose and poetry with its typographical style, telegraphic language and polemical rhetoric, and seems to be the first Futurist manifesto written by an English woman. However, contrary to the Futurist declarations glorifying technology and war, Loy's aphorisms focus on mental liberation, the expansion of individual consciousness, and human potential. Thus in "Getting Spliced," Carolyn Burke defines Loy "as a futurist prophet, proclaiming that the social and artistic conventions of the past are inadequate to address the complexity of modern life" (106). After the publication of "Aphorisms on Futurism," "Loy had no trouble getting her poems published in New York. She is famous now," (631) comments Rob Sheffield, describing the time when her poems started to emerge in the New York magazines. Loy's "Sketch of a Man on a Platform," "Three Moments in Paris," "One O'Clock At Night, "Café du Neant" and "Virgins Plus Curtains Minus Dots" were printed in 1915 in Allen Norton's *Rogue*,

Initially following Futurist ideologies, Loy's poetic works revolve around femininity. Her idiosyncratic prose-poem "Feminist Manifesto," penned within a few months following the publication of the "Aphorisms on Futurism," on November 15, 1914, and sent in draft form to Mabel Dodge Luhan, appears as a declaration written for and to women. Natalya Lusty remarks that for Loy, "Feminist Manifesto" was "a piece she immediately sensed had no place in established political ideologies and which perhaps accounts for it remaining unpublished in her lifetime" (251). "Feminist Manifesto" starts with the narrator's declaration crying out, "The feminist movement as at present instituted is **Inadequate**" (Loy, *LLB* 153), and it sees women as being at a critical point of a transformation—"on the eve of a devastating psychological upheaval" (Loy 153). In her letter to Carl Van Vechten (ca. 1914-15), Loy summarizes her concerns: "What I feel now are feminist politics—But in a cosmic way that may not fit anywhere—" (187).[17]

"Feminist Manifesto" has generated various interpretations from Loy's critics. According to Suzanne Zelazo,

> Loy's manifesto was a response to her contemporaries, such as Marinetti and his propagation of futurism, as well as Pound and Wyndham Lewis who called for the 'Blasting and Bombadiering' of Victorian social mores in their vorticist manifesto. Loy overturned their masculinist and individualist polemics by instead promoting ideals of 'equality' and 'collectivity.' (56)

While Zelazo evaluates the text as a polemical response written against the Futurist and Vorticist ideologies, Aimee Pozorski suggests Mina Loy was an "Eugenists Mistress and Ethnic Mother" (41), and comments that "Loy's strong rhetoric involving 'race-responsibility' in 'Feminist Manifesto,' and echoes of the eugenicist, Italian nationalist agenda, seem to belie an ambivalent understanding of her own ethnic identity and the racist household in which she was raised" (51). Thus, Pozorski relates Loy's "Feminist Manifesto" to the author's own childhood memories as well as her own racial and expatriate culture as it ". . . embodies the tensions between her childhood experiences, her own racial heritage, and the Futurists' influence which reemerge to haunt her like a spectre" (51). In contrast to these perspectives, my engagement with the text in my second chapter, considers "Feminist Manifesto" on its own terms, without reducing it to being merely an expression of expatriate and childhood influences on the psychology of the author.

"Aphorisms on Futurism," which is the focus of my third chapter, is the first Futurist manifesto written by an English woman; "Feminist Manifesto" is the first feminist one. In fact, "the French/Belgium poet Valentine de Saint-Point was the first woman to make a rejoinder to Marinetti, and the one most related to Loy's work" (Jaskosky 349). Saint-Point wrote two Futurist-Feminist manifestos in French: "Manifesto of the Futurist Woman" (1912) and "Futurist Manifesto of Lust" (1913).[18] There are thematic similarities in the manifestos of both writers. Helen Jaskosky contrasts Loy's "Feminist Manifesto" and Saint-Point's "Futurist Manifesto of Lust" as follows:

> While both women maintain that sexuality and lust are natural to both women and men, they differ on the underlying human nature which that sexuality expresses. . . Saint-Point's focus is on sexual energies, with the likely result of these energies left very much in the abstract, Loy's is on female self-realisation and the fulfilment of 'race-responsibility' through maternity. (188)[19]

Loy's "Parturition," an illustrative description of a childbirth, was printed in the October issue of Carl Van Vechten's *The Trend* in 1914; it captured the critical interest of the avant-garde circle, as it was the first poem composed about a woman's

physical experience of childbirth. In "Parturition," the physical and mental fluctuations—"contractions" and "expansions" (Loy, *LLB* 4)—occurring during the act of a woman's childbirth are depicted through various images, as well as through the poem's unconventional typography and style, its unpredictable textual gaps and hiatuses, and its idiosyncratic punctuation. Jashuq Weiner emphasizes the metaphysical sense embedded in "Parturition" as

> express[ing] her continual struggle, like the blind youth's, to live and play her music . . . [U]sing a contracting and expanding free-verse measure to suggest mimetically the rhythms of labor, Loy finds that giving birth contains an essential knowledge, 'the pin-point nucleus of being' [Loy, *LLB* 4]. Her vision reveals a hidden world. And it was this kind of knowledge she looked for and found in the work of other modernists. (158)

Weiner notes that it unveils a hidden world, which includes the knowledge foreshadowing the views of Modernism; my analysis of "Parturition" considers the nature of this "knowledge" as it develops within the text.

Loy's scandalous poem, "Songs to Joannes," (later converted to a thirty-four-poem collage, "Love Songs," in 1923) is another example of her use of collage and free-verse techniques to explore women's experiences of romantic and sexual relationships; the first four sections of the poem were printed in the first issue of Alfred Kreymborg's *Others* in July 1915. "[She] was perceived as poetry's deviant daughter following the appearance of 'Love Songs'" (xvi), Roger Conover remarks in his *LLB*. The poem is usually thought to be a product of Loy's failed romantic affair with the Futurist Giovanni Papini. In the same year, "At the Door of the House," which depicts a Tarot reading session and the desperate state of a woman in love, was printed in the *Others* anthology and "Brancusi's Golden Bird" in *Dial,* alongside T. S. Eliot's *Waste Land*.

In "Human Cylinders," published in *Others: An Anthology of the New Verse* in 1917—and also later in Alfred Kreymborg's *Lyric America* in the 1960s—Loy's narrator ironizes mechanical relationships between people and criticizes the Futurists' automatic and emotionless views. In its opening stanza, the speaker describes human beings as cylindrical—non-biological—entities moving together with a lack of vitality and interaction; as they feel themselves singular and separate within their relationships, there is no "communion" in their minds and spirits. In her *Becoming Modern*, Burke describes it as "a poem from the period of Mina's [failed] affairs with Papini [which] evokes the isolation of lovers in their 'mechanical interactions'" (182).

In the second decade of the twentieth-century, Loy's sensational poem "Lion's Jaws" was published in the September-December 1920 issue of *The Little Review,* edited by Margaret Anderson. According to Conover, "'Lions' Jaws' is [Loy's] last balance sheet of Futurist business" (*LLB* 187). Signed with the anagrammatic names, "Nima Lyo, alias Anim Yol, alias Imna Oly" (Loy 49), this long poem satirically depicts the competition between Raminetti, Gabrunzio and Bapini—these are thinly disguised names of the male Italian Futurists. Loy's narrator describes herself as the "excepted woman" (Loy, *LLB* 47) of Futurism, and depicts the history of the rise and decline of the movement in terms of male power struggles; she also critiques these struggles in terms of male Futurists' attitudes towards women. The poem responds to Italian Futurism by defining it as "flabbergast[ism]" (Loy, *LLB* 47), ironizes the way the Futurists compete with each other to seduce women, and exposes how they view women in society. Loy's "Ulysses," written in honor of James Joyce, was printed in *The Little Review* in 1923, and "Gertrude Stein," in which she praised Stein's compositional techniques, with two sequential essays in *Transatlantic Review* in 1924.

Loy's Later Textual Works

Of Loy's numerous poems written after 1925, only a few were printed during her lifetime. "The Widow's Jazz," which was assumed to have been penned in 1927 upon the disappearance or accidental death of her husband, Arthur Cravan, is an elegy first published in *Pagany: A Native Quarterly* in 1931. One of Loy's major works, "Anglo-Mongrels and the Rose," is "a long autobiographical [and narrative] poem that [Ezra] Pound called a free-verse novel" (Weiner 155); it was published in *The Little Review* between 1923-1925. According to Melanie Mortensen, "this poem illustrates Loy's historically-bound satire of her 'mongrel' identity" (1) and "treats [Loy's] heritage and upbringing in a mixed Jewish and Christian household; the effect of this intermingling of religion and ethnicity, or what was then considered race, is integral to understanding . . . her autobiographical expression of alienation" (i). Elizabeth Frost also proposes that, in "Anglo-Mongrels and the Rose," Mina Loy "seems to cast her own life-history in a deterministic mood, tracing the biological inheritance of the 'mongrel' Ova, the poem's central character" (44).[20] With regard to the style of the poem, Helen Jaskosky notes that:

> "Anglo-Mongrels and the Rose" displays futurist devices of disparate images, fragmented syntax, and minimal punctuation, with white space, capitalization, and dashes to indicate emphasis and pause. Loy's characteristic method of working through a collage-like juxtaposition of images, abstractions and allusions creates a dense, multi-layered text which elaborates and synthesizes connections among the personal, cultural, social, and moral. (350-351)

Like her earlier poems, Loy's four dramas—produced between 1914 and 1916—also portray her views on the Futurist movement as well as women's role within the movement. Her long incomplete play, *The Sacred Prostitute*, consists of fragmented—scripted and typed—manuscripts.[21] It was only printed posthumously, in 2011, in Dalkey Archive's *Stories and Essays of Mina Loy*. It appears to be a battle of the sexes describing the collision of two allegorical personas, "Futurism" and "Love," in the form of a satirical comedy; women are associated with love, and Futurism with men: "In *The Sacred Prostitute*, Futurism declares 'Let's identify ourselves with machinery!'" (26).[22] *Collision* and *Cittàbapini* (1915)—translated as "Bapini's City" from Italian—were printed together as *Two Plays* in *The Rogue* in 1915;[23] this is a one-and-a-half-page play which critiques the Futurists' violent and misogynist tendencies.

Loy's plays appear to be satirical parodies to be staged in a Futurist theatre; the scripts are composed using Futurist techniques of style such as telegraphic language, irregular textual gaps, em-dashes, and lack of dialogues. At the same time, these plays also ironize the Futurist leaders: as Aimee Pozorski suggests, "'Sacred Prostitute' personifies 'Futurism' and 'nature' as characters and dramatizes cultural understanding of [Futurists'] ideas through curt and sarcastic dialogue" (66).

Similarly, as Julie Schmid notes in "Mina Loy's Futurist Theatre," "Loy's *Two Plays* reflects Loy's interest in a futurist aesthetic . . . [and] exemplifies futurist theatre in their use of lighting and kinetic scenery, as well through their innovative use of language" (3). Schmid also compares the two plays in terms of how they perceive the Futurist world: "While *Collision* celebrates a dehumanized, mechanical world, Loy's *Cittàbapini* presents a more ominous view of a futurist dystopia" (4). *The Pamperers* (1916), published in the inaugural "Modern Forms" section of *The Dial* in 1920, "[also] satirizes the futurist movement, commenting on their bourgeois ideals and their treatment of women" (Schmid 3). However, in contrast to *Two Plays*, Loy's *The Pamperers* "centers around the confrontation between Woman and the Futurist Artist"

(Schmid 5). In December 1916, Loy starred with William Carlos Williams in Alfred Kreymborg's one-act play, *Lima Beans*, staged in New York (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Mina Loy and William Carlos Williams starring in Alfred Kreymborg's *Lima Beans*, in December 1916, New York[24]

Loy's later prose works include about twenty pieces such as essays, memoirs, pamphlets, and reviews. Her only novel is *Insel*, written in the 1930s; it chronicles the Surrealist spirit circulating in cafés in the early 1930s' Parisian artistic world, and is often assumed by the critics to have depicted Loy's romantic relationship with the Surrealist painter, Richard Oelze. As Sandeep Parmar comments, "*Insel*'s narrative consists of a series of encounters between Mrs. Jones (the character based on Loy) and Insel (Oelze)" (232). Also, according to Andrew Gaedtke, "when [Loy] met [Oelze], she was struck by the impression that the emaciated figure seemed to barely hold together, physically and psychologically. . . [this] ambiguously maternal, romantic and perhaps *psychotherapeutic* relationship that ensued would become the material for Loy's posthumously published novel *Insel*" (143). Gaedtke also suggests that *Insel* is a "Clinical Fantasy. . . a valuable resource for understanding modernism's relation to madness" (143).

Literary criticism on Loy focuses on her poetry, particularly *Lunar Baedecker* (1912) and *Lunar Baedeker and Time-Tables* (1958), the only two books of hers that were published during her lifetime. Her works have been discussed intermittently; most

critics have linked Loy's biography to her poetry and art. Virginia Kouidis's comment is typical:

> Mina Loy incorporated much of [her] exceptional biography in her poetry. Her first poems, examinations of the injustices of woman's life, are rooted in her effort to break with her repressive Victorian heritage; and the child-heroine Ova of 'Anglo-Mongrels' enacts the female-artist's search for self-and-world understanding. Poems on art and artists are drawn from [her] friendships with the Decadents, the Futurists, James Joyce, Constantin Brancusi, and Jules Pascin. (171)

However, throughout my analyses of Loy's works, I perform explorations of the texts outside of these historical aspects, and without treating them simply as autobiographical sources. It is my argument that biographical approaches do not do justice to the complexities of Loy's unique poetry, and that a more productive understanding would be created by considering these texts in their semiotic contexts, by investigating the intertextual connections between them, and exploring the construction of narrative voices in them.

Loy's Major Visual Works:

Even though Loy's recent reputation primarily stands on her poetical works, her paintings, collages, sculptures, drawings and sketches, which began in the early 1900s, continued until the early 1950s. Engaged with almost each artistic movement of the era, her bohemian illustrations contributed to the early history of modern art and were exhibited both in the Futurist exhibitions in Rome and in the Dadaist and Surrealist expositions in New York. Among her well-known paintings and assemblages are *Teasing a Butterfly* (1902)*, L'aube (1902), Fille En Robe Rouge* (1913), *Stars* (1933), *Surreal Scene* (1930), *Hourglass* (1941), *Househunting* (1950)*, Communal Cot* (1950), *No Parking* (1950), *Christ on a Clothesline* (1955-59) and her drawings and sketches, *La Maison En Papier* (1906)*, L'Amore Dorlote* (1906)*, Consider Your Grandmother's Stays* (1916), *Constantin Brancusi* (1924)*, Man Ray* (ca. 1925) and *Julien* (1938).

Two of Loy's drawings, which I interpret in detail here and within the intertextual connections of related works, namely *La Maison En Papier (Paper House)* and *L'Amore Dorlote par les Belles Dames (Love Pampered by Beautiful Women)*, portray gendered, ungendered and effeminate representations. *La Maison En Papier* suggests homosexuality through naked male figures while *La Maison En Papier* also

depicts a naked effeminate man situated between women who are dressed in Victorian-style floating robes.

Communal Cot[25] is an assemblage depicting a number of bandaged homeless men hovering around, and *Househunting* is an illustration of three-dimensional objects fixed on a canvas; the head of the central female figure is in the form of a thought-bubble containing—and perhaps trapped in—stereotypical gendered images of female domesticity. *Christ on a Clothesline* is a dramatic illustration in the context of a religious architectural symbolism, of an old, cadaverous Christ; this image which was also pictured on the cover of the fifth edition of *Maintenant: A Journal of Contemporary Dada Writing & Art,* in 2012.[26] *Surreal Scene* is a collage and gouache composition of three-dimensional objects on a peach background depicting tableaux surrounding a nude female figure; the objects scattered randomly around the central woman's image illustrate the states of transformations and entrapments.

Figure 4. Marcel Duchamp inspects Mina Loy's assemblage, *Bums Praying*, 1950s[27]

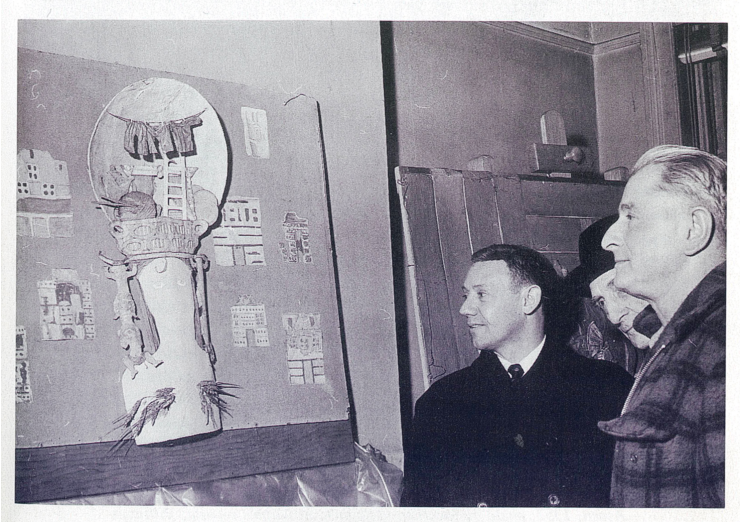


Figure 5. Mina Loy's assemblage *Househunting*, as photographed in her apartment, 1950s with David Mann, Marcel Duchamp and Alex Bossom[28]

Suzanne Zelazo, in her article "Altered Observations of Modern Eyes," comments that "[m]uch of Loy's visual art explores the fundamentals of the relational complexities between matter and emotional and sensory data, an examination that is most clearly developed in her innovative use of assemblage" (61). Loy's paintings and assemblages were valued by prominent artists of the era such as Marcel Duchamp (Figure 4 and Figure 5).

Rediscovery of Mina Loy's Works

The scholarly neglect of Mina Loy ended in the 1980s; in recent decades, critics, scholars and publishers have begun to rediscover and reevaluate the works, and she has come to be considered a unique female figure and a significant feminist voice among the circles of avant-garde art and literature. In particular, Loy's works have aroused the interest of current scholars of modernism and feminism. Roger Conover's publications on Loy's poetic and prose works, *The Lost Lunar Baedeker* (1996) and *The Last Lunar Baedeker* (1982), have brought her reputation back as an extravagant modernist figure. Virginia Koudis's *Mina Loy: American Modernist Poet* (1980) is the first book-length critical study of Loy's writing, and it addresses a wide audience. Carolyn Burke's prominent biographical book, *Becoming Modern: The Life of Mina Loy* (1996), is a multi-directional work which meticulously traces Loy's childhood,

her memories and her surviving children; it provides a fundamental background for her renewed appraisal and rediscovery. As Joshua Weiner comments, "[Burke's book] is a fine example of a feminist biography—that is, one that continually asks, what was it like, not just for Mina Loy, but for a woman to circulate in an early twentieth-century avant-garde so dominated by men, trying to make herself into a modern literary force" (152-153). Shreiber and Keith Tuma's *Mina Loy: Woman and Poet* (1998) is a collection of essays written by Loy scholars; it introduces an overview of Loy's personal, literary and artistic life. The most recent book published on Loy is Sarah Hayden's *Curious Disciplines: Mina Loy and Avant-Garde Artisthood* (2018); this charts Loy's connections with the early twentieth-century artistic movements—Futurism, Dadaism, Surrealism: Hayden sees Loy as an avant-garde theorist asserting her artistic identity, and examines how these movements shaped her artistry "in the era of 'Degenerate Art'" (175).

Theoretical Frames of Reference and their Relation to the Texts

While Loy's visual and textual works have typically been interpreted in the contexts of the author's biography and historical background, my own readings put these aside, based on the work of Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault, which has critically questioned the principles that the critical tradition relies on to construct and maintain such an "author." In "The Death of the Author," Barthes recognizes that "[t]he image of literature to be found in ordinary culture is tyrannically centred on the author, his person, his life, his tastes, his passions . . ." (Barthes 168). However, this traditional view of the author, he argues, ignores the fact that the act of writing is itself a performative act, by which the voice of the author fragments into the multiple possible meanings of the text. Because of this fragmentation or "death" of the author, the original voice cannot be reconstructed, except as a fiction. The multiplicity of possible meanings in the text's language is manifested as the constantly shifting, contradictory voice of the text, which Barthes calls the "modern scriptor"—and which is not limited to the written accounts of the writer's personal life and experiences (which are also interpretations and texts to be interpreted):

> In complete contrast, the modern scriptor is born simultaneously with the text, is in no way equipped with a being preceding or exceeding the writing, is not the subject with the book as predicate; there is no other time than that of the enunciation and every text is eternally written *here* and *now*. . . Succeeding the Author, the scriptor no longer

> bears within him passions, humours, feelings, impressions, but rather this immense dictionary from which he draws a writing that can know no halt; life never does more than imitate the book, and the book itself is only a tissue of signs, as imitation that is lost, infinitely deferred. (170-171)

Foucault takes Barthes' argument a step further: in "What is An Author?," he describes the author as "a historical figure at the crossroads of a certain number of events" (Foucault 204), and suggests that "we should locate the space left empty by the author's disappearance" (200). This means that since we cannot access the mind or motivations of the text's writer (it has "disappeared"), it is simplistic to attribute meaning in the text to the writer's intention: the author, or *author function,* as Foucault calls it, is a "historical" thing which is constructed by readers as a "figure" or representation of what they have concluded by reading the text in their own historical time frame:

> [t]he author's name is not, therefore, just a proper name among others. . . an author's name is not simply an element in a discourse . . . Its presence is functional in that it serves as a means of classification. . . the name of the author remains at the contours of texts—separating one from the other, defining their form, and characterizing their mode of existence within a society and culture. (200)

From this perspective, the narrative voice of a text is not a fixed concept; it evolves as the reading proceeds, and invites the reader to actively participate in the process of reading, which opens up multiple possibilities of interpretation. This understanding underlies my engagement with Loy's works: in both her textual and artistic works, I trace this shifting narrative voice, and explore how it evolves by multiplying and/or assembling, through the additional performative process of interpretation.

Loy's textual and visual works are full of ambiguous signs and symbols; thus, investigating the layers of meaning between signs as well as intertextual significations calls for a semiotic analysis. This offers a wide range of opportunities for opening up the texts, which go through countless transformations during the reader's process of interpretation. In his *Course in General Linguistics*, Ferdinand de Saussure explained semiotics (or "semiology") as follows:

> Language is a system of signs that express ideas, and is therefore comparable to a system of writing, the alphabet of deaf-mutes, military signals, etc. But it is the most important of all these systems. A science that studies the life of signs within society is conceivable it would be part of social psychology and consequently of general

> psychology; I shall call it semiology (from Greek, semeion 'sign). Semiology would show what constitutes signs, what laws govern them. (16)

Saussure's theory deals with the "arbitrary" relations between the signifier and the signified, which are determined by cultural and social conventions in a particular system of signs. Peirce, in his *Collected Writings*, takes this a step further, classifying signs into three groups—symbolic, iconic and indexical: a *symbol* is "a sign which refers to the object that it denotes by virtue of a law, usually an association of general ideas, which operates to cause the symbol to be interpreted as referring to that object" (2.249), while an *iconic* sign represents its object "mainly by its [physical] similarity" (2.276). An *indexical* sign, on the other hand, is distinguished from symbolic and iconic signs by the non-arbitrariness of the relation it expresses between the signifier and the signified: Peirce suggests that an indexical sign is connected to its object "as a matter of fact" (4.447). This entire system of classification, he stresses, depends on the processes by which we relate signs with each other to produce meaning: "[w]e only think in signs" (2302), but things become signs only when we invest them with meanings through our interpretation. The performative relation between the interpreter and what he or she is interpreting is what Peirce calls the interpretant: "Nothing is a sign unless it is interpreted as a sign" (2.172). Each of these types of signs operates in a slightly different way, and Peirce's classification of types of signs, understood through the activity of the interpretant, provides a way of understanding the interpretive links between visual signs in Loy's artworks.

These theoretical frames of reference are all engaged in my readings of the texts. Loy's artistic and textual works subvert traditional narrative techniques, and undermine any characterization of an author's original intention through shifting narrative voices, which open up multiple perspectives for creative interpretation. Instead of following a linear structure of narration, the texts employ a complex and multi-faceted narrative structure: the personas multiply in fragmented forms, and reassemble, or sometimes have a dialogue with themselves; or the narration of the poem shifts between the narrative voices.

Thus in "Lions' Jaws," the narrator incorporates herself as the third person as well as a visual representation in the poem, and multiplies herself into different anagrams—"Nima Loy, alias Anim Yol, alias / Imna Oly" (Loy 49): these are mostly regarded by critics as the permutated names of the author; however, the narrative voice

also shows herself as the first person "I," and makes judgements about both herself and the other personas by actively taking part in the poem. And finally, in the last section, the *Envoi*, the narrator inserts herself into the story as one of the anagrammatical names (Imna Oly) and satirically judges one of the characters depicted in the poem: "Mrs. Krar Standing Hail" (Loy, *LLB* 50)—an anagrammatical name which critics, such as Suzanne W. Churchill, generally decode as "Mrs. Stan Harding Krayl" and take as a reference to a woman who had an affair in Florence with Stephen Haweis, Loy's first husband— but which, I argue, refers to yet another floating persona.

"Feminist Manifesto" similarly reflects a complex narrative voice, shifting between—reasserting and sometimes contradicting—the spaces of the masculine logic of Futurism and modernist feminism; this voice also performs its arguments mentally and corporeally, both thematically, through its intertextual relations with two of Loy's artworks, *Househunting* and *Christ on a Clothesline*, and through its fragmentary style, which embodies an unusual typography, written in various sizes, lacks standard punctuation, and, with its use of em-dashes, reveals ruptures appearing in the thought process as well as the language of the persona.

Loy's "Aphorisms on Futurism" proceeds in a didactic tone, using imperative forms, through which the narrator is addressing the audience, mostly with the second-person pronoun; however, the narrative structure from time to time turns into the self-dialogue of the narrator with herself in the form of an "interior monologue," which also reveals her thinking process. The narrator also uses the first-person plural, "we" (Aphorism 46), suggesting a collective voice.

In "Parturition," even though the narrator mostly uses the first-person singular, the "I" multiplies into three different personas—artistic, textual and maternal—and finally all three voices transcend their struggles, exceed their boundaries, and merge at one point after having undergone a metamorphic process of individual and "cosmic reproduction" (Loy, *LLB* 6), to attain a higher level of consciousness. In this way, each narrator is transformed into an expanded version of themselves through the works they produce: a mother creates a child, an artist an artwork and a poet a poem. Each persona has had a single identity at the beginning, but they eventually become fragmented, as they duplicate and mirror themselves. Through this identity transformation, they

become the self-creators of themselves as well as of the universe—as synecdochical personas.

And Loy's *Surreal Scene* is a multi-levelled visual discourse; investigating it from a semiotic perspective enables its visual signs to be related with each other as well as with Loy's other artworks and the selected works of her contemporaries, through a network of chains of signification.

The process of identity formation and reformation in these texts takes place through the gendered performances of the multiple narrative voices; and this dynamic performative of Loy's textual and visual works is echoed in my own performance of articulating them through a narrative of interpretation. As Judith Butler comments, in her essay on "Performative Act and Gender Constitution," gender "is constructed through specific corporeal acts" (521). In *Surreal Scene*, for example, the nude figure multiplies into different personas, and performatively constructs her identities in fragmented and reassembled forms; my own reading rearticulates these in a performative act analogous to the Surrealist technique of the *Cadavre Exquis*. The word "performative" is therefore used in this thesis in one of three ways, depending on the context: to refer to the performative act by which the writer performs her death in the act of writing; to describe the subversive act of gender performative; and to characterize my act of reading, in which these are constructed.

The gendered performative manifests itself in Loy's texts thematically through motherhood, procreation and pregnancy, which are central themes in works such as "Feminist Manifesto," "Parturition" and *Surreal Scene*. Susanne Zelazo comments on Loy's embodying maternity in these three works:

> Much of Loy's work seeks to reclaim and celebrate the female and in particular the maternal body in all its sensory expressivity. As in *Surreal Scene*, Loy's harrowing although empowering poem about giving birth, "Parturition," prioritizes maternity. Similarly, her "Feminist Manifesto" is an attempt to assert feminine creative (even artistic) power. In fact, Loy's manifesto can be more provocatively understood as a celebration of maternity, a means of undermining the subjugation occasioned by patriarchal ideas of femininity. (63)

There are scattered references to these themes in other texts as well; for example, in "Lions' Jaws," one of the multiplied personas, "Nima Lyo" (Loy 49), satirically defines herself as "the lurid mother to [the Futurists'] flabbergast child" (Loy 49).

These works in particular raise the central question of female identity in connection with maternity. Julia Kristeva, in her *New Maladies of the Soul*, defines the

gestation process as a "natural psychosis" (220), and suggests that the problem is to find a way of "motherhood" for a woman that does not deprive of herself. Kristeva's approach to the problem links signs to maternity, and she develops the conception of a "semiotic chora" as a space dominated by mother's body, and—based on the Greek etymology—as a term of origin, out of which everything in this universe emerges. She "borrows the term ['chora'] from Plato's *Timaeus*, where it is meant to suggest the womb or receptacle" (Buchsbaum 10). For Plato, Kristeva explains in "Politique de la Littérature," the chora is "a mobile receptacle of mixing, of contraction and movement, vital to nature's functioning before the teleological intervention of God, and corresponding to the mother" (57). However, the "chora" for her is a more complicated space, which "becomes a precondition for creating the first measurable bodies" (57), and functions as the infinite potential of maternity. In her chapter on "The Subject in Process," Kristeva explains the process of the "semiotic chora" as "[T]he drives that extract the body from its homogeneous shell and turn it into a space linked to the outside, they are forces which mark out the chora in process" (143). Noëlle McAfee, in her *Julia Kristeva: Essential Guide for Literary Studies*, notes that Kristeva problematizes the pregnancy experience, seeing it as a paradoxical event that has to be reconfigured:

> Modern women who choose motherhood seem to be in bind. Kristeva wants to find a way out of this problem that does not call for women to choose between motherhood and their own desires, but that, instead, reconstitutes our representation of motherhood. The difficulty, though, is that the experience of pregnancy, labor, birth, and maternity is in fact wrenching and painful. (83)

In other words, as a feminine act and as a "space in which the meaning that is produced is semiotic" (19),[29] the "semiotic chora" is not a fixed concept, but a more complex perpetual motion circulating to "become" and "renew."

"Feminist Manifesto," however, raises another question: to what extent the act of "choice" and "motherhood" are conditioned by manufactured consent to stereotypical naturalized roles centered around social structures of love and desire. I would argue that all of the solutions suggested by Loy's narrator depend on a woman's mastering herself psychologically; the last section of the manifesto calls for women to "destroy in themselves" (Loy, *LLB* 155) the emotions and feelings that have been socially constructed through manufactured consent: "the desire to be loved. . . [t]he desire for comfortable protection. . . honour, grief, sentimentality, pride &

consequently jealousy" (Loy, *LLB* 156). In other words, these social expectations around "sex and so-called love must be reduced to its initial element" (Loy, *LLB* 156)—i.e. woman's authentic sexual desire—and "detached from it" (Loy, *LLB* 156). The text ends with a call for woman to regenerate society by "destroy[ing]—for the sake of her **self respect**" (Loy, *LLB* 156)—the patriarchal religious belief that sex is a sin, and to realize, "in defiance of superstition that there is **nothing impure in sex—except** in the mental attitude to it" (Loy, *LLB* 156).

In my reading of "Parturition," I relate the childbirth experience and metamorphic process of the female persona to Bracha Ettinger's theory of the "matrixial." Ettinger focuses on an individual's experience of being born from the womb of the m/other, and suggests it is a "matrix," not just an organ standing for an opposition to or a replacement for the phallic, but a more complex apparatus symbolizing the feminine. Drawing upon the aesthetic, social and ethical implications of the matrixial space, Ettinger critiques how the concept of the womb is perceived by the society, and introduces matrixial "metramorphosis" as "a process of inter-psychic communication and transformation that transgresses the borders of the individual subject, and takes place between several entities" (77). This approach is anticipated in Loy's narrator's "exceeding its boundaries" (Loy, *LLB* 4) in "Parturition." In "Lions' Jaws," Loy's narrator ironizes the Futurists' ("Latin littérateurs[']") (Loy, *LLB* 47) fantasy of asexual reproduction ("Man's immediate agamogenesis") (Loy, *LLB* 47), and that they do not need "women's wombs" (Loy, *LLB* 47) to create a living being, showing how the Futurists reject the "matrixial" space as a symbol of femininity. And in Marinetti's *Mafarka the Futurist: An African Novel,* which I discuss in its intertextual connection to *Surreal Scene,* hypermasculinist and misogynist Futurists exclude women's wombs from the procreation process, and rather, suggest agamogenesis to continue the race-generation. In contrast, in Loy's *Surreal Scene*, the nude female figure, whose uterus is decorated with lily flowers, and symbolizes femininity and female reproduction, exceeds her boundaries by circulating between her own identity and her reconstituted forms, which fragment into further multiple forms and reassemble, in an evolutionary process.

Organization of the Chapters

All of these frames are engaged at various levels in my readings of Loy's texts. The first chapter of this dissertation closely analyses Loy's experimental poem, "Lions' Jaws" (1919) as well as the photograph published at the beginning of the poem, and examines how they respond to Italian Futurism, which is defined by the narrator as "flabbergast[ism]" (Loy 47), by investigating the satirical competition between "Raminetti," "Gabrunzio" and "Bapini"—presumably the permutated names of the founding Italian Futurists, F. T. Marinetti, Gabriele D'Annunzio and Giovanni Papini. This chapter also investigates Futurism and its entanglement with gender hierarchies which the narrative voice subverts. Drawing on the theories of authorship in Barthes and Foucault, this chapter engages with the alternative meanings of the words in the poem to navigate the complex relations between the visual and written signs and what they represent, as well as to examine the multiple narrative personas evolving throughout the text. Many critics have grounded their analyses on the biographical and historical criticism, and traced the author's historical and romantic affiliation with these Futurists; they have also interpreted the photograph in the poem just as an illustration of the author, Mina Loy. My reading of "Lions' Jaws," in contrast, semiotically analyses the alternative meanings of the visual and written signs, and treats the photograph as a part of the poem, a visual analogy of the narrator(s).

The second chapter presents a close reading of Loy's manifesto-poem, "Feminist Manifesto," as well as two of her artworks, *Househunting* (1950) and *Christ on a Clothesline* (1950-59), which, I think, are visual analogies of "Feminist Manifesto," to explore how the narrative voice of the manifesto shifts between the masculine logic of Futurism and a modernist feminism to problematize Marinetti's "Futurist Manifesto," and how Loy's two artworks provide a connection to this shift. This chapter also aims to discover the radical and complex conceptions of the relationship between gender, performativity and female representation—which I discuss paradigmatically and satirically—to anticipate more recent trajectories in feminist theory. Butler's theory of gender performativity allows me to examine Loy's manifesto as performative rhetoric, written in intertextual response to Marinetti's "Futurist Manifesto," and to investigate, in its antagonistic relation to the manufactured consent revealed in both the suffragette and anti-suffragette movements, and how it performatively critiques women's current status as complex products of culturally

embedded male misogyny and women's self-perception, by addressing women to provoke them against their subordinate position in society. Composed in the declarative form of male Futurist manifestos, "Feminist Manifesto" functions performatively by decentering the logic of their patriarchal framework. In this chapter, Loy's narrator's argument is constructed as "Futurist-Feminist": the manifesto and the two artworks question and displace the hegemonic assumptions of Futurism, and simultaneously reject and reassert their premises in a feminist reconfiguration. Through its focus on bodily and mental consciousness and personal evolution rather than on Futurism's violence and misogyny, Loy's manifesto takes Futurism in a different direction, overturning its rhetoric and reconstructing its concepts by incorporating body, mind and sexuality from a radical feminist perspective, which, through the performative act of feminine writing and painting, asserts a woman's choice of gender expression as a force for destabilizing the structures of manufactured consent. These three works, as well as the selected suffragette postcards, perform a gesture—both mental and corporeal—and open up visual and literary routes to a contemporary modernism which is paradigmatically feminine, and a feminism which is paradigmatically modern.

The third chapter closely examines Loy's first published text, her manifesto-poem "Aphorisms on Futurism," and investigates how it responds to the Futurist project. It explores the paradoxical relations between Loy's narrator and the concepts of Futurism; unlike the Futurists' violent, nationalistic and egotistical declarations, Loy's aphorisms—although maintaining their polemical language and unusual typography by destroying the conventional language and art forms—focus on the evolution of the individual consciousness and expansion of human potential, and reconcile with or "rehabilitate" (Loy, *LLB* 149) the traditions of the past. Thus, this chapter focuses on the reformist and visionary rhetoric of the text, which declares that the universe is in need of a revolution ("TODAY is the crisis in consciousness") (Loy, *LLB* 151)—an anticipation of modernism—and it surveys in what way a new form of consciousness is necessary to "grasp the elements of Life" (Loy, *LLB* 151) in order to perceive the complexities of modernity.

In the fourth chapter, I examine Loy's "Parturition," an experimental poem depicting the physical experience of childbirth, and Loy's painting, *Ansikten* (*Faces*), which seems to be a visual analogy of the poem. This chapter explores the act of labor represented in the poem, considering it not only a maternal activity of reproduction of

a parturient woman, but also a textual and an artistic creative activity; this is to suggest that it is a metamorphic experience of an individual's physical and mental separation from his or her identity in order to form a new one through an elevated form of consciousness. With reference to the matrixial (Ettinger) and performativity (Butler) theories, my analysis explores how these perspectives—maternal, textual and artistic—generate fragmented personas: a parturient woman, a creative writer and an avant-garde artist, and how they eventually merge at one point by attaining an identity transformation. As the bodily and mental transformations in "Parturition" function as a medium for attaining individual consciousness and self-discovery, this chapter expands on the ideas of the previous chapter, and proceeds in relation to "Aphorisms on Futurism" to show how these evolutionary changes lead to shifts in an individual's self-perception of identity. It suggests that the fragmented narratives construct new identities, which attain a personal growth in their corporal and mental spaces by breaking their limits and expanding themselves with a new sense of consciousness. This chapter also considers the biomorphic and metaphysical elements the narrator is hallucinating in her unconscious space, as figurative representations of the bodily transformations and evolutionary development which the poem calls for.

Finally, the fifth chapter explores aspects of Loy's aesthetic oeuvre by closely analysing some of her visual works, which reflect the evolutionary affiliation of her artwork with different artistic movements. The chapter focuses on *Surreal Scene* (1930), one of the artist's masterpieces produced at a time all the avant-garde movements are absorbed; and it performatively connects it with her other works as well as the works of her contemporaries that are visually or thematically similar. The analysis illustrates how Loy's visual arguments incorporate Surrealist conceptions to engage with the logic of Futurism, sometimes confirming and sometimes undermining it. At the same time, it examines how gender performativity, the mental and corporeal constructions of fragmented female identities, function in Loy's *Surreal Scene* as well as in some of her other, related works. The interpretation is based on semiotically interpreting the signs in Loy's visual works to articulate their complex iconography; it follows chains of signification between the works in the manner of the Surrealist *Cadavre Exquis* to provide a model for the performative construction of a visual narrator.

CHAPTER ONE: "LIONS' JAWS": THE SATIRICAL FRAGMENTED VOICE OF THE FUTURIST-FEMINIST NARRATOR

1.1 Introduction

Written in 1919, Mina Loy's experimental poem "Lions' Jaws" was first published in 1920 in the September-December issue of *The Little Review,* edited by Margaret Anderson. The issue also included various art manifestos, prose sketches, Man Ray photographs, and Episode XIV of James Joyce's *Ulysses.* The original publication format of the poem is shown in Figure 6; it was later included in a posthumous collection, *The Lost Lunar Baedeker,* edited by Roger L. Conover (1996),[30] which was named after one of Loy's poems ("Lunar Baedeker") from the period 1919-1930.[31] (the Baedeker was a standard travel guide of the period).[32]

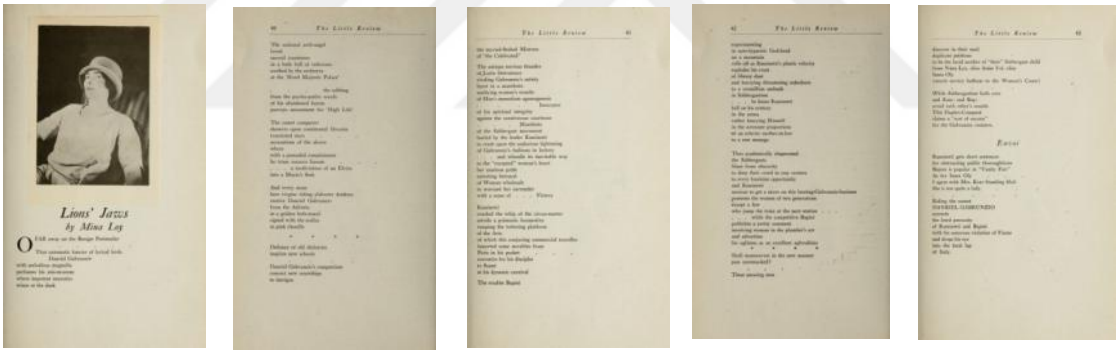


Figure 6. Original format of Mina Loy's "Lions' Jaws," *Little Review*, 1920[33]

The title of the text suggests multiple interpretations. The word "Lion" refers to a large male animal, and the "Jaws" to his carnivorous nature. However, the title conceals a deep irony because "Lions" also signifies the male characters depicted in the poem, and the "jaws" their farcical speech and activities—as the word "jaws" also means idle and senseless words. In short, the title of the text satirically dramatizes the male characters and their flaws.

Stylistically, the poem is peculiar in terms of its typography, its layout integrated with a visual component, and the shifts of the multiplied narrative voices

and intertextual connections, which evoke related visual and textual significations. Some long lines are balanced against shorter lines, which also reflects the shift in the thought process of the narrative voice.

"Lions' Jaws" problematizes the concepts of the Italian Futurist ("flabbergast") movement. According to the biographical accounts, the poem was written in New York, where Loy started to break with the ideas of the movement, and joined the Dada circle. Roger Conover suggests that "Lions' Jaws" is a source to be read as Loy's farewell to Futurism: "[Loy] was probably living in New York when she wrote this poem. . . [it] represents Mina Loy's last balance sheet of Futurist business" (Conover 187). According to Virginia Kouidis, it was Futurism which "seems to have awakened Mina Loy to the potentialities of the self, the need to reject the structures of the past, and the availability of new poetic forms for discovering and expressing her freedom; thus, it joins female self-consciousness as the wellspring of her poetry" (170). Certainly, the Futurist movement sparked the commencement of Loy's literary career. However, she had doubts about the Futurists' views, such as their admiration of war, their faschism and misogyny, and their embracing of modernism mainly as technological progress, so she soon realized that she would have no future as a woman in Futurism, and abandoned these ideas of the Futurists.

In her letter to Mabel Dodge Luhan in 1914, Loy expresses her ambivalence about Marinetti's Italian Futurism: "I am in the throes of conversion to Futurism. . . but I shall never convince myself;"[34] and in 1914, in *Chicago's Evening Post*, George Cram Cook identifies Loy as "the woman who split the futurist movement" (Burke 176). Loy's 1924 letter to Carl Van Vechten also emphasizes her dramatic shift from the movement: "Now dear Carlo—If you like you can say that Marinetti influenced me—merely by waking me up—I am in no way *considered* a Futurist by futurists—& as for Papini he has in no way influenced—*my work*!! So don't say a word about it—he's very passatist—really."[35] Loy would tailor the Futurists' views to her own intellectual and aesthetic agenda, especially by critiquing their underestimation of the feminine.

The text of the poem is full of references to historical sources, sensations, and graphic and musical elements; each word is a fragmented signifier connoting alternative meanings. The visual and textual narratives interact, and are intertwined with each other; this calls for closely reading the text from multiple perspectives—

structuralism, semiotics, performativity and feminism—through which my analysis creates its own narrative and illuminates the hidden voices of the narrator—which are multiplied and fused in the text, and which turn out to both assert and at the same time negate one another.

In a structuralist sense, the text can be decomposed and recomposed to produce new and creative interpretations: acting as a "structural man," (215) to use Roland Barthes' phrase, my act of reading the text will explore the intertextual relations between the signifiers to produce my own narrative structure. In "The Structuralist Activity," Barthes explains that structuralism is "an activity, i.e., the controlled succession of a certain number of mental operations," and suggests it may be perceived like a "Surrealist activity" (214). To define the goal of the structuralist activity, he uses the word "simulacrum," to suggest not "an original impression' of the world, but a veritable fabrication of a world which resembles the first one, not in order to copy it but to render it intelligible" (214). Barthes stresses the anthropological value of this act since "[s]tructural man takes the real, decomposes it, then recomposes it. . . it is man himself, his history, his situation, his freedom and the very resistance which nature offers to his mind" (215) because it is "a man-tic activity that is both intelligible and interrogating" (219). In other words, how we obtain meaning is much more important than what the meaning is; Barthes thus stresses the configuration process of the interpretant for an effective structuralist activity, and he proposes "two typical operations: dissection and articulation" (216). These two operations or performances of structural man—decomposing and recomposing—open the ways for an infinite production of meaning, and allow the reader to dismantle, and reconfigure the original text to articulate a constructive meaning by following the significations of the texts' signs. And I would argue that this would only be possible when the narrative voice as well as the signs represented in the text are emancipated from author's real identity and life experiences, and if instead, they are investigated by decomposing the signs as units, and then recomposing them as an "activity of articulation, which succeeds the summoning activity" (Barthes 218).

Surveying the intertextual relations by way of a semiotic analysis is also an effective method for interpreting the signs and what they represent in context—outside of the author's biography and history. This sort of reading provides a way of navigating the connotations of words. Thus, a new text can be created over the narrator's text, to

produce alternative meanings. From the trivalent perspective of Charles Sanders Peirce, semiosis is "an action, or influence, which is, or involves, an operation of *three* objects, such as a sign, its object and its interpretant, this is tri-relative influence not being in any way resolvable into an action between pairs" (Peirce 5484). Queiroz and Merrel have noted that this is a dynamism which actualizes as a mental activity during the process of the semiotic analysis: "semiosis is a triadic dynamic process [consisting of a sign, an object and an interpretant]. It is a social cognitive process, not merely a static symbolic system" (60).

The structural activity of reading the text through dissecting and reuniting the signs, as well as the process of performing a semiotic analysis on the "second" level of connotation (i.e. Barthes's mythological level)[36] and exploring the intertextual connections among them, also allows the text to be seen from the perspective of an *active* reader. This perspective is therefore "performative," in Judith Butler's sense of the word: performing the construction of the narrator's fragmented identities, for example, through the anagrammatical names Loy uses in the text, would then create a cognitive work of art actualizing in the reader's thought process, making the act of reading itself "performative."

These perspectives point to a reader-oriented interpretation, which leaves the interpretant, (Peirce's term) to find the intertextual connections of the signs circulating among the other texts. Michael Riffaterre, in his article "Syllepsis," focuses—unlike Mikhail Bakhtin and Julia Kristeva, who mainly concentrate on surfaces of text rather than on underlying meanings—not only on the reader's perception, but also on the process of investing meaning. Intertextuality thus functions as a semiotic act directed towards a creative interpretation, as well as "a modality of perception, the deciphering of the text by the reader in such a way that he identifies the structures to which the text owes its quality of work of art," and he relates it to its two fundamental features, "a semiotic and a formal unit"; these two structures "are actualized in the form of variants" (Riffaterre 625). Since texts are always connected to other texts, it is then, the reader who performs the act of relating them in the appropriate intertextual space, as: "[i]ntertextual connection takes place when the reader's attention is triggered by the clues" (Riffaterre 627). To read the clues and the variants of poetical works within this conception of intertextuality, Riffaterre makes use of the trope of *syllepsis*:

> [It is] the trope that consist in understanding the same word in two different ways at the same time, one meaning being literal or primary, the other figurative. The second meaning is not just different from and incompatible with the first: it is tied to the first as its polar opposite or the way the reverse of a coin is bound to its obverse. (629)

A sylleptic reading, which actualizes in two different levels of perception, therefore allows us to decipher non-literal, ironic and metaphorical meanings in the text in addition to their literal meanings.

Much has already been written about "Lions' Jaws," and the text continues to attract scholarly attention; however, it needs to be perceived beyond the current traditional understanding and within the contexts of contemporary theory. Recent criticism on "Lions' Jaws" is largely based on retrospective analyses focusing on Loy's experiences with the Futurist movement—mainly her romantic relations with the Futurist writers, F. T. Marinetti and Giovanni Papini. While Julie Schmid claims that "any reading of Loy's feminism must take into account her involvement with futurism" (2), Roger Conover considers "Lions' Jaws" as a substantial source for learning about Loy's personal and social life, and comments that "[m]uch of the private and public history of [Loy] and the Futurists can be traced in this poem. . . she may have fantasized—if not actually petitioned—her lovers to father (another) illegitimate child. . ." (Conover 187-188). Tim Hancock also connects the poem to Loy's relations with the Futurists, commenting that "Loy spells out her intentions at this time in 'Lions' Jaws,' a later reflection on her experience with Marinetti and Papini in Italy" (189). As for the anagrams appearing in the poem, Hancock notes that "the aliases and pseudonyms. . . are invariably masks for real individuals. Mina and Giovanni, Bapini, Raminetti, Danriel Gabrunzio, Nima Lyo. . . Mrs. Krar Standing Hail. . . all are identifiable and none are 'composite' figures" (185). While it is an obvious fact that Loy seems to have been inspired by the ideas of the Futurist leaders, borrowed their polemical rhetoric, typographical and linguistic innovations, and written texts such as "Aphorisms on Futurism" (1914) and "Feminist Manifesto" (1914) as a response to their manifestos, I do not explore the voices of the narrator(s) based on the author's life experiences and personal affiliations with the Futurists, because this focus, on the influence of the author's history and her real identity on the text, in fact, overshadows the much more complex and interesting textual space where the narrators' multiple voices emerge.

Instead, I would suggest that the author merely serves as a signifier to connect the texts intertextually; we can only find the author in her state of absence, which opens up ways to revolutionize the text. As Barthes comments in "The Death of the Author," "[t]he removal of the Author […] is not merely a historical fact or an act of writing; it utterly transforms the modern text […] the text is henceforth made and read in such a way that at all its levels the author is absent" (Barthes 169). In fact, to take this argument a step further, the "author" is found not within the texts, but in her existence as it circulates around the texts. Foucault explain in "What is an Author?" that this author-function is a "characteristic of the mode of existence, circulation, and functioning of certain discourses within the society" (Foucault 202). From this understanding of the author as only a conveyor of her rhetoric, it follows that the text should be investigated within the framework of the signs represented and the intertextual relations circling between them: "The work, which once had the duty of providing immortality, now possesses the right to kill, to be its author's murderer. . ." (Foucault 198). In other words, the author is beyond her existing identity, and "the notion of writing seems to transpose the empirical characteristics of the author into a transcendental anonymity" (Foucault 199).

My reading is therefore a performative exploration of "Lions' Jaws" semiotically and as a structural activity, which—outside the biographical and historical accounts, which I think limit the constructive and performative process—has the aim of constructing the author as a "fictive" persona, treating her biography only as a textual structure. In this context, a close reading of the text along with its visual and textual narratives makes it possible to survey the intertextual relations between the signs, and performatively construct the narrators, revealing the complex performative engagements between the conceptions of gender, Futurism and feminism in Loy's language.

1.2 Interpreting the Photo

The black and white photograph situated on the top half of the opening page dominates the poem as a visual narrative, and functions graphically as the most striking element of the first publication; it was presumably taken by Man Ray (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Man Ray's untitled photograph, which appeared at the beginning of the poem (detail from Figure 6)

Obviously, appearing at the beginning of the text as a graphical sign, the photograph effectively conditions the perceptions of the reader about the poem. As John Berger comments in *Ways of Seeing,* "seeing comes before words" (7-8); he elaborates the influence of seeing images on our perceptions saying that: "[e]very image embodies a way of seeing. Even a photograph" (10), and stresses the false assumption of perceiving the photograph as "a mechanical record" (10). Although it is often assumed that "[t]he photographer's way of seeing is reflected in his choice of subject, . . . our perception or appreciation of an image depends also upon our own way of seeing" (Berger 10). So, reading an image outside the perception of its artist or the photographer makes it possible to explore it within the context of the intertextual connections between the signs.

Every image is in this sense a work of art, and is influenced by the assumptions of the viewer. The woman's image sitting and staring at us seems to be a collection of signs directed to the reader while it is being looked at. When considered from

Saussurean perspective, "[a] sign must have both a signifier and a signified" (Saussure 102-103), so it is clear that the concept the signs refer to can take various forms, such as words, images, sensations, or sounds. The arbitrary nature of the signs in the image, then, can be perceived by investigating the connections among them because "[n]o sign makes sense on its own but only in relation to other signs. Both signifier and signified are purely relational entities" (Saussure 120). Thus, the meanings of the signs invested by the reader are based on its context only in connection to the other signs represented in the photo. Seen in this way, the image can be best interpreted through the act of a semiotic reading as the image is constructed by the explorations of performative reader, and which opens infinite ways to navigate the intertextual connections between the signifiers. All the perceptions of how the representation of the figure in the photograph are related in various ways to the reader's perception provide indications as to the tone and the identity of the narrative voice of the poem.

1.2.1 Perception of the Pose

The photograph seems to have been taken by a camera positioned below her eye level, making her look larger, and placing her in position of power relative to the observer. The pose of the figure leaning back suggests arrogance, perhaps a challenge to her observer; it seems to be authoritarian, even aggressive. The arms of the figure stretched sideways indicate control of personal space, as well as distance from the viewer; the head tilted slightly backwards implies dominance or superiority. Also, the posture of the figure leaning back with her arms opened signals confidence. Her straight face and unsmiling lips suggest emotional neutrality; the closed lips imply a refusal to communicate, but they also hint that she has a secret that she has been concealing, and is not going to share with the viewers. Her tilted head and upturned nose suggest an attitude of smugness, perhaps pride, arrogance or condescension, looking "down her nose."

As for the woman's external appearance, the casual, 1920s-style bobbed haircut is in line with contemporary daily and ordinary fashion; the clothing choices and the dressing style of the figure, load androgyny to her appearance. The bowler hat, popular at the time, was generally associated with the upper classes, and this gives the image the sense of a "mannishness" or masculinity, which is reinforced by the general

desexualisation of her body through the short haircut, formless clothing, thick eyebrows, and androgynous face.

1.2.2 Perception of the Fragmented Gaze

The narrowed and half-closed eyes of the image represent judgment or evaluation. Her gaze is engaged with the viewer—and the camera—by way of direct eye contact, which not only challenges the curiosity of the viewer, but also suggests a reciprocal glance.

The photo serves a communicative purpose, and the interaction between the gaze of the figure and the reader's gaze opens it up to being interpreted at a multi-dimensional level. Thus, it is useful to consider the reciprocal nature of an image: when we look at the image, the image also looks at us. This creates a conscious interaction between the gazer and the gazed, which changes the roles of the object and the viewer. "The eye of the other combines with our own eye to make it fully credible that we are part of the visible world"; "[it] is more fundamental than that of spoken dialogue" (Berger 9). From this perspective, the inward gaze of the image is threefold; it multiplies the narrative voice into three identities: the visual image gazes at the narrators, it is gazed at by the narrators, and also gazes at the way it is gazed at by its narrators. Thus, considering the image a part of the text, not a separate component, and that the image functions as one of the narrators in the poem, a narrative voice who develops throughout the poem, we can say that the gaze of the image also gazes at itself.

1.2.3 Unmasking the Androgynous Persona

The posture, glance, stance and body language of the poser indicate the identity and vocal tone of the narrator. Both the pose and the gaze of the figure foreshadow the provocative tone of the narrative voice, who situates herself as a judge on a trial or a case winner in a lawsuit, where the ideologies of Futurism are interrogated over the characters. Another ironical perspective is that the visual figure—as a gazer—gazes not only at her male viewers, but also at the female ones, including herself. Achieving her self-discovery in a kind of epiphany by fusing with her textual voice, the female fragmented narrator evolves throughout the text, and comes on the scene—after being

gazed at by her viewers and by herself, and having gazed at both—and merges with its vocal representation at the end of the text.

While the image has a predominantly female appearance, in fact, it embodies a portrayal of androgyny, as it also bears masculine characteristics. This androgynous look of the image foregrounds the logic of gender roles. In her "Gender Regulations," Judith Butler describes gender as "the mechanism by which notions of masculine and feminine are produced and naturalized, but gender might very well be the apparatus by which such terms are deconstructed and denaturalized" (43). Furthermore, the imagined persona eliminates not only the stereotypical female appearance imposed on her by the society, but also the binary hierarchy created between male and female. Thus, the visual narrator constructs her identity without limiting herself and depending on the norms of female sexuality. Since "[p]erformativity is not a singular act, but a repetition," (15) as Butler argues, the gender performance of the visual image is changeable, and not a fixed concept.

1.3 A Semiotic Reading of "Lions' Jaws"

The wealth of references in Loy's "Lions' Jaws" calls for a semiotic analysis—in line with a structuralist mode of reading—which aligns well with my conception of visual and verbal narratives that complement one another in a multi-faceted dialogue, where the narrators shift their voices by constantly fragmenting and fusing, and where their identities can be constructed through the performativity of reading.

The poem is thematically divided into four major sections (with various shorter fragments or verses within them): each section begins with a framing statement followed by a four or five-dot ellipsis to separate it from the rest of the section. The two breaks between the first three sections are marked by a row of four asterisks; the fourth, final section is introduced by the heading "Envoi."

The first section mainly deals with the activities of one of the characters, "Danriel Gabrunzio" (presumably a play on the name of the Futurist Gabriele D'Annunzio), and the second with his compatriots "Raminetti" and "Bapini" (playing on the names of two other Futurists, F. T. Marinetti and Giovanni Papini[37]). The third section, where the narrator inserts herself into the poem as the third person, reveals her multiplied personas—"Nima Lyo, alias Anim Yol, alias / Imna Oly"—which are assumed by the critics to be anagrams of the author's name; however, from a semiotic

perspective, these permutated names suggest multiple narrators as characters taking part in the poem, not the combinations of the author's names. And the fourth, final section is the "Envoi," a term which refers to the concluding stanza in the 14th- and 15th-century French poetic and musical form of the *ballade*.[38] What is also intriguing is the appearance of one of the multiplied narrators as the first person "I" in the last section of the poem, the *Envoi.* The narrative "I"—as vocal representation of the female image—emerges actively in the final part, and makes judgements about both the male and female characters of the poem.

1.3.1 The Mise-en-scène of Gabrunzio's Inflated Conquests

The poem begins by creating a geographical context in the framing statement:

O far away on the Benign Peninsular
. . . .
That automatic fancier of lyrical birds
Danriel Gabrunzio
with melodious magnolia
perfumes his mis-en-scene
where impotent neurotics
wince at the dusk

The opening words "O far away" set up a great distance from the narrator and the space of the poem. On the literal level, the Italian name "Danriel Gabrunzio" immediately suggests Italy. Literally, this seems to be just a harmless, gentle ("benign") geographical location; however, because of the wordplays and anagrams that are found throughout the poem, semiotically, "peninsular" may be read as a compound of scrambled words, most obviously "penis," "insular," "pen" and "lunar." These connotations evoke respectively a sexual image, a sense of male strength; isolation, which, together with the adjective "benign" ironizes male power and suggests impotence; writing (if "pen" is read as a metonymy); and the title of Loy's poem "Lunar Baedeker." These last two reinforce the opening's sense of space and distance ("far away") from the narrative voice.

These evocations are developed in the descriptions of Gabrunzio which follows. He likes birds which are "lyrical;" this suggests a poetic song, an interest in exoticism, perhaps emotional expressions and romanticism. And also, if the "lyrical birds" are perceived as metaphorical connotations, they refer to the descriptions of

emotionally or romantically inclined women, but ironically, his taste is “automatic” or mechanical and unconscious, and he is simply a soulless “fancier,” rather than someone who is seriously engaged with what he seems to be attracted to.

Gabrunzio’s superficiality can also be seen in the setting he creates around himself: it is a theatrical “mis-en-scene” which he fills and decorates (“perfumes”) with artificial and exaggerated sounds and objects (“melodious magnolia”). The “magnolia” is a scented ornamental flowering plant which represents sweetness and beauty; however, these flowers are bisexual,[39] so this may be a subtle reference to his sexuality. This is brought out more clearly in his mis-en-scene, which occurs “where impotent neurotics / wince at the dusk.” The suggestion is that here sexually powerless men feel anxious, and flinch with distress as the night approaches because they know they will be unable to perform.

This is Gabrunzio’s context, and perhaps this explains his need to disguise his impotence with exaggerated arrangements and decor. It appears to have fooled a number of the women he has conquered:

The national arch-angel
loved
several countesses
in a bath full of tuberoses
soothed by the orchestra
at the 'Hotel Majestic Palace'

. . . the sobbing
from the psycho-pathic wards
of his abandoned harem
purveys amusement for 'High Life'

One of the ways Gabrunzio has managed to attract lovers seems to have been by presenting himself as the Italian “national arch-angel.” This characterization suggests various aspects of Gabrunzio’s inflated view of himself. For example, in the Castel Sant’Angelo (the Mausoleum of Hadrian) in Rome, the angel of the highest rank, Michael, is represented by a marble statue holding his sword among the eight angels;[40] in this representation, the “archangel” is god-like and provides guidance to people who need help.[41] The anagram “Danriel Gabrunzio” also has echoes of both the names Daniel (meaning “God is my judge” in Hebrew)[42] and Gabriel: this archangel’s name means “messenger,”[43] perhaps suggesting that this is Gabrunzio’s role in the Futurist

movement; and it was, in fact, used in the title of a 1931 biography by Frederico Nardelli and Arthur Livingston, *Gabriel the Archangel: Gabriele D'Annunzio.*[44] A third association is with Ariel, an angel of high rank known as the "Lion or Lioness of God" as well as a protector of animals;[45] this suggests that D'Annunzio is one of the "lions" referred to in the poem's title.

Through these intertextual associations, Gabrunzio is presented both from the commenting perspective of the narrative voice, and through the narrator's descriptions of him, as he presents himself. Thus, the word "arch-angel" is hyphenated, so that the architectural form of the arch is evoked, but the "god-like" or angelic quality of Gabrunzio is ironically described as "arch," in the sense of being rogue-like or knavish.[46] These qualities are framed as "national," lampooning Gabrunzio as a local figure of religious and political, perhaps xenophobic identity, in Italy.

It is this inflated figure who, the narrator reports, "loved / several countesses"; Gabrunzio's love for these aristocratic women is ambivalent because it happens in the context of wincing "impotent neurotics," but the details of his extravagant mis-en-scene are specific: baths filled with tuberoses (recalling the magnolia), and melodies provided by an orchestra. These are designed to flatter his lovers with clichés of flowers, fragrance and music so as to camouflage his physical and emotional impotence. The larger space is the "Hotel Majestic Palace," which is also known as a hotel in Italy:[47] the royal qualities suggested in the name ("majestic," "palace") seem to fit the social status of the "countesses," but also establish the atmosphere Gabrunzio wishes to project about himself.

The description of this situation in the past tense suggests that the narrator is reporting real historical events from Gabrunzio's life; however, with the silence represented by three dots at the beginning of the next verse, there is a shift to the present tense, and a shift in focus. The aposiopesis is at the same time a pause and an ellipsis, which gives the impression that certain things are being omitted, not to be told to the audience. The focus now moves to the psychological and public consequences of Gabrunzio's activities, and in a more serious tone, emphasis is put on the melancholy and sensitivity of the moment.

The result of these activities is an "abandoned harem" where he has driven the women he has deceived to misery ("sobbing") and madness ("psycho-pathic wards"); the insane and mischievous chambers of the harem are now surrounded with the

hapless and melancholic voices of the women. However, there is a paradox suggested in the artificial function of the setting: a harem is traditionally a private house or part of a house in which a group of women are associated with one man—but this conventional idea is subverted: Gabrunzio's harem is "abandoned."

The qualities of this setting in which Gabrunzio presents himself as an "inflated" figure, in fact, obscure his real impotence. For example, the word "psycho-pathic" is hyphenated to suggest an irony: "psycho" indicates a person physically suffering from a mental illness—but "pathic" refers to a homosexual relationship, or to a (male) partner who acts passively in a relationship; this again points to Gabrunzio's disguised physical impotence as a "pathic" figure in his harem.

Another association presenting Gabrunzio as an overestimated, lecherous character is the description of the "abandoned harem," which is a phrase from the Russian composer Mikhail Glinka's opera *Ruslan and Lyudmila,*[48] based on Alexander Pushkin's poem of the same name. In the opera, the character Khazar Khan Ratmir, who tries to seduce Lyudmila and other women, has a personal harem. In the libretto, in the third act, Ratmir comes on the stage and addresses the women in his harem:

> And a swarm of living apparitions
> about the **abandoned harem** speaks to me!
> O the luxurious flower of the Khazar lands,
> my captivating maidens,
> make haste to me here!
> Like rainbow dreams,
> fly to me, wondrous maidens!
> Ah! Where are you, where are you?[49]

Thus, in terms of his lewdness and disloyalty, my intertextual perception is that Gabrunzio seems to be analogous to the licentious male character portrayed by Glinka. The descriptions of Ratmir and his harem in Pushkin's poem also bear resemblance to Gabrunzio's. Ratmir, as one of the rivals of Ruslan—"the luckless rivals of Ruslan" (I. 40)—is characterized as "the Last, the Khazar Khan Ratmir, a reckless spirit, aye and ardent" (I. 49-50) and in Ratmir's harem, women are depicted as follows:

> We many are and beauties all;
> Our lips are soft, our speeches tender.
> Come, youthful wanderer, surrender
> And heed our joyous, secret call!" (IV. 96-99)[50]

The focus now shifts to the public sensation of Gabrunzio's stories—which have created rumours, and also amusement among the upper classes: the expression "High Life" evokes "Highlife," a popular Ghanaian musical style which emerged in the 1920s,[51] around the year the poem was composed, and "High Life" also literally evokes elitist trends and an opulent lifestyle among the upper-classes, for whom Gabrunzio's scandalous adventures have become an object of derision as well as a source of amusement.

Gabrunzio's successes in mastering and taking control of these countesses next appear in his presenting himself as the "comet conquerer":[52]

The comet conquerer
showers upon continental libraries
translated stars . . .
accusations of the alcove
where
with a pomaded complaisance
he trims rococo liaisons
. . . a tooth-tattoo of an Elvira
into a Maria's flesh

The obsolete spelling of "conqueror" draws attention in the context of the "abandoned harem" to Gabrunzio's sexual conquests; at the same time, his presentation as a master of celestial bodies mocks his high opinion of himself.

There also seems to be an intertextual historical reference here in the phrase "comet conquerer." The "comet" evokes the Bayeux tapestry, an embroidery artwork portraying the events of the Battle of Hastings in 1066, in which the Anglo-Saxon king Harold was killed and the Norman Duke William II ascended to the throne of England.[53] One of its sections portrays the arrival of Halley's Comet[54]—and the rest shows the throne fights and the murder of the king during the battle:

Figure 8. ***Halley's Comet*** **(top centre) in one of the segments of the Bayeux Tapestry**[55]

Two themes appear in the section of the tapestry depicted in Figure 8: on the right, King Harold is speaking to a messenger; on the left, people are astonished at the arrival of Halley's Comet, shown at top centre. Since the appearance of the comet a year before Harold's defeat and death is understood as a disastrous prophetic omen, the description of Gabrunzio as a "comet conquerer" may be read as a foreshadowing of his decreasing power, both in the Futurist movement and in his licentious activities.

The focus now moves to Gabrunzio's political and intellectual identity, satirizing his illusory popularity. His effects are seen only in "continental libraries": the narrative voice implies that both his name and his works—the Futurist manifestoes—have acquired fame only on the European continent, but not in Britain,[56] the geographical context of the narrator. These effects—his intellectual achievements which he "showers" on the continent—are simply translations or second-hand efforts: the Futurist declarations are written and published by other thinkers ("translated stars") in different languages; for instance, the first part of "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism" was published in French on the front page of *Le Figaro,* a Parisian daily in Paris, on February 20, 1909.[57]

Gabrunzio's activities create gossip ("accusations") in library corners ("alcoves") on the continent. His attitude is parodied as "pomaded complaisance,"

which suggests the self-satisfaction of a hairdresser: “pomade” (scented scalp ointment) recalls his perfumed mis-en-scenes for seducing women, and “trimming” also evokes the hairdresser’s profession. In this way, the pretensions of Gabrunzio’s academic (“library”) and political mask are removed, revealing him to be simply a hairdresser. This image is reinforced with the description of what he is doing: cutting and decorating (“trimming”) his affairs (“liaisons”), which are characterized as “rococo”—referring to the extravagant and elaborate style of the influential 18th-century art movement[58]—and suggesting both his own staged preparations and the appearances of the flamboyant women he is having affairs with.

These women are associated with two female figures, “Elvira” and “Maria,” and the three-dot ellipsis appearing before these names implies that there is a much longer story that can be told to the readers about their stories. The intertextual connection of these two signs brings to mind historical and literal connotations. “Donna Elvira” is a character in Mozart’s opera *Don Giovanni* (1787),[59] and “Anna Maria,” a figure in *Don Juan,* a Spanish drama written by Tirso De Molina around 1630.[60] They represent two different female types, the courtesan and the mistress: “Elvira” is a courtesan of a royal court who has relationships with wealthy men, and “Maria” is a mistress, who is married and having extramarital affairs with a man. They are linked together by the fictitious male character “Don Juan,” whose name—the title of the opera and the drama—today evokes his character as a womanizer and a libertine. Both Elvira and Maria are abandoned by the same unfaithful character; and being unable to change for the better, Don Juan is led towards a downfall at the end. Within the context of the poem, the two figures are similarly linked by Gabrunzio—he tattoos “an Elvira / into a Maria’s flesh”—suggesting that his carnal and corporal affairs (“flesh”) will lead, like Don Juan’s, to his own eventual downfall.

The descriptions of “Danriel Gabrunzio,” whose name is given in full for the second time in the poem as a sign of the approaching end of his section, now move to his daily habits, with details of time (“every noon”) and place (“the Adriatic”):

And every noon
bare virgins riding alabaster donkeys
receive Danriel Gabrunzio from the Adriatic
in a golden bath-towel
signed with the zodiac in pink chenille

*** * * ***

Here, the image of Gabrunzio's female types is expanded: on the one hand he meets with naked virgins; on the other hand, these virgins come out to "receive" him, perhaps as courtesans. At the same time, "alabaster donkeys" and golden bath-towel" suggest touristic souvenirs, and refer to Gabrunzio's viewing women as sexual objects.

Gabrunzio's "bare virgins" on the "alabaster donkeys" also evoke the famous story of Lady Godiva, the 11th-century noblewoman who, according to the legend, rode naked on a horse in the streets of Coventry in England, to protest her husband's oppressive policies. The theme is depicted in a well-known painting by John Collier (Figure 9).

Figure 9. John Collier, *Lady Godiva*, 1898[61]

This image depicts the psychological state of Lady Godiva, as she sits naked on a horse to show her protest and discontentedness against male hegemony.[62] The colour red is generally associated with powerful passions such as love, hate and anger. When semiotically connected to the context of Gabrunzio, these significations evoke the emotions and psychological condition of the women who have had relationships with Gabrunzio, and been deceived by him in his "abandoned harem."

The setting again is the "Adriatic," referring to his national identity on the "Benign Peninsular." The details of his clothing—the "golden bath towel" and the

"pink chenille"—are presented ironically, like the "rococo" preparations he makes to flatter his lovers, while concealing his physical and emotional impotence. The section ends with the ironic golden bath towel, a sarcastic comment by the narrative voice that Gabrunzio's stories have left a mark on the Italian nation (represented metonymically by the Adriatic): the bath towel is "signed with the zodiac"—the figure representing all other signs.

1.3.2 The Rivalry between Raminetti and Bapini

The second section begins with a framing statement that sets the context for a characterization of two other Futurists, Raminetti and Bapini (presumably recognisable anagrams of Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's and Giovanni Papini's surnames):

*** * * ***
Defiance of old idolatries
inspires new schools
. . . .
Danriel Gabrunzio's compatriots
concoct new courtships
to intrigue
the myriad-fleshed Mistress
of "the Celebrated"

In this section, there is a shift to both the commencement of a movement and the activities of its supporters. Their "defiance" against the existing canons gives birth to a "new school"—the Futurist movement—which celebrates the ideas of youth, speed, dynamism, technology, industrialization and science, and expects artists and authors to incorporate these elements in their works. For instance, Marinetti, the founder of Futurism, declares in the "Founding and Manifesto of Futurism": "We intend to destroy museums, libraries, academies of every sort, and to fight against moralism, feminism, and every utilitarian or opportunist cowardice" (51),[63] and this iconoclastic attitude is also characterized by the modernist artists of the time, namely Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo, Balla and Severini, as can be seen in the conclusion to their "Manifesto of Futurist Painters": "With our adherence to Futurist movement, we want to destroy the cult of the past, the obsession with antiquity, pedantry, and academic formalism" (63).[64]

With the four-dot break, the context moves to the intellectual and sexual rivalry between Gabrunzio and the Italian Futurist leaders, his "compatriots," who contrive new approaches to dealing with women ("courtships"). The persona provides an interpretation of their new approaches: all types of women (sobbing countesses, Elviras, Marias, Godivas, bare virgins) are merged into the single "myriad-fleshed" figure of the "Mistress / of "the Celebrated"—to be seduced ("intrigued") and serve their needs. Thus, in his declaration, Marinetti indicates that Futurism is opposed to "feminism;" and the narrator emphasizes the concept by capitalizing "Mistress" to expose the misogyny.

These Futurists' crude approach to women as objects of sexual pleasure is expressed in the disguise of an intellectual statement, which "burst[s]" out like a thunder in the form of a manifesto:

> **The antique envious thunder**
> **of Latin littérateurs**
> **rivaling Gabrunzio's satiety**
> **burst in a manifesto**
> **notifying women's wombs**
> **of Man's immediate agamogenesis**
> **. . . Insurance**
> **of his spiritual integrity**
> **against the carnivorous courtesan**

Here, the narrative voice ironizes the apparently intellectual statement of the manifesto by describing these men as "Latin littérateurs": Latin represents the old language that came before modern Italian, and the Futurists claim to reject previous structures, but it seems that they are motivated by jealousy of the achievements of the past (their thunder is "envious"), they are doing nothing new because they are still stuck in the structures of the old ("Latin"); and their intellectual dominance is caricatured by the pretentiousness suggested by "littérateurs." What they produce in the end is something that can only compete with ("rivaling") the excesses and sexual fulfilment ("satiety") of Gabrunzio—whose activities take place in an atmosphere of impotence.

The manifesto the Futurists produce (concealing their own impotence) declares that they do not need women, and instead will follow a male fantasy of "asexual reproduction" ("Man's immediate agamogenesis"). The use of a capital letter in "Man" might also ironically suggest the qualities of a God—who does not physically need a

woman to create a living being; in his "Contempt for Women" (*Le Futurisme,* 1911), Marinetti declares: ". . . we male Futurists have felt ourselves abruptly detached from women, who have suddenly become too earthly or, better yet, have become a mere symbol of the earth that we ought to abandon" (86).[65] Marinetti's views led to a quick reaction from the women intellectuals such as Margaret Wynne Nevinson, a British suffragette, who wrote in her essay on "Futurism and Woman," published in *The Vote* in 1910:

> Signor Marinetti declares that above and beyond everything else Futurism looks forward to a machine-governed and womanless world—a world in which even the human race may be generated by mechanism, and where everybody will be of masculine gender. But this, say the learned biologists, will be only a reversion to the very ancient past, of which Futurism is the sworn foe. And if there is to be but one sex to carry on the human race, that sex, by virtue of its office, must be the female! (Nevinson 75)[66]

The narrator's critique develops further after a brief ellipsis: the manifesto ironically reveals that Marinetti's imagined womanless world is protection ("insurance") for male Futurists' imagined moral existence ("spiritual integrity") without bodily desires, but this fantasy is rooted in a fear of women—the flesh-eating Mistress or "carnivorous courtesan."

This critique continues again after the next ellipsis:

> **. . . Manifesto**
> **of the flabbergast movement**
> **hurled by the leader Raminetti**
> **to crash upon the audacious lightning**
> **of Gabrunzio's fashions in lechery**

The appearance of Raminetti's manifesto is presented as a very dramatic event: it is thrown out violently ("hurled") by Marinetti as a publication, introducing a movement that intends to shock ("flabbergast") the public, and provide a contrast to ("crash upon") the negative image of Gabrunzio's carnal activities ("fashions in lechery"), which are ironically described as boldly shocking in their own way ("audacious lightning"). But at the same time, Gabrunzio is presented as the actual originator of the Futurist movement: the thunder of Raminetti follows after the lightning of Gabrunzio. They are therefore not really competing or different, because they are aspects of the same thing, as the narrator pointed out earlier: the manifesto is

"envious thunder" which ironically only rivals Gabrunzio's impotence, and it fails ("crashes") when the similarity is revealed.

The manifesto has two imagined purposes: the first is "to crash" on Gabrunzio's activities; and the second is to convince or coax ("wheedle") a certain kind of woman to accept its ideas:

> **. . . and wheedle its inevitable way**
> **To the "excepted" woman's heart**
> **Her cautious pride**
> **Extorting betrayal**
> **of Woman wholesale**
> **to warrant her surrender**
> **with a sense of. . . Victory**

The silence of the ellipsis foreshadows the psychological, emotional effects of the manifesto on this "excepted" woman, who is perhaps a feminist, representative of all other women ("Woman")—a suffragette, working for "The Cause" of women's equality and voting rights."[67] However, although she does not agree with the view of women expressed in the manifesto, she may become ambivalent, as she is flattered to be associated with Futurism ("cautiously proud"), and convinced by her pride ("extorted") even to the point where she betrays the cause of women's rights and equality—"betrayal / of Woman wholesale." If the male Futurists manage to make her do this, then it will ensure that she "surrenders" her principles; but her psychological state is suggested by the ellipsis before the word "Victory," which suggests both her pride at being recognized and the regret she feels for betraying her gender. This portrayal of the "excepted woman" makes clear the ambivalent feelings of women such as Mina Loy, who were associated with the Futurist movement on the one hand, and with feminism on the other.

The next two fragments provide more perspective on the activities of the male Futurists, and the competitive relation between them. The first is Raminetti:

> **Raminetti**
> **cracked the whip of the circus-master**
> **astride a prismatic locomotive**
> **ramping the tottering platform**
> **of the Arts**
> **of which this conjuring commercial traveller**
> **imported some novelties from**
> **Paris in his pocket . . .**

souvenirs for his disciples
to flaunt
At his dynamic carnival

Raminetti is described metaphorically through two images: as a "circus-master" with a "whip," and as a travelling salesman who does magic tricks—a "conjuring commercial traveller."

In the first characterization, the word "circus" is used to caricature his Futurist activities, which are depicted as a ridiculous event staged to attract attention. The Futurist movement is depicted through one of its typical images, as a locomotive, evoking the manifestos calling for embracing dynamism. The ideas of speed, motion, technology and industrialization behind Futurism which are represented by the locomotive are illustrated in artworks of many Futurist artists: Umberto Boccioni's *The States of Mind I* is one example (Figure 10)

Figure 10. Umberto Boccioni, *The States of Mind I: The Farewells*, 1911[68]

where the focal point is produced by the movement which is depicted. This movement can be seen as the dynamism of technological machines—locomotives, automobiles and airplanes—as well as the perplexity of people using them. However, in the poem it is treated sarcastically: the locomotive is flashy and multi-coloured ("prismatic"), Raminetti is sitting on it and cracking his whip like a circus-master, perhaps taming

his followers or his audience; and the Futurist locomotive is supposed to be based on the "platform / of the Arts," but this platform is about to collapse—it is "tottering."

The other characterization of Raminetti also makes it clear that the "Arts" on which the Futurist locomotive is based are not the "fine arts," but small, cheap novelties which are not original or Italian, but "imported. . . from Paris." As a travelling salesman with a few tricks, he distributes these "souvenirs" to his followers ("disciples"), who are fooled by them and show them off ("flaunt them") in the Futurist event, which is characterized not as a serious event, but as a "carnival." These descriptions suggest, from the perspective of the poem's narrator, how hollow and trivial the views expressed in the Futurist manifesto are.

The second male Futurist, Bapini, is ironically described as "erudite":

The erudite Bapini
experimenting in auto-hypnotic God-head
on a mountain
rolls off as Raminetti's plastic velocity
explodes his crust
of library dust
and hurrying threatening nakedness
to a vermilion ambush
in flabbergastism

The word suggests that he is "skilled" and "knowledgeable," but paradoxically, in the same way that Gabrunzio's images were undermined by the description of him as an "automatic fancier" in the first section, here Bapini is fooling himself into believing that he is some sort of divinity (an "auto-hypnotic God-head"); he is a narcissistic and self-deluding figure. He is portrayed "on a mountain," suggesting his inflated opinion of himself.

The events which follow suggest how the male Futurists resolve the conflicts between them. As Raminetti's ideas take off with "plastic velocity"—this is a Futurist phrase expressing ideas of movement and dynamism—Bapini's power decreases, and he is about to roll down from his "mountain." In other words, Bapini's mask of erudition (his "crust / of library dust") is about to be removed ("exploded") by Raminetti's activities—this will be a bloody Futurist coup, a "vermillion ambush / in flabbergastism"— and he will be exposed in his "nakedness." Faced with this threat, he hurries to protect himself and prevent it:

. . . he kisses Raminetti
full on his oratory
in the arena
rather fancying Himself
in the awesome proportions
of an eclectic mother-in-law
to a raw ménage.

In a public space ("the arena"), Bapini supports Raminetti's Futurist ideas and flatters him when he is making a speech—"kisses [him] / full on his oratory." When he does this, he presents "Himself"—the capital letter suggests that he manages to preserve his idea of himself as a "God-head"—in the powerful ("awesomely proportioned") role of an authority figure who is open to different ideas (an "eclectic mother-in-law"), and therefore as someone who can bring together and resolve the crude mixture of opinions ("raw m[é]nage) of Futurism. Bapini's presentation of himself is undermined by the narrator's description of him as a "mother-in-law." On the one hand, this suggests the stereotype of interference, and on the other, it questions his masculinity by feminizing him; the narrator's metaphor of kissing "full on" also suggests a homosexual relationship between Raminetti and Bapini, which is echoed in the word "m[é]nage."

By this public act of support, each of them has theoretically recognized the other as a Futurist, and they have given the public the impression that they are friends who support each other; they are "academically chaperoned" or legitimized, so they are now free to do what they want:

Thus academically chaperoned
the flabbergasts
blaze from obscurity
to deny their creed in cosy corners
to every feminine opportunity

They can now come out in public ("blaze from obscurity"), comfortably reject what they said they believed (their "creed") in the manifesto—that they do not need women—and make use of every chance to approach them;

and Raminetti
anxious to get a move on this beating-Gabrunzio-business
possesses the women of two generations

except the few
who jump the train at the next station . . .

Raminetti, trying to beat Gabrunzio's record, seduces various women of different ages, although he has no success with the rebellious ones, who have refused to accept the Futurist statements about women ("who jump the train at the next station")—and here again, the narrator's voice may be including itself in this group of "excepted women."

And similarly, Bapini, also competing with the others, first of all writes "a pretty comment"—denouncing women and their wombs:

. . . while the competitive Bapini
publishes a pretty comment
involving women in the plumber's art
and advertises
his ugliness as an excellent aphrodisiac
*** * * ***

The reference ("involving women in the plumber's art") is to an article by Papini published in Florence in October 1913, in an issue of *Lacerba,* an Italian newspaper related with the Futurist movement.[69] In his article, Bapini reduces women to their sexual organ, and describes them as "a urinal of flesh that desire represents to itself as the chosen recipient."[70] His "pretty comment" views women just as men's pleasures, and the narrative voice ironically points out that the offensiveness of his comment "advertises / his ugliness"—which is the opposite of an "excellent aphrodisiac."

1.3.3 Performing the Fragmented Narrator

The third section begins with a framing statement, and then focuses on "Nima Lyo, alias Anim Yol, alias Imna Oly" (recognisable as anagrams of "Mina Loy"):

*** * * ***
Shall manoeuvres in the new manner
pass unremarked?
. . . .
These amusing men
discover in their mail
duplicate petitions
to be the lurid mother of "their" flabbergast child

from Nima Lyo, alias Anim Yol, alias
Imna Oly
(secret service buffoon to the Woman's Cause)

The framing statement is a rhetorical question, basically asking whether these kinds of tricks, deceptions and games being played by the Futurist movement ("manoeuvres in the new manner") should be allowed to continue with no one objecting. The four-dot ellipsis is, on the one hand, a pause given to the reader to consider the answer, and on the other hand, a pause to introduce the narrator's own answers.

The narrator now inserts herself into the poem as the third person, and inscribes her authorial signature in the story under various aliases—Nima Lyo, Anim Yol, Imna Oly—as the sender of ("duplicate petitions") to the two Futurist leaders. These petitions—perhaps a reference to poems by Mina Loy such as "Lions' Jaws," or her "Aphorisms on Futurism" or "Feminist Manifesto"—are shocking and sensational ("lurid") requests, like sexual proposals, to enter into an intimate relationship with these "amusing men" as a partner in Futurism: "to be the lurid mother of 'their' flabbergast child." However, this is a subversive act of resistance against their "manoeuvres in the new manner," because while Loy's narrators are associated with Futurism, they express a critique of the movement from a woman's perspective. It is a playful or "buffoonish" act of espionage directed against the misogyny of Raminetti and Bapini by a female figure who is carrying out a "secret service" for "the Woman's Cause." In doing these, Loy's narrator multiplies herself into different anagrams or aliases, which works against the Futurists' stereotyping of all women as a single "myriad-fleshed Mistress" or "carnivorous courtesan."

In the meantime, the tensions within Futurism become excessive and "boil over":

While flabbergastism boils over
and Ram: and Bap:
avoid each other's sounds
This Duplex-Conquest
claims a "sort of success"
for the Gabrunzio resisters.

The third section ends with a description of a renewed clash between "Ram" and "Bap" (these are abbreviations of "Raminetti" and "Bapini"). The competition between them

leads to a fragmentation where they "avoid each other's sounds," and this mutual rejection ("Duplex-Conquest") of each other is perceived as a "sort of success" by another Futurist action, "the Gabrunzio resisters." In short, this is the beginning of the break-up of the Futurist movement and its eventual collapse.

1.3.4 The Narrator's Judgmental Voice

The last section of the poem, the *Envoi,* is framed by a rapid descriptive summary of how things turn out for three of the Futurist figures—Raminetti, Bapini, and Imna Oly:

Envoi
Raminetti gets short sentences
for obstructing public thoroughfares
Bapini is popular in "Vanity Fair"
As for Imna Oly . . .
I agree with Mrs. Krar Standing Hail
She is not quite a lady. . . .
. . . . . .

Raminetti continues his Futurist activities, but his greatest achievement is getting a few prison sentences for blocking the roads ("obstructing public thoroughfares"). Bapini gets a job as a journalist for "Vanity Fair," a monthly American Society magazine satirizing high society and interviewing with celebrities."[71]

And finally, Loy's narrator differentiates one of the multiplied narrative voices, "Imna Oly," from the other aliases, and fragments again, both as the character of the anagram, and embodying herself into the story as the first person "I." This duplicity in the multiplication of the narrator can be attributed to her fragmented psychic nature, which appears here in two modes. Positioning herself as the first-person narrator, she ironically passes judgment not only on the male characters, but also on one of the maternal characters, "Imna Oly," and agrees with the perspective of "Mrs. Krar Standing Hail."[72] However, although she is supposed to judge "Mrs. Hail"—probably because of her illegal affairs as a mistress as she judges the other characters, she conceals this fact with her self-judgment as "Imna Oly." The irony is that the judgement of the narrator on "Imna Oly" is just as misogynistic as the Futurists' perspective because—despite her feminist acts on behalf of the "Woman's Cause"

against Futurist misogyny depicted in the third section—"Imna Oly," the narrator thinks, does not seem to fit the stereotypical expectations of the rest of society: "She is not quite a lady." Thus, the feminist narrative voice continues to be an outsider, fragments between belonging inside a category and not fitting in any category. The silence of the first-person narrator, characterised by three dots—before moving on to the final judgemental remark—gives the impression that the narrator omits the rest, and conceals something from the reader.

From this perspective, it can be seen that the voiceover of the female figure which appeared at the beginning of the poem, now suddenly appears at the end of the text. The first-person narrator—who incorporates herself in the *Envoi* as a judge both to critique the intellectual and sexual rivalries of the three male characters, and to criticize one of the feminist "lurid mother[s]" of "flabbergastism," "Imna Oly," presumably for her immoral acts—serves as the verbal embodiment of the visual female image. Thus, the line between the visual and the textual narrative blurs, and the fragmented relationship between these two signifiers—the verbal and the visual narrative voices—creates a visual analogy of the narrator's identity; the multiplied narrators evolve throughout the text and merge at the end.

The closing part of the *Envoi* again takes up the Futurist male figure, Gabrunzio, with whom the poem began:

. . . .
Riding the sunset
DANRIEL GABRUNZIO
corrects
the lewd precocity
of Raminetti and Bapini
with his sonorous violation of Fiume
and drops his eye
into the fatal lap
of Italy.

The poem closes with the figure of DANRIEL GABRUNZIO, "riding the sunset." Gabrunzio's final act signals the end of Futurism because it "corrects" the shallow excesses and sexual exaggerations ("lewd precocity") of Raminetti and Bapini. It does this by moving away from the "carnival" games and inflated egos of Futurist writers and artists, and into the serious real world of politics. The geographical setting is Fiume, an independent free state on the border of Italy that existed as a part of Yugoslavia during 1920–1924 (it is now within the borders of Croatia).[73] Historically,

Gabriele D'Annunzio—whose name is permutated to Gabrunzio in the poem—was famous as a war hero and creator of Italian nationalist literature; and as part of his mission to unite all Italians, he decided to invade and Fiume for Italy. In 1919 D'Annunzio invaded the city with a small army and began a 15-month occupation; but he was later expelled from the city by the forces of Italian Army, in 1920.[74] He is presented finally as the only Futurist who has lost something ("his eye") for the sake of Futurism (he actually lost one of his eyes when he was a fighter pilot serving Italy in the First World War)[75]—this is foreshadowed in the evocation of the Bayeux Tapestry suggested by the "comet conqueror." As a result, the poem ends with the fall of Futurism, Gabrunzio's moral triumph over Raminetti and Bapini in the Futurist struggle, and with him compensating for his own Futurist excesses (which were described at the beginning of the poem) by doing something politically meaningful—although the narrator also ironizes that nationalism: his sacrifice falls in the "lap of Italy," which is "fatal."

1.4 Conclusion

In "Lions' Jaws," Loy's narrator parodies the Italian Futurist leaders—named as Danriel Gabrunzio, Raminetti and Bapini—and lowers their intellectual activities to the maternal, sexual, homosexual, and even asexual level. "The national arch-angel" Gabrunzio is portrayed as a "comet conquerer" in his "abandoned harem"; the leader Raminetti becomes a "circus-master" in "his dynamic carnival"; and Bapini kisses Raminetti in "a raw ménage" with an "auto-hypnotic God-head." These three "Latin littérateurs" are depicted as male figures insulting "women's wombs" for "Man's immediate agamogenesis," as "hurled by Raminetti" in his "Manifesto." And finally, in the *Envoi* section, the narrator, by summing up all other female personas, incorporates herself within the poem, asserts her superiority by judging the characters, and disengages herself from the rising movement ("Riding the sunset"); she concludes the poem by reducing the "inflated" Gabrunzio: one of his eyes is depicted as having fallen into the "fatal lap" of Italy (the "Benign Peninsular").

This experimental poem satirizes the futurist leaders and their ideologies; however, in the process of treating Futurist views ironically, the narrator's voice contradicts itself from time to time by shifting between a Futurist and a feminist perspective, creating a complicated allegory within the context of the poem. This

allegory emerges when the text is read performatively, engaging semiotic, structuralist, performative and feminist perspectives simultaneously; the performative analysis both constructs and reveals the nature of the narrators hidden behind the visual and textual signs. The unusual style and imagery of the poem also contribute to its possible meanings: typographical fragmentations, such as the physical pauses, gaps and ellipses borrowed from the technical style of the Futurist manifestos, make the text more dynamic, and create spatial and semantic reflections of the fragmentary thought processes of the narrators.

The satirical embrace of the vocal and corporeal imagery of Loy's narrator results in her disembodiment multiplying into several identities and merging again; and this shifting play of Futurist and feminist identities can also be seen in Loy's prose-poem "Feminist Manifesto," and in its visual representations, *Househunting* and *Christ on a Clothesline*, where the fragmented visual personas become performatively integrated with their vocalized narratives.

CHAPTER TWO: FUTURISM AND FEMINIST PERFORMATIVITY: MINA LOY'S "FEMINIST MANIFESTO," *HOUSEHUNTING* AND *CHRIST ON A CLOTHESLINE*

> **Women**[76] if you want to realise yourselves—you are on the eve of a devastating upheaval—all your pet illusions must be unmasked—the lies of centuries have got to go—are you prepared for the **Wrench**—? There is no half-measure—NO scratching on the surface of the rubbish heap of tradition, will bring about **Reform**, the only method is **Absolute Demolition**
>
> —Mina Loy, "Feminist Manifesto" (1914)[77]

2.1 Introduction and Background to "Feminist Manifesto"

The idiosyncratic prose-poem "Feminist Manifesto" was written on November 15, 1914 when Loy was living in an expatriate community in Florence;[78] it was sent in draft form to Mabel Dodge Luhan, an American patron of the arts, and only published posthumously. In his Editor's Notes to *The Lost Lunar Baedeker*, Roger Conover quotes the marginal notes which Loy penned on the first page of the manuscript (Figure 11), which are intriguing: "This is a rough draught beginning of an absolute substantiation of the feminist question… give me your opinion—of course it's easily to be proved fallacious—There is no truth—anywhere" (216).

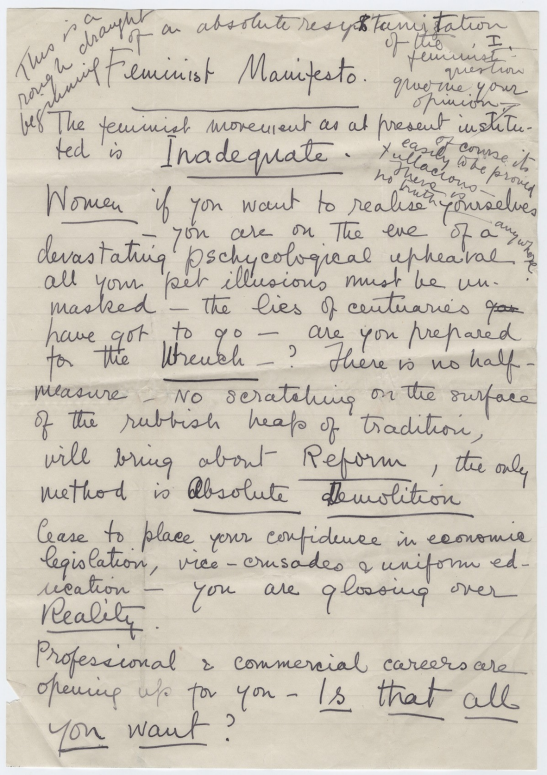

This is a draught of an absolute resignation of the feminist question
Feminist Manifesto.
The feminist movement as at present instituted is Inadequate.
Women if you want to realise yourselves — you are on the eve of a devastating psychological upheaval — all your pet illusions must be unmasked — the lies of centuries have got to go — are you prepared for the wrench — ? There is no half-measure — No scratching on the surface of the rubbish heaps of tradition, will bring about Reform, the only method is Absolute Demolition
Cease to place your confidence in economic legislation, vice-crusades & uniform education — you are glossing over Reality.
Professional & commercial careers are opening up for you — Is that all you want ?

Figure 11. Mina Loy's "Feminist Manifesto": holographic manuscript, first page. November 15, 1914. Courtesy of Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library[79]

The original manuscript was handwritten in text of various sizes and without standard punctuation: underlining and bold letters are used to emphasize certain words and phrases, and the multiple em-dashes at the ends of paragraphs suggest not only pauses, but pointed implications and implicit conclusions. In "Feminist Manifesto, "an em-dash marks the conclusion to the paragraph, suggesting both that the paragraph is finished—completed by the full-stop—and at the same time that something critical is missing, as the dash implies an omission" (Kelly 7). Loy's engagement with this modernist conceit in the poems led Gertrude Stein to praise her artistic abilities**,** saying that Loy could understand her works, "[even] without the commas. She has always been able to understand" (Stein 145) and Ezra Pound used the word "logopoeia" to characterize her work, defining it as "poetry that is akin to nothing but language, which is a dance of intelligence among words and ideas and modifications of ideas and characters" (55). The modernist fragmentation of the text is also in line with the typographic experimentation of Marinetti, Carrà and the other Futurists, the visual

equivalent of what they called "words-in-freedom." Futurist writers and artists subverted traditional writing formats by using the free form which they called "words-in-freedom"—or in Italian, *parole in libertà*. This involved liberating words and letters from their traditional use by destroying syntax, using verbs in the infinitive forms, removing adjectives and adverbs, deleting punctuation, inserting musical and mathematical symbols, and employing onomatopoeia.[80] Words-in-freedom poems were read as literature, experienced as visual art, and performed as dramatic works. With regard to the paradoxical shifts of Loy's persona between Futurist and feminist perspectives, Julie Schmid suggests that "[although] Loy quickly became disenchanted with Futurism's misogyny, she continued to be influenced by the movement's aesthetic innovations" (Schmid 2). Ironically, however, this can be interpreted as Loy's narrator's making use of the Futurists' textual aesthetic in order to undermine some of the movement's fundamental assumptions—heroism, dynamism, masculinity in particular—through a feminist rhetoric which addresses gender issues and women's roles in society. And as Loy's narrative voice shifts between Futurist and feminist perspectives, she appropriates Futurists' preferred literary form of the manifesto[81] in order to develop an aggressive critique of Futurism, as well as to argue for a more radical theory of feminism than that represented by the suffragette.

This form is not simply a proclamation of the writer's opinions and motives, but a call to action which also enacts and embodies, through its language, the action it is calling for. The primary function of the Futurist manifesto is declaration, which is intended to make something happen, and therefore functions as performative rhetoric: "performative utterances [are] all cases of declarations . . . declarations as speech acts . . ." (Searle 541) and "[i]t is the act of declaration, regardless of the intention or sincerity of the declarer, that constitutes the Futurist performative" (Pillai and Onar 62). The Futurists' declarations typically reject the past, its nostalgia and artistic and political traditions, and call for the destruction of institutions which preserve these traditions, such as libraries, museums and academies as Marinetti declares in his "Founding and Manifesto of Futurism." In statements like this, it is clear that the consequence of the performative may be action that is not physical (like the actual destruction of a building), but psychological—in that the performative may result in a concept or ideology (misogyny, for instance) being transmitted and accepted. Thus, in addition to embracing ideas of dynamism, technology, industrialization and war,

Futurist writers and artists aggressively attack feminism; Marinetti's misogyny is explicit in his 1911 "Contempt for Women": ". . . we male Futurists have felt ourselves abruptly detached from women . . . We have even dreamed of one day being able to create a mechanical son . . ." (89).

Marinetti's project, detailed in "The Founding Manifesto of Futurism" (1909), where he explicitly mirrors and develops Futurist ideas such as hyper-masculinity, agamogenesis, anti-feminism, misogyny, violence, and the machine world, evokes his *Mafarka the Futurist: An African Novel* (1909). In the novel, Marinetti's persona, El-Mafarka—who gives birth to his son, Gazourmah, his cyborg filial, and becomes a male-mother after being impregnated with the help of the African sun–declares: "We can shape everything around us and endlessly renew the face of the earth. Soon, if you appeal to your will, you will give birth without resorting to the woman's vulva" (Marinetti, *Mafarka* 146). In his preface to the novel, Marinetti calls men to detach themselves from their servitude to the woman's vulva: "… I tell you that the mind of a man is an unpractised ovary. . . It is we who are the first to impregnate it!" (3). So it is men —not women—who are depicted as capable of creating superhuman beings—their own "mechanical" sons. Marinetti's words thus represent not only the Futurists' embracing technology and the machine world, but also their hypermasculinist views, including excluding women from the procreation process as the female ovary is transformed into the male ovary. This Futurist view of procreation without women is also taken up in "Lions' Jaws" (1919), where Loy's narrator sees "Man's immediate agamogenesis" as an "Insurance // of [Man's] spiritual integrity" (Loy 47) and ironizes the Futurists' fantasy of asexual reproduction.

Against this conception, Loy's "Feminist Manifesto" was probably written as a response to Marinetti's 1909 "Futurist Manifesto."[82] It critiques women's current status as a complex product of two things—culturally embedded male misogyny, and women's self-perception—and it addresses women to galvanize them against their subordinate position in society. It therefore anticipates in textual practice through the declarative form of the manifesto, Judith Butler's argument, derived from speech act theory, that "the acts by which gender is constituted bear similarities to performative acts within theatrical contexts," and provides a textual embodiment of how "gender is constructed through specific corporeal acts, and what possibilities exist for the cultural transformation of gender through such acts" (Butler 521).

In this essay, I will perform close readings of Mina Loy's poem, "Feminist Manifesto," and two of her artworks, *Househunting* and *Christ on a Clothesline.* The purpose of these readings is twofold: to explore how the concept of gender performativity can be argued for in Loy by its projection through reading, and to investigate how the ideas of Futurism may be problematized in Loy's works by a performative exploration of the intertextual relations among them. The process involves constructing the author—Mina Loy—as a fictive persona rather than an "actual" or historical figure, and treating her biography as a textual construct, rather than as a normative source to refer to; and from this perspective, I will explore how the narrative voice of the manifesto shifts between the masculine logic of Futurism and a modernist feminism to problematize Marinetti's Futurist manifesto, and how Loy's two artworks provide various sets of connection to this shift.

A semiotic approach makes it possible to engage with the layers of meaning that proliferate in Loy's works, as well as with the intertextual relationships between them, by considering the symbolic dimensions of visual and verbal signs from social and cultural perspectives—rather than the historical or biographical—and to performatively "reconstruct" the texts and their persona(s). The three texts I have selected map complex engagements that negotiate the representational space between feminism and Futurism: a close reading of Loy's "Feminist Manifesto" (1914) thus "reveals" how the narrative voice of the manifesto shifts between the masculine logic of Futurism and a modernist feminism which problematizes Marinetti's "Futurist Manifesto"; the arguments suggested in the two artworks, *Househunting* (1950) and *Christ on a Clothesline* (1950-59), provide a visual analogy of this shift, developing radical and complex conceptions of the relation between gender, performativity and "feminine writing"—or, more broadly, "feminine representation"—which are both paradigmatically (and ironically) modernist, and anticipate later and more recent trajectories in feminist theory.

2.2 The Feminist Project of Loy's Narrator in "Feminist Manifesto"

The manifesto is organized as a series of related themes, beginning with Loy's persona's critique of the contemporary feminist movement as "**Inadequate**," and a direct call to women to "realize themselves" through "a devastating psychological upheaval." The typical early feminists' focuses on solving *external*[83] political

problems, referred to as fantasies, "pet illusions," the "lies of centuries," are rejected, because "NO scratching on the surface of the rubbish heap of tradition will bring about **Reform**"; instead, there must be "**Absolute Demolition**." While this might seem to echo Marinetti and the Futurists' call to reject tradition and break away from the past, it is also, in opposition to the misogyny of the Futurists' manifestos, a call to reject stereotypical views of women's roles, and for an entirely new approach to gender; it is the only way for women to gain their sexual and maternal independence: Peter Howarth, with regard to the project of "Absolute Demolition" and motherhood, also comments that "[the] moderate reform is useless, and the only method is 'Absolute Demolition' . . . and this destruction is the only way to grasp women's perfect autonomy" (149) Thus, what Loy's narrator envisions is the "**Absolute Demolition**": the only solution for women to gain their intellectual and physical liberty.

The "scratching on the surface," the manifesto explains, is campaigning for "economic legislation, vice-crusades & uniform legislation [. . .] Professional and commercial careers"—in other words, the kinds of social rights (equal pay, suffrage, equal job opportunities, etc.) that women activists, the suffragettes in particular, were fighting for.[84] The expression "vice-crusades" is a reference to the fact that many of the suffragettes were part of the Temperance Movement, the conservative Christian moral protest against the "sin" of drinking alcohol, which contributed to the prohibition laws of the 1920s; well-known images of Temperance leaders like Carrie Nation waving a hatchet led to the stereotyping of dominant or aggressive women as "battle-axes" (Figure 12).[85] It is a more subtle kind of stereotyping, however, that Loy's text is arguing against. Campaigns such as those of the Temperance Movement and indeed, other agendas of the suffragettes are superficial, the manifesto says, because they are "glossing over reality," and it asks women: "**Is that all you want?**". Here, Loy's narrator is questioning and critiquing the desires of the suffragettes.

Figure 12. "Carry Nation with a Hatchet," 1910. Activist, Organizer and Leader of the Temperance Movement, Courtesy of Virginia Commonwealth University[86]

Loy's speaker's point is that the reality is a deeper psychological issue underlying the "pathetic clap-trap war cry **Woman is the equal of man**"—because, the manifesto declares: "She is **NOT!**" This polemical declaration introduces Loy's persona's unique feminism and critique of gender roles as they are commonly understood. Men, she says**,** "conform to a social code" which claims to protect, but also *controls* a stereotype of what it believes to be femininity. The social code stereotypes them, so that they lose their real male identity: they are "no longer **masculine**." At the same time, women "adapt themselves" to their socially coded stereotype, "a theoretical valuation of their **relative impersonality**," so they are prevented from achieving their real identity as women—they are "not yet Feminine." Instead, they are defined by two functions:

> As conditions are at present constituted—you have the choice between **Parasitism, & Prostitution—or Negation**

In other words, a woman can "choose" only to be a social *parasite*—by looking for a man to support or "host" her (either outside or within marriage); and in return, to be a *prostitute*—to serve and satisfy men's physical needs outside marriage; and/or to produce and look after children within marriage. A woman who does not fit into either of these categories is excluded from society—*negated.* In her reading of this passage,

Christina Walter correctly suggests that "'Parasitism' here is Loy's metaphor for marriage, and negation (that is, the absence of a social relationship to men) is a forced meaninglessness that compounds women's social impersonality" (667). Lucia Re comments that "Loy's allusion to parasitism and to marriage as a kind of legalized and glorified prostitution is thus entirely in tune with the Futurist vocabulary, as is her advocacy of a free and spontaneous sexuality" (813); in Loy's context, however, the latter reference, despite the "Futurist vocabulary," is clearly an ironization of the misogynistic sexuality of the Futurists, in favor of a feminine sexuality.

As a result of this patriarchal social code, the relation between men and women is nothing more than "the enmity of the exploited for the parasite, the parasite for the exploited." In other words, both men and women are conditioned and exploited by the established set of gender roles, and each is forced to depend on the other. The only point where they can break out of the patriarchal system and realize themselves outside of its stereotypes, is when "the interests of the sexes merge"—when they are free to express their desires through "the sexual embrace." Linda Arbaugh Taylor comments that,

> [a]lthough [Loy] felt that gender power relations divided men and women against one another, she felt that this polarity could be collapsed through sex, for the 'only point at which the interests of the sexes merge is the sexual embrace'. . . For Loy, the body and mind, the sexual and psychological, must be reconsidered by women before political or economic solutions can be truly effective. (29)

Taylor here seems to be emphasizing an apparent essentialist division between men and women, rather than their mutual implication in a hegemonic structure of manufactured consent; I would argue, however, that the acceptance of the social hybridization of gender roles that Loy's narrator is critiquing is what Antonio Gramsci will later call the false consciousness of manufactured consent: "The effort to win consent—an effort that is ongoing and never entirely successful—is the attempt to gain hegemony, the dominant position in a given society. Hegemony is 'manufactured consent'" (Gramsci 1137). Loy's argument is that male dominance is being sustained by a system of beliefs and expectations which is propagated not only coercively through its institutionalization, but also psychologically; and not simply by the men who are raised in it, but through the active participation and consent of the subordinate group as well—in this context, women.

This implication evokes traditional cultural stereotypes, such as can be seen in the contrasting slogans that appear in photographs of two suffragette protests: a 1921 event in New York where the women hold placards with a quotation from the Irish nationalist poet William Rooney, defining themselves as "A FEARLESS INDOMITABLE / WOMANHOOD / A FEARLESS INDOMITABLE RACE";[87] and a 1914 protest in London against the apparent impunity of the militant Ulster Unionist leaders Lord Carson and Lord Lansdowne, where the suffragettes seem to be subscribing unironically to some traditional gender roles and promoting a stereotypical idea of "manliness": the sandwich-board signs they wear read: "COWARDLY / AND / UNMANLY / CARSON, "COWARDLY / AND / UNMANLY / LANSDOWNE."[88]

Although both men and women are trapped in these social codes, there is a difference in how they function in patriarchal society because in the false consciousness created by hegemony, which the manifesto characterizes as a "protectorate," men are defined (and tend to define themselves) only by their roles as protectors and controllers, while women typically are viewed or view themselves as having one of two functions: serving either as a "mistress" or as a "mother." The manifesto points out that because of this false consciousness, a woman who obtains financial support from a man in exchange for sexual favours is regarded in society as "incompetent" to become a "mother," and similarly, a real "mother" is considered "incompetent" to become a lover—she is a "poor mistress."

This distinction between mother and mistress is read by Jacinta Kelly as "a spatial separation that must be upended" (4) rather than as a psychological and social division (4-5); while Aimee L. Pozorski relates it to the author's biography: "Loy became both mistress to the Futurists and mother to racially-mixed children. Via Futurism, [she] challenged the conventions of poetry; via feminism, at times through an appeal to Futurist ideology, she challenged the conventions of womanhood" (42). Both of these perspectives, however, are clearly at odds with Loy's persona's observation that making such distinctions between "mistress" and "mother" corresponds to furthering the gender-based roles imposed on women by the society. Indeed, in reality, Loy's speaker argues, "Nature has endowed the complete woman with a faculty for expressing herself through all her functions—there are **no restrictions**"; and she has to "evolve" in this direction to raise the next generation accordingly and "[adequately apprehend] **Life**." This evolution will subvert the

distinction between stereotypical female types— "mother" and "mistress"—as they are seen through the lens of the Futurist movement.[89]

As a project to sustain women's intellectual and personal evolution, and overthrow the conventional female classification which labels women as "mother/mistress" or "parasite/prostitute," Loy's narrator envisions three steps, each of which rejects a related aspect of the patriarchal social code. First, women need to embrace their sexuality: to get rid of the social stereotype of the *virtuous woman,* which is assumed to be "concrete," but which is actually "the fictitious value of a woman as identified with her physical purity." The text therefore calls for the "**unconditional . . . destruction of virginity** throughout the female population at puberty" as a functional solution to eliminate conformity to the traditional male and consenting female expectations that women should be virgins, unless they are married or somehow lacking in virtue. Mark Ford, in his critical review of *The Lost Lunar Baedeker*, also considers Loy's words—"the unconditional surgical destruction of virginity through-out the female population at puberty"—simply "as a first step to liberating women from the only two roles then available to them: Parasitism & Prostitution" (40); indeed, as Loy's persona advocates this is the "first and greatest sacrifice," women must make to save themselves from the market value of virtue and purity. However, Rachel Potter rather oversimplifies Loy's narrator's psychological project by seeing it—through Loy's experience as described in her biography, and by linking the expression of these stereotypical roles only to larger economic structures—only as a material, "practical" agenda:

> [u]sing the tactics of shock and irreverence which she had learned from her contact with the Italian Futurists, [Loy] offers a practical solution to the problem of women's subservience to men: destroy the distinction between virgin and whore, and women will be set free from the division of labour which structures their social value. (258-259)

Loy's project is considerably broader, as can be seen beginning with the second step the manifesto calls for the destruction of the hegemonic stereotype of *marriage,* which sees men as independently useful "to the community," but values a woman based on whether or not she can "[manoeuver] a man into taking the life-long responsibility of her [. . .] as a thank offering for her virginity." In her reading of the Futurist paradox, and of the overlap between Marinetti's ideas on marriage in his

"Futurist Manifesto" and those in Loy's "Feminist Manifesto," Julie Schmid sees the latter in terms of a simple economic exchange:

> Marinetti states that the institution of marriage is 'prehistoric' and clearly establishes the law of adultery at any cost, or masked prostitution at any cost. Likewise, Loy argues that women must 'Leave off looking to men to find out what you are not. Seek within yourself to find out what you are. As conditions at present are constituted you have the choice between Parasitism, Prostitution, or Negation.' Much of Loy's manifesto focuses on the social conditions of women, critiquing the institution of marriage as an economic transaction in which the bride exchanges her virginity for financial security. (3)

Rachel Potter places Loy's argument in the larger context of capitalism and, paradoxically, in the non-identity and anonymity of the free market:

> Loy's early poems and manifestos declare the ethical bankruptcy of marriage, which she calls legalized love, and explore what she calls the 'new illusion' of love, explicitly connecting this difference to the shift from the paternalistic control of women by men to a society in which women can put themselves on the market and undergo its anonymous constraints and sanction. (259)

Both of these readings are again, I would suggest, oversimplifications: while there are certainly economic contexts indicated here in which manufactured consent functions, there are also larger psychological considerations involved in Loy's argument; and it is not simple "anonymity" that characterizes Loy's "new illusion," but, as is clear in the text, a freedom to shift between identities, as well as a larger, synecdochic conception of identity as "Woman" of which the individual identity represents a part.

This is indicated, for example, in the third, related step: the destruction of the stereotypical view of *motherhood* as something that women are "**entirely debarred**" from unless they consent and conform to the financial "bargain" of marriage. Instead, because "Every woman has a right to maternity," the "superior woman," in the process of her "psychic development," should have a relationship with a man in order to exercise her right to be a mother, but the relationship is simply "an alliance—spontaneously adapted for vital creation in the beginning," and she should not be obliged to produce children and continue in "a possible irksome and outworn" relationship of marriage. This means that through the woman's self-realization, the man's status in the family structure must be destroyed, so that "Every woman of superior intelligence should realize her race-responsibility in producing children" and "Woman must become more responsible for the child than man" in order to educate the next generation accordingly. As Howarth also stresses, "[m]otherhood is a 'right'

(not a relationship with the child), relationships should come and go as the parents evolve individually" (149). Such attitudes, the manifesto declares, will render women "free of stress," and bring about an awareness of voluntary maternity—independent from marital status—which will constitute a race of free-loving and self-sufficient mothers and children.

In this connection, Sarah Prescott points to what appears to be a contrast between Loy's perspective on childbearing and other agendas of contemporary feminism, such as Margaret Sanger's:

> Not only did [Loy] believe in ending the demonization of premarital sex, but she also believed that women should have the option of being mothers regardless of marriage. At a time when Margaret Sanger advocated for a married woman's right *not* to have children, Loy argued for a single woman's right *to* have them. 'Every woman has a right to maternity,' Loy writes in 'Feminist Manifesto.' Loy argued for a single woman's right to have them. 'Every woman has a right to maternity.' (195)

Tim Hancock, however, sees these perspectives as complementary:

> The importance of this focus on childbirth, both as eugenic responsibility and as summation of a period of 'psychic development,' is further evidenced by Loy's feelings towards a second woman whose writing influenced the 'Feminist Manifesto'. . . during the month in which she wrote this work, Loy also read Margaret Sanger's pamphlet 'Family Limitation' (published on 3 November 1914). Again, common ground can be found between the two women on the issue of female sexual awareness. (188-189)

Paul Peppis takes the argument a step further, considering Loy to be one of the free love eugenicists supporting a race of free-loving and independent mothers and children: "As rearticulated in 'Feminist Manifesto,' the eugenicists' master race becomes almost the product of independent female creativity. . ." (Peppis 570). These three readings suggest, on the one hand, the historical contexts which may be brought to bear on Loy's texts; at the same time, however, they also suggest the limitations of such perspectives: it could equally well be argued that Loy does not argue against Sanger's perspective, but for the right to choose; the suggestion that Loy's and Sanger's views are complementary does not necessarily imply that one excludes the other; and it is something of a leap to consider Loy a eugenicist without examining precisely what might be meant by Loy's words "race-responsibility," which could just as well be taken as a broad view of humanism.

At this point, the voice of the manifesto seems to merge the logic of Futurism with that of a radical feminism, rejecting the traditional feminist agenda, understood as

equality and sharing responsibilities with men: it is now the woman who is responsible for her children, not her husband. The status of the man in the family structure is destroyed, and the child is introduced as one of the results of a woman's mental development, rather than as the common product of both parents. As the real physical and psychological owner of the child, the "superior woman" would be free of stress, because children will no longer be obstacles determining the continuation or termination of marriage. A woman would be able to have a divorce with or without the presence of a child, and the production of a child would be a logical consequence of a woman's natural evolution: "Each child of a superior woman should be the result of a definite period of psychic development in her life" (Loy 155). The child's mental development would then be a natural extension of the woman.

Here again, the notion of "superiority" cannot simply be assimilated into the eugenics argument; in fact, as Christina Walter points out, Loy's argument, taken to its logical conclusion, simply reduces motherhood to a form of individual self-expression, which in effect undercuts the manifesto's broader references to a "race":

> Loy argues that the 'devastating psychological upheaval' of her de-virginization program will create a self-conscious woman who 'express[es] herself through all her functions,' including maternity. The children of such a woman will, in other words, stem from 'a definite period of psychic development' and manifest the 'individual lines' of her 'personal evolution. Maternity thus becomes merely a 'faculty' of personal expression. (668)

This raises a rather complex issue: to what extent and under what circumstances can personal and individual experience or expression be generalized to become metonymic representations of the general, such as a "race?" A discussion of the issue is outside the scope of this dissertation; however, this assumption is fundamental, not only in Loy's "Feminist Manifesto," but also in the aesthetic argument of her "Aphorisms on Futurism" (1914). For Loy's persona, in order to resolve social and politic problems, firstly, the female mind and body—sexually and mentally—must be reconsidered by women, who can, then, imagine to "constitute an incalculable & wider social generation" (Loy 156).

In short, the manifesto argues that all the steps women have to undergo—embracing their sexuality, destroying the stereotypical hegemony of marriage and transforming the established values of motherhood—depend on their mastering themselves psychologically. The last section therefore calls for them to "destroy in

themselves" the emotions and feelings that have been socially constructed through manufactured consent: "the desire to be loved. . . [t]he desire for comfortable protection. . . honour, grief, sentimentality, pride & consequently jealousy." These social expectations around "sex and so-called love must be reduced to its initial element"—i.e. woman's authentic sexual desire—and "detached from it." The text ends with a call for woman to regenerate society by "destroy[ing]—for the sake of her "self respect"—the patriarchal religious belief that sex is a sin, and to realize, "in defiance of superstition that there is nothing impure in sex—except in the mental attitude to it."

These anachronistic views are remarkable anticipations of second-wave arguments, and clear parallels may be drawn with, for example, Kristeva's conception of pregnancy as "a sort of institutionalized, socialized and natural psychosis," (*New Maladies of the Soul* 220) of the image of motherhood as a "fantasy . . . of a lost territory"; (*Tales of Love* 234) and the search for a "'third way' for feminism to proceed, a way for women to feel free to have children and create culture, to be the body and the mind." (McAfee 76). The form and style of Loy's narrator in the manifesto can also be considered, after Cixous, Wittig and Irigaray, as an embodiment of modernist *écriture féminine*: the fragmentary style with its characteristic em-dashes, stages continual ruptures in thought and language; and "Feminist Manifesto" performatively appropriates the declarative form and content of male Futurist manifestos to decenter the logic of their patriarchal framework.

This embodiment is also expressed visually in two of Loy's later artworks, *Househunting* (1950) and *Christ on a Clothesline* (1955-59), where the hand of the manifesto writer is replaced by the hand of the artist. The relation between these two pieces creates a visual analogue of the performativity of the manifesto.

2.3 The Woman's Search for Femininity in *Househunting*

Househunting is an assemblage of three-dimensional objects fixed to a canvas (Figure 13), and as such it visually echoes the fragmentary form of "Feminist Manifesto":

Figure 13. Mina Loy, *Househunting*, ca.1950. Courtesy of Carolyn Burke, Personal Collection[90]

The title of the work can now be understood metonymically as suggesting women's search for a space of self, as they are loaded with the stereotypical domestic roles imposed on them by society; and so, the image depicts domestic spaces and objects as entrapments, crowding into the head of the female figure. Small, houselike forms with evocations of brickwork surround the central woman's image, and represent her fragmented fantasies. Suzanne Zelazo has described the physicality of the woman's imagination as "the body as housing for the soul," and this piece of work as "reminiscent of a child's dollhouse wherein the junk of the street is transformed in the mind of the assemblage's central female figure" (65). However, the relations between the various elements depicted, which I will elaborate, suggest that the title is more appropriately read ironically, as satirizing the settlement of women trapped by domestic societal and patriarchal demands, and as undermining their search for self within the psychological space of manufactured consent.

The head of the central female figure is in the form of a plate, a halo or a thought-bubble—a mental landscape which contains, perhaps is trapped in, stereotypical gendered images of female domesticity: wool for knitting, a crudely patched and repaired teapot, doll-sized plates, a laundry basket, and male clothing—trousers—washed and hanging on a clothesline, reached by climbing a ladder.[91]

2.3.1 The Spirit of the Suffragette Movement

Each of the domestic images ironically evokes well-known images from popular culture, often on posters or postcards which were circulated either to promote or to oppose women's suffrage and liberation. The "thought-bubble," for example, suggests suffragette posters which featured a robed, Madonna-like woman with a halo implying sanctity and purity, and her arms outstretched holding a banner proclaiming "Votes for Women" (Figure 14).

Figure 14. "Votes for Women" (1913)[92]

Figure 15. "A Woman's Mind Magnified" (1906)[93]

Figure 16. "Suffragette Madonna" (1909)[94]

Figure 17. "St. Valentine's Greeting— Women's sphere is in the HOME" (1909)[95]

Figure 18. "The Suffragette <u>not</u> at home" (n.d.)[96]

Figure 19. "Suffragette Vote-getting, the Easiest Way, Suffragette Series 4" (1909)[97]

Figure 20. "I want to vote, but my wife won't let me (1909)[98]

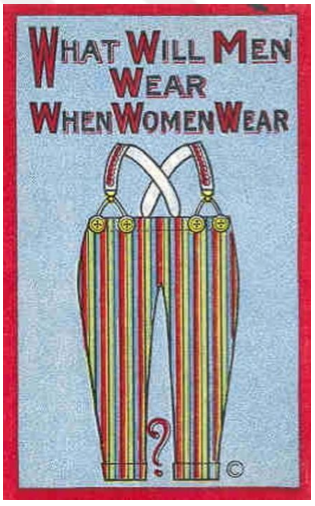


Figure 21. "What will men wear when women wear. . .?" (1915)[99]

It also recalls one anti-suffragette poster entitled "A Woman's Mind Magnified" (Figure 15) where the image of a woman's head is shown filled with illustrations of such things as a summer hat, a long dress, a puppy; and also a couple, a wedding ring and a baby suggesting the roles of wife and mother; and another, "Suffragette

Madonna," ironically showing a rather unhappy-looking man in a shirt and tie holding and feeding a baby, with a gold plate resting on a mantel behind his head serving as a halo (Figure 16); the implication of the halo here is male suffering and a "holy resistance" to the breaking of women's traditional roles associated with virginity and motherhood. The ball of wool evokes an anti-suffragette Valentine's Day greeting card showing a little girl in a blue dress and bonnet, sitting on a rocking chair and knitting; the caption reads: "Woman's sphere is in the HOME" (Figure 17). The teapot suggests the association of the suffragettes with tea and tea rooms,[100] and also recalls another image: a poster captioned "The Suffragette not at home" (Figure 18) depicting a chaotic dining-room scene where a man is trying to cope with the mess, a baby, and the household chore of pouring hot water from a kettle into a teapot. On the wall there is a flier, "Women's Suffrage / List of Meetings," and on the floor a handwritten note reads: "Dear Ted, / afraid shall be late— / Important Committee Meeting / Alice." And women's success in politics which depends on her manipulating men through her sexuality is seen in the postcard entitled "SUFFRAGETTE VOTE-GETTING, THE EASIEST WAY" (Figure 19).

The doll-sized plates, along with the basket and clothes hanging out to dry suggest domestic chores: a well-known anti-suffragette poster shows a man hand-washing laundry in a tub with a mangle, on a low table beside which a child is playing with a cat; the activity is taking place under a framed text that reads "EVERYBODY / WORKS BUT / MOTHER / SHE'S A SUFFRAGETTE," and the poster is captioned, "I WANT TO VOTE / BUT MY WIFE WON'T LET ME" (Figure 20). And the trousers call to mind a striking anti-suffragette poster which asks in large capitals, "WHAT WILL MEN / WEAR / WHEN WOMEN WEAR. . .?" (Figure 21); the missing word is represented by a pair of colourful striped trousers with suspenders attached.

The table similarly evokes a well-known object and event in suffragette history. Gladys Morrell, founder and leading suffragist of the Bermuda Women Suffrage Society challenged the political mechanism that allowed only male property owners to vote in the early decades of the twentieth century; along with her band of suffragists, she fought for Bermudian women's right to vote. The suffragettes led by Morrell refused to pay taxes until they got the right to vote, and the police seized their furniture and auctioned it. A group of suffragettes responded by going in buses to the auctions,

buying back the furniture and returning it to the owners. The small wooden table which once belonged to Gladys Morrell (Figure 22), iconically became a symbol: it was seized, auctioned and bought back every year from 1930 to 1944, when women in Bermuda finally got the right to vote.

Figure 22. Gladys Morrell's Suffragette Table, Courtesy of Bermuda Historical Society Museum, Bermuda[101]

On a historical note, Morrell's suffragette table later remained in the family until it was sold in an auction in Bermuda, and bought by the Historical Society of the Bermuda National Trust in 2017.[102] When parting with the cedar table, Kathy Bromby, Morrell's granddaughter, is quoted as saying: "I am ready to kiss the table goodbye"[103] (Figure 23). While on the one hand, this no doubt reflects pride in her grandmother's achievement for women's voting rights in 1944 after 30 years of campaigns and protests, in the end, Bromby's statement seems to unwittingly reveal precisely the limitations of the suffragette agenda that Loy spells out in "Feminist Manifesto."

Figure 23. Kathy Bromby with Suffragette Table and banner that once belonged to her grandmother, suffragist Gladys Morrell[104]

In the context of Loy's assemblage, the table and other signs evoke general cultural tropes as well as some that that are represented specifically in various ways in images related to the suffragette activists' efforts. They also suggest Loy's narrator's feminist projection in the "Feminist Manifesto" of "**Wrench**" and "**Reform**," which she finds "**Inadequate**" for women's attaining their physical, psychic and intellectual liberation and becoming aware of their capacity in male-dominated society. In short, these images inside the thought-bubble of *Househunting* present evocations of the mental clutter of manufactured consent, based on social stereotypes of gender roles: the fear of women's "wearing the pants" in a relationship, the idea that a woman's function is only to perform domestic chores such as cleaning house for a man, knitting, doing laundry and serving tea, and that her success in politics depends on her manipulating men through her sexuality. These "evocations" do not necessarily reflect intention (although it is likely that Loy would have been familiar with the tropes), but draw on the range of possibilities that have accumulated within the signs, and they can be drawn, no less validly than other historical or biographical documents, into intertextual relations with the image in the reading process by which meaning is constructed, bringing it into focus in the present.

Similarly, there are also deeper suggestions here, which allude to the Western traditions of religious architecture and painting. The crown-like shape on the figure's head, together with the vertical lines of her hair, resembles the capitals of fluted columns that support church domes (the circular shape of the thought-bubble evokes the dome);[105] this is held up in the image by little grotesque creatures like Gothic gargoyles standing on her shoulders. And it also suggests the traditional image of the crowned Virgin Mary, with the dome forming a halo.[106] The outline shape of the woman's head and upper body recalls the image of the chalice used to hold the wine symbolizing the blood of Christ;[107] the thought-bubble suggests the Communion Host—the wafer symbolizing the body of Christ—in church services; and the large circular plate of the thought-bubble also resembles a paten—the plate used to hold the wafers—with the smaller circular plates to the right of the ladder representing the wafers.[108] The ladder is commonly featured in Christian representations of the Deposition, as the steps Christ's followers go up to take Christ's body down from the cross after the crucifixion; and also as "Jacob's ladder,"[109] which in his dream extends from earth to heaven.[110] The spikes of wheat covering the figure's breasts, on the one hand, represent femininity and fertility; however, they also represent belief in Christ[111] as well as the bread in Holy Communion which symbolizes the sacrificial body of Christ. And ironically, the highest point of this belief system, reached by a ladder at the top of her thought-bubble, is the clothesline, where the woman does her domestic duty and serves her man by washing and drying his trousers.

Because she is loaded with these symbolic references, the woman's face is motionless, blank and staring, with unfocused blue eyes; she has no nose, ears or eyebrows, suggesting incomplete senses, numbness and inertia; and her pale, lifeless skin and folded hands suggest living death[112] and isolation. The imagery implies that it is oppressive stereotypes of women, held by both men and women, which support the structure of patriarchy. This is represented by the "superstition" of religion, which destroys women's authentic sensations: the pale red lipstick on the figure's lips is the only visible trace of her femininity. And all around her are torn-out paper images of fantasy homes like doll's houses: this is a mental landscape, where the woman appears to be looking for a sense of completeness and belonging, outside the manufactured consent of patriarchal beliefs and structures.

2.4 Downfall of the Male Hegemony in *Christ on a Clothesline*

In contrast to this mental landscape, Loy's *Christ on a Clothesline*[113] from 1955-59 depicts the physical space of a possible alternative reality. (Figure 24):

Figure 24. Mina Loy, *Christ on a Clothesline*, ca. 1955-59. Courtesy of Private Collection, Francis M. Naumann Fine Art Gallery, New York[114]

The imagery is a provocative assemblage, with the dramatic, even demonic, expression of the central male figure's corporeal embodiment. The three-dimensional construction of the work makes it more real—like a photograph, rather than a painting. On the other hand, the use of fragmented and reassembled objects suggests a Surrealist aesthetic. Caroline G. Miller, in her dissertation, describes this piece as "perhaps the most apt depiction of Loy's message of the impermanence of materiality" (29), underscores it as "the depiction of the material as ephemeral" (38) and defines the material "as a transitory, ephemeral space" (39). However, apart from its evocations of physical space, one can read a narrative voice into the painting which invites the reader to construct, through the intertextual relation between its signs and those of "Feminist Manifesto" and *Househunting*, layers of meaning that underlie and slide between the surfaces of physical space.

The title of this piece metaphorically suggests an irony by depicting "Christ"—the son of God—ending up with a tragedy as he is—perhaps by a woman—hung out

on a clothesline, which is often associated with women's domestic roles. Semiotically speaking, the clothesline is the most obvious iconic sign, which is also found in *Househunting*. However, in *Christ on a Clothesline*, this sign functions as the counter face of *Househunting* in the semiotic chain in certain ways. In this imagery, the religious architectural symbolism and fantasy houses depicted in *Househunting* are demystified in the background into a shabby brick tenement building, with two windows shut or boarded up, and a broken-down shed; the form of the mystical or theological ladder has been replaced (on the right) by the pattern of windows on a solid and secular apartment or office block. And in the foreground, instead of a man's trousers in *Househunting*, what appears pegged and hanging from a clothesline, isolated and excluded from the buildings, is an old, cadaverous "Christ," balding, with hollow cheeks, and a black eye from being beaten up. His arms are long and out of proportion. His body has lost its physical substance and its masculinity is represented by a shapeless garment while his hands are begging helplessly. The gothic gargoyles situated on the shoulders of the woman's image in *Househunting*, which iconically resemble fluted columns and evoke religious structures, are transformed into the long arms and hands of the "Christ," which hang down drooping, suggesting the decline of the religious institution. The thought-bubble representing the mind of the female figure of *Househunting* is replaced by the crown of thorns, which suggests the mind of the male figure, no longer suspended in the drama of the Cross, but domesticated, in shabby urban surroundings. While the thought-bubble ascends over the female figure's head in *Househunting*, suggesting resurrection, the "Christ" image in *Christ on a Clothesline* hangs down as if in descent, evoking death, and suggesting the "defiance of [collapsing] superstitions" in "Feminist Manifesto" (Loy 156).

Indeed, unlike the cluttered spaces of *Househunting,* this image is spare and minimal, as despite its simplicity, it is overdetermined with all of the religious significations evoked in that assemblage: the figure of Christ is precisely what is indicated by the chalice and wine, the paten and the Host, in all of their connotations of sacrifice and scapegoating. Its suspension evokes (and this is confirmed by the naming of the figure as "Christ" in the title) crucifixion and death. Yet what is ironized here, by the setting, by the transformation and disappearance of the ladder of the Deposition into patched wood or the abstracted squares of windows on an apartment block, is the concept of redemption or resurrection; the image seems to represent a

death with nothing to follow. And similarly, in *Househunting*, the bricks that are illustrated in different shapes and colours and in the form of torn-out paper images represent the fantasy houses in the mental landscape of the nude figure; they are used to connote the psychic space associated with the central nude figure—dream-like fantasies. In *Christ on a Clothesline*, the shabby bricks resemble the form of secular architecture; they are used as a background to a tenement building to suggest the collapse of male dominance and superstitions—and perhaps as well, if these are brought into relation with "Feminist Manifesto" and other texts such as "Lion's Jaws," the downfall of the Futurist movement.

In short, it appears that while in *Househunting,* Loy's narrator—whom this reading has constructed—is suggesting women's search for an autonomous and self-sufficient way of life outside of the physical and mental spaces of manufactured consent, the image in *Christ on a Clothesline* suggests that this may be achieved through subverting the gendered, social, religious and political hegemony of male dominance.

2.5 Conclusion

The alternative visual narratives of *Christ on a Clothesline* and *Househunting,* linked by the domestic image of the clothesline, create a pictorial analogy of the shifting voice of the persona in "Feminist Manifesto," and suggest the complexity of the negotiation of representational space between feminism and Futurism. These three texts, in questioning and displacing the hegemonic assumptions of Futurism, simultaneously reject and reassert its premises in a feminist reconfiguration, which makes Loy's narrators "Futurist-Feminist." Through their focus on bodily and mental consciousness and personal evolution rather than on Futurism's violence and misogyny, the narrators in these texts take Futurism in a different direction, overturning its rhetoric and reconstructing its concepts to integrate body, mind and sexuality in a radical feminist perspective which, through the performative act of feminine writing and painting, asserts a woman's choice of gender expression as a force for destabilizing the structures of manufactured consent, including the "pathetic clap-trap war cry **Woman is the equal of man**." The final Futurist-Feminist argument is that the domestication of women must be ended by cleaning, disinfecting, and hanging the institutions, superstitions, and symbols of patriarchal manufactured consent, out to dry:

the manifesto and the artworks perform a gesture, *through the act of reading them*, which is both mental and corporeal, opening up visual and literal routes to a contemporary modernism which is paradigmatically feminine, and a feminism which is paradigmatically modern.

Considering "Feminist Manifesto," *Househunting* and *Christ on a Clothesline* in their semiotic interconnections and possibilities of signification enables these texts to be configured and articulated through a performative act of reading—and enables the intertextual connections between the signs in these works, as well as other works that are related to them visually or thematically, to be rearticulated to create new constructs of the "author" and her "context."

In the first centenary of the suffragette movement and the Futurist movement, both of which, in different ways, engaged self-consciously and antagonistically with the assumptions and closures of "tradition," it seems disingenuous to interpret Loy's work relying simply on a critical tradition of biographical or historical scholarship that leaves the reading process—by which these conceptions have been constructed—concealed. Loy's work, foregrounding the fictive nature of cultural identity, suggests that it is through performatively subverting such mechanisms of manufactured consent that women can both "realise [them]selves" (Loy 153), and evolve personally and intellectually.

The individual and intellectual hybridity of Loy's narrative voice as it questions and displaces entrenched versions of femininity, as well as the hegemonic hypotheses from Futurist and feminist perspectives in "Feminist Manifesto" and in these artworks, can be traced in detailed way in her "Aphorisms on Futurism," where the voice of the fictive narrator I have created shifts between Futurism and modernism, in a form of dialogue both with her readers and with herself.

CHAPTER THREE: THE DILEMMA OF THE FUTURIST-MODERNIST NARRATOR IN "APHORISMS ON FUTURISM"

3.1 Introduction

Mina Loy's manifesto-poem "Aphorisms on Futurism" is her first published work; it was penned when she was involved in the Futurist movement in Florence, and published in the January issue of photographer Alfred Stieglitz's[115] magazine, *Camera Work,* in 1914.[116]

"Aphorisms on Futurism" consists of fifty-two aphorisms: it is a collection of fragments that develops an argument about art and life through a series of contrasts and parallels. In her *Becoming Modern: The Life of Mina Loy,* Carolyn Burke, Loy's biographer, notes that "[Loy] was intrigued by Marinetti's *parole-in-libertà,* or words-set-free, a poetic form, he claimed, which liberated language from the patterns of linearity. She found herself responding to his writing's dynamism now that she knew what the term meant . . ." (160). In terms of its form and pattern, the language of the text echoes the Futurists' technique used in Marinetti's "Futurist Manifesto,"—*parole in libertà*: words-in-freedom.[117] Loy's narrator uses this style as a device to express her ideas. Infinitive verbs and upper-case letters used in the aphorisms emphasize certain ideas in the shape of commandments. The aphorisms are introduced in different lines with a space between each; the first words of each aphorism are written with bold and capitalized letters, which creates the visual impression of a graphic artwork.

"Aphorisms"[118] differ from "manifestos": an aphorism makes a concise statement on a political ideology in a witty way, while a manifesto usually takes the form of revolutionary rhetoric, calling the public to action to stop or change something urgently. However, Loy's choice represents a combination of both—a manifesto in the form of aphorisms— which makes the text unique and unconventional: a "manifesto-poem."

As regards narrative style, in a general sense, the persona seems to be addressing an audience: she uses imperative forms—and occasionally the second-person pronoun—the indefinable "you" and "your"—in a didactic tone. However, the narration also gives the impression of being a self-dialogue in which the narrative

voice converses with herself, and attempts to solve the incompatibilities in her own mind. As Carolyn Burke comments, "This idiosyncratic manifesto adapted Futurist practice to a form that was, in essence, a dialogue with herself" (160). This is a variation on the "interior monologue,"[119] a characteristic form used in modernist literature, in which the narrator expresses her actions in a thinking process.

The text is satirical in character, shifting between praise and irony with opposing and accepting established concepts of life. In a superficial manner, it embraces Futurism, in terms of its enthusiasm for dynamism, speed, advanced technology and urban modernity as well as the language form which appears in Futurist manifestos. However, the aphorisms contain philosophical, psychological and revolutionary arguments: they touch upon various themes such as new art forms, regeneration of the individual consciousness, and expansion of the mind from limitedness to immensity within space and time.

In this argument, Loy takes a number of existing expressions and the concepts associated with them, and redefines them in the context of her own vision. These expressions include: line, future/Futurism/Futurist, the great man, God, egotism, life, time, mind and consciousness. To date, although various critics have quoted from the aphorisms, the text has not been analysed as a systematically complete and self-contained argument. My reading performs such an analysis through a semiotic interpretation of the text, which makes it possible to group, rearrange and rearticulate the aphorisms, and so create intertextual links between the significations, through conjunctions as well as fictive personas shifting between Futurism and modernism.

3.2 Aesthetic Production of the Futurist Artist

The argument of the aphorisms begins with a couplet distinguishing the past and the future, and relating it to history and tradition. The past is associated with death and the future with life:

> **[1] DIE in the Past**
> **Live in the Future.**

These associations are clearly metaphorical, and Loy's narrator explains the metaphors as the text proceeds. In between them is the present, which represents a

starting point (the "velocity of velocities" or the speed of speed, i.e. the conditions of possibility) for the future:

[2] THE velocity of velocities arrives in starting.

This suggests that while the past represents slowness, the future represents speeds that have to be reached. Here, the term "velocity" is associated with one of the primary ideas of the Futurist philosophy—dynamism. As Marinetti declares, "We affirm that the beauty of the world has been enriched by a new form of beauty: the beauty of speed . . . We have already created velocity which is eternal and omnipresent" (Marinetti 51).

The process of getting to the future from the present is described through a series of contrasts. The past (dying) is associated with "material" [3] and visible "form":

[3] IN pressing the material to derive its essence, matter becomes deformed.
[4] AND form hurtling against itself is thrown beyond the synopsis of vision.

The focus here is on the relation between "matter" and "essence," or the difference between form and meaning. While matter and its essence are connected, the essence is not available to us and cannot be accessed unless the external form is modified—"deformed." It suggests that the essence of objects in the world in general cannot be perceived without some action that modifies visible forms. This action may be interpreted as the activity of a visual artist in compressing materials to produce significations, which evokes motion in paintings. As the narrator argues, matter must be expanded to find the hidden essence in it.[120] While the future holds the essences [3] which are beyond vision, [4] the starting point to get to these invisible essences is possible by "pressing" the material to destroy the external forms.

The argument related to the "deformed" matter brings to mind the abstract forms used in Futurist artworks. Boccioni's well-known statue, *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* (1913), is considered a precursor example of Futurist sculpture.

The motion of the "Futurist man" is depicted in a "deformed" form, which is described as "hideous" [6] in the poem, and human movement is merged into space. (Figure 25):

Figure 25. Umberto Boccioni, *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*, 1913[121]

The process of the "form hurt[ling] against itself" appears as contradictory, as it destroys itself to the point where it is no longer perceivable and "beyond the synopsis of vision" [4]. Here, the sense of movement suggested by "hurtling" can be explained in terms of the "velocity of velocities" [2]. This phrase can be understood better if we substitute for it a similar phrase: "idea of ideas;" this suggests the underlying concept or conditions under which ideas become meaningful. So similarly, the "velocity of velocities" describes the conditions of possibility of speed; and these conditions are necessary for form to "hurt[le] against itself" as they are the starting point. From these conditions of possibility, specific examples of "velocities" or speeds can be derived. Any example of speed is therefore a synecdochic representation of the possibility of speed in general.

From this perspective, the external and visible forms to be destroyed are represented by the line and the circle; they are the foundation of art and are full of possibilities:

[5] THE straight line and the circle are the parents of design, form the basis of art; there is no limit to their coherent variability.

All other forms derive from these two forms, because they are infinitely variable; they frame the "basis of art." However, in contrast to the traditional idea that artistic forms should be "beautiful," the *Aphorisms* argue for such forms to be destroyed in order to access the essence, as they are empty inside and lead nowhere. The destruction of these traditional forms of art—"the straight line and the circle"—is illustrated in a 1951 painting by Mina Loy, reproduced in Figure 26:

Figure 26. Mina Loy, a 1951 New York painting[122]

The figures in this three-dimensional image are depicted in a straight linear form. However, the deformed human silhouettes are far beyond linearity; their movements are blended with the space and their irregular vertical positions make them dynamic figures as they move and circle around one another. The tones of the colours—yellow, green and brown—are intertwined with each other, and do not represent sharp tonal differences. All these features echo features of Futurist, Dadaist and Cubist aesthetics. Another striking aspect of this painting is that the way the silhouettes are pinned bears a resemblance to the image of Christ in Loy's 1955-1959 painting, *Christ on a Clothesline*, which could be interpreted in this context as hanging out and disinfecting the external and traditional—Futurist—forms existing in the physical space.

The narrative voice also declares that "there is no limit" [5] to the use of these two external forms—"the line and the circle"—[5], because as they are the "parents of design," all *forms* can be generated from them. However, multiple *materials* can be used in art, a viewpoint which can be interpreted as an echo of Boccioni's ideas: in his "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Sculpture," (1912) Boccioni announces the need to

> [d]estroy the literary and traditional dignity of marble and bronze. Reject the idea that one material must be used exclusively in the construction of a sculptural whole. Insist that even twenty different types of material can be used in a single work of art in order to achieve its plastic feeling. To mention a few examples; glass, wood, cardboard, iron, cement, hair, leather, cloth, mirrors, electric lights, and so on. (118)

In this regard, Loy's narrative voice shifts into a more sympathetic tone; she urges her reader to *love* the things that are opposed to the traditional forms—the ugly [6] and the dilapidated—and "rehabilitate":

[6] LOVE the hideous in order to find the sublime core of it.
[7] OPEN your arms to the dilapidated; rehabilitate them.

Once such external forms are destroyed, this will lead people to the "sublime core" of the essences which represent the future. Since we have been conditioned to appreciate traditional forms of beauty of the past, our eyes are already open to them:

[8] YOU prefer to observe the past on which your eyes are already opened.

In order to avoid being stuck on the exterior things in the past[123] that we are fixated on, we have to close our eyes to them and focus on what is beyond them. This may appear to be darkness at the start, [9] but once we *leap* into it, we will find the invisible, internal and sublime essences "explod[ing] with *Light"*:

[9] BUT the Future is only dark from outside.
[10] *Leap* into it—and it EXPLODES with *Light*.

This leap from external to internal space can be explained as a change of focus. The narrator implies that instead of focusing on the décor of the house, the person living in it must be centered:

[11] FORGET that you live in houses, that you may live in yourself—

People who are fixated on exterior things like the appearance of their house are very limited in their minds:

[12] FOR the smallest people live in the greatest houses.

These "smallest people" are, in fact, small-minded individuals; since they only focus on the exterior products and attach importance to domestic convenience, their minds remain limited. But, by rejecting their external and material focus, even these people can expand their minds:

[13] BUT the smallest person, potentially, is as great as the Universe.

The "Universe" represents the immensity and boundlessness of the individual mind, in contrast to the limitedness of the smallest person. Therefore, the mind, previously compressed with fixed thoughts, is now to be released from its limits and expanded.

3.3 Mental Expansion of the Potential Futurist Mind

Once the mind is set free, it can be saved from its limits; this expansion will bring about self-development and psychic liberation of the individual mind:

[14] WHAT can you know of expansion, who limit yourselves to compromise?

At this point, Loy's persona clarifies the attitudes of the traditional Futurist man—who is considered as the "great man," and who has looked down on other people throughout history:

[15] HITHERTO the great man has achieved greatness by keeping the people small.

Since these people have influenced others with their ideas so far, their attitude can be identified with human selfishness. While subverting the traditional Futurist man, Loy's narrator redefines her own "great man"—the potential Futurist man:

> **[16] BUT in the Future, by inspiring the people to expand to their fullest capacity, the great man proportionately must be tremendous—a God.**

Loy's narrator envisages that the "great man" will play a vital role in the prospective process of individual development. At this point, she redefines the concept of "God"[124] and glorifies the "great man"—the potential Futurist man who will have the power to expand other people to their fullest capacity and inspire them; it will make him as "tremendous [as] a God." In this way, the individual can attain his psychic liberation.

The narrator then focuses on human relations as well as one's own comfort of mind; she argues that individual self-development cannot be separated from relations with other people:

> **[17] LOVE of others is the appreciation of one's self.**

Self-love is a pre-requisite condition to loving other people; Loy's persona implies that you must first love yourself before you love other people. This means that a human being becomes a synecdoche for the whole of humanity; one must sympathize or empathize with himself/herself in order to embrace all mankind:

> **[18] MAY your egotism be so gigantic that you comprise mankind in your self-sympathy.**

The term "egotism" generally describes one's inflated opinions in an imagined self; an egotist places himself at the centre of the universe with no concern for other people. Traditional egotism can be connected with the egotist doctrines of the so-called "great man" [15] which have influenced humanity throughout history. However, Loy's persona redefines this drive as a "gigantic" self-love to embrace the whole of mankind. This argument suggests that one must also self-sympathize and be mindful of himself: the individual must look into himself deeply by leaving his ego aside [18]. In this way,

a person may comprise all human beings to perceive the whole and reach the "sublime". Thus, the descriptions [17, 18] in Loy's poem suggest a new kind of egotism: one for the individual himself—self-love—which then becomes generalized or universalized to include other people—social relations. The future and the past are sharply contrasted to foreground the absoluteness of the future:

[19] THE Future is limitless—the past a trail of insidious reactions.

This characterisation exhibits the impatient vision of Loy's persona towards the arrival of the future, as she describes its infiniteness and immensity. Although the future is "limitless" and immense, the past is limited and finite, which will lead people nowhere but to the route of harmful and deceitful attitudes—"insidious reactions"—such as "egotism" in the traditional sense. The argument of this aphorism is connected to the next aphorism in terms of the mental independence of the individual:

[20] LIFE is only limited by our prejudices. Destroy them, and you cease to be at the mercy of yourself.

Here, the narrative voice elaborates that individuals should not conform to the restrictions of the society—"prejudices." Rather, the restrictions must be destroyed so that the individual mind can be expanded to attain its psychic liberation [14]. In these two aphorisms, [19, 20] it is argued that destruction of such judgements is only possible by means of giving up one's self-pity. The individual can in this way perceive the life and reach his mental liberation. Human beings' life experience is itself connected to the concept of time:

[21] TIME is the dispersion of intensiveness.

The term "intensiveness" can be interpreted as the individual's focusing on one subject, which can be thought of as the compression of thoughts: "pressing" [3] and "[limit]ing yourselves" [14]. This idea of dispersing compression may echo the narrator's call, with regard to the limitlessness of the artists, for them to use multiple forms instead of focusing on a single form [5]. On the other hand, it can also be associated with the traditional egotism described previously [15], as it does not

"comprise mankind" [18] but focuses on one's own imagined self. So, while the concept of traditional time focuses on one single subject, which limits itself, Loy's narrator argues for timelessness, which is possible through the "expansion" of thoughts [14]. Based on the characterisation of the concept of time in the earlier aphorism, the Futurist poem can now be understood as a timeless and endless form:

[22] THE Futurist can live a thousand years in one poem.

At this point, the narrative voice argues, apparently paradoxically, for both the eternality or dispersion of the Futurist poet, and the limitation and compression suggested by his aesthetic talent:

[23] HE can compress every aesthetic principle in one line.

The apparent paradox lies in the fact that the term "line," a form used in the literary genre of the poem is connected with the aesthetic form of the "line," which was described earlier as one of the external forms to be destroyed—the "straight line" [5]. However, here Loy's narrator redefines it by relating it to the talent of the potential Futurist man. It is suggested that both Futurist poets and artists must use variable forms while producing their works. As the potential Futurist can "comprise mankind" by leaving his ego aside, he can abridge all the aesthetic principles in a single form. In the context of the "velocity of velocities," [3] the "line" can also be represented as a condition of possibility, which makes the work open to alternative interpretations. It will then save it from its boundaries and make its possibilities an independent work.

This is based on the "limitless" nature of the individual human mind:

[24] THE mind is a magician bound by assimilations; let him loose and the smallest idea conceived in freedom will suffice to negate the wisdom of all forefathers.

An individual mind has a miraculous capacity to absorb new ideas; however, exterior associations limit it. Therefore, the narrator suggests, the individual mind should be set free from the external "assimilations" [24]—"prejudices" [20]. Even the "smallest idea" [13] formed in freedom would be sufficient to invalidate the established values

of "all forefathers"—traditional "great m[e]n" [15]. This means that the free mind has to resist the impulse to automatically conform to the established traditional boundaries of the past and reject the new [1, 8] and instead, to embrace and assent to it:

> **[25] Looking on the past you arrive at "Yes," but before you can act upon it you have already arrived at "No."**

In other words, Loy's persona is here critiquing those who blindly look at the "past" [8] and negate everything new—"No"—without questioning it. This would lead them nowhere but to external things. Instead, they must abandon looking back at the traditional past and be receptive to the internal things—new ideas:

> **[26] THE Futurist must leap from affirmative to affirmative, ignoring intermittent negations—must spring from stepping-stone to stone of creative explorations; without slipping back into the turbid stream of accepted facts.**

This is a clarification of the attitude expected from the potential Futurist. As explained earlier, *Leap*[ing] from external things to internal ones represents the future, which "EXPLODES with *Light*" [10]. Loy's Futurist individual must change his focus to find the invisible and internal essences in the sublime by arriving at "Yes," [25] and "*Leap*[ing]" to the positive and creative ideas: the potential Futurist must move forward on the stepping-stone[s] without getting stuck—"slipping back"—in the dark current of the "accepted facts" of the "great man" [15] and the "forefathers" [24]. In short, Loy's narrator glorifies the eternal infiniteness of the future liberated from "prejudices," [20] "assimilations," [24] "negations," and the "accepted facts" [26].

3.4 The Marginal Self-Consciousness of the Futurist-Modernist Individual

At this crucial point, following the argument against "accepted facts," Loy's narrator moves on from the potential Futurist perspective to a broader, modernist perspective, considering all these characterisations to be aspects of the concept of the absolute, and she implies that the only truth on which "man may pin his faith" is that there is no "absolute" truth:

[27] THERE are no excrescences on the absolute, to which man may pin his faith.

From a semiotic perspective, the term "absolute" can be associated with both the concept of totality, where the fragments stand synecdochically for the whole of the universe, and the quality of being unlimited, where the individuals exceed their boundaries, and discover themselves. Thus, the concept of absoluteness is manifested as the narrator's revolutionary project for the upcoming modern world. The potential Futurist man, in the wake of modernism, need to "spring from stepping-stone to stone" [26] to attain the "absolute" as there is no abnormality on the absoluteness. These abnormalities—"excrescences"—can be interpreted as the external things described earlier [3, 11, 20, 24, 26].

The traditional concept of beauty has changed throughout history, but now a new form is necessary since humanity is in a dilemma:

[28] TODAY is the crisis in consciousness.

This new form suggested by Loy's persona is consciousness; the present is in the moment of a subtle crisis. The concept of consciousness is therefore developed in more detail:

[29] CONSCIOUSNESS cannot spontaneously accept or reject new forms, as offered by creative genius; it is the new form for however great period of time it may remain a mere irritant—that moulds consciousness to the necessary amplitude for holding it.

"Consciousness" is the key for the individual man to change his perception to reach psychic liberation; this argument evokes the narrator of "Feminist Manifesto," who calls women to the consciousness of femininity: "seek within yourselves to find out what you are" (Loy 154). As in the manifesto, the dilemma of "consciousness" Loy's narrator employs here invites the ideal readers to self-determination in order to find their own consciousness without limiting their "fullest capacity," [16] because at present, this new form is in a status of crisis due to the limited understanding of the individual minds who were influenced by the traditional ideas of the "great man" [15].

This change may be considered an "irritant," in that people are hesitant to absorb new forms because they have restricted themselves to individual development; but individual consciousness is timeless:

[30] CONSCIOUSNESS has no climax.

The new form is beyond limited concepts of time and space; it represents mental freedom connected with the interior space of the individual human mind. It is the ultimate form which is free from all its external restraints and leads to the unconditioned totality; it does not depend on any "excrescences" [27]. When the contrast between internal and external spaces is reconsidered, the new form—"consciousness"—semiotically alludes to the typical twentieth-century narrative technique "stream of consciousness,"[125] in which the narrator expresses her subliminal feelings. This new form is subsequently introduced in connection with its limitless capacity in the universe:

[31] LET the Universe flow into your consciousness, there is no limit to its capacity, nothing that it shall not re-create.

This aphorism becomes clear if one considers that the fragments signify the totality—the "absolute" [27]. Once the new form of "consciousness" is perceived by humanity, it will also absorb the whole universe. So, the universe will be infused into the human consciousness, which has a limitless potential to regenerate society. Now, the *starting* point—"the velocity of velocities" [2]—can be reframed in this context. The phrase describes a synecdochic representation of the future as well as the possibility of speed. In the context of "the idea of ideas," the "velocity" represents "consciousness" while "velocities" represents the totality—"the Universe." The narrator connects this argument to the next aphorism to stress the potential of "consciousness," which will absorb the elements of life:

[32] UNSCREW your capability of absorption and grasp the elements of Life—*Whole.*

This is only possible through the absorption of the individual consciousness by the universe; in this way, the key elements of life can be apprehended:

[33] MISERY is in the disintegration of Joy;
Intellect, of Intuition;
Acceptance, of Inspiration.

Following her characterisation of abstract concepts of life—"LOVE," [17] "TIME," [21] "MIND" [24] and "CONSCIOUSNESS," [29]—Loy's narrator now redefines other essential elements of human life; she considers these concepts necessary for the psychic evolution of mankind. Potential future time is associated with light and happiness while the past represents dark and misery; and at this point, these fundamental elements of life are introduced in contrast with one another. "MISERY" is described as a factor which limits "Joy"; it should be abandoned. The potential Futurist must always look ahead—to the future "EXPLOD[ING] with *Light"* [10]. "Intuition" is related to human consciousness as well as "appreciation of one's self" [17]; it is restricted by "Intellect" [33]—human "wisdom" [24] imposed by the "accepted facts" [26] of "all forefathers" [24]. Here, the emphasis is on the significance of psychic insight rather than on reason and knowing. Finally, "acceptance" and "Inspiration" are contrasted with each other: "acceptance" represents agreeing with the "prejudices" and "accepted facts," while inspiration transforms people, so they embrace and participate in new ideas and forms—"consciousness" which enables them to "find the sublime" [6]. The narrator now reframes the concept of the individual psyche of the modern world, and argues for the creation of a healthy personality that has to be purified from the ideas of other people:

[34] CEASE to build up your personality with the ejections of irrelevant minds.

The expansion of the individual mind is possible through the elimination of the "accepted facts" and ideas of the "forefathers." In this way, everyone will have his/her own views freed from "prejudices" and other people's ideas. This can be achieved through the individual's own choices:

[35] NOT to be a cipher in your ambient,
But to color your ambient with your preferences.

In this context, Loy's persona discusses the status of the modern individual in the social order. In order not to be a worthless person in the society, one should fix up her environment with her own choices not by "accept[ing] the facts" as they are, but furnishing them with her own decisions:

[36] NOT to accept experience at its face value.
[37] BUT to readjust activity to the peculiarity of your own will.

Individuals must not believe what they see; instead, they must make their own preferences and distinctive characteristics to find the deeper meaning inside it. All these suggestions are brought up as fundamental principles to achieve psychic liberation:

[38] THESE are the primary tentatives towards independence.

Through these characterisations, the individual man is introduced as the source of the problem:

[39] MAN is a slave only to his own mental lethargy.

In other words, the traditional Futurist is limited by his attitude of laziness—indifference towards his own individual development. As an apathetic action, it limits the individual and makes the person self-restricted. Loy's narrator implies that it is one's own choice of psychic laziness which results in your limited creativity. Once the individual is rescued from the boundaries in her mind and becomes consciousness, she will be free in her own creativity and attain her own mental independence, which will reshape the modern world. This freedom reflects the limitlessness of the individual mind's capacity:

[40] YOU cannot restrict the mind's capacity.

Here, Loy's narrator's voice shifts to a different form of dialogue; interacting directly with the reader, she speaks to an indefinable second-person pronoun, "YOU," and calls the audience to self-realisation. Arguing that individuals must not limit their psychic scope, she critiques the attitudes of human beings who limit themselves:

[41] THEREFORE you stand not only in abject servitude to your perceptive consciousness—
[42] BUT also to the mechanical re-actions of the subconsciousness, that rubbish heap of race-tradition—

Drawing on the word's traditional definition, the narrator blames individuals who are despicably limited in their "consciousness." These people perceive the world in their senseless "subconsciousness," which represents "rubbish heap of race-tradition." The figurative suggestion of the hyphenated "race-tradition" is an ironic perspective on nationalism; this attitude reflects the limited attitudes of individuals—"prejudices" and false, imagined freedoms.:

[43] AND believing yourself to be free—your least conception is colored
by the pigment of retrograde superstitions.

The potential individual of the future should set his mind free so that he will be purified from such beliefs in "retrograde superstitions," and from "insidious reactions" [19]. The idea of mental space brings together these characterisations which limit people:

[44] HERE are the fallow-lands of mental spatiality that Futurism will clear—

These attitudes are "fallow-lands" which the psychic development of Futurism will eliminate, if through it, as the narrator suggests, human beings to move towards self-realisation:

[45] MAKING place for whatever you are brave enough, beautiful enough to draw out of the realized self.

As a consequence of the potential "consciousness," the one who believes in himself and behaves courageously and aesthetically—not traditionally—will be able to attain his self-realisation. The narrator's voice abruptly shifts to a contentious and combative polemic—the most aggressive aphorism in the text:

[46] TO your blushing we shout the obscenities, we scream the blasphemies, that you, being weak, whisper alone in the dark.

This is the first time Loy's narrator uses the first-person plural "we," which gives the impression of a collective voice, recalling the rhetoric of an earlier aphorism—"your egotism" and "you comprise mankind in your self-sympathy," [18] in which she uses the second-person plural "you." Here, both are used in the same sentence to concentrate on the two polar sides by drawing attention to the distance between them. These "obscenities" and "blasphemies" represent the language the potential Modernist-Futurists use; they are "whisper[ed]" by the anti-Futurists as they feel ashamed and speak among themselves secretly:

[47] THEY are empty except of your shame.

Since their minds are limited, the language of the Futurists does not make any sense of them, so they are embarrassed; these sounds are dispersed and lost:

[48] AND so these sounds shall dissolve back to their innate senselessness.

These—the "obscenities" and "blasphemies"—will turn into absurdity in the small minds of traditionalists, since they do not have conscious awareness. In this way, following the social change, now the aesthetic change will occur; the narrator announces her utopian idea of the revolution of Futurist language:

[49] THUS shall evolve the language of the Future.

Here, the narrative voice takes on an enthusiastic tone; she now promises the evolution of the language—a new form she expects to be evolved by the limitless

individual minds. The text concludes by envisaging an imagined and respected superior race:

[50] THROUGH derision of Humanity as it appears—
[51] TO arrive at respect for man as he shall be—

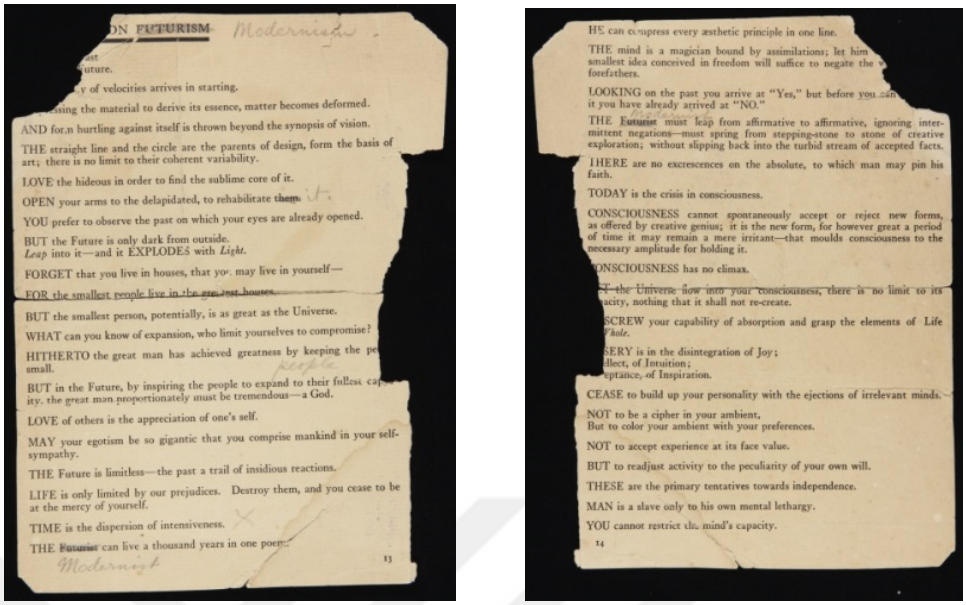
In order for individuals to get the respect they deserve from the society, the narrator suggests this solution :

[52] ACCEPT the tremendous truth of Futurism
Leaving all those
—Knick-knacks.—

And it is only possible through the acceptance of the inspiring path of the new "Futurism." The text ends with the narrator's rejection of outmoded external forms; the "—Knick-knacks—" represent the traditional limited ways of thinking that are to be destroyed for the regeneration of a new modernist world.

3.5 The Futurist Narrator's Shift Towards Modernism

The pencilled alterations the author made on the first published copy of the "Aphorisms" are often connected, through historical and biographical interpretations and based on the historical accounts, with the fragmentation of the author from the Futurist movement (Figure 27):


ON FUTURISM Modernism

uture.

y of velocities arrives in starting.

sing the material to derive its essence, matter becomes deformed.

AND form hurtling against itself is thrown beyond the synopsis of vision.

THE straight line and the circle are the parents of design, form the basis of art; there is no limit to their coherent variability.

LOVE the hideous in order to find the sublime core of it.

OPEN your arms to the delapidated, to rehabilitate them.

YOU prefer to observe the past on which your eyes are already opened.

BUT the Future is only dark from outside.
Leap into it—and it EXPLODES with *Light*.

FORGET that you live in houses, that you may live in yourself—

FOR the smallest people live in the greatest houses.

BUT the smallest person, potentially, is as great as the Universe.

WHAT can you know of expansion, who limit yourselves to compromise?

HITHERTO the great man has achieved greatness by keeping the people small.

BUT in the Future, by inspiring the people to expand to their fullest capacity, the great man proportionately must be tremendous—a God.

LOVE of others is the appreciation of one's self.

MAY your egotism be so gigantic that you comprise mankind in your self-sympathy.

THE Future is limitless—the past a trail of insidious reactions.

LIFE is only limited by our prejudices. Destroy them, and you cease to be at the mercy of yourself.

TIME is the dispersion of intensiveness.

THE Futurist can live a thousand years in one poem.

Modernist

13

HE can compress every æsthetic principle in one line.

THE mind is a magician bound by assimilations; let him smallest idea conceived in freedom will suffice to negate the forefathers.

LOOKING on the past you arrive at "Yes," but before you can it you have already arrived at "NO."

THE Futurist must leap from affirmative to affirmative, ignoring intermittent negations—must spring from stepping-stone to stone of creative exploration; without slipping back into the turbid stream of accepted facts.

THERE are no excrescences on the absolute, to which man may pin his faith.

TODAY is the crisis in consciousness.

CONSCIOUSNESS cannot spontaneously accept or reject new forms, as offered by creative genius; it is the new form, for however great a period of time it may remain a mere irritant—that moulds consciousness to the necessary amplitude for holding it.

CONSCIOUSNESS has no climax.

If the Universe flow into your consciousness, there is no limit to its capacity, nothing that it shall not re-create.

SCREW your capability of absorption and grasp the elements of Life Whole.

SERY is in the disintegration of Joy;
llect, of Intuition;
ptance, of Inspiration.

CEASE to build up your personality with the ejections of irrelevant minds.

NOT to be a cipher in your ambient,
But to color your ambient with your preferences.

NOT to accept experience at its face value.

BUT to readjust activity to the peculiarity of your own will.

THESE are the primary tentatives towards independence.

MAN is a slave only to his own mental lethargy.

YOU cannot restrict the mind's capacity.

14

Figure 27. Loy's pencilled substitutions on her "Aphorisms on Futurism"[126]

In the manuscript, the term "Futurism" was crossed out and replaced with "Modernism," "Futurist" with "Modernist" and "Future" with "Modern," in pencil. The title was also altered from "Futurism" to "Modernism," but the rest of the text remained the same. Roger Conover, for example, remarks in his *Editor's Notes* that

> [a] printed leaf of the [*Camera Work*] text at Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library bears [Mina Loy's] pencilled substitution of the word 'modern' for 'future' and "Modernism' for 'Futurism' throughout. [Loy] probably made these notes after abandoning her Futurist allegiance; although she might have retrospectively preferred to call this piece 'Aphorisms on Modernism.'" (215)

However, the reason why I have retained the original title of the poem here is not to base my analysis on the biographical and historical accounts, but to shift focus to the narrator's account, and away from the author's. The chronological course of the aphorisms, and the intertextual connections between them embody the shift in Loy's narrator's views from Futurism to modernism, as the narrator diverges from Futurist ideologies to "the new form" [29]: "the crisis in consciousness" [28].

3.6 Conclusion

"Aphorisms on Futurism" is a written proclamation in dialogue form; the aphorisms propounded are inflammatory and revolutionary for the upcoming modern world. The text can be considered an ideological assessment of modernity. The narrator of the poem sets forth an argument to mankind; she suggests that the universe is in need of a revolution which is only possible through a change and an awareness in the ways individuals think: "human consciousness" for a modern world. The revolution will take place through the limitations of individual minds.

Although there are parallels between Loy's text and the Futurist manifestos, in particular stylistically, and it is generally thought that Loy's "Aphorisms on Futurism" is a reproduction of Marinetti's "Futurist Manifesto," the style and form of "Aphorisms on Futurism" differ from that of other Futurist texts. Compared to the Futurist manifestos, the fragments are connected to each other and provide a coherent argument. The text focuses on the spiritual evolution of the human consciousness and expansion of the individual mind to "comprise mankind," contrary to the Futurists' vision of violence, egotism and nationalism. And in opposition to the Futurists' fantasy of destroying the traditions of the past, Loy's text suggests that an individual should reconcile with them and "rehabilitate" [7] them through love, self-sympathy and psychic liberation.

Through this argument, Loy's persona subverts the aesthetic and social traditions of the past, which she sees as insufficient for the modern world; and she suggests a new form which can be anticipated as the herald of a new era: Modernism. A new form of thinking is needed to perceive "the elements of Life—*Whole"* [32], and this is proposed through the fifty-two aphorisms. The psychic independence of individual minds is urgently needed for the regeneration of society; this is only possible through the expansion of human minds with an awareness of self-consciousness.

The mental expansion and intellectual consciousness of the individual can only be guaranteed through the experience of a "cosmic reproductivity" (Loy 7) actualizing in the maternal, artistic and linguistic layers of the feminist fragmented persona. This conception is developed in Loy's "Parturition," where the act of childbirth is metaphorically as "cosmic initiation" (Loy 6) as well as a contact with the "contents

of the universe" (Loy 6). It is a poem which, I will suggest, can best be understood through its semiotic, intertextual relations with the "Aphorisms."

CHAPTER FOUR: THE FEMINIST FRAGMENTED PERSONA IN "PARTURITION"

4.1 Introduction

"Parturition" is an early experimental poem; it was published in the inaugural issue of *Trend,* an American Journal edited by Carl Van Vechten, in 1914.[127] Because of its unique subject, and with its peculiar style and geometrical form, it caught the critical attention of the avant-garde community at that time. Roger Conover, describing it in his *Editor's Notes,* comments that:

> [A]s the putative first poem ever written about the physical experience of childbirth from the parturient woman's point of view, and the first poem in English to use collage as a texturing device, 'Parturition' is a significant event in the history of modern poetry as well as in the literature of modern sexuality. (177)

As a result of this, interpretations of "Parturition" have tended to focus on the most literal aspects of the poem, treating it as a description of childbirth. However, the poem is far more complex, as it overlaps and intersects with Loy's theories on poetry and feminism, which are developed in "Feminist Manifesto" and "Aphorisms on Futurism." Conover also remarks, "This poem, rather than the act of a childbirth itself, was probably the subject of a comment [Loy] made to [Carl Van Vechten] in a letter dated October 29, 1914," (Conover 176) and he quotes Loy's words: "I am glad to introduce my sex to the inner meaning of childbirth. The last illusion about my poor mis-created sex is gone. I am sad" (Loy 176-177). The characterizations of this comment on "inner meaning" which critical readers of the poem have missed in their emphasis on its literal aspects are the focus of this analysis.

The poem consists of 133 lines arranged in fourteen sections, and it has an unusual typography and style, which proceeds with unpredictable pauses and caesuras, devoid of punctuation. There are spaces left deliberately before some certain words to emphasize them; and the textual gaps and hiatuses give the impression that the lines go everywhere, as if circling around the poem. These stylistic devices can also be associated with the descriptions of acts of contraction and expansion (signifying the act of birth) occurring throughout the poem; and these in turn suggest the dynamic of poetic and artistic creation that is elaborated in the "Manifesto" and the "Aphorisms."

To begin with, the title, “Parturition,” refers to the act of giving birth, so it suggests the bodily experience of a woman in this process. The word comes from the Latin *parturire*, “to be ready to bear young," and is related to *partus*, the past participle of *parere*, "to produce."[128] Apart from its biological concept of female procreativity, the act of “parturition” can therefore be understood in different contexts based on its extended connotations of creation and production; it is a reproduction which is not only physical, but also textual and artistic. These additional significations are suggested by Loy’s use of the word “Parturition,” rather than “birth” or “motherhood”: the title suggests a neutral, biological and scientific description, not a purely subjective experience; and an analysis of the text in these different dimensions illustrates a complex relation between Futurism and feminism.

4.2 Intertextuality between “Parturition” and “Aphorisms on Futurism”

The poem begins with a woman’s general description of her giving birth:

[1] I am the centre
[2] Of a circle of pain
[3] Exceeding its boundaries in every direction

The narrator situates herself as the centre of a circle, representing a sensation, which radiates outwards in every direction. Physically, this may describe the expansion of her cervix at the prenatal stage, in which case the act of labor can be seen as a process developing between contraction and expansion. Here, the “circle” may also be seen as a symbol of return, which makes the act of birth a cyclic event and a continuous flux—birth, life and death—as renewal or reproduction through the process of birth.

The labor experience and female metamorphic process of the maternal persona in “Parturition” evokes Bracha Ettinger’s “Matrixial Theory,” which considers the significance of the womb from a psychoanalytic perspective. Ettinger, in her article, “Weaving a Woman Artist with-in the Matrixial Encounter-Event,” describes the act of labor as an individual’s experience of being born from the womb of the m/other, and proposes the term “matrix” to characterize a symbol of the feminine rather than an organ functioning as a counter-face of the phallic; it is not “a revolt or a struggle with the phallic texture” (73). Rather, she argues in *The Matrixial Borderspace*, where she also focuses on the social and ethical implications of the matrixial space and criticizes

the perception of society towards the feminine matrix, "the womb can appear in culture only as psychosis" (179). Ettinger also introduces matrixial "metramorphosis" as "a process of inter-psychic communication and transformation that transgresses the borders of the individual subject, and takes place between several entities" (*The Matrixial Borderspace* 77); it is in this sense that Loy's narrator speaks of "exceeding its boundaries" (Loy, *LLB* 4) in the opening of "Parturition." Ettinger also defines the "matrix" not as a variation of Kristeva's "semiotic chora," but as a more complex apparatus, "a concept for a *transforming borderspace of encounter of the co-emerging I* and the *neither fused nor rejected uncognized non-I"* (64).

The womb of the parturient woman ("the center of a circle of pain") (Loy 4) is described not only as her uterus at the prenatal stage, but also as a symbol of return, which makes the act of birth a cyclic event and a continuous flux—birth, life and death—as well as a process of renewal or reproduction. The broader implications of this are suggested in the "Aphorisms on Futurism":

[AF 5] **THE straight line and the circle are the parents of design, form the basis of art; there is no limit to their coherent variability.**

The "circle" evokes one of the two basic forms of art, and describes the geometrical figure an artist uses to produce an artwork; while the pain the narrator feels in the circle metaphorically represents the possibility for form to be broken by the artist.

The inspiration of the Futurist artists and the limitlessness of the future for the whole of humanity are suggested in the following aphorisms:

[AF 16] **BUT in the Future, by inspiring the people to expand to their fullest capacity, the great man proportionately must be tremendous—a God.**

[AF 19] **THE Future is limitless—the past a trail of insidious reactions.**

The implication is that the expansion and contraction of "birth" also refers to the act of creating art, and this also includes poetic creation. Loy's Futurist poet is characterized as eternal, limitless—

[AF 22] **THE Futurist can live a thousand years in one poem.**

—and revolutionary, experimenting with new and creative forms:

[AF 23] **HE can compress every aesthetic principle in one line.**
[AF 26] **THE Futurist must leap from affirmative to affirmative, ignoring intermittent negations—must spring from stepping-stone to stone of creative explorations; without slipping back into the turbid stream of accepted facts.**

In this context, the pain of the textual narrator signifies the struggle of the Futurist poet in pursuit of creating his or her text in the pre-writing stage; the evocations of "pain" recall the expansion of the limits of writing while exceeding its [linguistic] boundaries. The "centre" refers to the circular space where the poet is struggling to break her boundaries, and represents the linguistic restraints to be subverted.

A common feature of the circumference which merges maternal, artistic and poetic aspects is the self-awareness each narrator experiences, as they are all aware of their positions as the centre and the need to break their limits, spreading towards every direction of the "circle." This breakage of limits may result in a physical, textual and artistic metamorphosis in the narrators' self-identities, which leads them to an elevated consciousness. The act of parturiency can therefore be interpreted as a process of reconstructing new identities through producing a baby, an artwork and a creative poem.

The poem continues with the persona's comparing the external world with the present moment she experiences:

[4] **The business of the bland sun**
[5] **Has no affair with me**
[6] **In my congested cosmos of agony**
[7] **From which there is no escape**
[8] **On infinitely prolonged nerve-vibrations**
[9] **Or in contraction**
[10] **To the pinpoint nucleus of being**

The speaker makes use of scientific, medical and astronomical terminology and style in this section to identify the physical experience of labor: the "sun" represents the external space—the "cosmos"—as a source of energy and the adjectival word

"bland" connotes tediousness; "the business of the bland sun" suggests everyday things happening in the outside world and lacking in any distinctive features. The outside world becomes insignificant and worthless for the speaker because she suffers an extreme pain in her body, a "congested cosmos of agony" from which "there is no escape"; she struggles with the "prolonged nerve-vibrations or the "contraction" and expansion proceeding in the center of her body—"the pinpoint nucleus of being." In this way, she characterizes her personal entity as a "congested cosmos," which signifies the body of the narrative voice, the body of the text.

The implications of the "bland sun" can be associated with the exterior things to be avoided in order to find internal and sublime essences:

[AF 11] FORGET that you live in houses, that you may live in your-self—

In this sense, the "congested cosmos of agony" metaphorically implies the artist's own capacity struggling to exceed conventional lingustic boundaries. And the "prolonged nerve-vibrations Or [the] contraction" occuring in "[her] pinpoint nucleus of being" refer to the artist's efforts to attain aesthetic consciousness in pursuit of creating new art forms:

[AF 31] LET the Universe flow into your consciousness, there is no limit to its capacity, nothing that it shall not re-create.

These characterizations also include poetic creation; if the "bland sun" refers to conventional and limited literary forms, the "congested cosmos of agony" metaphorically represents the poet's own capability. Here, both the "nerve-vibrations" and the "contraction" can be regarded as the Futurist poet's act of creating literary work:

[AF 26] THE Futurist must leap from affirmative to affirmative, ignoring intermittent negations—must spring from stepping-stone to stone of creative explorations; without slipping back into the turbid stream of accepted facts.

The third section clarifies the speaker's labor experience, which takes place both inside and outside of her body and mind:

[11] Locate an irritation without
[12] It is within
[13] Within
[14] It is without
[15] The sensitized area
[16] Is identical with the extensity
[17] Of intension

The opening lines' "exceeding" boundaries radiating "in every direction" is elaborated as the act of labor proceeds. The "irritation" occurs in her "sensitized area"; the discomfort the speaker feels takes place not only on a physical level, but also on mental, social and emotional levels.

What occurs inside and outside of the female body is used to define the bodily rhythm between contraction—"within"—and expansion—"without." The sequential use of these binaries, "without" and "within," creates a "decentralization" of expansion and contraction, suggesting a Derridian concept of a "decentered universe." As Yeğen and Abukan comment, "[o]ne of the concepts that Derrida puts forward with the deconstruction is the 'decentralization.' The decentralization expresses that there is no self or centre and therefore there is also no self which can be degraded to it" (Yeğen and Abukan 58). Interpreting the dilemma between contraction and expansion as an act of decentralization enables multiple interpretations in the analysis of the text, rather than locating the meaning in a fixed concept.

The paradox here is that while the narrator separates external and internal worlds by means of the irregular spaces left between "within" and "without," which increases the tension between these two spaces, she also unites them and relates them to each other as two interchangeble spaces. She likens the pain she senses to the spasms occurring inside and outside of her body. These textual gaps create a restless rhythm, and also suggest interludes the parturient woman senses between contractions and expansions. The space left deliberately before these words creates a territorial and confined space which is uncomfortable both for the narrative voice and the reader, as is argued in the second section of the poem: it is the "congested cosmos of agony" from which "there is no escape."

In terms of artistic creation, the play between "within" and "without" represents the aesthetic narrator's struggle to break the limits of traditional art forms

and re-produce new ones. As is implied in the aphorisms, "without" signifies the external world, and "within" the internal—

[AF 11] FORGET that you live in houses, that you may live in your-self—

—and these two worlds clash. "The sensitized area" signifies the speaker's and the Futurist artist's consciousness of the discomfort, the "irritation" occurring in the inner and outside world; it leads to a reconstruction in her self-identity as she performs in between them. This change takes place both in the inside space—the "sensitized area," the "congested cosmos"—and in the outside world appearing as an extreme form for her—"the extensity of intension."

All these representations also refer to the form of the poem: the persona subverts the boundaries of language and destroys the conventional integrity and the logic of the structure by using "within" and "without" in four lines with irregular gaps and caesuras; and the grammatical ambiguities in the text's use of these two words adds to the uncertainties as well as the multiplicity of meaning. The caesuras left deliberately before "without" and "within" also represent an aporia—the insoluble paradox for the persona described earlier: "there is no escape." The poet likens her own painful struggles with the outside forces ("extensity") and is conscious of the discomfort she feels while producing a creative and independent text. The "irritation" also echoes one of the arguments of the "Aphorisms," where the narrator describes people's avoidance and negation of the new form:

[AF 29] CONSCIOUSNESS cannot spontaneously accept or reject new forms, as offered by creative genius; it is the new form for however great period of time it may remain a mere irritant—that moulds consciousness to the necessary amplitude for hold-ing it.

4.2.1 Visual Representation of the Fragmented Narrator

What merges these interpretations is that the parturient, artistic and poetic personas are self-aware of the transformation occurring in their corporal and mental spaces, through the accompanying extreme difficulty and discomfort, the "pain" and "irritation." The textual spaces and hiatuses between "within" ("contraction") and

without" ("expansion") create a cyclical effect, which both centers and decenters the narrator at the same time, and leads to a reconstruction in her identities—by both fragmenting and fusing. In fact, what the persona is multiplying here is herself. A visual analogy of this identity fragmentation of the three narrators can be seen in Loy's artwork *Ansikten*[129] (*Faces*) in Figure 28:

Figure 28. Mina Loy, *Ansikten* [ca. 1910s]. Courtesy of the Bukowskis Auction House, Stockholm, Sweden[130]

The image, suggested by the word "Ansikten" in Swedish, is painted on marble and is the only artwork on which Loy signed her first name. It is unfortunately unknown when exactly she made this painting; however, it seems to have been produced in the early period of her career, when she was under the influence of Futurism as well as Surrealism and Cubism, probably close to the year this poem was composed—1914.

This painting can be interpreted as a visual representation of the poem, where the multiplied female faces signify the fragmented narrators whose identities are fragmented, and fused as the text evolves. The facial features are not clear and there are no sharp tonal differences in blue and green colours; the artwork has a focal face image at the center from the front sight depicting one of the eyes of the woman looking directly to the viewer, as well as her lips. The background of the image is out of focus and heavily painted in blurred blue. Some of the tiny images scattered in the image

resemble animals such as a moth and a bird, which I will refer to later. And the image of a little baby, which may signify a newborn child in this context, is seen at the top right corner. These associations reienforce the relationship of this painting with the poem.

On a more general level, the image bears the characteristics of various well-known art forms of the early modernist period. The impression of dynamism and motion of the fragmented images as if they are circling around one another suggests the styles of Futurism. The Futurist features of this painting can be associated with Loy's 1951 painting, which I referred to in my discussion of Loy's "Aphorisms on Futurism," as it is in line with the Futurist artists' destruction of the "the straight line and the circle" and their use of dynamic figures moving and circling each other:

[AF 5] **THE straight line and the circle are the parents of design, form the basis of art; there is no limit to their coherent variability.**

However, it also reflects other artistic forms of the period, such as Surrealism and Cubism. The irregular lines surrounding the intertangled face images and the tiny hallucinatory elements scattered in the painting—a bird's head at the bottom right, a moth at the bottom left corner, a little baby at the top right corner and some scattered, barely perceptible animal silhouettes—evoke Surrealism, as they reflect the narrators' subliminal and unconscious feelings. At the same time, features such as the multi-dimensional fragmented appearance of the faces from different angles, and the straight-lined geometrical shapes—such as the sharp nose of the frontally-positioned face—echo Cubist aesthetics. In this way, Loy's fragmented narrator synthesizes a variety of aesthetic forms, a synthesis argued for in the "Aphorisms," and the Futurist poet is also capable of abridging different aesthetic principles in one line:

[AF 23] **HE can compress every aesthetic principle in one line.**

In the next section, the persona reemploys the first person singular "I"; however, in contrast to the self-centered viewing of herself in the opening line of the poem, here, she feels discomfort about her existing position:

[18] I am the false quantity
[19] In the harmony of physiological potentiality
[20] To which
[21] Gaining self-control
[22] I should be consonant
[23] In time

The use of the first-person singular suggests the radical potential of female subjectivity in the process, as the speaker characterizes herself as a distracting subject matter—"the false quantity"—causing disorder and distraction in this activity of labor, which might otherwise have the potential to have a "harmonious" outcome. As her pain increases, she feels more exhausted and under pressure, anxious to providing the necessary control. She now wants to exceed the boundaries of time, but because the process takes place both inside and outside of her body and mind, this pressure fills her with bodily and mental distress, so that she cannot exceed these temporal boundaries.

The implication is that the "physiological" harmony also refers to the act of producing art—an artist's struggle to attain independence by allowing uncertainties to produce her own artwork. This evokes one of the strongest arguments of the "Aphorisms," on the need for expansion and liberation of the individual mind:

[AF 14] WHAT can you know of expansion, who limit yourselves to compromise?

As the Futurist artist has the capacity to tolerate the unclarities, she can break the traditional forms to reproduce them. In this way, the artistic persona can be saved from boundaries, and be ahead of her time—"I should be consonant / In time."

This characterization also incorporates poetic creation. The use of the "I" suggests the central position of the poet, but the textual narrator now feels discomfort about her current "potentiality"; she wants to be self-aware—"I should be consonant / In time"—and "gain [her] self-control] by getting rid of the pressure of uncertainties—"without" and "within." This is elaborated in the aphorisms:

[AF 32] UNSCREW your capability of absorption and grasp the elements of Life—*Whole.*

These arguments with regard to maternal, artistic and poetic creation make it clear that all the fragmented narrators—a mother, an artist and a poet—are aware of the uncertainties ("irritation"), liken these uncertainties to their own struggles while breaking their limits, and embrace them to reform the new forms. Here, the paradoxical multiplicities and uncertainties within and without the narrators[131] point to the idea of reproducing creative, and independent aesthetic and poetic works as well as mentally developed children. In the earlier arguments of "Feminist Manifesto," the narrator argues for women's rights in regard to maternity and race-responsibility to educate the next generation, as women's psychic development, which will eventually affect their children's development: "Woman must become more responsible for the child than man" (Loy 155). A child should be a product of a woman's mental development instead of a common product of the parents, which is only possible through woman's self-realization. Women seem to be "superior" as the physical and psychological owners of the child, and free of stress, because children should no longer be obstacles for the continuation or termination of marriage; as declared in the manifesto, "Each child of a superior woman should be the result of a definite period of psychic development in her life" (Loy 155).

The narrator now emphasizes the drastic pain she suffers:

[24] Pain is no stronger than the resisting force
[25] Pain calls up in me
[26] The struggle is equal

Describing the "pain" she senses, she compares it with her struggle while she is delivering her baby, which shifts between "prolonged nerve-vibrations" of "contraction" and "expansion. The pain which shakes her up is the same as that of her battling—"the resisting force"—and the "expansion" and "contraction."

This painful process also takes place for the artist while producing art: it is the artist's struggle against breaking the traditional artistic forms—"resisting force"—which reflects how challenging it is for an artist to break the stereotypical forms in order to replace them with more creative and independent ones. From the perspective of the "Aphorisms," the "resisting force" can be considered a metonymy representing the "crisis in consciousness"—

[AF 28] **TODAY is the crisis in consciousness.**

—and as the new form suggested by the narrator:

[AF 29] **CONSCIOUSNESS cannot spontaneously accept or reject new forms, as offered by creative genius; it is the new form.**

Poetic creation is also implied: the Futurist poet labours in difficulty to exceed linguistic boundaries and unite creatively, and this is depicted in the clash between the distress she feels (the "pain"), and the linguistic limits—"the resisting force."

Here again, "the resisting force" is a metonymy substituting for the boundaries restricting individuals on the way to their expanding themselves and attaining independence, such as egotism,

[AF 18] **MAY your egotism be so gigantic that you comprise mankind in your self-sympathy.**

the "insidious reactions,"

[AF 19] **THE Future is limitless—the past a trail of insidious reactions.**

the "prejudices,"

[AF 20] **LIFE is only limited by our prejudices. Destroy them, and you cease to be at the mercy of yourself.**

the "assimilations,"

[AF 24] **THE mind is a magician bound by assimilations; let him loose and the smallest idea conceived in freedom will suffice to negate the wisdom of all forefathers.**

the "intermittent negations,"

[AF 26] **THE Futurist must leap from affirmative to affirmative, ignoring intermittent negations. . .**

and the "irrelevant minds":

[AF 34] CEASE to build up your personality with the ejections of irrelevant minds

The "pain" in this context represents the Futurist poet's struggle in the process of "negat[ing] the wisdom of all forefathers":

[AF 24] THE mind is a magician bound by assimilations; let him loose and the smallest idea conceived in freedom will suffice to negate the wisdom of all forefathers.

Viewed in terms of the activities of the three personas, the transformational and reproductive process involved in "exceeding [the] boundaries" is painful for a mother, an artist, and also a poet.

4.2.2 Incorporation of the Feminine Experience of the Male Gaze

In this section, the voices of Loy's speakers appear as female, and are contrasted with satirical portrayals of the male; the text can be seen as developing a feminist perspective with female narrators—an expectant mother, a female artist and a female poet. First, a male and another female figure are incorporated in the poem:

[27] The open window is full of a voice
[28] A fashionable portrait painter
[29] Running upstairs to a woman's apartment
[30] Sings
[31] "All the girls are tid'ly did'ly
[32] All the girls are nice
[33] Whether they wear their hair in curls
[34] Or —"
[35] At the back of the thoughts to which I permit crystallization
[36] The conception Brute
[37] Why?
[38] The irresponsibility of the male
[39] Leaves woman her superior Inferiority.
[40] He is running up-stairs

The parturient persona's voice suddenly shifts to a different focus: she first describes the attitudes of the male character by ironizing his act of viewing women as

objects, and then changes her voice, adopting an indifferent and aggressive attitude. The voice of the male figure she hears comes from a "fashionable" male artist, who is perhaps the father of the baby. Even though many scholars have considered the "fashionable portrait painter" to be a reference to Stephen Haweis, a painter, photographer and Loy's first husband who is assumed to have cheated on her in Florence, I would suggest this "fashionable portrait painter" is a symbol of generalised masculinity from the viewpoint of the narrator. In other words, it symbolizes the external world the narrator perceives during the act of labor.

This scene in "Parturition,"—the portrait-painter's "running upstairs to a woman's apartment" and singing a song—may be read as an illustration of his paying a visit to his mistress while the woman gives birth. The argument about men's extramarital affairs with women echoes the descriptions of the similar female types depicted in "Lions' Jaws" and "Feminist Manifesto." The concept of the mistress can be tied intertextually to one of the female characters depicted in "Lions' Jaws," "Mrs. Krar Standing Hail" (Loy 50), with whom one of the fragmented narrators, "Imna Oly," agrees when she describes herself as "not quite a lady" (Loy 50). Suzanne W. Churchill, in *The Little Magazine Others and the Renovation of Modern American Poetry,* suggests that "Mrs. Krar Standing Hail" is a pseudonym for "Mrs. Stan Harding Krayl, [describing her as] a woman who had an affair in Florence with Stephen Haweis, Loy's first husband" (Churchill 219). Another intertextual connection with "Lions' Jaws" is Loy's persona's characterization of Gabrunzio's activities as "rococo liaisions," (Loy 46) and "new courtships" (Loy 47) with women seem as the "myriad-fleshed Mistress" and "carnivorous courtesan" (Loy 47). The lyrics of the song are shallow and meaningless, generalizing women from a male perspective as little ("tid'ly") and worthless ("did'ly)." Also, the adjectival words "tid'ly" and "did'ly" intertextually evoke Loy's speaker's depiction of Gabrunzio as a man who views women as sexual objects in "Lions' Jaws"—"bare virgins with alabaster donkeys" (Loy 47).

At the same time, however, the narrator of the "Feminist Manifesto" also seems to argue for the false consciousness of the society, which classifies women as either "the mistress" [or] the mother" (Loy 154). The narrator of the manifesto turns two female types against one another; a "mother" is regarded as "incompetent" (Loy 154) to become a lover in the society: "[she is a] poor mistress" (Loy 154).

The "Or" with a long dash at the end of the quatrain gives the impression that there is more that the narrative voice can describe about the stories of the "girls," yet she has no wish to proceed. In effect, there is a mental synthesis occuring "at the back of [her] thoughts," which liberates the process of "crystallization" in her mind. And she questions ("Why?") the irresponsible nature of fathers or male partners in society. The section ends with an ironic repetition of the male figure's "running upstairs."

From an aesthetic perspective, the artistic persona articulates both visual and aural elements—"the open window" and "full of a voice"—in the initial sentence of the section. The "fashionable portrait painter" stands for a male artist who makes women's portraits,[132] and the woman for whom he is "running upstairs" in this context might be a female muse or a model. The painter murmurs a song while "running upstairs," which ironizes the aesthetic creativity and potency of female artists in the field of art; the lyrics of the song he sings seem to suggest that male artists view women in their minds as little and worthless—"tid'ly" "did'ly." The female artist, however, goes through a mental synthesis by setting her thoughts free, and she "permit[s] crystallization." She assumes that "the irresponsibility of the male" makes women inferior; she finds this situation "Brute," and critiques the misogynist attitudes of male artists, who exclude female artists from the canon of art.

On a broader level, as a reference to poetic creation, the "voice" the persona hears from "the open window" can be associated with new and innovative language forms. The textual narrator is ready to break the limited conventional forms in order to reproduce new ones. The quatrain verse embodied in this part represents the new language form, because it destroys traditional grammatical structure and punctuation. The final line of the verse is silenced by an "Or," followed by an em-dash and marking a caesura or a break, which also leaves a gap to the reader to fill in. And now, the voice of the poetic narrator suddenly changes: she liberates her thoughts, and speaks with the subconscious mind—"crystallization." Here, the narrator's feminist perspective may be ironizing the dominance and indifference of the male writers—presumably the Futurists—in the literary circle. She implies that "irresponsible" male poets leave women inferior, and that this situation is unfair—"Brute." The phrase "running upstairs" can be considered a metaphor to ironize male writers' trivial affairs, either in the literary cycle, or depending on whether the female upstairs is a courtesan, an artist's model, or a poet.

The artistic, literary and maternal values the poem develops can also be taken to describe, by contrast, the social roles of the male as an artist, a poet and a father. These interrogations of the inferior status of women in society recall the arguments developed in Loy's "Feminist Manifesto": "the women who adapt themselves to a theoretical valuation of their sex as a relative impersonality, are not yet feminine" (Loy 154). Such characterizations implying the inferior status of women in the society evoke the misogyny and anti-female biases of the Futurists, based on hierarchies which exclude women and reject feminism. The parturient narrator criticizes the role of the men—"the irresponsibility of the male,"—both as fathers and as partners, and critiques mothers' inferior position in the society. Thus, earlier in the "Feminist Manifesto," the narrative voice suggests that "Women must destroy in themselves, the desire to be—loved" (Loy 155) in order to demolish the division between the two female types ("mother and "mistress").

The artistic and textual aspects also merge, because "the irresponsibility of the male" can be associated with the viewpoint of a feminist female artist or a poet ironizing male artists' and writers' aesthetic and literary potency in the world of art and literature. The masculine language used ironically in the song also foregrounds the female narrator's gaze against males' viewing women as objects of entertainment. Another striking point in this section is that the first punctuation mark, interrogation, is used—"Why?"—to reinforce the internal reckoning the speaker permits "at the back of her thoughts."

4.2.3 Transcendence of Boundaries to Form a New Identity

This section begins with a sort of comparison the narrator makes to connect the two polar modes: while "[h]e is running upstairs," the narrator is concurrently "climbing a distorted mountain of agony," which functions as a counterargument. She now recenters herself using the first person singular—"I"—and elaborates her own circumstances, reproaching, in contrast, the roles played by males during the time of creative and pro-creative labour:

[41] I am climbing a distorted mountain of agony
[42] Incidentally with the exhaustion of control
[43] I reach the summit
[44] And gradually subside into anticipation of
[45] Repose
[46] Which never comes
[47] For another mountain is growing up
[48] Which goaded by the unavoidable
[49] I must traverse
[50] Traversing myself

In the process, she feels an "agony" in which she "reach[es] the summit" and hopes for a relaxation period—"Repose"—between the contractions and expansions. Yet it never comes: once she gets to the summit, she anticipates a rest, but then another "mountain of agony" appears there, and the pain she feels circles its own rhythm, which she has to cross through only by controlling herself. As she is aware that this is a painful phase ("another mountain") which she has to overcome, she tries to keep her control to "reach the summit": "I must traverse / Traversing myself."

The act of "climbing," or moving to a higher position suggests that the "distorted mountain" might represent the "deformed," "hideous" and "dilapidated" forms of Futurist art (which artists such as Boccioni, Carrà and Nevinson also represent in their works) to "rehabilitate" the "dilapidated" so as to find the "sublime core":

[AF 3] IN pressing the material to derive its essence, matter becomes deformed.
[AF 6] LOVE the hideous in order to find the sublime core of it.
[AF 7] OPEN your arms to the dilapidated; rehabilitate them.

On the other hand, the "distorted mountain" may be a metaphor for the limited canonical and traditional forms which are to be broken by means of the artist's transcendence: "I must traverse" / Traversing myself." The transformational process is painful for the artist: she only manages to get there through "control." The avant-garde Futurist artist has a mission to overthrow the conventional art forms—"another mountain"—by "exceeding the boundaries in every direction" in order to construct new art forms. This procedure leads her to an "unavoidable" transformation as well as the construction of a new identity.

These evocations can also be associated semiotically with poetic creation: the Futurist poet experiments with the new language forms at an elevated level of

"consciousness" by overcoming, "traversing," her limits. The "summit" she "reach[es]" shows the arrival of the new language form—

[AF 2] THE velocity of velocities arrives in starting.

—and it is the revolution of the new Futurist language:

[AF 49] THUS shall evolve the language of the Future.

"Traversing [herself]" signifies the "unavoidable" change that will subvert canonical and traditional language forms and pave the way for producing innovative ones. The occurrence of the verb "traverse" in the active and passive forms makes the narrative voice both a subject and an object: in this way, the expansion of the writer's limits—"traversing"—will not only overthrow the conventional poetic forms, but also revolutionize the form and the style of the poet, so that the Futurist poet is reborn by giving birth to another self, which reshapes her identity.

The common feature uniting birth, artistic creation and poetic creation, is that the narrators posit themselves as both a subject and an object—who traverses and is being traversed in this process. This occurs inside the "centre of a circle" and between the "mountains"—"contraction" and "expansion"—and each persona strives to exceed her own boundaries—"within" and "without." As they exert themselves to transcend, these exhausting attempts, in their physical and intellectual levels, result in a process of evolution which breaks and reshapes their identities.

4.2.4 Mental and Corporal Identity Psychosis

The narrative voice goes beyond the pain, and arrives at a heightened level of sensitivity. In contrast to the abstract perceptions she felt in the earlier stages, now she senses more concrete images in the form of hallucinations, and seems to undergo a corporal and mental disarticulation and hallucinations, as well as displacement:

[51] Something in the delirium of night hours
[52] Confuses while intensifying sensibility
[53] Blurring spatial contours
[54] So aiding elusion of the circumscribed
[55] That the gurgling of a crucified wild beast
[56] Comes from so far away
[57] And the foam on the stretched muscles of a mouth
[58] Is no part of myself
[59] There is a climax in sensibility
[60] When pain surpassing itself
[61] Becomes exotic
[62] And the ego succeeds in unifying the positive and negative poles of sensation
[63] Uniting the opposing and resisting forces
[64] In lascivious revelation

Here, the expectant mother transcends the pain, which leads her to a temporary psychic deterioration—"delirium"—as well as a mental and spatial displacement: she does not feel the pain any longer because her consciousness separates from her body. Because of her intense sensitivity to the "pain," she begins to confuse the spatial details ("contours") around her and loses the concept of time and space. She dreams of escaping from this "circumscribed" situation, which she defined in the opening of the poem in the shape of "the [limited] center," as well as in the second section, as a "congested cosmos." Hallucinating a demonic and grotesque figure in her perplexed mind—"a crucified wild beast"—she hears its voice from a distance. This may be a representation of one of the fragmented identities of the narrator, as she sees herself as tormented and fragmented by the pain; or a metaphor indicating the acute pain she perceives in the form of a "beast." In this crucial moment of childbirth, it may also ironically suggest the baby approaching.

Following the hallucinations, she starts to feel the physical reaction of her body; the concept of "the foam on the stretched muscles of [her vaginal] mouth" signifies the liquid reaction[133] of her body which initiates the birth of the baby. From this viewpoint, the "crucified wild beast" might be taken as a metonymy referring to the approaching "foam." However, the "foam" could also metaphorically signify the baby who is about to be born. As the speaker feels neither the baby nor the "foam" as belonging to her—"no part of myself"—she depicts the "foam" appearing "on the stretched muscles of a mouth." Her use of "a mouth" instead of "my" mouth shows how she feels detached from it: now that she has gone beyond the pain, she starts to

feel it as an external and unfamiliar force. And she feels the two polar sides of her sensation, both positive and negative: “exotic” and “wild.” The merging of these “opposing and resisting forces” creates a soothing pleasure in her body and mind, a “lascivious revelation”: she goes out of time and space.

From the perspective of the artist, the persona transcends her struggle to reproduce new art forms. The “spatial contours” can then be understood as a metaphor referring to one of the basic art forms:

[AF 5] **THE straight line and the circle are the parents of design, form the basis of art; there is no limit to their coherent variability.**

The limited and conventional aesthetic forms become blurred in the vision of the artist. The Futurist artist wishes to abandon them by “elusion of the circumscribed” and expects them to “Die in the Past” **[AF 1]**, and this is the moment she anticipates the arrival of the new aesthetic forms:

[AF 2] **THE velocity of velocities arrives in starting.**

And for this purpose, the artist has to give up her “ego,” which must be so “gigantic” that the individuals, after first looking deeply into themselves, can leave it aside by means of “self-sympathy:

[AF 18] **MAY your egotism be so gigantic that you comprise mankind in your self-sympathy.**

This is the only way to perceive the whole and reach the sublime: once the Futurist artist stops looking at the past and accepts the new forms by reconciling with them, she will then reach the “climax,” the “summit” where the new art forms are produced. The unification of various art forms, of their “opposing and resisting forces” will give pleasure—“lascivious revelation”—to the avant-garde artist.

On the level of poetic creation, the narrator strives both to “traverse” herself and to “traverse” the boundaries to reproduce innovative linguistic forms: the “spatial contours” represent the limits of the poet. However, she wants to break the boundaries to recreate a new form of language. In this context, the “crucified wild beast” might

be taken as a reference to the canonical forms and "the wisdom of all forefathers" **[AF 24]** as well as the "insidious reactions [of the past]" **[AF 19]**, which restrict the evolution and the "expansion" **[AF 14]** of the Futurist poet's individual mind. Once the artist reconciles with all the forms—the "positive and negative poles"—she can reach the climax, which will expand her capacity and bring about a new form of consciousness:

[AF 49] THUS shall evolve the language of the Future.

In this way, each narrator is transformed into an expanded version of themselves through the works they produce: a mother creates a child, an artist an artwork and a poet a poem. Each persona had a single identity at the beginning, but now they become fragmented, as they have duplicated and mirrored themselves through the works they have created.

The longest section of the poem, divided into three parts, describes the narrator's arriving at the relaxation stage, where she questions her new extended identity as well as her status in the natural process: birth, life and death. She comes close to death, as it is the end of consciousness, but soon manages to return to life and survives:

[65] Relaxation
[66] Negation of myself as a unit
[67] Vacuum interlude
[68] I should have been emptied of life
[69] Giving life
[70] For consciousness in crises races
[71] Through the subliminal deposits of evolutionary processes

In the first part of this section, the pain is over and the baby is born; the speaker suddenly feels a sense of "relaxation" as a natural part of the postpartum process with the arrival of the baby. However, she also feels a physical loss in her uterus as a post-natal consequence—a "vacuum interlude"—as well as a mental emptiness inside of her, because she is detached from the baby. The mother, in other words, "negat[es] [herself] as a unit" and denies her current identity, the "false quantity," described earlier. She was feeling herself in the state of a mother with a baby, but now she feels

alone again and turns back to her previous state; this is the moment the maternal figure becomes conscious of her natural metamorphosis of the "evolutionary processes." She thinks "[she has] been emptied of life" by "giving life" to another body.

These characterizations suggest that the artistic persona eventually reaches a stage of refreshing tranquillity, as the result of her efforts in producing the artwork. This "interlude" brings about a reformation at the mental level. The artist gets confused, and negates her current identity in which she exists "as a unit," because she is detached from the reproduction she has created. However, she is now conscious of this natural change—this "evolutionary process."

Now she faces another dilemma as she remains between death, "hav[ing] been emptied of life," and life—"giving life." "Giving life" metaphorically illustrates the new art form or "consciousness." If death is associated with the "past" and life with the "future," **[AF 1]** the present, which is in between the past and the future, seems to be the moment of a crisis:

[AF 28] TODAY is the crisis in consciousness.

The Futurist sees the new art form as a prerequisite to attaining an expansion in aesthetic consciousness as well as the evolutionary process.

On a linguistic level, this means that the poet arrives at the stage of consciousness which brings about the state of "relaxation" when she composes her product in its new form as a creative text. The Futurist poet negates her present status in which she exists "as a unit" and feels an emptiness in her self-identity: "I should have been emptied of life." This is the moment she separates herself from the text she has created: the singular identity—"as a unit"—of the poet is removed ("unit" also connotes detachment). The text is thus foregrounded when the literary work is disjoined from the writer,—this anticipates an argument later made by Roland Barthes in "The Death of the Author" (1967): by the performative act of writing, the authoritative role of the author is removed, and the text and its interpretation are liberated from the domination of the writer. As a result, both the writer and the text attain their own evolutionary process.

4.2.5 The Stage of Production and Identity Formation

When the baby arrives, the maternal narrator is conscious of her metamorphic stage, yet she is confused about her current identity. As she does not know how to feel, she compares her experience with the natural birth process of an insect, and questions herself through a moth's cyclical rhythm of life. This is the second time the narrative voice uses a question mark:

[72] Have I not
[73] Somewhere
[74] Scrutinized
[75] A dead white feathered moth
[76] Laying eggs?
[77] A moment
[78] Being realization
[79] Can
[80] Vitalized by cosmic initiation
[81] Furnish an adequate apology
[82] For the objective
[83] Agglomeration of activities
[84] Of a life.

Lexically, the word "moth" is also a hidden echo within the word "mother." Moths are nocturnal winged insects which usually have distinctive colourful wings, but the speaker describes it as "white," suggesting purity as well as a composition of all the other colours in nature. The narrator's choice of "moth" creates a parallel with human beings in terms of the natural creation process or "cosmic initiation": the life cycle of moths has four stages—the egg, the larva, the chrysalis or pupa, and finally the moth (the imago).[134] The "dead white feathered moth," which has a short lifespan, lays many eggs to increase the chance of more moths surviving in nature, and this also increases the life of the mother moth, which transforms itself into an expanded version of itself.[135]

However, the "dead white feathered moth" represents "death," which can be associated with the speaker's subliminal feelings and fears, while the "eggs" suggest the offspring she has given birth to. She becomes conscious about the moment of death while delivering her baby; now the mother is aware of her new identity, which she still negates. She "furnish[es] an adequate apology," defending herself against all the struggles she has experienced between contractions and expansions in this circular

process of birth. And she is "vitalized by cosmic initiation," because as a mother, she reconstitutes herself as well as the identity she produces for her baby.

From a creative perspective, this suggests that the Futurist artist reaches an aesthetic consciousness following the creation of her reproduction in the new form. The identity reformation comes with a heightened awareness for the artist; however, since she is still struggling with breaking the boundaries, she feels she is in the dilemma of the cyclical evolutionary process—birth, life and death—so she identifies herself as a "dead white feathered moth," who undergoes a course of metamorphosis. This image represents the artist who detaches herself from the work she has produced, and the "eggs" signify the vitality which the artist breathes into her artwork. If the "moth" represents the way the artist perceives herself, then it is the moment the artist is transformed into a new expanded identity—"vitalized by cosmic initiation." The process of all this "agglomeration of activities," the cycle of birth, life and death, constitutes a new "life," as the new Futurist artist—"the moth"—manages to survive in her new identity.

On a textual level, the poet arrives at a Futurist literary consciousness after inventing the creative text in the new form; however, she still experiences a dilemma in the procreative cycle of her text—birth, life and death—because she needs to:

[AF 32] **UNSCREW [her] capability of absorption and grasp the elements of Life—*Whole.***

That is, she still strives to break the limits of her literary capacity ("expansion") because the identity transformation proceeds both inside and outside of her. In this sense, the "dead white feathered moth" suggests the "egotism" **[AF 18]** the Futurist poet has to achieve by "unifying the positive and negative poles."

The "dead moth" may also be considered as a representation of the poet who goes out of existence after creating her text in the new form, and the "eggs" as the text produced by the poet. The poet is therefore "apologizing," writing a defense of the painful stages—"Agglomeration of activities"—she has lived through during the process of "Giving life" to her work. This is the moment when the poet is furnished with her new identity—"vitalized by cosmic initiation."

In the stage of reproduction, the speakers at all these levels—mother, artist, poet—in which they question the natural process of birth, life and death, undergo a

rebirth in their identities. The "moth," like a "butterfly," evokes the idea of independence as creating a new life. Its vitalizing of a new body—"laying eggs"—signifies how even a small change can create a huge transformation in the universe, a "rebirth." The stanza finishes with a full stop, signifying the end of the first half of the poem, which reaches "life."

In the second half, the speaker now depicts the process that occurs upon reaching "LIFE":

[85] LIFE
[86] A leap with nature
[87] Into the essence
[88] Of unpredicted Maternity
[89] Against my thigh
[90] Touch of infinitesimal motion
[91] Scarcely perceptible
[92] Undulation
[93] Warmth moisture
[94] Stir of incipient life
[95] Precipitating into me
[96] The contents of the universe

Having gained access to "LIFE," the speaker goes backwards in time to the moment of impregnation, and depicts how and when it started. "A leap of nature / Into the essence" stands for the change which initiates the natural chain of life—sexual intercourse. The "unpredicted maternity" suggests undesired and unplanned pregnancy, the speaker's regret for the intercourse she had as well as the state of motherhood she is currently experiencing. From this perspective, the female figure for whom the "fashionable portrait painter [is] running upstairs" may also represent the speaker, since she sees herself as a woman, the one who pays the social, physical and emotional price in the society, while she finds the male irresponsible.

The "touch" (of the male organ, of intercourse) is insignificant—"infinitesimal" and "scarcely perceptible"—in the whole cycle of birth, life and death. Through the "Undulation" or wave-like motions occurring "against [her] thigh," she receives the fertilizing cells of the male as "the contents of the universe," described as a natural event, a "precipitati[on]" flowing into her with "Warmth" and "moisture." Both the male figure and the baby are out of focus in this larger process, which is only challenging for the woman.

In terms of artistic development, the "leap" characterizes a change of focus, and this is the moment an artist "*Leap[s]"* into [the future]" to find the sublime essences, a future which "EXPLODES with *Light*" **[AF 9, 10]**. "Infinitestimal motion" evokes how "THE Future is limitless" **[AF 19]** and "scarcely perceptible" suggests the idea of "the smallest person." As "the smallest person, potentially, is as great as the Universe" **[AF 13]**, the aesthetic consciousness of the artist can perhaps make a change in the universe, an "undulation."

On the level of the text, the "leap with nature" metaphorically describes the moment a creative Futurist poet begins to set her thoughts free, and the beginning of the poet's consciousness of her capability is in this sense, "unpredicted maternity." The "infinitestimal motion [that is] scarcely perceptible" recalls:

[AF 24] **. . .the smallest idea conceived in freedom. . .**
[AF 13] **BUT the smallest person, potentially, is as great as the Universe.**

The change of the poet's identity as well as the change in her writing style or "consciousness" is suggested by the "stir of incipient life / precipitating into [her]." Once the poet breaks the boundaries and expands her independent capacity, "the Universe [will] flow into [her] consciousness / there is no limit to its capacity" **[AF 31]**—"the contents of the universe." This brings about the rebirth of the Futurist poet.

4.2.6 Towards Becoming One with Cosmic Consciousness

The maternal, artistic and poetic personas go back in time and remember the "incipient" state of their identity transformation. This is the moment their level of consciousness is elevated and reaches the summit; they are each aware of the significance of the change they have contributed to the immense universe, as well as their new, self-creating identities:

[97] Mother I am
[98] Identical
[99] With infinite Maternity
[100] Indivisible
[101] Acutely
[102] I am absorbed
[103] Into
[104] The was—is—ever—shall—be
[105] Of cosmic reproductivity

The speaker now raises herself to her new title of "Mother"; this is the moment she feels herself as the creator of her baby. Semiotically, this evokes one of the arguments of Loy's narrator in "Feminist Manifesto," where she advocates that motherhood should be the right of every woman, whether single or married: "Every woman has a right to maternity" (Loy, *LLB* 155). On the other hand, the state of maternity is also argued ironically in "Lions' Jaws," where the speaker depicts herself as "the lurid mother of [Futurists'] flabbergast child" (Loy, *LLB* 49).

What asserts the metamorphosis in the narrator's identity, is that while she depicted herself as the "centre of a circle of pain" in the poem's opening lines, she is now the centre of the universe, "absorbed . . . [into the cosmos]," and senses herself as an "indivisible" part of it. Being in harmony with the "cosmic reproductivity," she sees maternal experience as a universal and "infinite" act.

As a Futurist artist is the creator of her artwork like a "mother," she thinks of herself as "identical with infinite Maternity"; "absorbed" into the universe, the artist is aware of her capability:

[AF 32] UNSCREW your capability of absorption
and grasp the elements of Life—*Whole.*"

Feeling herself an "indivisible" part of the universe, as representing "cosmic reproductivity," the artist creates her innovative artwork as if she was creating the universe. It is a long process, as she is a part of the past, the present and the future, of "The was—is—ever—shall—be / Of cosmic reproductivity." The typography used in this line also gives the impression of a visual artwork, emphasizing the significance of each stage separately.

At the same time, the poet is now aware that she is the procreator or "mother" of her poem created in the new form; however, she does not feel like an author figure,

as she is absorbed into the universe as an indivisible part of "cosmic reproductivity." What she experiences is a universal procreation rather than an individual act. The unusual syntax reflects the new language form the poet has used: "The was—is—ever—shall—be / Of cosmic reproductivity."

This is the moment when each of the personas reaches a heightened level of consciousness, as they become the self-creators of both the universe and themselves: they create not only new bodies in the universe as a part of themselves, but also their new identities. The mother metonymically represents the artistic and poetic "procreator," the one who gives birth to a new body not only as a mother, but also as an artist and a poet.

The speaker now remembers the time of conception and birth, and represents it with another natural image, like the "crucified wild beast" and the "dead white feathered moth." The corporeal and psychic transformation occurring in her identity is now compared to the situation of a parturient mammal—a cat, connoting other forms of life in the universe as well as the fragmentation taking place in the identities of the narrators lacking conscious perception:

[106] Rises from the subconscious
[107] Impression of a cat
[108] With blind kittens
[109] Among her legs
[110] Same undulating life-stir
[111] I am that cat

The speaker imagines herself as a mother cat who has given birth to her kittens, with the "same undulating life-stir," suggesting the analogy as well as the conflicts and wave-like motions occurring in her subconscious metamorphic space. Her reproductive and self-creating identity is emphasized as she vitalizes new bodies. Like the moth and the cat, she is capable of creating the same cycle of birth, life and death and participating in the "same undulating life-stir."

The cat with its blind kittens also suggests an artist who goes deeply into her inner state. The "kittens" metaphorically evoke the artwork the artist produces in the new aesthetic form; the adjective "blind" suggests their state of being newly born to the universe. The Futurist artist sees herself as a universal figure "to comprise mankind" **[AF 18]**, so she emulates her "self-creator" identity with a non-human living

thing—"a cat." The potential Futurist artist and the universe are united with a God-like power:

[AF 16] **BUT in the Future, by inspiring the people to expand to their fullest capacity, the great man proportionately must be tremendous—a God.**

The Futurist artist plays a vital role in the prospective process of individual development of mankind, and the "undulating life-stir" is her reproductive power in the natural development of life, vitalizing new art forms and reshaping her new identity and artistic consciousness.

And from a textual perspective, the poet, after putting forward her identity as a "self-creator" or "Mother" now imagines herself alongwith the work she has created in the form of a non-human but living being. The "kittens" are depicted as "blind," evoking the speaker of the aphorisms:

[AF 8] **YOU prefer to observe the past on which your eyes are already opened.**

And being "blind" represents the "ignorance" of those who get stuck in the "Past":

[AF 9] **BUT the Future is only dark from outside.**
[AF 10] ***Leap* into it—and it EXPLODES with *Light*.**

On the other hand, the "blind kittens" also suggest the creative text, written in the new language form the poet is currently experimenting within the new literary movement of Futurism. "Undulating life-stir" thus also echoes the dynamism and cyclical motion of the Futurist movement, as well as the techniques the potential Futurist poet borrows from it.

Each of the poem's personas is thus directed towards her inward space and experiences her identity transformation in a different way. They metaphorically associate their products—the conscious individual, the Futurist artwork and the creative poem—with a cat's kittens. They are all aware of their self-creating power in this "undulating life-stir."

The "sub-conscious" state of the narrative voice and its animal images continue in the next section, where they are connected to the natural cycle of life which generates the conscious identity transformation in the speakers' physical and mental spaces:

[112] Rises from the sub-conscious
[113] Impression of small animal carcass
[114] Covered with blue bottles
[115] —Epicurean—
[116] And through the insects
[117] Waves that same undulation of living
[118] Death
[119] Life
[120] I am knowing
[121] All about
[122] Unfolding

Here the speaker imagines "death" through different animal figures, recalling the earlier image of the "dead white feathered moth." The mother sets her sub-conscious feelings free, associating herself with a "small carcass," and the "blue bottles" with the baby; this is defined as "Epicurean," literally referring to the devotion to pleasure and hedonism which takes its name from the Greek philosopher Epicurus.[136] However, on the semiotic level, the "small animal carcass / Covered with blue bottles" can be related to the well-known Aristotelian theory of "spontaneous generation," also known as "abiogenesis,"[137] according to which life can arise from non-living matter. Karen R. Zwier, in "Methodology in Aristotle's Theory of Spontaneous Generation," explains that "Aristotle . . . believed in the occurrence of spontaneous generation," (356) and this tradition continued into the early nineteenth century. In these contexts of classical and Biblical authority, Loy's "blue bottles" spontaneously arise from the dead body—the "small animal carcass"—and maintain their natural motion through the "undulation of living / Death / Life."

Another semiotic connection is that the sign of the "blue bottles" evokes a biblical story from the Old Testament (Judges 14) about Samson,[138] who, according to the legend, tore a lion apart on his wedding day and later found that a swarm of bees with some honey had developed in its carcass. Samson took it out and ate it with his family, without telling them that he had taken the honey from the dead body of the lion he killed. The bees are believed to have spontaneously self-generated from the dead

body of the lion and produced honey. Thus, the "blue bottles" reproduced from the "small animal carcass" in the poem can be associated with the bees that emerged from the lion's dead body in the Samson story.

As regards the symbolic motifs of the bees and the honey in the story, a number of allegorical references are argued by scholars, one of which is suggested by Dr. Martin Emmrich. Emmrich comments, "We note first of all that we are confronted with a most extraordinary situation: bees are not known to settle in a carcass! That in this case they did, is almost as miraculous a feat as the killing of the lion itself" (69). The reason why it is miraculous is that the cadaver of a lion would probably dehydrate itself very soon, because bees cannot live in moist places. Therefore it can be said that the dead lion carcass provides a suitable environment to revivify the bees so they produce honey; Loy's "small carcass" is a favourable environment for the survival of the "blue bottles."[139] The "blue bottles"—the baby—are depicted as a living organism that seems to have arisen from the dead body of the "small carcass"—the mother. In this way, a new life" comes after death. This is the moment the mother breaks her boundaries and attains her limitless and independent individuality with her expanded form of identity. From the feminist perspective, it is the women who vitalize a new body and turn death into a new life. Now that the speaker is aware of this process and discloses herself, "unfolding," it is the female consciousness that has developed through the act of labor.

From the aesthetic perspective, the artist continues to unveil her sub-conscious state through the imaginings appearing in her mind. The "animal carcass" suggests traditional artistic forms which lack artistic consciousness, and the "blue bottles" can be regarded as the new forms emerging spontaneously from the dead conventional forms—the "Past" **[AF 1]**, the "insidious reactions" **[AF 19]**, the "prejudices" and the "accepted facts" **[AF 26]**. The "undulation of living [as] Death [and] Life" **[AF 117, 119]** suggests the tension between the past and the future; the past is metaphorically associated with death and the future with life:

[AF 1] **DIE in the Past**
Live in the Future.

As "Death" [118] and "Life" [119] are metonymies of "past" and "future," the persona attains the aesthetic consciousness at the end of the section—"I am knowing / All

about" [120, 121]—and reveals this state of "Unfolding" as an expression of her individual and conscious development.

As regards the act of poetic creation, the Futurist poet continually reveals her subliminal state through other imaginary figures. The "small animal carcass" represents canonical, traditional language forms—"Death"—and the "blue bottles" can be associated with the new and revolutionary textual techniques—"Life"; new language forms arise from the old ones. These old forms must be negated and must "DIE in the Past [AF 1] so that the "language of the Future" [AF 49] can "Live in the Future" [AF 1]. Furthermore, the "small animal carcass" suggests the death of the poet, and the "blue bottles" the text emerging in its new and modern form, once it is detached from the authoritative hands of the writer and attains its liberation. The "Undulation of living" therefore implies the reproductive characteristic of the Futurist poet, expanding herself by breaking and exceeding boundaries. This "unfolding [of the mind]" paves the way for multiple interpretations of the text, which evolves into the new form—"consciousness"—and absorbs the whole universe:

[AF 30] CONSCIOUSNESS has no climax.
[AF 31] LET the Universe flow into your consciousness, there is no limit to its capacity, nothing that it shall not re-create.

The parturient, artistic and poetic personas are each conscious of their contributions to the natural process of the universe by both breaking their own limits and reforming new forms, as a consequence of surviving the two challenging stages of "contraction" and "expansion"—"within" and "without." They are now aware of their self-creating power: the female individual gives life to a new body as well as a new identity to herself; the Futurist artist revitalizes an old traditional form and "rehabilitate[s]" it; and the Futurist poet breaks her restraints to open the way for independent and multiple interpretations by the ideal reader.

4.2.7 Sublimity at the Post-Reproduction Level

After going through all the stages, the speaker wakes up to a different time and space the next morning:

[123] The next morning
[124] Each woman-of-the-people
[125] Tiptœing the red pile of the carpet
[126] Doing hushed service
[127] Each woman-of-the-people
[128] Wearing a halo
[129] A ludicrous little halo
[130] Of which she is sublimely unaware

The idiomatic expression "woman-of-the-people"[140] describes an ordinary woman who leads a mundane life or a life of routine, such as a nun. These women[141] move silently—"tiptoeing"—because they are "doing hushed service,"[142] as if they are worshipping while the hymns are being read in a church. "The "red pile of the carpet" is a symbol of domesticity; however, it also signifies the fabric laid on the floor of a church. What these women are doing is ironized by the narrator, as they are portrayed wearing "a ludicrous little halo." However, they are characterized as women who lack the capacity of consciousness and perception: they are "sublimely unaware" of the challenging experiences of the parturient women as well as their own status in the society.

The "ludicrious little halo" reflects the satirical view of the speaker towards such women, who are depicted as "sublimely unaware" of their behaviours. Here, the signification of the "halo" image also evokes Loy's *Househunting,* where the shape of the female figure's head resembles a halo. This figure also echoes the traditional image of purity and holy resistance; however, here, the "ludicrous little halo" is used to ironize women's roles in society. In contrast to the powerful and reproductive women who are capable of reproducing a new body for the universe by breaking their boundaries and struggling to survive, these women have stereotypical identities: they lead an ordinary life and only serve God; like nuns,[143] they are are "blind" and unfamiliar with the experiences of other women. Here, the speaker satirizes the way these women gain value—a "halo"—in society, in contrast to women of her own type, who go through challenging social, physical and emotional experiences to survive in society. These attitudes of the women depicted as "woman-of-the-people," again suggest Antonio Gramsci's idea of "manufactured consent," which I have discussed in my reading of "Feminist Manifesto. It is the consent of these subordinate women which sets the stage for the male hegemony.

From the perspective of art, the ordinary type of women characterized as "tiptoeing" and "doing hushed service" suggests beautiful, faithful and inactive women depicted in previous canonical art forms, such as those produced in the Renaissance or the Victorian period. The "halo" image is used in representations of Christ in Medieval Renaissance art, particularly in religious iconography; but here, the "ludicrious little halo" is used to tease such works and their artists, who are described as "sublimely unaware" of the traditionality of the forms they use.

At the same time, the Futurist poet critiques the ordinary and limited-minded women writers who cannot break their boundaries in the literary world and so remain under the influence and oppression of the male writers: they are "sublimely unaware" of what they are doing, while the Futurist male writers fantasize a world detaching them from literary circles.

The poem ends with a satirical biblical reference, subverting the conventional concept of the Christian god:

[131] I once heard in a church
[132] —Man and woman God made them—
[133] Thank God.

The grammar and the syntax here may be read ambiguously: "man" represents a general group of human beings, while God is defined as "woman God." The last line can be interpreted as the speaker's commanding human beings to "Thank [woman] God" for her endowing them with life.

Alternatively, the image of God can be interpreted as both "man" and "woman." In the more standard idiomatic reading, Loy is paraphrasing the *Book of Genesis* in the King James version of the Bible (1:27): "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (2), where God is depicted in the image of both a man and a woman; thus, in the last line, the speaker ironically thanks God and declares that he, and/or she made those women—the "wom[e]n of the people."

4.3 Conclusion

The action and act of "Parturition" describes the female metamorphic experience of giving birth and attaining a heightened level of consciousness and

identity reformation. However, even though it is about the act of delivering a child, the speaker does not mention a "fetus," "motherhood," "child," "baby," or the gender of the child throughout the poem. I would therefore argue that the act of parturition represents not simply the process of giving birth to a child, but the act of an individual's physical and mental separation from his or her own identity to form a new one with an elevated awareness.

The act of labor can be interpreted as an activity fluctuating between "contraction" and "expansion," as the persona struggles with extreme spasms of pain proceeding "within" and "without" her body; it signifies breaking and re-forming limits in the circumference of self-identity. If we consider this expansion as an extension of one's identity, it becomes paradoxical as it also contracts throughout the process, which makes Futurism a feminist activity. Hence, these contractions and expansions reflect the fragmenting and fusing of self-identity. This leads to a revolution in the body and mind of the speakers, each of which goes through the same two stages: converting one form into another as an extension of herself by breaking the limits and, at the same time, giving birth to a new identity by re-forming boundaries, each with an elevated level of consciousness in their corporal and psychic spaces.

The poem has unique typographical characteristics, with unusual and non-standard hyphenation, capitalization and spacing patterns; at some points, it also features a scientific style of diction, where medical, geometrical and astronomical terms are used to depict the stages of labor as well as the identity conflicts of the speaker. A number of changing animals—a "dead white feathered moth," a "cat," a "small animal carcass" and "blue bottles"—provide figurative ways of perceiving the natural cycle of life as well as the state of motherhood of other living things.

Loy's persona redefines stereotypical female types—mother, wife, lover, virgin—and their social roles. Focusing on the woman rather than the child, she identifies the individual self both in the personal and in the universal cosmos through the fragmented narrative voices. In this way, she subverts traditional perceptions of the act of labor, and creates an exceptional context of identity transformation through which it takes shape in three different layers: the rebirth of an artist, of a poet and of a mother. Hence, the act of labor is not only associated with a female experience; it is also a means to an individual's self-discovery and heightened consciousness. What

occurs “within” and “without” in the speaker’s body is introduced through metaphorical depictions of internal and external worlds.

Stylistically, and through its multiple voices, the poem’s diction is precise and self-conscious in revealing the subliminal layers of the narrative voice. The identity fragmentation of the multiple speakers in “Parturition” can also be seen in Loy’s “Lions’ Jaws” as the narrative voice is multiplied through different anagrams or aliases: “Nima Lyo, alias Anim Yol, alias Imna Loy” (Loy, *LLB* 49). This can be considered a reaction to the Futurists, who generalize all women to “carnivorous courtesan[s]” (Loy, *LLB* 47).

The poem features a “fragmented narrative” structure, which is divided into three fragmented narrative personas in distinctive contexts—an avant-garde artist, a creative writer and a parturient woman—each of which is self-aware of her own transformational process. As the text evolves, each persona evolves herself and takes a turn in the process. Finally, all the identities are merged at one point: the rebirth of a female individual who resists the domestication of women in the society, and is aware of her intellectual and reproductive power; an artist who subverts the canonical traditions and aesthetic forms and re-forms the new ones; and a creative poet who overthrows the conventional language forms, and reconstructs a new form—Futurist language. Their common feature is that they break their boundaries, and expand themselves with a heightened level of consciousness.

The journey of Loy’s narrator’s fragmentation, her fragmenting into various persona and merging to become one with mental, intellectual and corporal consciousness can be traced semiotically, as the next chapter will show, in her multi-faceted artistic works—paintings, assemblages and drawings—which represent an engagement, both from within and outside, of the prominent artistic movements of the early Modernist era, such as Futurism, Dadaism, and, of course, Surrealism. The narrators multiply themselves through becoming both objects and subjects, which, through their reciprocity, come together to form a composite identity.

CHAPTER FIVE: MINA LOY'S VISUAL ARTISTRY

5.1 Mina Loy's Multi-faceted Artistic Identity

Mina Loy's multi-directional artistic identity goes beyond the accepted boundaries, not only of the academic art against which the modernists rebelled, but also of the art movements she was associated with. This questioning of boundaries enables us to perceive the hidden facets of her questioning of and contribution to the primarily male-oriented historical contexts of twentieth century modern art and culture. Her extravagant iconography often seems to be a performative act, and enacts paradigms for gender performativity and the formation of female identities. Affiliated with almost each artistic movement of the era, Loy maintained an eclectic attitude in her aesthetic style: she adopted Futurist, Dadaist and Surrealist ideas and techniques to her own philosophy, and contributed to the early history of modern art with her bohemian representations. The themes she uses in her visual works often include the concepts of gender performativity, construction of female identities, religion, motherhood and feminine reproductivity, the fragmentation of the female body and mind, human consciousness, sexuality and homosexuality. Through these works, she underscores women's reproductive and regenerative capacity to create the harmony between the female body and mind, and rise to a higher level of consciousness and awareness.

Like her unusual poetry, Loy's visual art is hard to interpret; it often seems to be obscure, chaotic and difficult to decipher, and shifts between dream and reality. Most of the artworks feature an awareness of secrecy, depth, gendered portrayals and bewilderment in human life. Loy's artistic experimentations include collages[144] and assemblages as pictorial techniques, taking her art to a multidimensional level and developing a new form of feminine modern art. Her visual objects are fragmented and reassembled in various compositions; she uses a wide variety of materials such as found objects, pasted fragments, and natural or manufactured materials in three-dimensional installations. And as Suzanne Zelazo notes, "Loy herself was a perfect embodiment of collage-based aesthetic in her heterogeneous talents as actress, assemblage artist, designer, inventor, model, painter and poet; conjoining multiple

media and invoking multiple senses. . .” (61). Loy’s use of manufactured objects also evokes one of the artistic forms of the modernist era, the “ready-made,” which was used by Dadaists and Surrealists to challenge the stereotypical conception of the works of conventional art, the best-known example being the work of the Dadaist artist Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain* (1917).[145]

Loy’s artworks reflect an eclectic attitude in her aesthetic style: her drawings, sketches and gouache pieces often portray gendered, ungendered and homoerotic figures.

Le Maison en Papier, 1906 (*Paper House*), for example, immediately suggests a gender ambivalence. The work (Figure 29) depicts two black-haired women in balloon-sleeve dresses gazing upwards—one seems to be begging or praying, and the other appears to be making a wish. In the foreground, there are two naked effeminate men—one sitting on the other’s back and the other carrying him; and two shadowlike naked, effeminate men appear behind windows which resemble the *Shoji*, a traditional Japanese-style paper house structure. One is hanging his right hand down from the window and handing a flower to the woman below, and the other is holding a mirror-like object in his left hand and looking to the right, where there is a mysterious emblem; their nude poses and attitudes, between the shadows of the background, suggest homoeroticism, contrasted with the apparent unhappiness or desperation in the expressions and attitudes of the women, who are depicted in much more detailed outline.

Figure 29. Mina Loy, *Le Maison en Papier*, 1906[146]

Another work, *L'Amour Dorloté par les Belles Dames*,[147] 1966 (*Love Pampered by Beautiful Women*) (Figure 30) depicts a naked effeminate man with his arms up between two women dressed in Victorian-style floating robes: one is embracing the man in her lap and the other is having a close look at him. The naked man seems to have two wings behind him. At the right, there are two more women in similar robes standing and observing them curiously, and there is another woman at right bottom, sitting and holding a round decorative object in her hands and looking back towards the others.

Figure 30. Mina Loy, *L'Amour Dorloté par les Belles Dames*, 1906[148]

L'Amour Dorloté par les Belles Dames also evokes biblical Renaissance altarpieces, which depict the carrying of Jesus Christ from the Cross to the grave by mourners around him, a well-known images, seen in the tradition in such works as Raphael's *The Deposition* (a.k.a. *Pala Baglione* or *The Entombment*) (1507) (Figure 31) and Caravaggio's *The Entombment of Christ*,[149] (a.k.a. *Deposition from the Cross*) (1602-1604). From a religious perspective, *L'Amour Dorloté par les Belles Dame* seems to satirize the dramatic effect depicted in these artworks—the deposition of Christ—but from a gendered perspective, the naked effeminate man ironically represents the downfall of male hegemony as well as of the patriarchal ideas of Futurism, echoing *Christ on a Clothesline*, where Loy's visual persona depicts the collapse of male hegemony.

Figure 31. Raphael (Raffaello Sanzio), *The Deposition of Christ*, 1507 [150]

The radical avant-garde artworks of the "painter-poet" Mina Loy, are often in dialogue with her innovative poetic experimentations; the connections between images in Loy's poems as well as her visual works are all part of a complex iconography. Her multi-faceted ideas provide an intellectual and historical context for her visual and textual works; she shapes the language with her own genre and style and through graphic descriptions enacted visually. The bodily and mental transformations illustrating the female body and mind as well as human experiences bring out a visual complexity while her poems play on linguistic entanglements through their exceptional typography and style. Loy's feminist theories are intermingled in her textual and artistic experimentations; "Parturition" (1914), for example, which describes a woman's experience of giving birth, seems to be a textual description mirroring the focal themes she uses in paintings such as *Surreal Scene* and *Ansikten*.

What makes Loy's works distinct from the works of her contemporaries is that, in the misogynist circle of the twentieth-century, these artworks subvert the male dominated hegemony of the prominent art movements of the era, particularly the Futurist and Surrealist aesthetics, and take them in a different direction by reconfiguring them from a feminist perspective—by sometimes validating them, and

at other times overthrowing them. Her poetry, meantime, explores a sort of collagelike language containing verbal puns, gaps, emdashes and unpunctuated typography, which represents an incomplete or omitted thought process. The use of diverse aesthetic forms and materials creates an eclectic art and poetry, as Loy's persona declares in her "Aphorisms on Futurism" (1914), [AF] 5: "there is no limit to [art forms'] coherent variability" (Loy, *LLB* 149). This eclectic and boundless vision and all-embracing aesthetics can also be seen in the opening stanza of "Parturition": "I am the center / Of a circle of pain / Exceeding its boundaries in every direction" (Loy, *LLB* 4).

Such a multisensual visual and poetic style opens up new routes to contemporary feminism and modernism. Loy's experimentation with diverse linguistic and artistic styles creates a complex meeting-point of interpretations, which enables us to perceive the connection between her aesthetic and textual works and her feminist theories. By highlighting the fractures within feminism and structures around it through her avant-garde art and language, she illuminates the contradictions between artistic and feminist theories, and draws attention to modern femininity and human perception, making her a unique figure in the modernist literary and visual canon. The paintings challenge the realms of reality and fantasy; Loy's subversion of the distinction between the worlds of dream and reality leaves us margin for creative interpretation and imagination. Her visual depictions have no clear identity; rather they are abstractions.

5.2 Surrealism and Mina Loy's *Surreal Scene*

Surreal Scene was composed in the 1930s, in the heyday of Surrealism, the influential aesthetic and literary art style which emanated from Cubism and Dadaism, and flourished in Europe between World Wars I and II. Prominent artists of the movement included Joan Miró, Jean Arp, Giorgio de Chirico, René Magritte, Salvador Dalí, Max Ernst, and the photographers Man Ray and Alfred Stieglitz, among others.

The term "Surrealism" was first coined by Guillaume Apollinaire, as Sarane Alexandrian explains: "In the programme for the ballet *Parade,* which was performed on 18 May 1917, [Apollinaire] used the word '*sur-réalisme*' in print for the first time" (27). The movement was first founded with the publication of André Breton's *Manifestoes of Surrealism* (1924)*,* which was deeply influenced by Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theories—particularly his book, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899);

Breton was inspired by Freud's ideas of dream analysis, the unconscious, and repressed human thoughts and desires, and these ideas were adapted by Loy for her own feminist agenda.

Painted in 1930, Loy's *Surreal Scene* is critical of the male-dominated avant-garde atmosphere of the early twentieth century, through Surrealist form as well as its unique artistic and gendered composition of the female body and the unconscious mind. The painting makes use of various Surrealist concepts, such as its attempts to combine the conscious and unconscious territories of human experience—the worlds of dream and fantasy. This is reflected in its merging of bodies with animate and inanimate objects to create hybrid figures and dreamlike transformations, its rejection of realism and rationality, the juxtaposition of contradictory and apparently unrelated elements suggesting or reflecting the unconscious, and its use of hyper-real landscapes as settings to disclose the dreamworld of the unconscious through chaotic biomorphic, anatomic, metaphysical and hallucinatory motifs that arise naturally through dreams.

Surreal Scene portrays the unconscious female body and mind through forms of multiple identities, and juxtaposes animate and inanimate dream elements which resist logical and rational interpretation according to conventional visual canons. With its puzzling iconography, the work seems to channel the female unconscious body and psyche through its references to women's procreativity and regeneration. At the same time, it seems to incorporate certain ideas from Futurism (which Loy had been deeply inspired by during the early years of her career), sometimes confirming and other times undermining it.

5.3 Interpreting *Surreal Scene*

Like many Surrealist works, this painting's complex iconography has not yet been analyzed critically. This may be because it seems to be juxtaposed at random, and is supposed to reflect the irrational unconscious, so it is easier to focus on particular elements in this work than to draw rational connections between the signs. Loy's work has usually been approached from a biographical perspective by most biographers, and this is problematic in several ways. It assumes that everything in the work can be referred to historical events in the author's life, which is not clear in many cases; and it assumes that everything in the work can be correlated with the psychology of the author/painter, which has been constructed by her biographers. It also assumes

that psychological interpretations are accurate representations of what happens in an author's/painter's mind, and it ignores the complicated, sometimes ironic relation between an author/painter and the persona or multiple personas created in the work. If we look at *Surreal Scene* just as a reflection of Loy's unconscious, this would mean either arguing that it cannot be interpreted because it reflects the irrational unconscious, or simply interpreting it based on unreliable psychological symbolism to create a fictional model of Loy's mental state. Instead, because it evokes the thought processes of Surrealism in its title, and appears to depict a variety of disconnected images, this painting seems to require a different and more complex thought process to interpret it than Loy's other works. This thought process can be understood as a process of making semiotic connections.

The painting appears to the viewer as a collection of signs at the moment that it is being looked at, so this creates two problems for interpretation: finding the possible significations of each of the signs, and creating relationships between the signs. Each of the signs may refer to signs in Loy's other artworks or poems, or in paintings of her contemporaries which appear to be thematically or visually analogous, or in historical, biographical or autobiographical texts, or in Loy's narrator's or the viewer's cultural contexts. The relationships found between signs within the painting may then create other contexts which modify the individual meanings of the signs. This perspective suggests that interpreting the painting is not just a process of "finding" meanings and relationships between meanings in the text that have been put there by the painter, but of creating and constructing them, and then projecting them into the painting. Seen in this way, performing an interpretation of the painting is a performative act which creates the persona(s) of the painter.

The performative act of semiotic interpretation is based first of all on Ferdinand de Saussure's description of the linguistic sign (*S/s*) as a two-sided psychological entity consisting of a "signifier" (*S*)—the form the sign takes; and the "signified" (*s*)—the concept the sign stands for. For example, the word "tree" is a signifier which denotes the concept of a tree, which is "what it stands for," its signified or connotation. (The word "psychological" here is not used in a Freudian sense; it simply describes the fact that language is "mental," that is, it can exist in the mind without being expressed physically as written words or sound or gestures—for example, we can have a mental conversation with ourselves in our minds without speaking the words.) Most

importantly, for Saussure, "the arbitrary nature of the sign [between the signifier and the signified] was the first principle of language" (67). Daniel Chandler clarifies the Saussurean concept of "the bar" as well as the connection between the "signifier" and the "signified" as follows: "The horizontal line marking the two elements of the sign is referred to as the bar" (par. 4) and "the relationship between the signifier and the signified is *conventional*—dependent on social and cultural conventions" (par. 31).

In interpreting Loy's painting, the process of finding meanings in individual signs depends on knowing the meanings which are conventionally attached to them. This knowledge comes from our traditional association of certain images with certain words, stories or cultural contexts, and the associations can come from the interpreter's experience of life, observations, or readings, in various ways. The process of linking the meanings of signs together to create threads of meaning ("semiotic chains") is what produces the interpretation, and this process can be understood through the semiotic theory of Charles Sanders Peirce.

"We only think in signs," Peirce states (2.302), but things become signs only when we generate their meanings through our interpretations. Peirce broadly categorizes signs as *symbolic, iconic* or *indexical*. Symbols are interpreted in accordance with a rule, and assigned arbitrarily. They are accepted as societal conventions, and usually based on knowledge. For example, letters, flags, mathematical and alphabetical signs and punctuation marks are all symbolic signs. The *iconic* signs, on the other hand, are highly evocative, in that they refer to the physical likeness. Photographs, portraits, statues, cartoon and sound effects, for instance, all serve as iconic signs. As for the *indexical* signs, they are different from the symbolic and iconic signs in terms of their feature of non-arbitrariness between the signifier and the signified; there is a factual, dynamic and causal relationships with the objects and what they represent, so they point to something associated with them: Peirce suggests that an indexical sign is related to its object "as a matter of fact" (4.447). Smoke, for example, is an indexical sign for fire as it has a dynamic connection with fire; it cannot occur without its existence. W. J. T. Mitchell summarizes Peirce's semiotic categorization of signs as follows: "for Peirce, the world of signs is fully described by a trio of icon, symbol, and index—signs, that is, by resemblance or analogy, by convention (words and arbitrary signs), and by 'causal' or 'existential' connection (a trace that signals its cause; a pointing finger)" (Mitchell 56).

Some signs may concurrently perform a combination of the two or even three semiotic levels—e.g. symbolic as well as iconic and/or indexical—depending on the nature of the interpretant. For example, footprints might function on all three semiotic levels—symbolically, iconically and indexically—based on the context that we bring to them. *Symbolically,* footprints represent the act of walking by showing the impression of both feet on a surface, but *iconically,* the imagery of some footprints might physically resemble ancient and mythological footprints, or echo the shape of the foot of a bear or a dinosaur. From the *indexical* aspect, on the other hand, footprints—without resembling its signified object—have a causal and factual relationship with the object. For example, the sign of footprints on ice suggests that someone has stepped onto them. These symbolic, iconic and indexical connections and their combinations are all made in the mind of the interpreter—the *interpretant*—and allow us to examine what is happening between the elements of the painting as well as how they can be connected to Loy's other works and contexts, but without referring them back to something behind the painting such as the imagined mind or intention of the painter. *Surreal Scene* is a multi-levelled visual discourse, and analysing it from a semiotic aspect therefore not only allows me to connect the visual signs to each other and to other relevant signs, but also, through making these connections, to performatively construct a view of the painting which can be seen in it, and therefore reflects the significance of the work.

5.4 A Semiotic Analysis of *Surreal Scene*

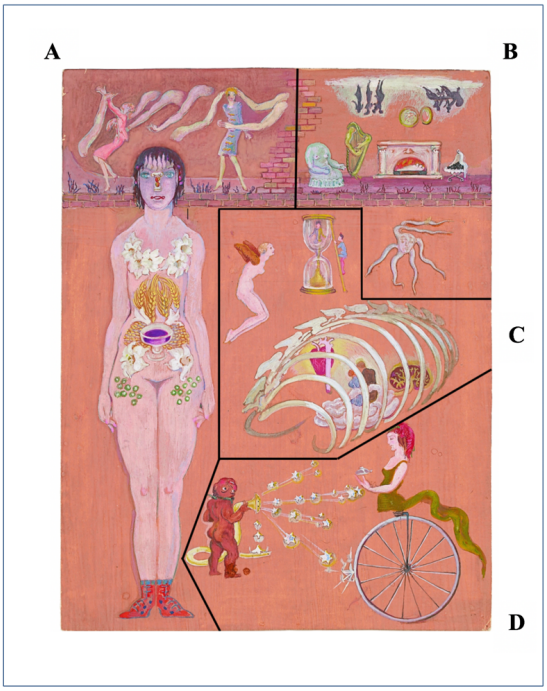
Surreal Scene (Figure 32) is a collage and gouache composition of three-dimensional objects on a peach background. It depicts different tableaux surrounding a nude female figure; various objects scattered randomly around the image of the woman illustrate the states of transformations and entrapments. The irrational temporal and spatial juxtapositions represent a composition of two spaces—external and internal—shifting between reality and dream worlds, and seem to illustrate the body and mind of the female figure. The painting seems to be created from fragments that function as different kinds of signs; it may represent the complex iconography of a dream landscape, but it gives the impression of a storybook accommodating different themes. While it is not possible to speculate on what the meaning of the dream might

be, or what Loy had in mind, various semiotic denotations and connotations can be drawn from the images in the painting and the words that can be used to refer to them.

The dominant image is the figure of a nude woman decorated with animate and inanimate objects, and the painting can therefore be thought of as depicting the corporeal and psychic dynamics of the nude female, through these objects and the images of various other things juxtaposed around her.

Figure 32. Mina Loy, *Surreal Scene*, 1950[151]

The threads of associations in the painting can be mainly divided into four thematic sections: the left side of the painting (A) depicts a whole nude female image and two female figures surrounded by disembodied limbs situated in the frame of red bricks above her; the upper quarter (B) creates the impression of a living room with various objects circling the fireplace, dark silhouettes, and a six-legged starfish image with a smiling face; the center right of the painting (C) details an armless kneeling female angel, an hourglass in which a female is trapped inside and on which a man is climbing on it through a ladder, and a ribcage with various elements inside and outside—a heart with the aorta, a couple surrounded by intestines and a kidney next to them; and finally, the lower side of the painting (D) shows a red-headed hybrid woman-unicycle figure at bottom right, and a dark naked boy holding a hose and spraying some stars towards the woman and the wheel of the bicycle.



5.4.1 The Nude Female Figure

To begin with, on the left side of the painting (A; Figure 29), there is a full-length nude female figure decorated with various objects; above her head are two women with a number of disembodied limbs, moving on clumps of grass which seem to be growing under their feet. This scene appears to demonstrate how the female form and body parts are perceived by society, but because the setting is around the head of the large female figure, it may also represent, like the thought-bubble in *Househunting,* the self-perception of the woman figure.

Figure 33. Detail from Figure 32, *Surreal Scene* (A)

On a broad global level, it is possible to look at these images in terms of their mythological associations across cultures. From this perspective, one could say, for example, that the reddish

dishevelled hair on her forehead iconically (by resemblance) suggests the dripping down of blood, which may indexically (through a causal or factual association) connote "a ritual accompaniment. . . [or] a sign of mourning. . . Some of the Immortals had dishevelled hair" (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 460). The blood-like straggling hair in this sense might symbolize women's vitalization and immortality. However, the hair also iconically resembles the grass above the woman's head, which appears to be growing under the feet of the two women above. The hair of a female figure is often mythologically associated with "the Earth's hair, and hence with plant life. Agricultural societies see its growth as an image of that of the plants which feed them" (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 460). These associations suggest that on a broad cultural level, the sign of the blood-like dishevelled hair of the nude female figure lined up with clumps of grass indexically represents women's regenerative maternal identity as fertility, reproductivity and procreation. Similarly, the head of the woman is set against a horizonal line of red bricks cutting across her neck. The red bricks can be thought of as indexically evoking the lives and settlements of human beings, as they are used as materials for building houses: as Chevalier and Gheerbrant note, bricks reflect "mankind's adoption of a settled way of life and the beginnings of urbanization in house, temple and city" (122); these bricks, symbolizing housing and settlement, could then be seen as indexically connected with the sign of grass, which represents vegetable life.

Such associations provide a broad mythological perspective on elements of the painting, but do not help to understand it in its specific cultural and artistic contexts, although the mythological references may be echoed in these contexts. On a more specific level, Loy metaphorically uses bricks (or other elements that suggest them) in several of her artworks, such as *Househunting* (Figure 34) and *Christ on a Clothesline* (Figure 35) as we have seen in Chapter 2.

Figure 34. Mina Loy, *Househunting*, 1950[152]

Figure 35. Mina Loy, *Christ on a Clothesline*, 1955-59[153]

The bricks illustrated in different shapes and colours and in the form of torn-out paper images in *Househunting* represent the fantasy houses in the mental landscape of the nude figure; and from an intertextual perspective, the red bricks in *Surreal Scene* can be indexically related to the bricks in *Househunting*, as in both cases they are used to connote the psychic space we associate with the central nude figure—its dream-like fantasies. Besides, the shabby bricks and shapes in *Christ on a Clothesline* iconically resemble the form of secular architecture; they are used as a background to a tenement building to suggest the collapse of male-dominance and superstitions as well the downfall of the Futurist movement. The bricks in *Surreal Scene*, in this sense, indexically relate to the bricks in *Christ on a Clothesline,* as in both paintings they are used to connote women's search for an autonomous and self-sufficient settled way of life, and new beginnings in their physical and mental spaces.

The nude woman's image as a whole looks quite awkward, as if each section of it, from top to bottom, is disconnected from the previous section. This disconnection of body sections iconically evokes the idea of the "Cadavre Exquis," or Exquisite Corpse, sometimes known as "the Drawing Game." This is a collage game that is collectively played visually or verbally by several players. As a verbal game, the aim is to construct a sentence: one player thinks of an adjective, the next player a subject noun, the next a verb; then an adjective, a noun, and so on, but each player does not know what the preceding words are which have been chosen by the other players. When the words are all put together, the result is an unusual, and sometimes amusing sentence. The concept of the "Cadavre Exquis" was invented in Paris in 1925 by the Surrealists, Yves Tanguy, Jacques Prevért, André Breton and Marcel Duchamp.

Figure 36. *Nude*, *Cadavre Exquis* with Yves Tanguy, Joan Miró, Max Morise and Man Ray (1926-1927)

The name 'cadavre exquis' was derived from a phrase that resulted when they first played the game, 'le cadavre exquis boira le vin nouveau' ('the exquisite corpse will drink the new wine')."[154] When it is played as a visual game, a piece of paper is folded repeatedly, accordion-style, and the aim is to draw a figure, starting from the head and moving down to the feet. Each collaborator in turn adds to the composition: the first draws the head, for example, marks the two lines for the neck, folds the paper over, and hands it to the next player, who draws the neck and shoulders, folds it over, hiding everything drawn except the two clues for the next player, and so on, until they have drawn all the body parts of the figure. When the paper is finally unfolded, the result is an absurd image created by four different people. An example of a *Cadavre Exquis* depicting a bizarre nude figure, the result of one of the games played by some Surrealists, is shown in Figure 36.[155]

André Breton described Surrealism as a spontaneous use of "psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express—verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner—the actual functioning of thought" (Breton 26). The Surrealists thought of the images and sentences created by the Cadavre Exquis as the product of the collective unconscious of the group of players; it unlocked hidden facets of the unconscious mind as well as the personal imagination. The awkwardness of Loy's nude female figure in *Surreal Scene* iconically evokes these Cadavre Exquis drawings, and its oddly disconnected parts can be seen as fragments which fragment the image, but at the same time are connected together, reassembled, to form the whole body. The playing of the game can be considered as analogous to the performative act of creating the body: both Surrealism and "gender performativity" engage in the common semiotic process of producing meaning.

"Gender is constructed through specific corporeal acts" (521), Judith Butler has argued in her "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution," and "[p]erformativity is not a singular act, but repetition and ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration" (Butler, *Gender Trouble,* 15). Loy's construction of the nude female figure in a form resembling a *cadavre exquis*—or more accurately, my construction of Loy's construction—functions as a visual analogue of performativity: it subverts the stereotypical gender images of female body and mind in several ways: *first,* by showing its fragmentation through the juxtaposition of awkwardly disconnected parts; and, as I will show, *secondly,* through its ritualized classical pose and gaze; *third,* through the various objects covering its parts (which reflect and subvert the social norms of female identity that are constructed by manufactured consent"); and *fourth,* through the semiotic connections between the surrounding scenes and objects. Because "there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very expressions that are said to be its results" (Butler 25), what the nude figure in the painting visually expresses to the viewers is what she actually performs.

5.4.2 Fragmentation

The full-length stance of the nude female figure with her arms hanging tightly at the side, hands clasping up the upper thighs, iconically resembles that of a statue,

and her large and dehumanized blue eyes seem to lack any emotion, excluding the viewer from interaction. This posture suggests a *kouros*, the typical archaic Greek votive statue of a young man (Figure 37),

Figure 37. *Kouros* (left) and *Kore* (right)[156]

which reflected classical ideals of the beauty of the male body. Since the archaic votive statues of women (*kore*) were always clothed, generally with one arm in the gesture of holding something, Loy's depiction of the pose is ironic, as it shows the female figure in the style of a *kouros*, instead of a *kore*[157] (except for the knitted socks or boots on her feet)—subverting the gendered portrayal and the ideas of the body and beauty of the male and female in the classical artistic tradition.

5.4.3 The Pose and the Gaze

As for the large and dehumanized eyes of the woman's image, they echo the blank gaze of *kouros* and *kore* figures staring into ideal space, but also give the impression of a neutral female gaze, which iconically echoes the glance of the female image in Loy's *Househunting* (Figure 2). The logic of the *Cadavre Exquis*, its collective construction of a body by male Surrealist artists, also provides another way of considering the gaze: it might be a critique of how women are viewed (and view themselves) in terms of the male gaze—since to the observer of the painting, the figure

seems to be looking out blankly. In her *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and Histories of Art*, Griselda Pollock suggests this perspective on the definition of the feminine as an object of the masculine gaze:

> [Woman] is contrasted iconographically to the naked woman. She is denied the picturing of her desire; what she looks at is blank for the spectator. She is denied being the object of desire because she is represented as a woman who actively looks, rather returning and conforming the gaze of the masculine spectator. (122)

In the context of the painting, the sexless posture of the nude figure, which possesses both male and female characteristics (in its echoing of classical votive figures), displays the complexity of gender, and represents the double identity of the woman; while the figure's neutral gaze signifies how women are perceived and illustrated as motionless, numb and inert through the male vision.

Another aspect of the face, the figure's nose, iconically resembles the Corinthian-style architecture of Greek culture. Loy's strategic decoration of the nose with this architectural element evokes ideas of the shape, proportion and elegance of classical columns, suggesting criteria traditionally used to characterize women's femininity and beauty. The figure's red lips are symbolically connected with femininity, but their ribbon-like shape also suggests a range of other possibilities. As a symbolic sign, the lips recall the "lemniscate," a conventional mathematical symbol (∞) which is used to refer to infinitely large numbers, as well as to infinity,[158] and which evokes the idea of limitlessness and eternity. This is also an iconic sign, as it physically recalls the Lemniscate—which represents eternal life in the Tarot[159]—and so this sign iconically invokes occultism and mysticism.

Loy's use of this infinity symbol with its references to the Tarot reflects her interest in occultism and divination; and Tarot signs are a common theme in Surrealist poems and paintings.[160]

Figure 38. Victor Brauner, *Le Surréaliste*, 1974[161]

For example, Victor Brauner, a French-Romanian painter and sculptor, uses tarot motifs to create surreal images. In his 1947 *Le Surréaliste* (Figure 38), he illustrates *The Magician* figure, the first card of Major Arcana in the Waite tarot deck, with a alarge infinity sign situated in the center of the hat of the male figure, who is wearing a medieval costume and standing behind a table with a knife, a chalice and some coins on it.

There is also speculation that T. S. Eliot, who praised Loy's poetry, grounded his tarot imagery in his "The Waste Land"[162] on Loy's "At the Door of the House." As Roger Conover also comments in the *Editor's Notes* of his *LLB,* ". . . the aleatory foundation of ['At the Door of the House'] may have adumbrated the Tarot imagery in *The Waste Land* (1922)" (185). Some parallels can therefore be drawn between Loy's "At the Door of the House"[163] (first published in the *Others* anthology in 1915), and *Surreal Scene*, in terms of how women are conceptualized: the concept of woman: the second stanza of the poem, for example, begins with a Tarot reading session depicting the desperate state of a woman in love: "Impassioned / Doubly impassioned / Sad / You see these three cards / But here is the double Victory / And there is an elderly lady. . ." (Loy 33). In these lines, the words "doubly" and "double" suggest infinity. There is also a representation of a nude female figure in the sixth stanza of the

poem, which has some similarity to the visual nude motif characterized in *Surreal Scene*: "A man cut in half / Means a deception / And the nude woman / Stands for the world" (Loy 34). Here, Loy's lines imply that the woman synecdochically symbolizes the universe as a whole ("stands for the world"), while the man is—metaphorically—incomplete and an adulterer ("cut in half").

The infinity sign also indexically relates to what Loy suggests in the "Aphorisms on Futurism," where the Futurist poem is depicted as a timeless and endless form by the narrator: "THE Futurist can live a thousand years in one poem." (AF 22, Loy 150). The speaker of the *Aphorisms* also praises the eternal infiniteness of the Futurist poet because of his aesthetic talents: "HE can compress every aesthetic principle in one line" (AF 23, Loy 150).

All of these poetic connections revolving around the infinity sign show how Loy's multisensual poetic eye merges with her visual imagination, and her subversion of the gap between representation and reality—between the signifier and the signified.

5.4.4 Objects on the Body

Different parts of the torso and thighs of the female figure are covered with various symbolic images of objects. Loy uses lily flowers, wheat stalks, a chalice of wine and green blobs with white centers to decorate the breasts, sternum, ovaries, uterus and thighs of the figure; and these fragmented signs suggest other meanings (Figure 39). The lilies iconically resemble one of Loy's sculptural works, a lampshade designed in 1927—*Calla Lily Lamp* (Figure 40).

Figure 39. Detail from Figure 32, *Surreal Scene* (A)

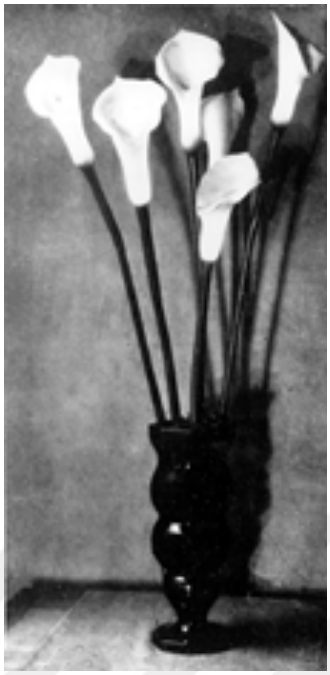


Figure 40. Mina Loy, *Calla Lily Lamp*, 1927[164]

On the one hand, "[t]he derivative of the word calla is the Greek word for beauty—*calla*. Calla lilies are said to come from the ancient god Hera, the wife of Zeus. The lilies symbolize purity and innocence."[165] On the other hand, when seen iconically as Tarot signs,[166] "the lily can signal growth, development, and a quality of innocence in our lives. Depending on the surrounding cards, the lily may also indicate new relationships and births."[167] Lilies also have a metaphorical connection with feminine fertility and procreativity, one of the themes of Loy's "Feminist Manifesto" (1914), where her persona touches upon the right of maternity for every woman, and subverts the stereotypical view of motherhood, arguing that female reproductivity is a necessity for women's psychic development and "race-responsibility" to perpetuate a better new generation:

> **Every woman has a right to maternity—**
> **Every woman of superior intelligence should realize her race-**
> **Responsibility, in producing children in adequate proportion to**
> **The unfit or degenerate members of her sex— (Loy, *LLB* 155)**

Similarly, the wheat grains dressing the sternum and the abdominal area of the nude female figure in *Surreal Scene* iconically evoke the wheat stems in Loy's *Househunting.* As the symbolic meaning of wheat grains is the cycle of life, regeneration and fertility,[168] the lilies metaphorically symbolize feminine fertility and reproductive devices in both paintings.

In the lower stomach area of the nude figure, a chalice of wine is situated to cover the uterus. This sign symbolically represents a sacred motif suggesting the communion wine or the holy grail; however, the red fluid in the cup can also be an indexical evocation of the blood of a baby existing in the uterine plexus. Below the waist of the figure, the upper thighs are covered in green blobs with white centers. These green blobs sprinkled on both thighs of the nude figure are symbolic signs that metaphorically suggest frogspawn or semen, and thus, point to procreation and fertility.

All of these objects dressing the figure's bodily organs—the lilies, the wheat grains, the chalice of wine and the green blobs with white centers—represent the female procreative experience; they stand for indexical signs, and refer to the act of parturiency, the cyclical human gestation process from conception to birth, while a woman carries a fetus in her uterus—this, of course, is the subject of Loy's "Parturition," which describes a woman's act of childbirth:

Mother I am
Identical
With infinite Maternity
Indivisible
Acutely
I am absorbed
Into
The was—is—ever—shall—be
Of cosmic reproductivity (Loy, *LLB* 7)

In the poem, this is the moment the persona feels herself as the creator of her baby. She declares herself in her new identity—"Mother I am"—and synecdochically feels "absorbed" into the universe. Being in harmony with the "cosmic reproductivity," she sees maternal experience as a universal and sacred act. Loy's connections referring to maternity can also be seen in her "Lions' Jaws" (1919), where the speaker depicts herself as "the lurid mother of [the Futurists'] flabbergast child" (Loy 49).

Finally, the red knitted socks or shoes with blue laces the nude figure is wearing are indexical signs with their direct physical relationship to the object. When perceived as socks, as the only clothed part of the nude female figure, they metaphorically evoke domesticity and a sense of belonging to a home; however, as stylistic shoes, they suggest the 1930s-style popular two-tone heels and oxfords.[169] The ironical referent between the object and the woman is that socks or shoes are both garments worn in the lower part of the body.

5.4.5 The Surrounding Scenes

While the dominating nude female figure in *Surreal Scene* mainly depicts feminine reproductive devices—by transfiguring them in the form of lilies, wheat grains, the chalice of wine and the green blobs—and displays the procreative power of femininity, *Househunting,* intertextually, focuses on the nude figure's head depicted figuratively as a mental landscape in the form of a thought-bubble filled with gendered images of female domesticity, among which the woman is searching for a sense of wholeness outside of patriarchal boundaries. In *Surreal Scene,* the scenes surrounding the figure seem to serve the same purpose as the thought bubble of *Househunting*, but with broader implications.

At the upper left corner of the painting (A), there are two female figures—the one on the left is in a pink dress, and the other on the right is in blue—and they are illustrated as both entrapped and embraced by a line (presumably male) disembodied limbs. At this point, it is not clear whether the two women are dancing with or escaping from these limbs; their facial expressions are obscure. The disembodied limbs iconically resemble prosthetics; they evoke the paintings of Loy's contemporary, Giorgio de Chirico, a pre-Surrealist artist known as the founder of metaphysical art. His body of works include enigmatic shadows, mannequins, dream-like objects, distorted limbs and claustrophic dreamscapes in an atmosphere of menace and melancholy, all of which greatly inspired other Surrealist artists. The dismembered adjacent limbs situated in *Surreal Scene,* for example, echo the artificial limbs in de Chirico's 1917 oil painting, *Hector and Andromache* (Figure 41), which exhibits not only Surrealist aesthetics through its irrational dream-like representation, but also a cubist style with its geometric and simple perspectives. The painting depicts a couple,

whose bodies are illustrated with prosthetic limbs which are geometrically defined, but with a flesh-like solidity:

Figure 41. Giorgio de Chirico, *Hector and Andromache*, 1917[170]

The grass growing under the two women's feet in *Surreal Scene* also indexically suggests plants cropped by someone, but which seem to be growing. Thus, the bricks symbolizing housing and settlement in the paintings are logically connected with the grass, which represents blossoming and growing: they signify the life of both human beings and vegetation.

The right side of the top quarter (Figure 42) gives the impression of a living room furnished with various interior objects: a blue, headless armchair, a green harp playing itself with its hands, a coat scuttle, a starfish image with a smiling face, a poising locket-like mirror reflecting the vision of the large starfish below, a flaming fireplace with a naked couple lying inside, and bat-human hybrid figures hovering above the fireplace in a cloudy light. All of these elements indexically have direct relationships with the signs they stand for, while the bat-human hybrid figures have multiple iconic significations.

Figure 42. Detail from Figure 32, *Surreal Scene* (B)

These bizarre elements again evoke de Chirico's series of *Metaphysical Interiors,* which Carl Jung, in *Man and His Symbols*, labels as

> revealing [a] 'ghostly aspect' of things. . . They are dreamlike transpositions of reality, which arise as visions from the unconscious. But his 'metaphysical abstraction' is expressed in a panic-stricken rigidity, and the atmosphere of the pictures is one of nightmare and of fathomless melancholy." (293)

For example, the blue armchair with a headless seated lap where the armrests are actually in the shape of arms, recalls de Chirico's *The Disquieting Muses* (1916) (Figure 43), which depicts two faceless mannequins, one illustrated with an elongated head, standing and the other without a head, sitting, who are surrounded by various objects and their shadows. Loy's image also evokes Salvador Dalí's 1936 Surrealist painting, *Singularities,* (Figure 44) which depicts a headless seated lap on which a human silhouette is sitting in front of the dancing, headless figure of a woman.

Figure 43. Giorgio de Chirico, *Disquieting Muses,* 1936[171]

Figure 44. Salvador Dalí, *Singularities*, 1916[172]

The disembodied head in the headless armchair suggests decapitation,[173] which Hailey Maxwell, in his article "Decapitation in the Low Surrealist Revolution," links to the allegory of revolution: "Surrealism fractured around the metaphor of revolution. Decapitation, as a symbol of revolutionary rupture, death, violence, anarchy, and history, became contested—such contestation reveals the fracture between 'low' and 'high' Surrealism" (par. 2). In the context of *Surreal Scene*, as a symbol of Surrealism's revolutionary intentions—the idea of "low Surrealism"—this image, dissociating the head from the body, can be a reference to questioning or displacing male hegemony as, more specifically, the armless chair suggests a buxom female image.

Next to the armchair, there is a yellow harp with its frame extending into two arms that play it. As a symbolic sign, the harp can be defined as an ancient and traditional, large musical instrument comprising of a row of strings stretched from the top to the bottom of a frame, and which also brings to mind sweet sounds evoking fairies. However, here the harp image iconically represents male control, as it is played by two muscular arms in the image.

To the right of the harp object is a fireplace, flanked by two doric columns, with red and yellow flames burning in it and with a naked couple lying inside on a

blanket. The depiction of the naked couple indexically represents human sexual relationships, and the coat scuttle related to the fireplace iconically feeds the passion of the couple by being the source of its metaphorical heat in the fireplace.

Above this scene, a locket-like green mirror is hovering, with a reflection of the starfish situated below: this mirror indexically displays the reciprocity of the painting and its observer, but also serves as a broader metaphor of how reality is inverted: ". . . The mirror presents a negative image of reality. . . 'What is above is as what is below,' says the alchemical *Emerald Tablet*, but with an opposite meaning" (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 658). This image also recalls the mirror that echoes the visions of the posers, King Philip IV and his wife Queen Mariana, from the painter's canvas—and presumably the artist himself—in Diego Velázquez's *Las Meninas* (1656) (Figure 45).

Figure 45. Diego Velázquez, *Las Meninas*, 1656[174]

Michel Foucault, in his analysis of *Las Meninas* in *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, describes the function of a mirror as follows:

> In fact, [the mirror] shows us nothing of what is represented in the picture itself. . . Instead of surrounding visible objects, the mirror cuts straight through the whole field of representation, ignoring all it might apprehend within that field, and restores visibility to that which resides outside all view. But the invisibility that it overcomes in this way is not the invisibility of what is hidden: it does not make its way around any obstacle, it is not distorting any perspective, it is addressing itself to what is invisible both because of the picture's structure and because of its existence as

> painting. . . The mirror provides a metathesis of visibility that affects both the space represented in the picture and its nature as representation; it allows us to see. . . what in the painting is of necessity doubly invisible. (8-9)

Similarly, what produces an ambiguity in Loy's painting is that the roles of the object, the subject, and the viewer exchange while looking at the mirror, which creates reciprocity, by which both visibility and invisibility are signified at the same time. As in the case of the nude figure's eyes in (A), the gaze is neutral here as well, playing between illusion and reality, and revealing an ambivalent relationship between the gazer and the gaze.

Above the locket, there are two groups of black shadows which look like bat-human hybrids on a white cloud-like background. In the upper-right of the painting (B), these shadowy figures function iconically because of their visual resemblance to various other objects. When the painting is turned upside down, these bat-like shapes turn out to be two separate scenes seen in silhouette (Figure 46).

Figure 46. Detail from Figure 32, *Surreal Scene* (B)

On the right side, three standing or dancing women appear, and one of them—the one on the right—seems to be holding a baby. The scene on the left shows three ungendered figures sitting around a table. These scenes, when separated from the rest of the painting and viewed upside-down, echo the inversions produced by the mirror, and suggest the inversions produced by the unconscious; they are also shadow reflections of the scene in (A) of the women surrounded by disembodied limbs, but seem to reflect these figures as a positive fantasy, whole and relaxed.

Viewed upside down, their bat-like images resemble gothic or grotesque elements, and create an illusion exterior to the interior scene depicted below. At the

same time, these upturned hybrid figures iconically bring to mind the "Hanged Man" card in Tarot symbolism: "The Hanged Man generally shows that you are at a crossroads—one with only two options i.e. in or out, up or down, yes or no. [One] may find [him/herself] very much wanting to do 'something' but having no idea what it is or how to do it."[175] In this context, they reflect the unconscious dream-like hallucinations of the fantasy world, a representation of the nude woman's mind—while the rest of the objects below signify worldly pleasures in the actual, physical world of the woman—reality.

Through these inversions, and in contrast to the interior objects surrounding the fireplace, they seem to reflect two distinctive worlds in the unconscious mind of the nude female figure, which challenge the perception of the viewers; as de Chirico explains, this is essential to how we perceive art objects:

> [The object is] more than [meets] the eye. . . Every object has two aspects: the common aspect, which is the one we generally see and which is seen by everyone, and the ghostly and metaphysical aspects, which only rare individuals see at moments of clairvoyance and metaphysical meditation. A work of art must relate something that does not appear in its visible form. (293)[176]

In other words, when viewing a surreal object, the viewer is invited to see beyond the appearance, and perceive what cannot be expressed by conventional means.

There is a further, metaphorical connection between these bat-human silhouettes and the mirror in the upper right corner of the painting (B), the kind of relation explained by Michel Foucault in his discussion of the silhouette and curtain images in René Magritte's *Décalcomanie*.[177] Foucault, in *This is Not a Pipe*, makes a distinction between similitude and resemblance:

> [Resemblance] reveals the clearly visible; similitude reveals what recognizable objects, familiar silhouettes hide, prevent from being seen, render invisible. . . Resemblance makes a unique assertion, always the same: This thing, that thing, yet another thing is something else. Similitude multiplies different affirmations, which dance together, tilting and tumbling over one another. (46)

From this perspective, the bat-human silhouettes and the reciprocal mirror-object reflecting the starfish image below the fireplace, can iconically be interpreted as similitudes, because of their multiplied meanings, as well as the invisibility which they suggest.

Below the fireplace, there is a six-legged starfish with a smiling face centered on its torso. The starfish image indexically suggests biomorphic features; it represents

a living organism rather than an artistic image, and it therefore signifies the idea of regeneration: the starfish has a unique quality of self-healing when its legs are amputated. As Vivia Gomez puts it:

> [Starfish] are known for their ability to regenerate amputated limbs, and are characterized by flexible arms attached to a central disc. . . A sea star that has the ability to regenerate amputated limbs must first undergo a repair phase to heal the exposed wound. Once the wound is healed, the sea star can begin to generate new cells, which in turn, sparks new growth. Regeneration can take anywhere from several months to years.[178] (par. 2)

However, the starfish is also an iconic sign, and has a metaphorical connection with what it represents in the painting. Its self-reviving function can be related with Loy's concept of woman in terms of her reproductive and regenerative capability—which is illustrated on the left side of the painting (A) by means of the symbolic and iconic signs dressing the nude female figure, as well as by the depiction of the small tufts of grass growing itself, on the upper left. And if the female figures in the painting are regarded as representations of women's multiple identities, the starfish image can also be considered as a regenerative figure, fragmenting and reassembling itself.

Another exceptional feature of the starfish is its asexual reproduction. Gomez notes that "Sea stars have the ability to reproduce sexually and asexually. Those that reproduce asexually do so by fragmenting its central disc into fragments, a process called 'fission.' It can also reproduce asexually by amputating its own arms" (para. 3). This process of asexual re-creation evokes one of the arguments discussed in "Lions' Jaws": "Man's immediate agamogenesis," (Loy 47) which ironizes the Futurists' fantasy of asexual reproduction and a womanless world. In this sense, Loy's starfish image in *Surreal Scene* metaphorically stands for men's impotence, and for parthenogenesis as a counterattack to the Futurists' dream of "agamogenesis."

Iconically, the starfish figure has been used by other Surrealist artists; the Dadaist and Surrealist photographer Man Ray, for example, used the image in his *L'Etoile de Mer (The Starfish)* rayograph, (1928) (Figure 47) which is thought to have been created from a frame of the short film *L'Etoile de Mer.* Surrealist artist Joan Miró also depicted various biomorphic and figurative objects including starfish; among his works with the starfish image are *The Hunter (Catalan Landscape)* (1923-24) (Figure 48), *Harlequins Carnival* (1924),[179] *The Beautiful Bird Revealing The Unknown To A*

Pair Of Lovers (1941),[180] *The Smile of the Flamboyant Wings* (1953)[181] and *Femme Poudrant* (1949).[182]

Figure 47. Man Ray, *L'Etoile de Mer*, 1928[183]

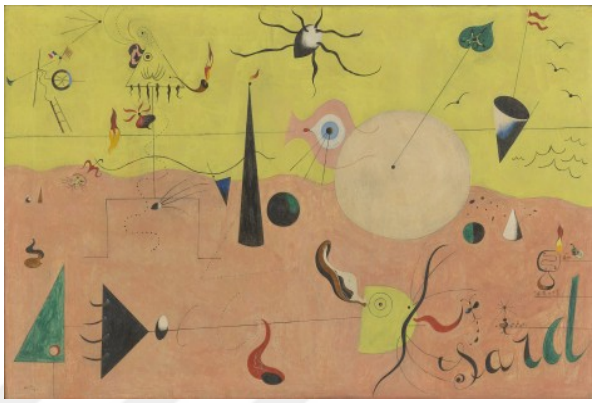


Figure 48. Joan Miró, *The Hunter*, 1923-24[184]

In the third section of the painting (C) (Figure 49), various elements are illustrated. Firstly, from left to right, there is an armless angel figure with broken brown wings, in a kneeling position, and observing the hourglass image on her right.

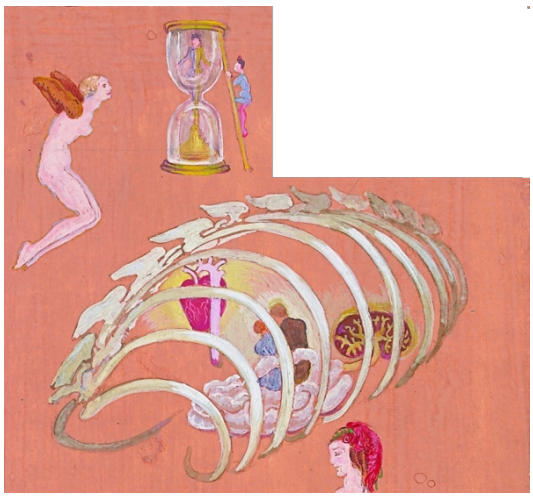


Figure 49. Detail from Figure 32, *Surreal Scene* (C)

The missing arms of the figure appear to be substituting for the scattered prosthetics illustrated at top left of the painting in (A). However, this armless angel figure may also be an iconic evocation of the famous Hellenistic marble sculpture of Nike, the

Greek Goddess of Victory from the 2nd century—*The Winged Victory of Samothrace*, sometimes called *The Nike of Samothrace* (Figure 50); both of the images are armless and they have wings on their backs, but the armless angel is naked whereas the Nike is dressed. This contrast indexically evokes the connection between the archaic votive figures of men (*kouros*) and women (*kore*), and the nude female figure discussed earlier—where the nude female figure is depicted in the form of a man (*kouros*) by subverting the gendered representation. Here, the armless angel in the painting is ironically naked, while the Nike sculpture is dressed. Another indexical association is that "[the sculpture of Nike] was created to not only honor the goddess, Nike, but also to commemorate a battle fought at sea . . ."[185] From this viewpoint, the battle of the sexes in the painting might be referring to the battle signifying Nike.

Figure 50. *The Nike of Samothrace*, 2nd century[186]

Next to the armless woman is an hourglass, inside which a woman's body is trapped. The woman is depicted with a long dress, where half of her body is poured like sand through the hourglass; a ladder is balanced against its right side, and a man with blue shirt and red trousers is climbing up it. The position of the man observing the woman trapped in the hourglass represents the male gaze; however, the presence of the ladder is ambiguous here, as it is unclear whether he is going to rescue her from or imprison her in the hourglass. Here, the ladder object also evokes the

metaphorical—and ironically hyphenated—image of stairs ("up-stairs)" that is depicted in "Parturition":

> **A fashionable portrait-painter**
> **Running up-stairs to a woman's apartment**
> **Sings**
> **[. . .]**
> **The irresponsibility of the male**
> **Leaves woman her superior Inferiority.**
> **He is running up-stairs (Loy, *LLB* 5)**

Loy's narrator's depiction of the portrait-painter who is "running upstairs to a woman's apartment"—to pay a visit to his mistress while the parturient woman gives birth—can be intertextually interpreted as a visual analogy of the man climbing up a ladder on the hourglass in which a female is trapped. Also, in *Househunting*, the ladder is depicted as one of the stereotypical gendered images of domesticity within the mental landscape of the central female figure—in the form of the thought-bubble where she is trapped.

And the ladder is commonly featured in Christian representations of the Deposition—the steps Christ's followers climb to take Christ's body down from the cross after the crucifixion; so the ladder image also evokes Peter Paul Rubens' *The Descent from the Cross* (1617-18)[187] and Marc Chagall's *Jacob's Ladder* (1973).[188]

The hourglass figure evokes the corset image in Loy's 1916 black-and-white drawing, *Consider Your Grandmother's Stays*[189] (Figure 51), which depicts a fancy woman wearing a dress with a tight-laced corset and a black balloon skirt, and holding flowers in her hands. The two black images hanging down from the left bottom corner of the drawing appear to be the missing hair of the woman's head, which suggests a Dadaist and Surrealist detail:

Figure 51. Mina Loy, *Consider Your Grandmother's Stays*, 1916[190]

This shape of the hourglass evokes the corset,[191] which was a necessary item of women's clothing in the late 19th and early 20th century, as it reflected the idealized "hourglass shape" of a woman's body. Loy uses this image metaphorically to represent the aesthetic and physical obligation of the women in that period: corsets shaped women's appearances in a stereotypical way, both physically and morally; they are therefore not only a signifier of femininity, but a symbol of woman's objectification in society. Trapped in the hourglass, the female figure is depicted as bound to a closed space—like the domestic space of home—while the male figure is illustrated out of doors. In this sense, the hourglass figure also reflects the chalice situated in the stomach area of the nude figure. Later in 1941, the hourglass figure was taken up against by Loy; *Hourglass* (Figure 52) depicts a green-framed hourglass containing brown sand and black liquid pouring down through it. Here, although the image might seem on the surface to be just a depiction of an inanimate object, its outline of the black liquid suggests otherwise, because its shape resembles a female body with its narrow waist, wide bust and hips.

Figure 52. Mina Loy, *Hourglass*, 1941[192]

Loy's hourglass image in *Surreal Scene* also suggests intertextual parallels with *Househunting*: the nude female figure with a thought-bubble on her head illustrated resembles an hourglass in which the woman's head is loaded with the gendered images of domesticity. By picturing the hourglass image in different forms and contexts, Loy is questioning and critiquing gender-based expectations as well as the domestic roles imposed by society.

Fille En Robe Rouge (*Woman in Red Dress*) (1913) (Figure 53) is another of Loy's gendered portrayals; it shows two women dancing against a brown backdrop—one is in a cream dress and is looking back with one visible arm, and the other one is in a red dress with her right arm bent backwards, holding the other woman's left hand. The blank gaze of the woman in the cream dress echoes the facial expression of the nude female figure (A) in *Surreal Scene*: it gives the impression of a neutral female gaze, which also iconically resembles the gaze of the female image in *Househunting*. On the other hand, the linking arm of the women might signify stereotypical gendered identities of female domesticity—often depicted as trapped or prevented by someone else.

Figure 53. Mina Loy, *Fille En Robe Rouge*, 1913[193]

This evokes what Loy's narrator says in "Feminist Manifesto" about the inferior status of women in society:

> The women who adapt themselves to a theoretical valuation of their sex as a **relative impersonality**, are not yet **Feminine** (Loy 154)

Therefore, as women conform socially to coded stereotypes, they lose their real "masculine" identities: they are "no longer **masculine**" (Loy 153). They are also prevented from reaching their real identity as women because they "are not yet **Feminine**" (Loy 154).

Below the hourglass in *Surreal Scene*, the skeletal ribcage on which a number of birds perch, leads us to consider the physical and psychological effects of wearing a corset.[194] Here, the corset impression of the hourglass represents women's desire for freedom in the 1920s, and the ribcage and the bird-like vertebrae perching on it reinforce the concept. The birds signify women's desire for freedom and independence; corseting a woman's waist to make an hourglass shape deforms the ribs

and causes spinal misalignment. In the left corner of the ribcage are the images of a heart, an aorta and arteries within a halo of yellow light. The fleshless bones seem to confine the human heart, which is a symbol of the emotions: this suggests Loy's fragmentation of body and mind, which leads to a revolution both in the psychic and in the corporeal space of the central female figure, and gives birth to a new identity.

A couple sitting side-by-side, wrapped around by white, cloud-like shapes that resemble tortile intestines, is depicted at the bottom right of the ribcage; and there is a cut-away image of a kidney tied to the intestines. These thoracic and abdominal organs illustrated on the right side of the nude female figure's torso seem to substitute for the lilies, the wheats and the green blobs dressing the body of the figure. The couple embracing one another inside the ribcage represents two partners in a romantic relationship, while the naked couple illustrated within the fireplace above signifies a sexual relationship. Medically, the intestines and the kidneys are vital organs for expelling waste from the body and separating and digesting nutritive and non-nutritive elements, so the wrapping around of the couple by these organs seems to suggest a kind of physical and mental purification; while the depiction of the heart and the aorta images signifies an emotional and spiritual catharsis.

The idea of flight as escape or freedom, suggested by the "birds" image of vertebrae, can also be seen in some of Loy's other paintings. For example, in *Ansikten,* [ca. 1910s] (Figure 32)—a graphic analogy of the narrator's identity fragmentation in "Parturition"—a bird's head at the bottom right and a moth image at the bottom left corner appear as hallucinatory, dream-like objects scattered around the intertangled face images.

And in Loy's 1902 painting, *Teasing a Butterfly* (Figure 54), six cherubic faces with empty eyes and teasing hands in a cloud-like backdrop are looking at the butterfly situated at the middle bottom of the painting: the faces with their staring eyes and showing their hands echo the grasping limbs in the upper left of *Surreal Scene.* They also appear as grotesque reflections which themselves look like the butterfly, suggesting the same inversions we see in the bat-human hybrids above the fireplace in *Surreal Scene.*

Figure 54. Mina Loy, *Teasing a Butterfly*, 1902[195]

In the fourth section of the painting (D), (Figure 55), there are two images which seem to be connected in one scene. On the left, a chubby, muscular naked figure of an African boy who appears to have been decapitated can be seen: his head is turned upside down and there is a ball of mud under his right foot. He holds what appears to be a yellow hose-pipe, from which stars are dripping, and also spraying out, towards the torso of a woman with red hair in a green dress.

Figure 55. Detail from Figure 32, *Surreal Scene* (D)

A number of associations come to mind immediately. The legless woman, on the right of the boy, is riding on a wheel which resembles a unicycle—the one-wheeled vehicle that was popular in the 1900s. Some of the stars the boy is spraying appear to

be hitting and puncturing the tire of the red-headed woman as if they are trying to prevent her from riding the unicycle, and suggesting male attempts to control women's freedom through motherhood. The red colour of the woman's hair recalls Paul Gauguin's 1890 *Redheaded Woman and Sunflowers*[196] painting. The visible arm of the woman seems to be holding a teapot lid. Her legs are absent, replaced by the cycle tyre, and the green dress blowing behind her like a ribbon, together with the unicycle on which she is sitting, suggest the Futurist emphasis on dynamic sensation and motion; this can also be associated with Futurists' view of human beings as machine-like entities, detached from their emotions.

Similar depictions of dynamism and motion can be seen in many other Futurist paintings, such as Boccioni's 1913 *Dynamism of a Soccer Player*[197] and Giacomo Balla's 1912 *Girl Running On A Balcony.*[198] The circular shape of the wheel is also a characteristic motif which the Russian Expressionist artist Wassily Kandinsky uses in his works; his geometric and compact composition, *Circles in a Circle* (1923),[199] for example, improvises circles of varying sizes and colours. In these contexts, the dark boy's action against the woman on the unicycle refers to the Futurists' attempts to exclude women from literary and aesthetic circles. The unicycle figure also recalls Marcel Duchamp's 1913 ready-made artwork, *Bicycle Wheel.*[200]

As a literary evocation, the wheel figure suggests the idea of Futurist dynamism and machinery addressed in Loy's poem "Human Cylinders" (1917), where Loy's narrator—without any emphasis of gender—satirizes mechanical relationships between human beings, critiquing the Futurists' automatic and emotionless viewpoints. This half-woman on a unicycle in *Surreal Scene* evokes Loy's narrator's "human cylinders" in her poem. In its opening stanza, the speaker describes human beings as cylindrical, non-biological entities moving together in a lack of vitality and communication; since they feel themselves to be singular and separate within their relationships, there is no "communion" in their minds and spirits:

> **The human cylinders**
> **Revolving in the enervating dust**
> **That wraps each closer in the mystery**
> **Of singularity**
> **Among the litter of a sunless afternoon**
> **Having eaten without tasting**
> **Talked without communion (Loy, *LLB* 40)**

The figure of a woman on a unicycle with her dress blowing behind her also points to the women of the 1920s who protested the domestic roles imposed on them by male-dominated society. The bicycle was a symbol of women's liberation, as it paved their way to gain their rights:[201] women demanded their legal rights, and embraced their freedom by taking off their corsets and getting on their bicycles.[202] In this sense, the three elements—the woman on the unicycle, the hourglass in the form of a corset, and the ribcage—can be related to the same context, the Suffragette movement.

The wheel of the unicycle is also a reference to the Wheel of Fortune card in the Major Arcana tarot deck. According to Tarot interpretations, "The Wheel of Fortune is generally an indicator of luck or destiny and it is a Major Arcana signifier of change. When the Wheel of Fortune appears upright in your Tarot reading, big changes are coming. . . The Wheel of Fortune also represents the ever-changing cycles we go through in life" (para 1).[203] The wheel object in terms of tarot divination is thus a metaphor signifying a turning point or a radical change in women's life—which again brings to mind the Suffragette movement. Likewise, the teapot lid the woman is holding in her hands is a reference to the American suffragette movement—*Votes for Women*—which started with a simple tea party in Boston in 1773, and later continued in New York in 1848: the teapot is known as the symbol of the movement.[204] This image also recalls *Househunting,* where there is the image of a repaired teapot, along with other stereotypical gendered elements, in the thought-bubble of the nude female figure. When all these elements are taken into consideration, the teapot lid in the hands of the red-headed female figure riding a unicycle is a powerful representation of the great change women went through in the early twentieth century—through the suffragette movement towards women's liberation.

Finally, the illustration of the dark figure, probably an African boy, in the left corner of the lower left thread (D), is a critical evocation of Futurist conceptions. It visually recalls the Futurist artist Umberto Boccioni's aerodynamic sculpture, *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* (1913) (Figure 25), where Boccioni depicts a naked humano-mechanical deformed man, who visually resembles the dark boy whose head is turned upside down in *Surreal Scene.* However, it also brings to mind a literal connection, Marinetti's novel, *Mafarka the Futurist: An African Novel* (1909), in which he explicitly mirrors the Futurist ideas such as hyper-masculinity,

agamogenesis, anti-feminism, misogyny, violence, technology and the machine world, ideas he detailed in "The Founding Manifesto of Futurism" (1909).

The setting of Marinetti's tale is Northern Africa; and the novel narrates the story of an Arabian King, El-Mafarka, who conquers an army of black Africans, dethrones his uncle, King Boubassa, and becomes the most powerful African-Arabian King. Mafarka is an evolutionary character: after his beloved brother, Magamal, dies due to his contracting rabies, he faces his own mortality, and directs his whole energy to the creation of his own son. He wants his hypermasculine and virile traits to pass on to his offspring, so he is impregnated with the help of the African sun, gives birth to his son Gazourmah, his cyborg filial, and becomes a male-mother.

In the novel, men—not women—are depicted as being capable of creating life like superhuman beings: "We can shape everything around us and endlessly renew the face of the earth. Soon, if you appeal to your will, you will give birth without resorting to the woman's vulva" (Marinetti 146). The novel extols the "male ovary" instead of the female one; and in his preface to the novel, Marinetti calls for men to detach themselves from their servitude to the woman's vulva: "… I tell you that the mind of a man is an unpractised ovary. . . It is we who are the first to impregnate it!" (3). Mafarka believes that it is possible for men to give birth without women, due to their superior powers. As he does not believe in the necessity of female reproductivity, he considers only men's procreative and physical capabilities necessary for the future; thus, female reproduction is replaced by male procreative capability. This is a reference again to "Man's immediate agamogenesis" (Loy, *LLB* 47), which Loy's narrator discusses in "Lions' Jaws"; and it represents the Futurists' hypermasculinist views, excluding women from the procreation process as the female ovary is transformed into the male ovary. Women are excluded from their identities thoughout the novel, and they are regarded merely as sexual commodities; their identities as wives are also destroyed because Mafarka's brother, Magamal, murders his own wife.

Mafarka the Futurist is full of fierce and violent elements developed in terms of war and sexuality. Clear parallels can be drawn between the dark naked boy whose head is turned upside down in *Surreal Scene,* and Gazourmah, the cyborg son of Mafarka. Gazourmah is an immortal human-machine hybrid character who appears to possess Futurist characteristics: he is brute, vigorous, misogynist and virile. Thus, like his father Mafarka, he is depicted in the novel as the ideal Futurist man, whose identity

is constructed through the views of Futurism. He has metal wings resembling an aeroplane, and a huge phallus. Here, the huge phallus of Gazourmah brings to mind the hose pipe the African boy is holding (D) in *Surreal Scene*; it seems to be a metaphorical phallic symbol satirizing the Futurists. The stars the boy is spraying towards the red-headed woman's image can thus be connected to Gazourmah's—and perhaps Mafarka's—fertility. The mud ball under the right foot of the dark boy in *Surreal Scene* can be seen as allegorical, satirizing Marinetti's fascist ideologies about the colonization of Africa as well as the Futurists' misogynist procreation fantasy—"Man's immediate agamogenesis" (Loy, *LLB* 47)—which excludes women.

Loy's effeminate depiction of the dark naked boy in *Surreal Scene* also echoes Marinetti's *Mafarka the Futurist,* since the make-up on the cheeks and the lips of the boy signifies, in context, transsexuality. Magamal, Mafarka's brother, for example, is introduced with traditional feminine traits in the novel; he is sentimental, gentle and fragile, and Mafarka protects him because he does not have virile and masculine power. As a single male figure, Mafarka's excessive love towards only two male characters, Gazourmah and Magamal, rather than a woman, might also be a reference to homosexuality, as Mafarka does not like any to have loving connections with women. However, at the end of the novel, the antagonist Mafarka undergoes a drastic change after becoming a male-mother: he starts to have female characteristics, such as sentimentality, motherly affection and fragility. Thus, the ideal Futurist man of Marinetti, in this way becomes a sentimental and stereotypical mother. This represents Mafarka's, and perhaps the Futurists' fantasy to possess both male and female traits.

In the context of *Mafarka,* the illustration of the effeminate dark boy with his head turned upside down in *Surreal Scene* satirizes the Futurists' love of the machine, war and violence as well as their homosexual, asexual, and misogynist attitudes, and it implies the downfall of the Futurist ideas. The boy's effeminate appearance also brings to mind what Loy's narrator suggests in the fifth stanza of "Lions' Jaws":

. . . he kisses Raminetti
full on his oratory
in the arena
rather fancying Himself
in the awesome proportions
of an eclectic mother-in-law
to a raw ménage. (Loy, *LLB* 48)

Here a homosexual relationship is implied between Bapini and Raminetti—the permutated names of the two Futurists, Giovanni Papini and F. T. Marinetti, in the poem—through the narrator's use of the word "ménage" at the end of the stanza. Loy's reference to homosexuality can also be seen in the second stanza—

> **. . . the sobbing**
> **from the psycho-pathic wards**
> **of his abandoned harem**
> **purveys amusement for 'High Life' (Loy, *LLB* 46)**

—where the word "psycho-pathic," ironically hyphenated, refers to a homosexual relationship, or to a (male) partner who acts passively in a relationship. The narrator uses this word to draw attention to the physical impotence of Raminetti's rival, Gabrunzio—a permutated name for Gabriele D'Annunzio, in the poem—viewing him as a "pathic" figure in Raminetti's harem.

5.5 Conclusion

Reading Loy's *Surreal Scene* in this way, through its intertextual connections to historical and aesthetic documentation, enables us to reconfigure the function of Surrealism in relation to Futurism, and to reconsider Loy's visual art by focusing on the connections between the signs in *Surreal Scene* as well as her other artistic and poetic works. Suggesting a multifaceted artistic insight which Loy embeds with Surrealism and Futurism, it also draws attention to the attainment of feminine bodily and psychic awareness and consciousness.

Surreal Scene redefines gendered representations of performativity and identity formation through four overlapping and fragmented threads, which constitute the system of the painting: the thread (A) consists of the central nude female image and the dismembered limbs situated in the frame of red bricks with the growing grass, and signifies the female reproductive system, while the thread (B) includes the living room furnished with a fireplace, the dark silhouettes and six-legged starfish image, and stands for female regeneration and procreativity. The thread (C), which comprises an armless angel, an hourglass and a ribcage, represents the physical and mental restrictions surrounding women; and the final thread (D), with the red-headed woman

on the unicycle and the dark naked African boy holding a hose, points to women's evolutionary transformation which occurs in her psychic and corporeal spaces.

As a multifaceted female figure of the early twentieth century, Loy's multisensual aesthetic vision creates a pictorial analogue of a gendered iconography which questions and redefines the gender performativity and construction of female identities from a Surrealist angle. The naked female figure is the focal point of *Surreal Scene*, with the Surrealist and Futurist elements around it. Through their physical and mental transformations to channel the female unconsciousness, Loy's artworks exhibit the techniques and ideas of Surrealism, and blur the distinction between the worlds of dream and reality—the external and internal spaces—where the female body and mind undergo an evolution, and reconstruct their new identities, through performative acts.

As an iconic story of the evolution of female mind and body from a feminist perspective, the painting portrays and critiques female roles, through depicting their multiplied identities as well as the restrictions surrounding them: an oppressive and powerless figure dismembered and decapitated by the male-dominated society, a procreator—a mother—perceived by her reproductive devices and constructed by the male-dominated society, a naked sexual commodity illustrated in the fireplace and surrounded by metaphorical objects signifying women as an headless chair and a musical instrument playing itself, a submissive companion gazed on by her lover in the hourglass, a biomorphic figure in the form of a starfish regenerating herself whenever dismembered, and finally as a red-headed independent feminist figure riding a bicycle like a suffragette advocating women's rights by holding the symbol of the women's movement—the teacup lid—in her hands. She finally accomplishes her corporeal and psychic metamorphosis by resisting the misogynist ideas of Futurism, which is represented through the depiction of the effeminate black African boy. The fragmented identities illustrated in the painting are assembled in the red-headed female figure, as it represents women's becoming aware of their consciousness as well as the limitless bodily and psychic capacity to gain their liberty and legal rights.

Finally, this assemblage, *Surreal Scene*, confirms Loy's versatile aesthetic identity, which comprises a creative artist, an innovative poet and a conscious and race-responsible mother. In its relation to her poems and paintings—thematically, figuratively and visually—Loy's *Surreal Scene* is a feminist satirical response to her Futurist contemporaries and their hyper-masculinist and patriarchal sentiments. Her

emphasis on the feminine body and psyche illustrated in various forms draws attention to multiple female identities, which oppose an intellectual and revolutionary criticism to the gendered boundaries of womanhood. Loy's final argument is that her modern female figure becomes aware of her physical, psychic and intellectual capacity, reconstructs her new identities, and achieves her liberation in the male-dominated society.

CONCLUSION

As a bohemian poet, artist, actress and a feminist female figure enlightening the dawn of the Modernist period in the early twentieth century, Mina Loy holds an exceptional place in art and literature of the avant-garde. On the one hand, her creative output reflects the tones and emphases of the era; on the other hand, it challenges the conventions of that time to generate reactionary, responsive and satirical paradigms of female poetry and visual art. Both thematically and through their experimentation with format, genre and typography, her texts problematize the concepts of Futurism—sometimes opposing and at other times reconciling with them. They focus on challenging stereotyped roles of femininity in society, especially through their engagement with Futurist, Surrealist, and other modernist aesthetics; and so tend to revolve around expressions of gender, human consciousness, individuality and sexuality from a woman's perspective, developing a philosophy for transforming female mental and corporeal spaces, and hence the broader structure of society.

Loy's poetic works stand out in terms of their unusual layout, syntax and semantics, which subvert traditional grammatical forms and expressions. With regard to the unconventional typography, in particular the textual gaps and idiosyncratic punctuation, Jane Dowson and Alice Entwistle, in *A History of Twentieth-Century British Women's Poetry*, remark that "the textual spaces and absence of punctuation or capital letters go some way towards fracturing the constricting binaries" (67). Carolyn Burke, in her chapter, 'Mina Loy,' in *The Gender of Modernism: A Critical Anthology*, defines Loy's poetry as "crossing of feminist and metaphysical concerns" (231). In this sense, the language and expressions in her poetic works seem to transcend the conventional limits, and create a new writing form. The three-dot ellipses, unbalanced length of lines, and hiatuses used in her rhetoric create an ironic tension between the signs and the shifting narrators who represent them.

Loy's visual works are also unique in how they embody female corporeal and psychic transformations. The aesthetic representations in her iconography create eclectic paradigms of avant-garde art which redefine and respond to the aesthetic movements of her age, such as Futurism, Dadaism and Surrealism. Her multi-

directional artworks go beyond the boundaries of these movements, and the extravagant iconography appears as a performative act, by which she creates paradigms of gender performativity and female identity formation. These visual works thematically argue for gender performativity and the formation of female fragmented identities in bodily and mental spaces with a focus on religion, motherhood and feminine reproductivity. By fluctuating between the worlds of the unconscious and reality to create a constantly shifting multiplicity in the visual narrators, the body of Loy's artistic experimentations creates a gendered portrayal of the evolution of human life.

In both the textual and aesthetic works, the performativity of the narrators creates the difference, because they act to transgress their boundaries and form new identities; they multiply themselves into textual and aesthetic spaces where the Futurist, feminist and modernist trajectories are conceptualized.

Although Loy's innovative and experimental works were acclaimed by her contemporaries such as T. S. Eliot, Gertrude Stein and Ezra Pound, it is only recently that they have been "rediscovered," and have begun to draw the attention of scholars of modernism. While most of Loy's works have often been examined from the perspectives of biographical and historical criticism, I have argued that they should be interpreted in the scope of contemporary theories—feminism, authorship, semiotics, structuralism, performativity and art—without adhering to the biographical accounts except as intertextual significations; my focus in this dissertation has therefore been on semiotic, intertextual and performative explorations of the texts and the narrators.

From this perspective, it can be seen that the unique voice of Loy's fictive narrators, which I have performatively created through my reading, is hidden *between* the signs, and that it multiplies itself and shifts between Futurism, feminism and modernism. This semiotic focus allows Loy's textual and visual representations, as they are depicted by the personas, to be explored in their own terms, through the intertextual relations between them, and also through their relation to Loy's other works and the works of her contemporaries. The process of structurally decomposing and recomposing the texts and engaging with alternative possible meanings of the signs, has enabled me to act as a "performer reader," and to link together the evolutionary thought processes of the narrators, who fragment, and reassemble to form their identities by evolving throughout the process of interpretation. The fragmentary

nature of these verbal and visual texts can be addressed through the process of linking, and rearticulating the signs within them: in terms of aesthetic perception (here the perspectives of Loy's contemporaries such as Breton, Marinetti and de Chirico, as well as the logic of seeing as explained by John Berger provide useful reference points); feminism and gendered discourse with a focus on performativity and maternity (Butler, Ettinger); intertextuality (Riffaterre); semiotics (Peirce, Saussure); and authorship (Barthes, Foucault). I have referred to these perspectives at various points, and they are implicit in my interpretations, but I have kept my use of the theoretical terminology to a minimum, in order to not let it overwhelm the language and iconography of Loy's texts, and instead, I wanted to foreground the links and connections between them as far as possible in their own terms, and bring out the arguments from within the texts.

My reading of "Lions' Jaws" in the first chapter performatively illustrates the complex relations between the narrators and their engagements with Futurism and feminism, tracing the intertextual entanglement between the visual and textual narrators, and examining how they multiply and reassemble through anagrammatical characters. The photograph of Mina Loy, situated at the beginning of the text, is not a simple reflection of the author outside the text, but a representation of a visual persona, which points to the androgynous identity of the textual narrator. This identity is based on a notion of balance, as the visual speaker possesses the bodily and mental qualities of both a man and a woman: the androgynous mind and identity of the narrator is performative, as she unsettles and transgresses the conventions of gender. At the same time, however, the satirical textual voice of the persona contradicts itself from time to time, and shifts between Futurism and feminism: thus, for example, while opposing the patriarchal and misogynistic ideas of Futurism by defining herself as the "excepted woman" of "flabbergastism," this persona also conforms to the conventional gender categories of the movement by calling herself the "lurid mother" of "flabbergastism." This shifting and fragmenting voice of the narrator chronicles a range of female stereotypes—countess, mistress, virgin, mother and lady—and problematizes the ways in which women are perceived by the Futurists in society.

Loy's "Feminist Manifesto," considered in relation to two of her artworks, *Househunting* and *Christ on a Clothesline,* shows that Loy's personas in these works question and displace the male hegemony to struggle with conceptions of widespread stereotypical female roles in society—mother and mistress—and overthrow the social

mechanisms of "manufactured consent." The narrator of the manifesto critiques the contemporary feminist movement, and calls women to action, to realize their intellectual and physical capabilities and improve themselves in order to raise a cognitively self-conscious generation. This feminist project is also embodied in the artworks, where the textual narrator merges with the visual ones. The image of the woman in *Househunting*, loaded with the stereotypical domestic images in her psychic space is in search of her femininity; and the objects depicted in her mental state are satirical images of "manufactured consent," domestic images that are correlated performatively through my reading with cultural images of the suffragette and anti-suffragette movements in Britain, the U.S. and Bermuda. While *Househunting* ironically brings out the mental space that occupies the female figure, *Christ on a Clothesline* provides another kind of subversion, looking at corporeal space by way of a religious figure, "Christ," who ends up tragically being hung out on a clothesline: the images in this painting metonymically represent the downfall of male hegemony, and intertextually relate to the collapse of the Futurist movement, which is discussed in the first chapter. In short, my reading of "Feminist Manifesto" and her two artworks illustrates how the fictive voice which I performatively create in the process subverts the hegemonic assumptions alternating between Futurism and feminism.

My analysis in the third chapter of Loy's manifesto-poem, "Aphorisms on Futurism," links significations within each aphorism with those in other aphorisms, creating threads of signification that illuminate the dialogical rhetoric of the narrative voice—both with herself and with the readers. These linkages create a complex intertextuality between the aphorisms and the fictive narrator's shifting between Futurism and modernism. Opposing existing social structures, while at the same time using them as the basis for moving beyond them, the narrator of the aphorisms proclaims a new form of aesthetic production for potential artists, based on destroying and transcending retrospective artistic forms. The upcoming crisis will be based on the limitation of individuals, who are unable to reach their "fullest capacity"; the narrator's Futurist-Modernist project therefore calls for a new version of "Futurism," where artists can expand themselves through developing individual "consciousness," and so attain psychic liberation.

Carolyn Burke describes Loy's poem "Parturition"—the subject of my fourth chapter— simply as "simulat[ing] the contractions and expansions of labour" ('Mina

Loy,' 231). However, as my reading of the poem shows, the act of labour is not merely the physical act of a parturient woman's giving birth. A semiotic and intertextual exploration brings out the complexity of the text's conceptions, showing that its feminist persona multiplies into at least three different identities—the maternal (this is the obvious theme and subject matter of the poem), the artistic (the poem is an allegory of new "Futurist" artistic creation), and textual (the poem is also an allegory of poetic creation, and the allegory is enacted through the form of the text). These identities eventually merge to form a new identity, reflected in Loy's painting, *Ansikten*, which, through the visual intertextual analogy I have created, seems to represent the mental space of the artistic-textual-feminist-maternal-Futurist narrator. The poem's narrators, in other words, evolve through bodily and mental transformations—"expansions" and "contractions"—that enable them to exceed their boundaries, and eventually merge to construct a new, multiple identity.

My final chapter looked at some of Loy's visual works, in terms of how—in relation to the arguments developed in her texts—they spatially represent gender performativity and fragmented female identity formation, as it occurs in the external and internal spaces of the female unconscious. My semiotic analysis of *Surreal Scene*, one of her masterpieces, through its intertextual relations with Loy's other artworks as well as the works of her contemporaries, explores its reconfiguration of Futurism and hegemonic discourse by constructing threads of signification between its apparently disconnected "surreal" images. These signifying threads suggest that the visual narrator undergoes a corporeal and psychic transformation, and evolves through depictions of her multiple identities. Through merging these identities, the narrator performatively (in the act of representing them visually) moves towards attainment of feminine awareness and consciousness. This act also reflects my reading process, in which the mental and bodily fragmentations of the nude female figure, depicted as dismembered objects, create a pictorial analogue of a gender-based iconography.

Broadly speaking, the intention of this study is to move beyond the traditional understanding of interpreting literary and aesthetic works through historical and biographical accounts, and through psychologizing the author's life experiences, and to recognize that these are constructions and projections of the critics and academics. More specifically, my semiotic and intertextual explorations of Loy's texts performatively construct and draw out an alternative narrative voice in Loy's aesthetic

and poetic works which is unique and evolutionary, in that it both fragments itself and reunites to create a new, multiple identity that brings together the feminine, the visual, the textual, and the modern. My analyses, in this sense, unveil the fictive and evolutionary nature of Loy's personas, and also chart the potential of the personas hidden between her texts' signs and images, which distinguishes them from their contemporaries. In doing this, I have approached Loy's texts as inseparable bodies, because they mutually complement and constitute each other both linguistically and corporeally: on the one hand, the significations of the visual images are represented through language; on the other hand, the significations of the literary documents are represented through paintings.

In short, the interdisciplinary and performative nature of this dissertation creates an opening for further intertextual studies on Loy's work, as well as the work of other modernist and feminist artists and writers, with the aim of performatively constructing narrative voices that question the established academic understandings of "authorship," focusing on the dialogic, polyphonic and also ekphrastic structures of narrators in poetic and artistic works.

NOTES

[1] Roger L. Conover, "Introduction," *The Lost Lunar Baedeker*: *Poems of Mina Loy.* Edited by Roger L. Conover, Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1996. Hereafter cited as *LLB* in this dissertation.

[2] In Anthony David Moody. ed. *Ezra Pound: The Epic Years, 1921-1939.* Oxford U P. 2014.

[3] Many of Loy's literary works such as her autographed manuscripts, letters and notes are unpublished, and are archived in "The Carolyn Burke Collection on Mina Loy," and "Mina Loy Papers" sections at Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

[4] Most of Loy's artworks are currently housed in the "Dada Daughters," Private Collection, Francis M. Naumann Fine Art Gallery, New York and in the "Yale Collection of American Literature" section, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

[5] Mina Loy with the avant-garde circle of writers and artists: Ezra Pound, Tristan Tzara, Man Ray, Kiki Ray, Mina Loy, Jean Heap, Jean Cocteau, Martha Dennison and others in front of the Jockey club, Paris, 1923. www.reddit.com/r/OldSchoolCool/comments/3v743m/ezra_pound_tristan_tzara_man_ray_kiki_ray mina/.

[6] Most of Loy's poems, particularly those argued in this study, are quoted from *The Lost Lunar Baedecker: Poems of Mina Loy,* edited by Roger Conover, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996, and the page references are given from this source.

[7] In Roger Conover's "Introduction" to *LLB*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996, p. xvi.

[8] In Roger Conover's "Introduction" to *LLB*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996, p. xvi.

[9] In Van Debora Durme. "Conjuring Melodies from Arid Air: Mina Loy and Pound's *Melopoeia*," *Cambridge Quarterly,* 2008.

[10] Mina Loy also praised Stein's work and wrote a poem in 1929 as an homage to her, "Gertrude Stein": "Curie / of the laboratory / of vocabulary. . ." (In Conover, *LLB,* Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1996, p. 94). The word "laboratory" is used as a metaphor to emphasize Stein's language in the sense of a groundbreaking discovery. The poem was sent as a two-part letter to Ford Madox Ford, editor of the *Translatlantic Review,* in 1929, and published in the 1982 issue of Conover's *The Last Lunar Baedeker*. See the poem uploaded by Pam Brown, *Scribd*. tr.scribd.com/document/82260525/Mina-Loy-on-Gertrude-Stein-1929.

[11] See the full text of "Letters of Ezra Pound: 1907-1941." Edited by D. D. Paige. Delhi University Library. *Archive.org*. archive.org/stream/LettersOfEzraPound1907-1941/letters_djvu.txt.

[12] *Little Review* Reunion: Jean Heap, Mina Loy, and Ezra Pound, Paris, ca. 1923. The image has been reproduced courtesy of Carolyn Burke, in *Becoming Modern: The Life of Mina Loy,* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996, pp. 368-369.

[13] Inspired by Arthur Cravan's *Maintenant*, The Three Rooms Press has been publishing *Maintenant* as a contemporary Dada journal since 2005. See the recently published issues. *The Three Rooms Press*, threeroomspress.com/authors/maintenant-dada-journal/.

[14] See the full text of *Dada Almanach,* Berlin, 1920. cres1.lancs.ac.uk/~esarie/dada.htm.

[15] See the full version of Mina Loy's essay, "In. . . Formation," *The Blind Man*, no. 1, April 1917. p. 7. *Monoskop*, monoskop.org/images/1/1d/The_Blindman_1_Apr_1917.pdf.

[16] See the full version of Mina Loy's essay, "O Marcel - - - otherwise I Also Have Been to Louise's'." *The Blind Man*, no. 2, May 1917, pp. 14-15. *Library of Iowa University,* sdrc.lib.uiowa.edu/dada/blindman/2/14.htm.

[17] In Carolyn Burke's *Becoming Modern: The Life of Mina Loy.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996.

[18] Valentine de Saint Point, a French writer, poet, painter, journalist and dancer, is primarily known as the first female Futurist as she is the author of two Futurist-Feminist manifestos, "Manifesto of the Futurist Woman" (1912) and "Futurist Manifesto of Lust" (1913).

[19] In Tim Hancock. "'You Couldn't Make It Up': The Love of 'Bare Facts' in Mina Loy's Italian Poems," *The Journal of the English Associations*, 2005.

[20] In Aimee L. Pozorski. "Eugenicist Mistress & Ethnic Mother: Mina Loy and Futurism," pp. 41-69.

[21] The fragmented manuscripts of Loy's incomplete play, *The Sacred Prostitute*, in handwritten and typed versions are archived at Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. See the full version of the play in *Triple Canopy*, www.canopycanopycanopy.com/contents/the_sacred_prostitute.

[22] In Sarah Hayden. *Curious Disciplines: Mina Loy and Avant-Garde Artisthood.*

[23] See the full version of Mina Loy's *Two Plays: Collision and Cittàbapini* published in *The Rogue*. *Navigating the Avant-Garde*, mina-loy.com/chapters/courting-an-audience/5-collision-cittabapini/.

[24] Mina Loy and William Carlos Williams starring in *Lima Beans*, Alfred Kreymborg's "scherzo for marionettes," as staged at the Provincetown Playhouse, December 1916, New York. The image has been reproduced courtesy of Carolyn Burke, in *Becoming Modern: The Life of Mina Loy,* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996, pp. 368-369.

[25] See Mina Loy's *Communal Cot*. ca. 1950. Papier maché and rags, 27 ¼ inches. Daughters of DADA, Private Collection, Francis M. Nauman Fine Art Gallery, New York. www.francisnaumann.com/daughters%20of%20dada/loy.html.

[26] See the picture of Mina Loy's *Christ on a Clothesline* (1955-59) reproduced on the cover of the fifth edition of *Maintenant* 2012 issue. *River Pine Anthology*, riverpineanthologyofcivicdiscourse.wordpress.com/2012/04/02/found-a-diamond-in-the-gutter-maintenant-6/.

[27] Marcel Duchamp inspects Mina Loy's assemblage *Bums Praying*, 1950s. The image has been reproduced courtesy of Carolyn Burke, in *Becoming Modern: The Life of Mina Loy,* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996, pp. 368-369.

[28] Mina Loy's assemblage *Househunting*, as photographed in her apartment in 1950s with David Mann, Marcel Duchamp and Alex Bossom. The image has been reproduced courtesy of Carolyn Burke, in *Becoming Modern: The Life of Mina Loy,* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996, pp. 368-369.

[29] In Noëlle McAfee. *Julia Kristeva: Essential Guides for Literary Studies (Routledge Critical Thinkers).* Routledge, 2004.

[30] Conover, Roger L. ed. "Lions' Jaws." *The Lost Lunar Baedeker: Poems of Mina Loy.* Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1996, pp. 46-50.

[31] Mina Loy. "Lunar Baedeker." *The Lost Lunar Baedeker: Poems of Mina Loy.* Edited by Roger L. Conover, Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1996, pp. 81-82.

[32] *Baedeker* refers to any of a series of travel guidebooks issued by the German publisher Karl Baedeker (1801–1859) or his successors. *Online Etymology Dictionary*, www.dictionary.com/browse/baedeker.

[33] Mina Loy, "Lions' Jaws." *Modernist Journals Project Exhibits,* vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 39-43 *University of Tulsa, Oklahoma,* orgs.utulsa.edu/mjp-exhibit/items/show/21.

[34] Loy's letter to Mabel Luhan Dodge, February 1914. Mabel Dodge Papers, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, MSS 196, Box 24, Folder 664.

[35] Loy's letter to Carl Van Vechten (1880-1964), Carl Van Vechten Papers, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Call Number: YCAL MSS 1050, Folder 1082.

[36] See Roland Barthes' *Mythologies*. Random House, 1993.

[37] Other permutated variations of Giovanni Bapini also appear in Loy's "Effectual Marriage" as "Miovanni" and in "Giovanni Franchi" as "Giovanni."

[38] The *Ballade* is one of the well-known forms of music and poetry. It consists of three main stanzas, each with the same rhyme scheme, and a shorter concluding stanza, or envoi. It was popular in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in France. *Poets,* www.poets.org/poetsorg/text/ballade-poetic-form.

[39] *Magnolia* is different from other flowers because it has evolved even before bees came to be. Magnolia flowers are pollinated by beetles, and as they bloom self-pollinate, they are bisexual flowers. www.auntyflo.com/flower-dictionary/magnolia.

[40] *Castel Sant'Angelo* is one of the most original monuments in Rome. It dates back to the Roman period, but has been deeply transformed over the centuries. The monument takes its name from an ancient legend about the apparition of the Archangel Michael in 590, during a plague. *Castles,* www.castles.org/castles/Europe/Western_Europe/Italy/San%20Angelo/.

[41] The Archangel *Michael* is one of the three angels which are named in the Bible; the other two angels are Gabriel and Lucifer, the original name of Satan / The Devil. *Michael* refers to different meanings, such as 'one of the chief princes', 'the great prince', 'a mighty warrior' and 'leader of other angels.' He is considered God's enforcer of judgement, and is the only angel particularly called as an archangel in the Bible. The meaning of the name *Michael* often refers to an angel who is like God. Thus, it plays a special role in guarding. *Whyangels,* www.whyangels.com/archangels_michael_gabriel.html.

[42] The personal name *Daniel* is also a name of Hebrew origin. It often means: "God is my judge." *Ancestry*, www.ancestry.com/name-origin?surname=daniel.

[43] The meaning of *Gabriel* refers to God's hero. The angel *Gabriel* is generally known as God's special messenger; he is assigned with the job of coming to the earth to give significant announcements and messages about special events. www.whyangels.com/archangels_michael_gabriel.html.

[44] *Gabriel,* the *Archangel; Gabriele D'Annunzio. Foreignaffairs,* www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/ capsule-review/1932-01-01/gabriel-archangel-gabriele-dannunzio.

[45] The name of the archangel *Ariel* refers to lion or lioness of God, so *Ariel* is often associated with lions. It is assumed that, one can see references or visions of lions when *Ariel* is around you. *Ariel* also refers to the act of healing and protecting nature, and is often associated with wild animals. *Angelsandmasters*, angelsandmasters.net/A7.html.

[46] The word "Arch" dates back to the 1500s. It often means "chief," however, it is also used to define a "rogue," which means "mischievous" in the 17th century. *Vocabulary.com*, www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/archly.

[47] "Hotel Majestic Palace" is a hotel nested in the heart of Sorrento Peninsular, Italy. *Majesticpalace*, www.majesticpalace.it/.

[48] *Ruslan and Lyudmila* is an opera in five acts composed by Mikhail Glinka between 1837 and 1842. The opera is based on the 1820 poem of the same name by Alexander Pushkin. *Ballet and Opera*, www.balletandopera.com/?perfomance=1022&page=catalog.

[49] See the original version of the Libretto of *Ruslan and Lyudmila* by Mikhail Glinka. Rouslan et Ludmila. *Allreadable,* www.allreadable.com/51c04u88.

[50] See *Ruslan and Lyudmila* by Alexander Pushkin, *Russian Crafts*, russian-crafts.com/tales/rus_lud.html.

[51] "Highlife" is a music genre that originated in Ghana early in the 20th century. It uses the melodic and main rhythmic structures of the traditional Akan music, but is played with Western instruments. Highlife music is characterized by jazzy horns and multiple guitars. www.revolvy.com/page/Highlife.

[52] "Conquerer" is the obsolete form of "conqueror." *Dictionary.com*, www.dictionary.com/browse/conquerer.

[53] On October 14, 1066, at the Battle of Hastings in England, King Harold II (ca.1022-66) of England was defeated by the Norman forces of William the Conqueror (ca.1028-87). By the end of the bloody battle, Harold was dead and his forces were destroyed. He was the last Anglo-Saxon king of England. The battle changed the course of history and established the Normans as the rulers of England. William was the son of Robert I. The duke, who had no

other sons, assigned William as his heir, and William became duke of Normandy with the death of the Duke in 1035. *History.com*, www.history.com/topics/british-history/battle-of-hastings.

[54] Halley's most famous appearance occurred shortly before the 1066 invasion of England by William the Conquerer. It is often said that William felt the comet heralded his success. In any case, the comet was put on the Bayeux Tapestry in William's honour; it chronicles the invasion. *Space.com*, www.space.com/19878-halleys-comet.html.

[55] See, for example, Nick Lomb, "Kerrie comes face to face with Halley's Comet at Bayeux, France," March 13, 2008. *Museum of Arts and Sciences*, maas.museum/observations/2008/03/13/kerrie-comes-face-to-face-with-halleys-comet-at-bayeux-france/.

[56] "Continental" means relating to the continent of Europe excluding the British Isles. *Merriam Webster*, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/continental.

[57] Marinetti's "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism," published on the front page of *Le Figaro* on February 20, 1909. It was the start of a torrent of manifestos in French and Italian.

[58] "Rococo Art" is an art produced in the Rococo style, a style of artistic expression that emerged in France in the early 18th century. Art and architecture in this style are characterized by very fanciful themes. The term is a portmanteau of rocaille, the French word for "shell," and barocco, the Italian word for "Baroque." *Wise Geek*, www.wisegeek.com/what-is-rococo-art.htm.

[59] *Don Giovanni* is an opera in two acts with music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Italian libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte. It is based on the legends of Don Juan, a fictional libertine and seducer. Donna Elvira is a lady of Burgos abandoned by Don Giovanni. *Murashev,* www.murashev.com/opera/Don_Giovanni.

[60] See, for example, www.spainthenandnow.com/spanish-literature/don-juan-and-honour.

[61] See *Lady Godiva* by the English Pre-Raphaelite artist, John Collier in 1898. www.anglik.net/ladygodiva.htm.

[62] See, for example, "Infamous Coventry Lady Exposed." www.bbc.co.uk/coventry/features/stories/2002/04/the-history-of-lady-godiva.shtml.

[63] In Lawrence Rainey, Christine Poggi, Laura Wittman. Eds. "Founding and Manifesto of Futurism" in *Futurism: An Anthology*, Yale U P: New Howard London, 2009, p. 51.

[64] In Marinetti's "Founding and Manifesto of Futurism," p. 63.

[65] In Marinetti's "Founding and Manifesto of Futurism," p. 86.

[66] In Marinetti's "Founding and Manifesto of Futurism." p. 75.

[67] In the nineteenth century women had no place in national politics. They could not stand as candidates for Parliament. They were not even allowed to vote. It was assumed that women did not need the vote because their husbands would take responsibility in political matters. A woman's role was seen to be child-rearing and taking care of the home. Nineteenth century feminists talked about "The Cause". This described a movement for women's rights generally. It had no particular political focus. But by the close of the century the issue of the vote became the focus of women's struggle for equality. *Bbc,* www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/higher/history/britsuff/suffrage/revision/1/.

[68] Umberto Boccioni, *States of Mind I: The Farewells 1911. MoMA*, www.moma.org/collection/works/78648.

[69] In Paola Sica. *Futurist Women: Florence, Feminism and the New Sciences*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

[70] In Carolyn Burke. *Becoming Modern: The Life of Mina Loy*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996. p. 166.

[71] *Vanity Fair* was a continuation of a magazine of that name established in December, 1892, to cover sports, music, and drama. *Vanity Fair*, www.vanityfair.com/magazine/2006/10/earlyyears.

[72] See, Suzanne W. Churchill, p. 219, where she explains that "Mrs. Krar Standing Hail" as a pseudonym for "Mrs. Stan Harding Krayl, a woman who had an affair in Florence with Stephen Haweis, Loy's first husband." Churchill, Suzanne W. *The Little Magazine Others and the Renovation of Modern American Poetry*. Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006.

[73] See "Treaty of Rapallo." www.revolvy.com/main/index.php?s=Treaty%20of%20Rapallo.

[74] See "Chronology 1920." www.indiana.edu/~league/1920.htm.

[75] See "The All-Being Eye: Gabriele D'Annunzio's Somatic Visions of Wartime." July 19, 2012. *Yale University Press Blog,* blog.yupnet.org/2012/07/19/the-all-being-eye-gabriele-dannunzios-somatic-visions-of-wartime-italy/

[76] The areas of emphasis which appear in the bold and/or underlined form in the "Feminist Manifesto" are transcriptions which approximate Loy's handwritten manuscript's emphases. I have reproduced the first page of the manuscript courtesy of Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. All the transcriptions of "Feminist Manifesto" are provided from *The Lost Lunar Baedeker,* edited by Roger Conover, Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1996, pp.153-156.

[77] Mina Loy, "Feminist Manifesto," edited by Roger Conover, *The Lost Lunar Baedeker.* Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1996, p.153.

[78] See Jacinta Kelly, pp. 4-5, where she points out that "'Feminist Manifesto' can be read as an early announcement of Loy's intentions towards her art; written in 1914, it signals that these intentions were already forming at the outset of her career. Further, the 'Manifesto' was penned while Loy was still living in Florence, and as such, it was developed at a time when she was most actively negotiating the consequences of Futurism for women and the threat of the domestic house. Indeed, the same period that gave rise to the 'Manifesto' also saw the production of her 'house' poetry and her satires on Futurism."

[79] Mina Loy's "Feminist Manifesto": holographic manuscript, first page. November 15, 1914. Mabel Dodge Luhan Papers, MSS 196, Box 62, Folder 1658. Courtesy of Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

[80] See, for example, F. T. Marinetti, "Zang Tumb Tumb: Adrianopoli Ottobre 1912: Parole in libertà, 1914," *MoMA* website*,* www.moma.org/collection/works/31450.

[81] As Marjorie Perloff notes, the manifestos produced by the Italian Futurists "were the movement's literary form par excellence" (81-82). "Violence and Precision: The Manifesto as Art Form." *The Futurist Moment*. *Avant-Garde, Avant Guerre, and the Language of Rupture*, pp. 81-82.

[82] See Lucia Re's assessment of what she considers "Feminist Manifesto" "a reaction to the misogyny of the founding [Futurist] manifesto of 1909 or to 'counterbalance' Valentine de Saint-Point's manifestos . . . de Saint-Point's and Loy's manifestos have some striking thematic similarities" (811). Also see Roger Conover's comments in his *Editor's Notes* in *The Lost Lunar Baedeker*: "Saint-Point's manifestos announced the birth of a strong and instinctive superwoman and affirmed the rights of female sexual desire" (217-218).

[83] The italicization and/or underlining of words or phrases within quotation marks reflect Loy's handwritten emphases, as transcribed by Conover in *LLB*; all other emphases are my own.

[84] See "Emmeline Pankhurst addressing a crowd in New York City" (1913) poster, *Museums Victoria Collections,* collections.museumvictoria.com.au/articles/2747; and NUWS protest poster, in "Non-militant suffragettes and their peaceful march for votes," *The History Press,* www.thehistorypress.co.uk/articles/non-militant-suffragettes-and-their-peaceful-march-for-votes/.

[85] Activist groups such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and the Anti-Saloon League led the campaign against alcohol: "Members of these groups spoke publicly in favor of Prohibition and lobbied elected officials for laws banning the consumption of alcohol. Some of the more active members disrupted business at saloons and liquor stores. One of the most visible prohibitionists, Carry Nation, used a hatchet to smash liquor bottles and break furniture in saloons." *Law Library: American Law and Legal Information,*

law.jrank.org/pages/10714/Temperance-Movement.html. See also the posters "Lips that touch liquor shall not touch ours," from an 1895 film mocking teetotallers produced in Thomas Edison's studio, © The Art Archive at Art Resource, New York. *Lapham's Quarterly,* laphamsquarterly.org/intoxication/art/intoxication-lips-touch-liquor; and "Petition for Home Protection in 1877." "This petition appeared in the January 1877 issue while it still had the name *The Ballot Box*." *Accessible Archives*, www.accessible-archives.com/2013/02/petition-for-home-protection-in-1877/.

[86] "Carry Nation with a Hatchet" (1910) Activist, Organizer and Leader of the Temperance Movement, Courtesy of Virginia Commonwealth University, VCU Libraries, Social Welfare History Project, *Social Welfare Library,* socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/people/nation-carrie-a/.

[87] See "Indomitable Womanhood" Suffragette protest photograph, New York, 1921" photograph, *Scoopnest*, www.scoopnest.com/user/HumanRtsV/706595690009350145.

[88] See, for example, the photograph, "A Suffragettes demonstration in 1914-the women chained themselves together and carried large placards criticizing the government" in London. In Keiligh Baker, "A-list stars upstaged on the red carpet. . .," *Dailymail Online*, www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3263943/Suffragette-red-carpet-invaded-campaigners-against-domestic-abuse.html.

[89] Loy's categories are anticipated in Valentine de Saint-Point's "Manifesto of the Futurist Woman (Response to F. T. Marinetti)" (1912): "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" (par. 29). *Mariabuzsek,* mariabuszek.com/mariabuszek/kcai/DadaSurrealism/DadaSurrReadings/FtrstWoman.pdf. Saint-Point, is a French dancer, poet, journalist and painter, and often described as the first female Futurist; she is the author of two Futurist-Feminist manifestos, "Manifesto of the Futurist Woman" (1912) and "Futurist Manifesto of Lust" (1913).

[90] Mina Loy, *Househunting* (1950). I am very grateful to Carolyn Burke, for sending me a high-resolution image of Loy's *Househunting*, and giving me permission to use it for this project. The original copy is in her personal collection, and was first reproduced in Burke's *Becoming Modern: The Life of Mina Loy*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996, pp. 368-369.

[91] An early photograph of this assemblage from the 1950s shows three items of clothing on the line—two pairs of trousers, and a man's shirt; the two missing items may have been removed intentionally for dramatic effect, or have been lost in history. See "*Househunting*: Mina Loy's assemblage, photographed in her Stanton Street apartment, 1950s." in Carolyn Burke's *Becoming Modern: The Life of Mina Loy.* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996, pp. 368-369.

[92] "Votes for Women" (1913) suffragette poster, *Radcliffe Institute, Schlesinger Library (PD)*, cdn1.picryl.com/photo/2016/02/25/suffrage-posters-from-schlesinger-library-534ad2.jpg.

[93] "A Woman's Mind Magnified" (1906) postcard, *The Suffrage Postcard Project*, thesuffragepostcardproject.omeka.net/items/show/359.

[94] "Suffragette Madonna" (1909) postcard. I am very grateful to Catherine H. Palczewski for sending me a high-resolution image of this postcard, and giving me permission to use it for this project. The original copy is in her personal archive. (Catherine H. Palczewski, Suffrage Postcard Image Gallery, U of Northern Iowa. Cedar Falls, IA). See *Unischolarworks*, scholarworks.uni.edu/suffrage_images/203/.

[95] "St. Valentine's Greetings—Woman's sphere in the HOME" (1909) postcard. I am very grateful to Catherine H. Palczewski for sending me a high-resolution image of this postcard, and giving me permission to use it for this project. The original is in her personal archive. (Catherine H. Palczewski, Suffrage Postcard Image Gallery, U of Northern Iowa. Cedar Falls, IA). See *Unischolarworks,* scholarworks.uni.edu/suffrage_images/451/.

[96] "The Suffragette not at home" postcard. In *Corey Wren, "Suffragette Cats are the Original Cat Ladies," Jezebel blog*, jezebel.com/suffragette-cats-are-the-original-cat-ladies-1478240567.

[97] "Suffragette Vote-getting the Easiest Way, Suffragette Series 4" (1909), postcard. I am very grateful to Catherine H. Palczewski for sending me a high-resolution image of this postcard, and giving me permission to use it for this project. The original is in her personal archive. (Catherine H. Palczewski, Suffrage Postcard Image Gallery, U of Northern Iowa. Cedar Falls, IA). See *Unischolarworks,* scholarworks.uni.edu/suffrage_images/213/.

[98] "I want to vote, but my wife won't let me" (1909), postcard. I am very grateful to Catherine H. Palczewski for sending me a high-resolution image of this postcard and giving me permission to use it for this project. The original copy is in her personal archive. (Catherine H. Palczewski, Suffrage Postcard Image Gallery, U of Northern Iowa. Cedar Falls, IA). See *Unischolarworks,* scholarworks.uni.edu/suffrage_images/241/.

[99] "What will men wear when women wear. . .?" (1915), postcard. *History of Feminism*, historyoffeminism.com/anti-suffragette-postcards-posters-cartoons/.

[100] See, for example, "America's Suffragette Movement Started with a Simple Tea Party." *The Tea Maestro*, theteamaestro.blogspot.com/2016/11/americas-suffragette-movement-stared.html.

[101] "Gladys Morrells's Suffragette Table." The photograph has been reproduced with the kind permission of Akil J. Simmons, Acting Chief Photographer, Royal Gazette. I am very grateful to him for sending me a high-resolution image of the photo and giving me permission to use it for this project.

[102] See the photographs from Bermuda: "Members of the Historical Society with the Suffragette Table" and "Suffragette Table with the Tea Set." The table is now on display at the Bermuda Historical Society Museum, *Bernews,* bernews.com/2017/03/gladys-morrell-table-bought-historical-society/.

[103] See "Remembering the Suffragettes," by Jessie Moniz Hardy, *Royal Gazette,* www.royalgazette.com/lifestyle/article/20170303/remembering-suffragettes.

[104] "Kathy Bromby with a cedar table and banner that once belonged to her grandmother, suffragist Gladys Morrell." The photograph has been reproduced with the kind permission of Akil J. Simmons, Acting Chief Photographer, Royal Gazette. I am very grateful to him for sending me a high-res image of the photo, and giving me permission to use it for this project.

[105] See, for example, "Dome of the Panthéon, (Le Panthéon) Paris, France." *Khan Academy,* tr.khanacademy.org/humanities/monarchy-enlightenment/neo-classicism/a/soufflot-the-panthon-paris.

[106] See, for example, Jan van Eyck's *Virgin of the Ghent Altarpiece*, 1432, *Athenaeum*, www.the-athenaeum.org/art/list.php?m=a&s=tu&aid=5459.

[107] See, for example, Jan van Kessel's *The Eucharist*, 1646, *My Art Prints,* www.myartprints.co.uk/a/van-kessel-dae-jan/eucharist.html.

[108] See, for example, "Paten with hosts," *Holy Trinity Anglican Church on Amelia Island*, www.holytrinityanglican.org.

[109] See, for example, William Blake's *Jacob's Ladder,* 1800. *Artfund,* www.artfund.org/supporting-museums/art-weve-helped-buy/artwork/2723/jac-ladder; Peter Paul Rubens's *Descent from the Cross*, 1612-14. *Visual Arts,* www.visual-arts-cork.com/famous-paintings/descent-from-the-cross-rubens.htm; Marc Chagall's *White Crucifixion,* 1938. *Artic,* www.artic.edu/aic/collections/artwork/59426; and Marc Chagall's *Jacob's Ladder,* 1973, *Marc Chagall,* www.marcchagallart.net/chagall-194.php.

[110] "Jacob's Ladder" is generally interpreted as a connection between heaven and earth, with God taking the initiative to reach out to man. The perfect "ladder" is Jesus Christ, who was God come to earth to save humanity. Jesus refers to himself as this ladder in John 1:51: "*And he (Jesus) said to him, 'Truly, truly I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.'"* In Jack Zavada, "Jacob's

Ladder Confirmed God's Covenant and Blessing," *ThoughtCo,* www.thoughtco.com/jacobs-ladder-bible-story-summary-700200.

[111] As numerous sources point out, "Wheat is a rich biblical symbol. From Jesus' parables, wheat came to represent believers over against the 'weeds' or 'tares,' which represent unbelievers. Wheat may also be used to represent the bread in Holy Communion and, further, the Body of Christ." *Planetgast*, www.planetgast.net/symbols/symbolsw/symbolsw.html.

[112] In Christian custom, when dead bodies are placed in the coffin before they are buried, their hands are arranged in the form of the cross. See *New Advent,* www.newadvent.org/cathen/03071a.htm.

[113] *Christ on a Clothesline* was also pictured on the cover of *Maintenant 6: A Journal of Contemporary Dada Writing & Art,* in 2012. *River Pine Anthology*, riverpineanthologyofcivicdiscourse.wordpress.com/2012/04/02/found-a-diamond-in-the-gutter-maintenant-6/.

[114] Mina Loy, *Christ on a Clothesline*, ca. 1955-59. Collage and mixed media in deep glass-covered box. 34x41/4 x 4 ¼ inches. I am very grateful to Dana Martin, of the Francis M. Naumann Fine Art Gallery in New York, for sending me the high-resolution image of Mina Loy's *Christ on a Clothesline*, and giving me permission to use it for this project. The original is in the Private Collection of the Francis Naumann Fine Art Gallery, New York.

[115] Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946) was an American photographer and the editor of *Camera Work* from 1903 to 1917. Read, "Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946) and American Photography." *The Metmuseum,* www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/stgp/hd_stgp.htm.

[116] "[It was] first published in Alfred Stieglitz's epochal quarterly, *Camera Work* 45 (January [June] 1912," pp. 13-15)." In Roger L. Conover, Roger. ed. *The Lost Lunar Baedeker: Poems of Mina Loy.* Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1996, p. 215.

[117] See "Italian Futurism: 1909-1944 Reconstructing the Universe." exhibitions.guggenheim.org/futurism/.

[118] An "Aphorism" is a statement or saying that is both efficiently presented and either witty or wise. www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/aphorism.

[119] "Interior Monologue" is a device used in "Stream of Consciousness." literarydevices.net/stream-of-consciousness/.

[120] The persona's characterisation of the matter as "deformed" echoes a statement by the sculptor Constantin Brancusi (1876-1957), who was deeply influenced by Auguste Rodin: "The artist should know how to dig out the being that is within matter." See "Constantin Brâncuşi: French-Romanian Photographer and Sculptor." *The Art Story,* www.theartstory.org/artist-brancusi-constantin.htm.

[121] Umberto Boccioni, *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space,* 1913. The original copy is kept in MoMA, NY. www.moma.org/collection/works/81179.

[122] Mina Loy, a 1951 New York painting. *Flickr*, www.flickr.com/photos/uknowit/30079675.

[123] Using the contrast between the past and the present, Loy's narrator only sees the hope in the future and negates the attachment to the "Past" time—*passéism*—this is the most contrasting view of the Futurist philosophy since Futurists reject the past as well as its nostalgia, artistic and political traditions.

[124] Loy's definition of man being "as tremendous [as] God" (Loy, *LLB* 150) can be associated with Nietzschean frame of mind, as the potential Futurist individual is depicted as powerful, superior and independent throughout the text. Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) writes in his *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits* that ". . . become master over yourself, master of your own good qualities . . . acquire power over your aye and no and learn to hold and withhold them in accordance with your higher aims . . ." (Nietzsche 11).

[125] "Stream of Consciousness" is a method of narration that describes in words the flow of thoughts in the minds of the characters. See *Literary Devices*, literarydevices.net/stream-of-consciousness/.

[126] "Aphorisms on Futurism." Published in *Camera Work* 45, 1914 January. The altered copy with the changes is archived at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library,

Yale Collection of American Literature, Mina Loy Papers MSS 6, Box 6, folder 152. When exactly Loy made these changes is unknown. See brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3547622.

[127] "Parturition" was first published in the 8:1 issue of the *Trend* (October 1914, pp. 93-94). In Roger Conover, *LLB,* p. 176.

[128] The meaning of "Parturition," *Dictionary University*, dictionary.university/parturition.

[129] The Swedish word "Ansikten" means "Faces." en.bab.la/dictionary/swedish-english/ansikten.

[130] The image *Ansikten* [ca. 1910s] is reproduced here courtesy of Bukowskis Auction House, Stockholm, Sweden. Photo credit "Photo Bukowskis Auctions," Photo byline "Photo Bukowskis Auctions." I am very grateful to Lena Rydén and Per Kesselmar, Specialists of Modern Art, Bukowskis Auction House, Stockholm, Sweden, for sending me the high-resolution image of *Ansikten*, and giving me permission to use it for this project.

[131] The ambiguities of the narrator's maneuvering between "within" and "without" recall John Keats's idea of "negative capability" since the narrator is also "capable of being in uncertainty." Keats encourages uncertainties to perceive and produce a creative, artistic or poetic work, and describes negative capability in *The Complete Poetical Works and Letters of John Keat* as "an emotional state characterized by indecision, restlessness, uncertainty and tension resulting from incompatible inner needs or drives of comparable intensity" (Keats 277).

[132] This characterization of the "fashionable portrait painter" (Loy, *LLB* 27) in "Parturition" recalls Man Ray, an American Dadaist and Surrealist artist and a fashion photographer who made a number of Loy's portraits, one of which is positioned at the beginning of "Lions' Jaws." See orgs.utulsa.edu/mjp-exhibit/items/show/21.

[133] In "Parturition," the concept of the "foam" (Loy, *LLB* 5)—the fluid reaction of the parturient woman—can be related to Julia Kristeva's "Theory of Abjection" if it is considered a human reaction emerged at the time of mother's separation from the baby—the labor. As Kristeva suggests in the *Powers of Horror*, "The abject refers to the human reaction (horror, vomit) to a threatened breakdown in meaning caused by the loss of the distinction between subject and object or between self and other . . . On the level of our individual psychosexual development, the abject marks the moment when we separated ourselves from the mother, when we began to recognize a boundary between 'me' and other, between 'me' and (m)other" (In Felluga Dino, "Modules on Kristeva: On the Abject." *Introductory Guide to Critical Theory, Cla Purdue,* www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/psychoanalysis/kristevaabject.html. par. 2).

[134] See "The Life Cycle of Butterflies and Moths (Lepideoptera)," www.ukleps.org/morphology.html.

[135] As Darwin suggests in *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, ". . . natural selection acts only by taking advantage of slight successive variations; she can never take a great and sudden leap, but must advance by short and sure, though slow steps" (162).

[136] The meaning of "Epicurean." www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/epicurean.

[137] Here, the meaning of "abiogenesis" also recalls Loy's speaker's depiction of the Futurists' male fantasy—"asexual reproduction" as "Man's immediate agamogenesis" (Loy, *LLB* 47) in "Lions' Jaws." The narrator ironizes the idea that the reproduction through "agamogenesis" will protect men from "carnivorous courtesan[s]" (Loy, *LLB* 47).

[138] "What is the Significance of Honey Inside the Lion's Carcass?." See hermeneutics.stackexchange.com/questions/17290/what-is-the-significance-of-the-honey-inside-the-lions-carcass.

[139] This argument evokes Charles Darwin's "Theory of Natural Selection": "Darwin simply brought something new to the old philosophy--a plausible mechanism called 'natural selection.' Natural selection acts to preserve and accumulate minor advantageous genetic mutations. Suppose a member of a species developed a functional advantage (it grew wings

and learned to fly). Its offspring would inherit that advantage and pass it on to their offspring. The inferior (disadvantaged) members of the same species would gradually die out, leaving only the superior (advantaged) members of the species. Natural selection is the preservation of a functional advantage that enables a species to compete better in the wild. Natural selection is the naturalistic equivalent to domestic breeding." www.darwins-theory-of-evolution.com.

[140] The meaning of "woman of the people," idioms.thefreedictionary.com/woman+of+the+people.

[141] The context of the "wom[e]n-of-the-people tiptoeing the red pile of the carpet [and] doing hushed service" (Loy, *LLB* 7) suggests that these women, as the servants of the speaker, metaphorically wear "ludicrous halo[es]." In her article "Moths and Mothers: Mina Loy's Parturition," Tara Prescott comments that "The speaker imagines her servants performing 'hushed service,' aligning them with servants of God. Given the context of the laboring woman surrounded by nun-like 'wom[e]n-of-the-people,' one could infer that the speaker is imagining her servants as nuns in a Catholic hospital" (Prescott 207). She also notes that "[Loy's] own identification as a mother was problematic; she left her children for months at a time in the care of a nanny in another country, and they were mostly raised by others. The issues of motherhood clearly weighed on her mind, as she wrote 'Parturition' over a decade after her last pregnancy" (Prescott 208).

[142] "Tenebrae Service and Good Friday," *Michelleule,* www.michelleule.com/2016/03/25/tenebrae-service-and-good-friday/.

[143] As regards the women "doing hushed service," (Loy, *LLB* 7) Loy's biographer Carolyn Burke comments that "the speaker is imagining her servants as nuns in a Catholic hospital. In 1914, [the year "Parturition" was composed] Loy volunteered as a nurse in a surgical hospital in Florence, and her experiences there inform several poems" (Burke 175). See also Loy's related poems: "Babies in Hospital" (Loy, *LLB* 24-26) and "Aid of the Madonna" (Loy, *LLB* 115).

[144] Hannah Höch (1889-1978) is a female German Dada artist who also used collage techniques and photomontages in her works, and illustrated androgynous bodies and faces. Her works promoted the idea of the "New Woman" in the modernist canon. *The Art Story*, www.theartstory.org/artist-hoch-hannah.htm.

[145] See, for example, Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain,* 1917. *Tate Museum*, www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/duchamp-fountain-t07573.

[146] Mina Loy, *La Maison en Papier*, 1906. Collection of Michael Duncan, Source: Carolyn Burke. *Becoming Modern: The Life of Mina Loy*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 1996. *Illinoi*, www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/g_l/loy/artworks.html.

[147] In his 1918 book, *The Merry-Go-Round*, "An Interrupted Conversation," Carl Van Vechten narrates the events he thinks that inspired Mina Loy to draw *L'Amour Dorloté par les Belles Dames*: "All artists create only in the image of the things they have seen, reduced to terms of art through their imagination. The paintings of Mina Loy seem to the beholder the strange creations of a vagrant fancy. I remember one picture of hers in which an Indian girl stands poised before an oriental palace, the most fantastic of palaces, it would seem. But the artist explained to me that it was simply the façade of Hagenbeck's menagerie in Hamburg, seen with an imaginative eye. The girl was a model. . . One day on the beach at the Lido she saw a young man in a bathing suit lying stretched on the sand with his head in the lap of a beautiful woman. Other women surrounded the two. The group immediately suggested a composition to her. She went home and painted. She took the young man's bathing suit off and gave him wings; the women she dressed in lovely floating robes, and she called the picture, *L'Amour Dorloté par les Belles Dames*" (Vechten 189). August 15, 2008, The Project Gutenberg EBook. *Gutenberg*, www.gutenberg.org/files/26320/26320-h/26320-h.htm.

[148] Mina Loy, *L'Amour Dorloté par les Belles Dames*, 1906, Collection of Roger L. Conover, Source: Carolyn Burke. *Becoming Modern: The Life of Mina Loy*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 1996. *Illinoi*, www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/g_l/loy/artworks.htm.

[149] See, for example, Caravaggio's altarpiece, *The Entombment of Christ,* 1602-1604. *Musei Vaticani*, www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collezioni/musei/la-pinacoteca/sala-xii---secolo-xvii/caravaggio--deposizione-dalla-croce.html.

[150] Raphael's *The Deposition*, 1507. *Jpduhawk,* jpduhawk.weebly.com/raphael---the-deposition.html.

[151] Mina Loy, *Surreal Scene,* 1930. The image is reproduced here courtesy of the © Tajan Auction House, Paris, France (collage and gouache on paper, signed lower right, 125/8 X 9 in). I am very grateful to Romain Monteaux-Sarmiento, Director of Communication, © Tajan Auction House, Paris, for sending me a high-resolution image of Loy's *Surreal Scene*, and giving me permission to use it for this project.

[152] Mina Loy, *Househunting* (1950). I am very grateful to Carolyn Burke, Mina Loy's biographer, for sending me a high-resolution image of Loy's *Househunting* and giving me permission to use it for this project. The original is in her personal collection, and was first reproduced in Burke's *Becoming Modern: The Life of Mina Loy*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996.

[153] *Christ on a Clothesline* by Mina Loy, 1955-59. I am very grateful to Dana Martin, of the Francis M. Naumann Fine Art Gallery in New York, for sending me a high-resolution image of Loy's *Christ on a Clothesline* (1955-59) and giving me permission to use it for this project. The original is in the Private Collection of the Francis Naumann Fine Art Gallery.

[154] See, for example, *Cadavre Exquis* drawings. *TATE*, www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/c/cadavre-exquis-exquisite-corpse.

[155] *Nude* by Yves Tanguy, Joan Miró, Max Morise and Man Ray, 1926-27. Composite drawing of ink, pencil and colored pencil on paper. 14 1/8x9 (35.9x22.9 cm.) *MoMA*, www.moma.org/collection/works/35701.

[156] See *Kouros* and *Kore* images, *Trivial Design*, trivialdesign.wordpress.com/tag/kouroi/.

[157] See *Kouros* and *Korei* and their visual examples. *Britannica*, www.britannica.com/art/kouros.

[158] See the "Infinity Symbol." *RapidTables*, www.rapidtables.com/math/symbols/Infinity_Symbol.html.

[159] See all Rider-Waite Tarot cards with Lemniscate symbols. *Tarot Teachings*, www.tarotteachings.com/images/SymbolCardLemniscate.jpg.

[160] See "The Symbols Found in Tarot." *Aberystwyth University Tarot and Mediation Society*, groupspaces.com/AberTarotMeditation/pages/lesson-2-the-symbols-found-in-tarot.

[161] See, for example, Victor Brauner's *Le Surréaliste,* 1947. *Guggenheim*, www.guggenheim.org/artwork/681.

[162] See the full poem, "The Waste Land" (1922) by T. S. Eliot. *Poetry Foundation*, www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47311/the-waste-land.

[163] See the full poem, "At the Door of the House" (1915) by Mina Loy. *Poetrynook*, www.poetrynook.com/poem/door-house.

[164] *Calla Lily Lamp* by Mina Loy, 1927. The image has been reproduced courtesy of Carolyn Burke. *Becoming Modern: The Life of Mina Loy*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 1996. Interview of Carolyn Burke with Pam Brown about Mina Loy, *Jacket Magazine*, jacketmagazine.com/05/mina-iv.html.

[165] "History and Meaning of Calla Lilies." *Proflowers*, www.proflowers.com/blog/calla-lily-meaning.

[166] See, for example, Rider-Waite Tarot Cards with Lily Symbols. *Tarot Teaching*, www.tarotteachings.com/images/SymbolCardLilly.jpg.

[167] See "The Symbols Found in Tarot." *Aberystwyth University Tarot and Mediation Society*, groupspaces.com/AberTarotMeditation/pages/lesson-2-the-symbols-found-in-tarot.

[168] Reproduced from *History of Painters*, www.historyofpainters.com/wheat.htm.

[169] See, for example, 1930s style women's shoes. *The Revival Retro Boutique*, www.revival-retro.com/collections/high-heel-shoes, and www.revival-retro.com/collections/shoes.

[170] Giorgio de Chirico's *Hector and Andromache*, 1917. *Newington-Cropsey Cultural Studies Center*, www.nccsc.net/essays/giorgio-de-chirico-0.

[171] Giorgio de Chirico's *Disquieting Muses*, 1916. *Art Story*, www.theartstory.org/artist-de-chirico-giorgio-artworks.htm.

[172] Salvador Dalí's *Singularities*, 1936. *Arthive*, arthive.com/artists/12619~Salvador_Dali/works/316151~Singularity.

[173] See "Decapitation" by Hailey Maxwell, February 1, 2017. *Age of Revolutions*. ageofrevolutions.com/2017/02/01/decapitation-in-the-low-surrealist-revolution/.

[174] Diego Velázquez's *Las Meninas*, 1656. *Museo Del Prado*, www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/las-meninas/9fdc7800-9ade-48b0-ab8b-edee94ea877f.

[175] See, for example, all Rider-Waite Tarot cards with Hanged Man symbols, May 6, 2018. *Psychic Revelation*, www.psychic-revelation.com/reference/q_t/tarot/tarot_cards/hanged_man.html.

[176] In Carl Jung Ed. *Man And His Symbols.* Dell, 1968.

[177] See, for example, René Magritte's *Décalcomanie* (*La Trahison des Images*), 1966. *Artsy*, www.artsy.net/artwork/rene-magritte-la-decalcomanie.

[178] See the article "How Does A Starfish Regenerate?" by Vivia Gomez. *Animals*, animals.mom.me/starfish-regenerate-1317.html.

[179] See, for example, Joan Miró's *Harlequins Carnival,* 1924-25. *The Art Story*, www.theartstory.org/movement-surrealism-artworks.htm.

[180] See, for example, Joan Miró's *The Beautiful Bird Revealing The Unknown To A Pair Of Lovers,* 1941. *The Art Story,* www.theartstory.org/artist-miro-joan-artworks.htm.

[181] See, for example, Joan Miró's *The Smile of the Flamboyant Wings*, 1953. *Joan Miró,* www.joan-miro.net/the-smile-of-the-flamboyant-wings.jsp.

[182] See, for example, Joan Miró's *Peinture Femme se Poudrant,* 1949. *Mutual Art*, www.mutualart.com/Artwork/Peinture--Femme-se-poudrant-/DD5ACDDB6EDEA26C.

[183] Man Ray's *L'Etoile de Mer (The Starfish),* 1928. *Artsy,* www.artsy.net/artwork/man-ray-letoile-de-mer-the-starfish.

[184] Joan Miró's *The Hunter (Catalan Landscape),* 1924. *MoMA*, www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/joan-miro-the-hunter-catalan-landscape-montroig-july-1923-winter-1924.

[185] See "The Nike (Victory) of Samothrace." *Just Fun Facts*, justfunfacts.com/interesting-facts-about-the-winged-victory-of-samothrace/.

[186] *The Winged Victory of Samothrace*, a.k.a. *The Nike of Samothrace*. *The Louvre Museum*, www.louvre.fr/en/mediaimages/winged-victory-samothrace.

[187] See, for example, Peter Paul Rubens' *The Descent from the Cross,* 1617-18. The original copy is in the Hermitage Museum Collections, St. Petersburg, Russia. *Hermitage Museum,* www.hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/digital-collection/01.+Paintings/48163/?lng=.

[188] Marc Chagall's *Jacob's Ladder,* 1973. *Marc Chagall*, www.marcchagallart.net/chagall-194.php.

[189] According to Carolyn Burke's *Becoming Modern: The Life of Mina Loy*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996, p. 469, Loy's 1916 drawing, *Consider Your Grandmother's Stays,* was published in the American Magazine *Rogue,* vol. 3, no.2, November 1916, p. 7. and in *Art Review* in October 1922, p.15.

[190] Mina Loy's *Consider Your Grandmother's Stays,* 1916 is a black and white drawing; the image is archived in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library (Call number: Za Zr63). The image has been reproduced from Mina Loy Papers, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Mina Loy. brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3769123.

[191] See, for example, various photos of the early 20th century corsets, "Early 20th Century Fashion: Modernism Embodied by the Fashion Designs of Paul Poiret, Coco Chanel,

and Elsa Schiaparelli." *Vanderbilt*, www.vanderbilt.edu/olli/class-materials/Class_Slides_20th_century_part1.pdf.

[192] Mina Loy's *Hourglass* (1941) is a painting on card stock with acetate backing and glitter; the image is now archived in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. The image has been reproduced from Mina Loy Papers, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Call number: YCAL MSS 6). brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3582149.

[193] Mina Loy, *Fille En Robe Rouge*, 1913. Watercolor and pencil on paper. 34X25, 3. *Mutual Art*, www.mutualart.com/Artwork/Fille-En-Robe-Rouge/54A6FDC163DB7D0D.

[194] See, for example, René Magritte's *The Therapist,* 1937. "[René] Magritte. . . has always had an obsessive interest in birds. He paints doves, one of them is inside and the other inexplicably outside the ribcage of a man." "In "René Magritte" by James Thrall Soby. p. 42. *MoMA Exhibition Cataloques*, moma.org/d/c/exhibition_catalogues/W1siZiIsIjMwMDA2MjMwNiJdLFsicCIsImVuY292ZXIiLCJ3d3cubW9tYS5vcmcvY2FsZW5kYXIvZXhoaWJpdGlvbnMvMTg5OCIsImh0dHA6Ly9tb21hLm9yZy9jYWxlbmRhci9leGhpYml0aW9ucy8xODk4P2xvY2FsZT1rbyJdXQ.pdf?sha=871e3b19c4942a59.

[195] *Teasing a Butterfly* by Mina Loy, 1902. The image is reproduced here courtesy of Dana Martin, of the Francis M. Naumann Fine Art Gallery in New York. I am very grateful to her for sending me a high-resolution image of Mina Loy's *Teasing a Butterfly* and giving me permission to use it for this project. The original copy is in the Private Collection of the Francis Naumann Fine Art Gallery, New York.

[196] See, for example, Paul Gauguin's *Redheaded Woman and Sunflowers,* 1890. *Gauguin Gallery*, www.gauguingallery.com/zz_redheaded-woman-and-sunflowers.aspx.

[197] See, for example, Umberto Boccioni's *Dynamism of a Soccer Player*, 1913. *MoMA*, www.moma.org/collection/works/80009.

[198] See, for example, Giacomo Balla's *Girl Running On A Balcony*, 1912. *Giacomo Balla*, giacomoballa.blogspot.com/2011/11/girl-running-on-balcony.html.

[199] See, for example, Wassily Kandinsky's *Circles in a Circle,* 1923. *Philadelphia Museum of Art*, www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/51019.html.

[200] See, for example, Marcel Duchamp's *Bicycle Wheel,* 1913. *MoMA Learning*, www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/marcel-duchamp-bicycle-wheel-new-york-1951-third-version-after-lost-original-of-1913.

[201] See the newpaper excepts from the writers of *Sunday Herald*, 1891, *The Columbian* (Pennsylvania), 1895 and *The New York Sun*, 1897 to see how bicycle-riding shifted women's ways from the restrictive and traditional norms of fashion and transportation in the Victorian period. In "How the Bicycle Paved the Way for Women's Rights," by Adrienne Lafrance, June 26, 2015. *The Atlantic*, www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2014/06/the-technology-craze-of-the-1890s-that-forever-changed-womens-rights/373535/.

[202] See, for example, *Woman on a Bike, 1920s.* Germany. *Alamy*, www.alamy.com/woman-on-a-bike-unicycle-1920s-germany-image178142201.html.

[203] See the meanings of the "Wheel of Fortune Tarot Cards. *The Tarot Guide*, www.thetarotguide.com/wheel-of-fortune.

[204] See "Tea Rooms and the Women's Suffrage Movement." In Anita Davison, 6 February 2015. *English History Authors*, englishhistoryauthors.blogspot.com/2015/02/tea-rooms-and-womens-suffrage-movement.html.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

“Lions' Jaws” by Mina Loy (1919)

O F A R away on the Benign Peninsular
. . . . .
That automatic fancier of lyrical birds
Danriel Gabrunzio

with melodious magnolia
perfumes his mise en scene
where impotent neurotics
wince at the dusk

The national arch-angel
loved
several countesses
in a bath full of tuberoses
soothed by the orchestra
at the 'Hotel Majestic Palace'

. . . the sobbing
from the psycho-pathic wards
of his abandoned harem
purveys amusement for 'High Life'

The comet conquerer
showers upon continental libraries
translated stars . . .
accusations of the alcove
where
with a pomaded complaisance
he trims rococo liaisons . . .
. . . a tooth-tattoo of an Elvira
into a Maria's flesh
And every noon
bare virgins riding alabaster donkeys
receive Danriel Gabrunzio
from the Adriatic
in a golden bath-towel
signed with the zodiac
in pink chenille

Defiance of old idolatries
inspires new schools
. . . .
Danriel Gabrunzio's compatriots
concoct new courtships
to intrigue
the myriad-fleshed Mistress
of "the Celebrated"

The antique envious thunder
of Latin littérateurs
rivaling Gabrunzio's satiety
burst in a manifesto
notifying women's wombs
of Man's immediate agamogenesis
. . . Insurance
of his spiritual integrity
against the carnivorous courtesan
. . . Manifesto
of the flabbergast movement
hurled by the leader Raminetti
to crash upon the audacious lightning
of Gabrunzio's fashions in lechery
. . . and wheedle its inevitable way
to the "excepted" woman's heart
her cautious pride
extorting betrayal
of Woman's wholesale
to warrant her surrender
with a sense of . . . Victory

Raminetti
cracked the whip of the circus-master
astride a prismatic locomotive
ramping the tottering platform
of the Arts
of which this conjuring commercial traveller
imported some novelties from
Paris in his pocket . . .
souvenirs for his disciples
to flaunt
at his dynamic carnival

The erudite Bapini
experimenting
in auto-hypnotic God-head
on a mountain
rolls off as Raminetti's plastic velocity
explodes his crust

of library dust
and hurrying threatening nakedness
to a vermilion ambush
in flabbergastism
. . . he kisses Raminetti
full on his oratory
in the arena
rather fancying Himself
in the awesome proportions
of an eclectic mother-in-law
to a raw ménage.

Thus academically chaperoned
the flabbergasts
blaze from obscurity
to deny their creed in cosy corners
to every feminine opportunity
and Raminetti
anxious to get a move on this beating-Gabrunzio-business
possesses the women of two generations
except the few
who jump the train at the next station . . .
. . . while the competitive Bapini
publishes a pretty comment
involving women in the plumber's art
and advertises
his ugliness as an excellent aphrodisiac

Shall manoeuvres in the new manner
pass unremarked?
. . .
These amusing men
discover in their mail
duplicate petitions
to be the lurid mother of "their" flabbergast child
from Nima Lyo, alias Anim Yol, alias
Imna Oly
(secret service buffoon to the Woman's Cause)
. . . .

While flabbergastism boils over
and Ram: and Bap:
avoid each other's sounds
This Duplex-Conquest
claims a "sort of success"
for the Gabrunzio resisters.

Envoi

Raminetti gets short sentences
for obstructing public thoroughfares
Bapini is popular in "Vanity Fair"
As for Imna Oly . . .
I agree with Mrs. Krar Standing Hail
She is not quite a lady. . . .
1. . . . . .
Riding the sunset
D A N R I E L G A B R U N Z I O
corrects
the lewd precocity
of Raminetti and Bapini
with his sonorous violation of Fiume
and drops his eye
into the fatal lap
of Italy.

APPENDIX 2

"Feminist Manifesto" by Mina Loy (1914)

The feminist movement as at present instituted is
Inadequate

Women if you want to realize yourselves—you are on the eve of a devastating psychological upheaval—all your pet illusions must be unmasked—the lies of centuries have got to go—are you prepared for the **Wrench**–? There is no half-measure—NO scratching on the surface of the rubbish heap of tradition, will bring about **Reform**, the only method is
Absolute Demolition

Cease to place your confidence in economic legislation, vise-crusades & uniform education-you are glossing over
Reality.
Professional & commercial careers are opening up for you—
Is that all you want?

And if you honestly desire to find your level without prejudice—be **Brave** & deny at the outset—that pathetic clap-trap war cry **Woman is the equal of man**-
For
She is **NOT!**

The man who lives a life in which his activities conform to a social code which is protectorate of the feminine element—
—is no longer **masculine**
The women who adapt themselves to a theoretical valuation of their sex as a **relative impersonality**, are not yet
Feminine
Leave off looking to men to find out what you are **not** ——seek within yourselves to find out what you **are**
As conditions are at present constituted—you have the choice between **Parasitism**, & **Prostitution** —-or **Negation**

Men & women are enemies, with the enmity of the exploited for the parasite, the parasite for the exploited—at present they are at the mercy of the advantage that each can take of the others sexual dependence—. The only point at which the interests of the sexes merge—is the sexual embrace.

The first illusion it is to your interest to demolish is the Division of women into two classes **the mistress**,

& **the mother** every well-balanced & developed woman knows that is not true, Nature has endowed the complete woman with a faculty for expressing herself through all her functions—there are **no restrictions** the woman who is so incompletely evolved as to be un-self-conscious in sex, will prove a restrictive influence on the temperamental expansion of the next generation; the woman who is a poor mistress will be an incompetent mother—an inferior mentality—& will enjoy an inadequate apprehension of **Life**.

To obtain results you must make sacrifices & the first greatest sacrifice you have to make is of your "virtue"
The fictitious value of a woman as identified with her physical purity—is too easy to stand-by—rendering her lethargic in the acquisition of intrinsic merits of character by which she could obtain a concrete value—therefore, the first self-enforced law for the female sex, as a protection against the man made bogey of virtue—which is the principal instrument of her subjection, would be the unconditional surgical destruction of virginity through-out the female population at puberty—.

The value of man is assessed entirely according to his use or interest to the community, the value of woman depends entirely on chance, her success or in success in manoeuvering a man into taking the life-long responsibility of her—
The advantages of marriage are too ridiculously ample—
Compared to all other trades—for under modern conditions a woman can accept preposterously luxurious support from a man (with-out the return of any sort—even offspring)—as a thank offering for her virginity.
The woman who has not succeeded in striking that advantageous bargain—-is prohibited from any but surreptitious re-action to Life-stimuli—& **entirely debarred maternity**.
Every woman has a right to maternity—
Every woman of superior intelligence should realize her race-responsibility, in producing children in adequate proportion to the unfit or degenerate members of her sex—

Each child of a superior woman should be the result of a definite period of psychic development in her life—& and not necessarily of a possible irksome & outworn continuance of an alliance—spontaneously adapted for vital creation in the beginning but not necessarily harmoniously balanced as the evolution—
For the harmony of race, each individual should be the expression of an easy & ample interpenetration of the male &

female temperaments—free of stress
Woman must become more responsible for the child than man—
Woman must destroy in themselves, the desire to be loved—

The feeling that it is a personal insult when a man transfers his attention from her to another woman
The desire for comfortable protection instead of an intelligent curiosity & courage in meeting & resisting the pressure of life
sex or so called love must be reduced to its initial element, honour, grief, sentimentality, pride and & consequently jealousy must be detached from it.
Woman for her happiness must retain her deceptive fragility of appearance, combined with indomitable will, irreducible courage, & abundant health the outcome of sound nerves—
Another great illusion is that woman must use all her introspective and clear-sightedness & unbiased bravery to destroy—for the sake of her self respect is the impurity of sex the realization in defiance of superstition that there is nothing impure in sex—except in the mental attitude to it—will constitute an incalculable & wider social regeneration than it is possible for our generation to imagine.

APPENDIX 3

"Aphorisms on Futurism" by Mina Loy (1914)

Aphorisms on Futurism

DIE in the Past
Live in the Future.

THE velocity of velocities arrives in starting.

IN pressing the material to derive its essence, matter becomes deformed.

AND form hurtling against itself is thrown beyond the synopsis of vision.

THE straight line and the circle are the parents of design, form the basis of art; there is no limit to their coherent variability.

LOVE the hideous in order to find the sublime core of it.

OPEN your arms to the dilapidated; rehabilitate them.

YOU prefer to observe the past on which your eyes are already opened.

BUT the Future is only dark from outside.
Leap into it—and it EXPLODES with *Light*.

FORGET that you live in houses, that you may live in yourself—

FOR the smallest people live in the greatest houses.

BUT the smallest person, potentially, is as great as the Universe.

WHAT can you know of expansion, who limit yourselves to compromise?

HITHERTO the great man has achieved greatness by keeping the people small.

BUT in the Future, by inspiring the people to expand to their fullest capacity, the great man proportionately must be tremendous—a God.

LOVE of others is the appreciation of oneself.

MAY your egotism be so gigantic that you comprise mankind in your self-sympathy.

THE Future is limitless—the past a trail of insidious reactions.

LIFE is only limited by our prejudices. Destroy them, and you cease to be at the mercy of yourself.

TIME is the dispersion of intensiveness.

THE Futurist can live a thousand years in one poem.

HE can compress every aesthetic principle in one line.

THE mind is a magician bound by assimilations; let him loose and the smallest idea conceived in freedom will suffice to negate the wisdom of all forefathers.

LOOKING on the past you arrive at "Yes," but before you can act upon it you have already arrived at "No."

THE Futurist must leap from affirmative to affirmative, ignoring intermittent negations—must spring from stepping-stone to stone of creative exploration; without slipping back into the turbid stream of accepted facts.

THERE are no excrescences on the absolute, to which man may pin his faith.

TODAY is the crisis in consciousness.

CONSCIOUSNESS cannot spontaneously accept or reject new forms, as offered by creative genius; it is the new form, for however great a period of time it may remain a mere irritant—that moulds consciousness to the necessary amplitude for holding it.

CONSCIOUSNESS has no climax.

LET the Universe flow into your consciousness, there is no limit to its capacity, nothing that it shall not re-create.

UNSCREW your capability of absorption and grasp the elements of Life—*Whole.*

MISERY is in the disintegration of Joy;
Intellect, of Intuition;
Acceptance, of Inspiration.

CEASE to build up your personality with the ejections of irrelevant minds.

NOT to be a cipher in your ambient,
But to color your ambient with your preferences.

NOT to accept experience at its face value.

BUT to readjust activity to the peculiarity of your own will.

THESE are the primary tentatives towards independence.

MAN is a slave only to his own mental lethargy.

YOU cannot restrict the mind's capacity.

THEREFORE you stand not only in abject servitude to your perceptive consciousness—

BUT also to the mechanical re-actions of the subconsciousness, that rubbish heap of race-tradition—

AND believing yourself to be free—your least conception is colored by the pigment of retrograde superstitions.

HERE are the fallow-lands of mental spatiality that Futurism will clear—

MAKING place for whatever you are brave enough, beautiful enough to draw out of the realized self.

TO your blushing we shout the obscenities, we scream the blasphemies, that you, being weak, whisper alone in the dark.

THEY are empty except of your shame.

AND so these sounds shall dissolve back to their innate senselessness.

THUS shall evolve the language of the Future.

THROUGH derision of Humanity as it appears—

TO arrive at respect for man as he shall be—

ACCEPT the tremendous truth of Futurism
Leaving all those

Knick-knacks.

APPENDIX 4

"Parturition" by Mina Loy (1914)

I am the centre
Of a circle of pain
Exceeding its boundaries in every direction

The business of the bland sun
Has no affair with me
In my congested cosmos of agony
From which there is no escape
On infinitely prolonged nerve-vibrations
Or in contraction
To the pinpoint nucleus of being

Locate an irritation without
It is within
Within

It is without
The sensitized area
Is identical with the extensity
Of intension

I am the false quantity
In the harmony of physiological potentiality
To which
Gaining self-control
I should be consonant
In time

Pain is no stronger than the resisting force
Pain calls up in me
The struggle is equal

The open window is full of a voice
A fashionable portrait painter
Running upstairs to a woman's apartment
Sings
"All the girls are tid'ly did'ly
All the girls are nice
Whether they wear their hair in curls
Or —"
At the back of the thoughts to which I permit crystallization
The conception Brute
Why?
The irresponsibility of the male
Leaves woman her superior Inferiority.
He is running upstairs

I am climbing a distorted mountain of agony
Incidentally with the exhaustion of control
I reach the summit
And gradually subside into anticipation of
Repose
Which never comes.
For another mountain is growing up
Which goaded by the unavoidable
I must traverse
Traversing myself

Something in the delirium of night hours
Confuses while intensifying sensibility
Blurring spatial contours
So aiding elusion of the circumscribed
That the gurgling of a crucified wild beast
Comes from so far away
And the foam on the stretched muscles of a mouth
Is no part of myself
There is a climax in sensibility
When pain surpassing itself
Becomes exotic
And the ego succeeds in unifying the positive and negative poles of sensation
Uniting the opposing and resisting forces
In lascivious revelation

Relaxation
Negation of myself as a unit
Vacuum interlude
I should have been emptied of life
Giving life
For consciousness in crises races
Through the subliminal deposits of evolutionary processes
Have I not
Somewhere
Scrutinized
A dead white feathered moth
Laying eggs?
A moment
Being realization
Can
Vitalized by cosmic initiation
Furnish an adequate apology
For the objective
Agglomeration of activities
Of a life
LIFE
A leap with nature
Into the essence

Of unpredicted Maternity
Against my thigh
Tough of infinitesimal motion
Scarcely perceptible
Undulation
Warmth moisture
Stir of incipient life
Precipitating into me
The contents of the universe

Mother I am
Identical
With infinite Maternity
Indivisible
Acutely
I am absorbed
Into
The was—is—ever—shall—be
Of cosmic reproductivity

Rises from the subconscious
Impression of a cat
With blind kittens
Among her legs
Same undulating life-stir
I am that cat

Rises from the sub-conscious
Impression of small animal carcass
Covered with blue bottles
—Epicurean—
And through the insects
Waves that same undulation of living
Death
Life
I am knowing
All about
Unfolding

The next morning
Each woman-of-the-people
Tiptœing the red pile of the carpet
Doing hushed service
Each woman-of-the-people
Wearing a halo
A ludicrous little halo
Of which she is sublimely unaware

I once heard in a church
—Man and woman God made them—
Thank God.

Mina Loy, 1914.

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