Modernist Posthumanism in Moore, H.D., and Loy

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Abstract

This dissertation examines modernism, particularly modernist encounters with technology and the body, through the lens of posthumanist thought; the theories and lexicon of posthumanism illuminate modernist poetic encounters with forms of alterity and in so doing modernism and posthumanism reconfigure one another. Each of the project's three chapters examines the work of a different writer—Marianne Moore, H.D., and Mina Loy—by way of a different strand of posthumanist thought, ranging from Donna Haraway's work with companion species, to N. Katherine Hayles's theories on code and embodiment, to Rosi Braidotti's posthumanist investigations of necropolitics. I read Moore's, H.D.'s, and Loy's poetic texts as articulating posthumanist, ethical strategies that, through forms of alternative embodiment, expand beyond binary definitions of self and other, interrogate structures of power that perpetuate these definitions, and imagine bodily identities—particularly for women, and particularly through poetic form—that resist and fall outside of such containing, oppressive forces. This project also argues throughout that poetry is particularly important to these writers' modernist posthumanism.

The first chapter focuses on Marianne Moore and her so-called "animiles"—her poems that depict animal subjects— rereading established narratives about Moore and her modernism. Although criticism has often aligned Moore with certain facets of humanist thought, I argue that Haraway's concept of posthumanist "contact zones" is in fact more appropriate to describe her poetic work's relationship to the animal domain. What I read as Moore's prosthetic, figurative language and her mechanical syllabic metre hyperextend and embody these animals alternatively in non-normative ways, rendering them ultimately unknowable, so that these animals and the poems' own forms frustrate contained narratives about the other or the "whole body."

Chapter Two examines H.D.'s *roman à clef Asphodel* through Hayles's *How We Became*

Posthuman, tracing how the protagonist Hermione seeks out the universal qualities of Morse code in order to create a "spiritual Esperanto." Although this project fails, Hermione's engagement with Morse code nonetheless constructs a poetic, technological, and embodied language out of this code. In *Asphodel,* the language of Morse code has materiality and is rooted in the body; in my reading, Hermione likewise engages in a form alternative embodiment via Morse code that creates space for female identity outside of patriarchal structures while acknowledging the pain of the subjugated body.

As the last full chapter of this project, Chapter Three examines the role of death in Mina Loy's poetry through Rosi Braidotti's posthumanist work with necropolitics. Loy's husband Arthur Cravan disappeared off the coast of Mexico in 1918 and was presumed dead. This situation, while tragic for Loy, provides a critical spur for exploring Loy's posthumanist, necropolitical treatment of the ghostly body in death. Loy's involvement in Italian Futurism's and Christian Science's technological and bodily discourses, as well as her work with modernist impersonality, informs her handling of this alternative body.

The project's coda moves from modernist posthumanism towards what I offer as a posthumanist way of reading, inspired by contemporary work in the digital humanities, that explores the layers of H.D.'s Madrigal Cycle through topic modeling and the intersections of close, human reading and distant, machine reading.

Résumé

Cette dissertation examine le modernisme sous l'optique de la pensée post-humaniste, particulièrement des rencontres modernistes avec la technologie et le corps; les théories et le lexique du post-humanisme illuminent les rencontres poétiques modernistes en se préoccupant foncièrement des formes d'altérité, et, ce faisant, reconfigurant le modernisme et le post-humanisme. Chacun des trois chapitres du projet examine le travail d'une différente auteure – Marianne Moore, H.D. et Mina Loy – en conjonction avec un différent courant de pensée post-humaniste, traitant d'œuvres aussi diverses que le travail de Donna Haraway, les théories de N. Katherine Hayles, et les enquêtes post-humanistes de Rosi Braidotti. Je soutiens que les textes poétiques de Moore, d'H.D. et de Loy, en présentant des formes de corporéités alternatives, articulent des stratégies éthiques post-humanistes qui développent des définitions de l'être et de l'Autre qui échappent aux binaires, interrogent les structures de pouvoir qui perpétuent ces définitions, et imaginent des identités corporelles – particulièrement pour les femmes, particulièrement en prosodie – qui résistent et évadent ces forces oppressives. En effet, ce projet soutient que la poésie est particulièrement importante pour le post-humanisme moderniste de ces écrivains.

Le premier chapitre se centre sur Marianne Moore et ses «animiles» – ses poèmes qui représentent des sujets animaux – réinterprétant les notions reçues au sujet de Moore et sont modernisme. Bien que les critiques littéraires ont souvent aligné Moore avec certains aspects de la pensée humaniste, je soutiens que le concept post-humaniste des «zones de contact» de Haraway est en fait plus approprié pour décrire la relation de son œuvre poétique au domaine animal. Le langage de Moore, que je décris comme étant prosthétique et figuratif, et son mètre

syllabique mécanique deviennent le corps imaginé de ces animaux, alternant entre de différents modèles non-normatifs, ce qui les rend ultimement insondables. Ces animaux et les formes des poèmes frustrent donc les attentes d'un narratif prescrit au sujet de l'Autre, ou du corps soi-disant entier.

Le deuxième chapitre examine le *roman à clef Asphodel* d'H.D. en tirant des théories de Hayles présentées dans *How We Became Posthuman*. L'œuvre poétique décrit le cheminement de la protagoniste Hermione, qui se penche sur les qualités universelles du code Morse pour créer un «Esperanto spirituel.» Bien que ce projet échoue, l'engagement d'Hermione avec le code Morse en façonne cependant un langage poétique, technologique et corporel. Selon mon interprétation, Hermione participe à une forme d'incarnation physique alternative par l'entremise du code Morse, créant ainsi un espace pour l'identité féminine au-delà des structures du patriarcat, tout en reconnaissant les douleurs du corps subjugué.

Comme dernier chapitre du projet, j'examine le rôle de la mort dans la poésie de Mina Loy en tirant de l'ouvrage post-humaniste de Rosi Braidotti sur les nécro-politiques. L'époux de Mina Loy, Arthur Cravan, est disparu au large des côtes du Mexique en 1918, et fût présumé mort. Cette situation, bien que tragique pour Loy, offre une perspective générative aux critiques littéraires intéressées par l'attitude poétique de Loy envers le corps et la mortalité, et par son exploration du corps spectral. L'investissement de Loy dans les discours du futurisme italien et de la Science chrétienne sur le corps et la technologie informe sa perspective artistique sur ces types de corporéités.

Le coda du projet passe du modernisme post-humaniste à une méthodologie littéraire post-humaniste, inspirée par des développements contemporains dans le champ des humanités numériques. J'explore les différents aspects du « Madrigal Circle» d'H.D. avec l'aide de techniques de modélisation numérique par sujet, en reliant cette approche plus mécanique à un mode de lecture attentive plus humain.

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Like the *avant-la-lettre* posthumanist explorations of my modernist authors, this project in many ways began before it was named: when I walked into Miranda Hickman's undergraduate class on modernist poetry in the second year of my B.A. at McGill. To that end, my first and deepest thanks have to be to Professor Hickman, as she has guided and inspired me almost from the very beginnings of my academic career. Her advice, expertise, and support throughout writing this dissertation in particular were immeasurably important to its conception, creation, and submission. Many faculty members at McGill were also integral to this project, and I particularly thank Professor Brian Trehearne and Professor Ned Schantz for their ever-incisive and always useful commentary and help throughout my doctoral work.

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Introduction

“We have always been posthuman.”

— N. Katherine Hayles

This closing sentiment to N. Katherine Hayles’s influential work, *How We Became Posthuman*, opens up posthumanism to a multitude of contexts, eras, and approaches. Although posthumanist theories and studies often deal with technology (and attendant ways of being) that is specific to our internet age, posthumanist relationships and conditions of being, as they are now defined, existed before theorists such as Hayles marked them in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. The posthuman condition, particularly as it is used in this dissertation, is not a historical phenomenon, but rather a certain perspective on the place of the human alongside and *vis-à-vis* the non-human, and it is thus worth exploring posthumanism outside of contemporary contexts. As Hayles notes in her introduction, posthumanist “changes were never complete transformations or sharp breaks … they reinscribed traditional ideas and assumptions even as they articulated something new. The changes announced by the title thus mean something more complex than ‘That was then, this is now.’ Rather, ‘human’ and ‘posthuman’ coexist in shifting configurations that vary with historically specific contexts” (6).

This dissertation takes these suggestions seriously, exploring early twentieth-century literary modernism, particularly the works of Marianne Moore, H.D., and Mina Loy, through the lens of posthumanist thought. It is these shifting configurations that make posthumanism a sensitive lens with which to discuss modernism; moreover, viewing modernism through posthumanism illuminates and redefines both modernism and posthumanism in generative ways, renewing understandings of modernist techniques such as stream of consciousness and impersonality and broadening the scope of the posthuman. Many of the fundamental developments associated with posthumanism—the Internet, a widespread cultural awareness of cyborgs, and the concept of artificial intelligence—emerged after the modernist era. Yet the early twentieth century saw comparable developments in an increasing mechanization of war and work as well as the attendant rise of artistic explorations of technology in movements such as Italian Futurism and Vorticism; the early twentieth century is another seedbed for such posthumanist developments.

In fact, this project maintains that these authors demonstrate a particularly *modernist* posthumanism, with all the considerations that this entails. Modernists often shared an interest in alterity, whether animal or technological, from T.S. Eliot's cats to William Carlos Williams's famous quotation that a poem is a "machine made of words" (256). Yet, as Cary Wolfe puts it, "Just because a historian devotes attention to the topic of nonhuman animals … doesn't mean that humanism and anthropocentrism aren't being maintained" (123); addressing alterity does not always mean advancing a posthumanist perspective. This dissertation will show how Moore, H.D., and Loy often go beyond a mere interest in alterity in ways some of their contemporaries do not, and into a reconfiguration and even confusion of the boundaries—particularly in the body—between human and non-human in ways that can be marked as posthumanist. Moreover, from an organizational standpoint, their texts each represent a different concern of posthumanism and can help illuminate the spectrum of posthumanism as a whole. This dissertation also emphasizes previously under-explored aspects of their work, responding to critical notions of Moore's poetry, investigating H.D.'s interest in technology, and engaging with Loy's relationship to death.

On the whole, posthumanist thought seeks to reconfigure human identity and reconnect it to non-human systems and external networks—to explore different forms of what is construed as the "Other," or alterity, often at the expense of what is understood as the "self," and often through the destabilizing processes of technological developments. Posthumanist thought also often interrogates the liberal humanist subject and the assumption of this subject's mastery over nature and culture; accordingly, posthumanism explores the ways that human and nature, human and technology, and human and animal construct and re-construct one another. Nonetheless, as Sidonie Smith notes, "What constitutes posthumanism itself depends on what project you're pursuing. In the field of posthumanist studies, there are multiple, sometimes overlapping, sometimes discrepant, strands of critical activity" (137). Thus, there are divergent and conflicting applications of posthumanisms and disagreement even about whether posthumanism as a body of thought should be seen as a reaction or response to humanism, a development out of it, or a mixture of both. The adaptability of posthumanist studies then necessitates a definition of the boundaries and characteristics of the particular categories of posthumanism this dissertation will wield.

In general, this project works from the perspective that posthumanism both arises from and responds to humanism: humanist thought raises questions and problems on which posthumanism depends, even as posthumanist thought attempts to go beyond or at times respond to humanist perspectives. As a result, I do not want to position humanism and posthumanism in a reductive binary, whereby posthumanism corrects all the mistakes of humanism and acts as an opposing force for good. Posthumanism is not an inherently ethical lens or discourse, just as humanism is not inherently pernicious—the effects of these discourses depend greatly on the way we apply these discourses. Nonetheless, this project uses a posthumanist lens and in some cases privileges this lens over a humanist one. That is, it will position certain posthumanist perspectives as generative and positively valenced, and at times even fertile in their response to detrimental aspects of humanist thought.

However, humanism advanced many of the conversations about the definition and rights of the human that posthumanism would carry on into the non-human. Indeed, humanist thought is often a foundation for posthumanist thought; the two perspectives are necessarily affiliated with one another. Humanist thought, particularly as it emerged during the Enlightenment, contributed to discussions on the rights and actions of the individual, often structuring an ethics of being and living in the world, and these concepts still exert considerable influence. As Stephen Law sums up, “humanism involves a commitment to the existence and importance of moral value” with ethics that are “strongly informed by study of what human beings are actually like, and of what will help them flourish in this world, rather than the next” (2). Stephen Sicari associates humanism with “higher ideals” (xii), and Sandra Rudnick Luft, in her review of *Imperfect Garden: The Legacy of Humanism*, addresses humanism’s compatibility with “democratic political structures” (426). Humanist thought specifically reaches towards a strengthened moral outlook on the physical, material world. This move into the material world, away from a morality dependent upon a higher being, is an unspoken but necessary precursor to posthumanism’s own interest in non-human others such as animals and machines. Humans move away from looking at God towards looking to themselves and then towards looking to others. Humanism, in its reaction against religious doctrines, began the exploration of identities and modes of being that posthumanism carries into different networks.

Like Smith’s characterization of posthumanism, humanism, as a constellation of responses about the place of the human, also functions along a spectrum and can be put to different uses and projects; as Leon Surette points out, “‘Humanism’ is a term that has had different meanings in different historical periods, as well as for different individuals in the same period" (*Dilemma* 46). In *Literature and the American College* (1908) Irving Babbitt discussed three different strands of humanism, although he only advocated for one such strand. Although Babbitt himself engages in a somewhat reductive argument about humanism for his own purposes, his classifications do clarify different motives behind different humanisms, as well as the fact that there are different humanisms at all. First, Babbitt identifies scientific humanism, which he sees as helmed by figures such as Francis Bacon. Babbitt argues that scientific humanism relegates man to a position subject to laws of nature and physics rather than a law of their own; he argues that this humanism quantifies and rationalizes everything, and in so doing misses out on what makes humanity special and superior. Babbitt's second classification of humanism is sentimental humanism, which is associated with Jean Jacques Rousseau, and which promotes a kind of unbounded individualism, "encouraging men thus to put a sense of their rights above their obligations" (103). Although this humanism seems opposite to scientific humanism on the surface, Babbitt argues that it still looks towards unfettered progress for the individual; he argues that "Rousseau would unchain" a torrent of "elemental forces of self-interest" (103). Babbitt also disparages this kind of humanism for assuming a hardwired, universal ethics to humanity, and actually sees it as amoral and ineffective. Instead, Babbitt praises what he calls classical humanism, which he associates with the works of Plato, Philip Sidney, and Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe. Classical humanism, as Babbitt defines it, is a conservative vision in that it relies not on unchecked progress but rather on an adherence to a particularly human law, or a "moral order" (43) and a loyalty to traditional standards of thinking, canon-making, and ethical programs.

The strands of humanism Babbitt discusses, such as scientific humanism, are often proto-posthumanist perspectives, and they connect rather than divide humanism and posthumanism. Scientific humanism's interest in technological development dovetails with posthumanism's own interest in technology and contains the potential for human/non-human interaction. Just as there are posthumanisms, there are humanisms, and avoiding any potential caricature of humanism means taking these various strands into account. Nonetheless, there *are* differences in kind between posthumanism and humanism. In Babbitt's definitions, the human is always brought to bear on the particular concerns of the highlighted strand of humanism. Posthumanism, for its part, is not as interested in how technological or natural narratives involve the human. Instead, posthumanism blurs the boundary between subject and object, so that the emphasis does not fall on the human, but rather many times on the way certain technological, animal, or otherwise human/non-human interactions interrogate, reconfigure, or even erase the category of human. At times, humanist goals intersect with the goals of strains of posthumanism, while at other times posthumanism provides different responses to the same questions humanism poses. In other instances, certain posthumanist perspectives and interactions seek different goals and constructions of identity than the humanist perspective, often at the expense of traditional understandings of the human. As Oxana Timofeeva puts it, the human subject departs from the humanist "dream of autonomy to define itself from without, through various figures of the nonhuman" (331) in posthumanist theorizations of identity.

Moreover, Babbitt interrogates certain humanisms within his own humanist perspective, and there are indeed aspects of humanism that merit critique. First, humanist thought's emphasis on the human at the expense of other life forms, often—as Babbitt points out—works towards mastery of non-human subjects and knowledge, which often reduces the complexity of the other.

Second, the liberal humanist subject is often associated with universal narratives that nonetheless disconnect that subject from historical contexts. In *How We Became Posthuman*, Hayles associates the liberal humanist subject with "possessive individualism" (34) and, as Sicari notes, Louis Althusser "thought of his position as anti humanist, as opposing humanism at its most fundamental and therefore most vulnerable point, the existence of a transcendental self outside culture, existing before and apart from history, society, language, and ideology" (92). These narratives often construct the individual liberal humanist subject, standing in for a universal human narrative, as outside of society and often as outside of history. This humanist subject also downplays or even erases the body and bodily identity in service of this universality as well as in service of rationality. As Hayles puts it, "Identified with the rational mind, the liberal subject *possessed* a body but was not usually represented as *being* a body," and as a consequence the assumed universality of this subject "depends on erasing markers of bodily difference, including sex, race, and ethnicity" (4-5). This construction of the liberal humanist subject follows, and issues from, a binary Cartesian configuration of identity that bifurcates the mind and body, upholding the mind as rational and male while degrading the body as emotional and feminine. Thus, the universal narrative of the humanist individual often works to exclude identities (including bodily identities) outside of the white, straight, human male.

As a result, several theoretical perspectives have critiqued this humanist subject: feminist theorists criticize "a universality that has worked to suppress and disenfranchise women's voices" (Hayles 4), postcolonial theorists have further contested "the very idea of a unified, consistent identity, focusing instead on hybridity" (Hayles 4), while postmodernist theorists "have linked it with capitalism, arguing for the liberatory potential of a dispersed subjectivity distributed among diverse desiring machines" (Hayles 4). Furthermore, although Chapter One in particular will discuss the ways critics associate modernism with some of these aspects of humanism, roughly contemporary theorists also critiqued certain humanist perspectives. As Claire E. Katz notes, Emmanuel Levinas argues that “ethics is not to be a punctuation mark in a life otherwise dominated by a self-centred ego. Rather, this ceding of the self will define the new subjectivity. He identifies this failure to turn toward the other, to put it first, as a crisis in humanism” (6). Instead, Levinas’ ethical project—in his words—is one that attempts to “approach the Other in conversation” and “receive from the Other beyond the capacity of the I” (51).

Indeed, this quotation encapsulates this project’s posthumanism, a posthumanism that is interested in ceding masterful definitions of the self and attendant bifurcations of the other in order to turn towards a view of the other that is complex, shifting, and even at times threatens the self as traditionally understood within humanist frameworks. Moore, H.D., and Loy exhibit this posthumanism—often with a feminist bent—in their critiques of problematic humanist assumptions as localized in the figure and bodily assumptions of the liberal humanist subject, whether in Moore’s interrogation of human mastery and bodily wholeness via her exploration of animal hyperextension and prosthesis away from feminine and scientific humanist containment, H.D.’s move away from patriarchal control of women’s bodies and into Morse code, or Loy’s critique, to the benefit of feminine identities, of Cartesian binaries as well as the necropolitical bifurcation of life and death. In so doing, their works move away from the boundaries and containments of the liberal humanist subject in order to create and foster multiple, non-normative identities.

Yet both posthumanism and humanism are not closed, settled systems. As Hayles observes, “As the liberal humanist subject is dismantled, many parties are contesting to determine what will count as (post)human in its wake" (246). In so doing, Hayles shifts the focus not on what the posthuman or posthumanist thought *will* or must inherently mean, but what it *can* mean "if certain strands among its complex seriations are highlighted and combined to create a vision of the human that uses the posthuman as leverage to avoid reinscribing, and thus repeating, some of the mistakes of the past" (288). The goal of posthumanist thought *vis-à-vis* humanist thought is then to move on and even learn from, rather than negate, humanism, and Hayles's language here reminds us that, even with a posthumanist lens, these errors are possible to make again. Accordingly, as it considers the work of H.D., Moore, and Loy, this project will address one strand of posthumanism, transhumanism, which is susceptible to many of the same critiques as humanism and focuses on the technological advancement of the human. This often means that transhumanism, in contrast to the posthumanisms of the authors in this project, focuses on the superiority of the human.

Transhumanism is perhaps one of the most extreme posthumanist branches, and it places an immense amount of faith in technology, positing that the closer the human gets to becoming a machine, the better the human becomes as a species. Arguably, in transhumanism the human is still the central concept, and mechanical and animal others become tools for human advancement. This has ethical consequences, sometimes adverse ones: in seeking to create a superhuman, transhumanism continues the humanist project for individual human superiority and mastery at the expense of other beings and networks. Of course, there are some vital differences between transhumanism and the humanisms to which I have pointed: the otherness of technology, if grafted onto the self, provides interesting opportunities for a redefinition of humanity. Yet when the goal is towards superiority rather than redefinition, this only seems to lead to different ways of confirming and reinscribing human privilege rather than accepting otherness or abnormality, as other posthumanist strands attempt to do. In this sense, transhumanism is not as interested in interrogating the self or exploring the other as some other varieties of posthumanist thought, and it may be called posthumanist only in its somewhat narrow emphasis on bodily alteration and technological advancement.

Amanda K. Booher's article "Docile Bodies, Supercrips, and the Plays of Prosthetics" brings many of these troubling aspects of transhumanism into focus. Booher discusses recent perspectives on prosthesis, particularly with the advent of the Paralympics. Although Chapter One will further discuss the ways Marianne Moore re-conceptualizes an anxiety-driven view of prosthesis, I focus more here on the way transhumanism's conception of prosthesis ends up reinscribing the negative values associated with humanism to which Moore will respond. The Paralympics, Booher argues, value what she terms as the "supercrip." This term is applied to people with disabilities, such as Oscar Pistorius[1] and Sarah Reinersten, whose prosthetic, mechanical limbs render them, in some respects, superhuman. Building from Michel Foucault's theories and Joseph Shapiro's work with prosthetics, Booher argues that a supercrip is a disabled, docile body that achieves "the constraint of conformity," superseding "its low ranking to appear normal and acceptable," and that it is only then that "the disabled body [is] seen as worthy of respect by other normal bodies" (72). For Booher, this conception "constructs the prosthetized body as one where the body/machine can be disassembled and reassembled quite simply: machine (prosthesis) is simply attached to machine (body). Insert tab A into slot B, fasten, and the process is complete. This underlying perception of the relationship between body and prosthesis promulgates anxieties of the simple replacement of flesh for machine" (78). The process Booher describes creates a paradigm whereby a disabled person can only be normal, or valuable, as long as they are actually extraordinary or superior. Prosthesis, accordingly, becomes an add-on and a compensatory technology rather than a complex, physical negotiation between human and machine. This compensatory maneuver still upholds the value of a liberal humanist subject as an idealized, contained norm that to which all other deviant forms must measure up. Moreover, it places the emphasis of technological interaction back on superiority and the advancement of the human.

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[1] This was written in 2010, before his murder conviction.

It is this transhumanist line of thinking, whether in humanism or posthumanism, to which this project primarily responds. The theorists who structure the arguments of this dissertation move away from this notion of the superhuman and of mastery and towards recognizing the value of the alterity of non-human others, their complexity, and the ways these others can influence and redefine the human. Defining the human in these ways opens up both humanism and posthumanism to a mistreatment of animals, of our environment, and of anything non-human, often aligning these discourses with colonialism and projects of social Darwinism, as the human seeks out relationships that affirm rather than question our status. Likewise, even humanist models of stewardship of the non-human lead towards a confirmation of human superiority over the non-human. Scientific humanism, for its part, has a way of going too far in the opposite direction, reducing everything to objects of study, even the human, even while still implicitly crediting the human with the ability to discern these objects *as* objects of study. It thus forecloses the agency of those objects—animal, molecular, plant, etc— to act upon us: it is a one-way relationship; we act upon these objects.

A posthumanism that responds to such humanist assumptions of mastery can, at the very least, lay those assumptions bare and, at best, model a new relationship for humanity that does not rely on shaping or progressing to superiority. Thus, even as posthumanism is not inherently ethical, there is an implicit ethical project in the way this dissertation, and its authors, take up posthumanism. In particular, this project focuses on how Moore, H.D., and Loy, using what we can now read as tenets of posthumanism as ethical strategies, create forms of alternative embodiment to exceed contained, normative, often feminine identities, and in so doing provide a more complex view of othered and marginalized identities that speaks back to inflexible categorizations of self and other. Moore's prosthetic animals honor the wondrous unknowability of the other's body; Hermione's human body connects with Morse code in *Asphodel*; and Loy, with the aid of her work with Italian Futurism and Christian Science, undoes the boundary between life and death to reconfigure what I call the ghostly body.

In giving these identities space for alternative configurations and embodiment away from the ideal of the liberal humanist subject and narratives of mastery, this project's texts implicitly critique patriarchal systems of power and discourses that perpetuate this ideal and this mastery, police normative identities, and oppress and contain alterity, particularly feminine alterity; feminist strategies intertwine with posthumanist strategies. Moore's animiles—her poems with animal subjects—speak back to critiques of her work that would domestically contain her and her animals as well as to forms of humanist containment, H.D.'s work with Morse code acknowledges and escapes gendered bodily pain under patriarchy, and Loy's feminized ghostly bodies undo the Cartesian binaries inherent in the liberal humanist subject in order to interrogate both patriarchal systems of thought and the life/death binaries associated with necropolitics. These texts cede the mastery of the human and the self, criticize the pernicious narratives and definitions of identity patriarchal, dominant systems of power perpetuate, and provide alternative identities that reimagine femininity in particular. In short, their posthumanisms take up Levinas' ethical work to "approach the Other in conversation" and "receive from the Other beyond the capacity of the I" (51); Moore, H.D., and Loy explore complex configurations of the other and in so doing refigure powerful received narratives—and the systems that uphold these narratives—about the self.

Likewise, although this dissertation contains varied posthumanist theorists, I have chosen these theorists not only for their relevance to the author and the concerns I am discussing, but also for their commitment to the kinds of posthumanisms that encourage reconfiguring, multiple, and partial connections between the human and the non-human. These theories investigate non-normative identities and place value not just in the mind—a Cartesian split that comes from humanist assumptions—but also in embodied identity. Among other theorists, Donna Haraway's interest in posthumanist animal studies in *When Species Meet* helps me to explore the complex relationships within Moore's own animal poems, while Hayles's work with both embodiment and code in *How We Became Posthuman* illuminates H.D.'s work with Morse code and embodied identity in *Asphodel*. Finally, Rosi Braidotti's work with necropolitics and posthumanism builds the scaffolding for Chapter Three's discussion of Loy's mourning of Arthur Cravan, her interest in the feminized body in death, and the way this body can cross over into the threshold of life. Each of these theories of the posthuman manifests in different ways, focusing on animals, code, and death, but an ethical commitment to exploring and valuing non-normative identities, as well as a technological bent, nonetheless ties these theories together.

This project also argues that the label "posthumanism" brings these strands together, and the fundamental assumption of this project—that Moore's prosthetic animals, H.D.'s work with Morse code, and Loy's necropolitical work with the ghostly body are posthumanist explorations—deserves unpacking. There are two primary reasons for this posthumanist designation, one local and the other general. First, all the authors explore forms of alternative embodiment and the excess of normative identity through, to varying degrees, technological means, spurring on an interaction between the organic and the machine and forcing the self to confront the other through a modern development. Moore's syllabic metre combines organic, creative impulses with the mechanical, and this metre structures the prosthetic similes and metaphors that fuse within her animiles, re-embodying these animals as hyperextended, wondrous creatures. H.D.'s Hermione uses Morse code to embody herself alternatively, and Loy's interest in Italian Futurism and Christian Science, incorporating these movements' interest in technological and scientific development, shapes her view of the body as a locus of shifting identity. In this sense, Moore's, H.D.'s, and Loy's texts are topically posthumanist, working as they do through technology to reassess identity.

The second reason, however, is more important to their posthumanist strategies, as it designates not just a topical but also a fundamental interest in posthumanist explorations and confusions of self and other. For an exploration of technology is not the only or even definitive factor of posthumanism; the posthumanist lenses of this project interrogate binary, often humanist definitions of the self so as to explore the complexity of the other and speak back to systems of power that perpetuate these definitions—technology is just one way in which to interrogate the self through the other. In so doing, as I have laid out above, posthumanism often coordinates a constellation of responses to more problematic nodes of humanism, particularly in the notions of mastery, universality, and binaries of the liberal humanist subject—hence, in part, the label posthumanism, even as posthumanism at times may run alongside humanism. Moore's, H.D.'s, and Loy's texts explore this complexity, often at the expense of humanist definitions and narratives of the self, and their posthumanisms arise not just from a thematic and modernist interest in technology but also from a fundamental attitude towards the self and other that questions humanist assumptions. In short, they challenge, to use a line from Moore's "The

Pangolin," 'certain postures of man' along a posthumanist line of thinking. Accordingly, although H.D. might engage with technology and Morse code most directly, Moore and Loy's work with alternative embodiments is not any less posthumanist for their more lateral exploration of mechanization. Moreover, while many of the nonhuman others discussed in the ensuing chapters—animals, code, ghosts—have captured the imagination of writers, artists, and theorists long before posthumanism, I name Moore's, H.D.'s, and Loy's interpretations as posthumanist because of their participation, through modernist contexts and technologies, in this constellation of responses.

It is also necessary to clarify the logic behind this project's localization of posthumanist processes in the body, as Moore, H.D., and Loy's posthumanist strategies and forms of alternative embodiment remake the bodies and identities in their work. Prosthesis recasts and hyperextends Moore's animal bodies away from various containments, Morse code re-imagines Hermione's body in *Asphodel*, and Loy's undoing of Cartesian and mortal binaries reframes bodily identity. Perhaps as a function of Cravan's own absent body, Loy's work with the body and its various alterations is more abstract and less physical than Moore and H.D.'s explorations, and the changes of her bodily identities often take place on ideological terrain. Nonetheless, her poems show how Loy thinks about identity directly through embodiment, reworking the bodies of her feminine and ghostly subjects and thus reshaping their identities.

This dissertation's focus on the body is due, in part, to the focus on feminine identity: the female body is often a battleground for ideology, and transformations in the portrayal of the female body shift female identity and reconfigure these ideologies. The body is also fruitful ground for posthumanist exploration, with prosthetic technologies and virtual realities changing the way we see our bodies and thus our identities as a whole, and both Haraway and Hayles connect posthumanism particularly to embodiment.[2] Nonetheless, the body and its various alterations in the face of technological development, like technology itself, are still secondary in this project to a posthumanist attitude of questioning the self and crediting the other with complexity. Shifts in human identity that do not relate directly to the body might be marked as in keeping with this dissertation's posthumanist lenses if they too take up the constellation of responses surrounding humanism and the liberal humanist subject, particularly if they also address technology.[3]

Other modernists besides Moore, H.D., and Loy do approach posthumanism, but in ways that are not highlighted in this work. For instance, in D.H. Lawrence's now-famous letter to Edward Garnett on June 5, 1914, Lawrence refers to the mechanical qualities of F.T. Marinetti's work with technology and Italian Futurism in both praise and critique, writing that the "non-human, in humanity, is more interesting" (182) than the human. He writes further of the "The inhuman will" that interests him, stating that "I only care about what the woman *is*—what she *is*—inhumanly, physiologically, materially — according to the use of the sword: but for me, what she *is* as a phenomenon … instead of what she feels according to the human conception" (183). Lawrence's interest in the non-human in the human, the other in the self, reads as a posthumanist construction of identity, whereby the self is not bounded off from the other. Yet Deanna Wendel, in her article "Alternative Posthumanisms in *Women in Love*," also troubles this posthumanism throughout Lawrence's work, arguing that Lawrence is in fact focused on the superhuman, a construction I have already associated with problematic transhumanist assumptions. Seen through this criticism, Lawrence's letter still emphasizes what the inhuman can do *for* the human, and he accordingly still focuses on the human. The Italian Futurism to which Lawrence refers often exhibits the same tendencies, and I place Moore, H.D., and Loy's work in tension with these conceptions of posthumanism.

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[2] Haraway's discussion of situated knowledges, discussed later in this introduction, re-embodies objectivity. Likewise, Hayles re-establishes the importance of the body in posthumanism, since "Embodiment has been systematically downplayed or erased in the cybernetic construction of the posthuman in ways that have not occurred in other critiques of the liberal humanist subject, especially in feminist and postcolonial theories" (4).

[3] As Hayles writes in *How We Became Posthuman*, "it is important to recognize that the construction of the posthuman does not require the subject to be a literal cyborg. Whether or not interventions have been made on the body, new models of subjectivity emerging from such fields as cognitive science and artificial life imply that even a biologically unaltered *Homo sapiens* counts as posthuman. The defining characteristics involve the construction of subjectivity, not the presence of nonbiological components" (4).

Nonetheless, in arguing for these authors' modernist posthumanisms, I am pushing back against some posthumanist theories. Both Haraway and Hayles associate posthumanism closely with postmodernist, rather than modernist, thought and contexts. Haraway contrasts "strongly rationalist, modernist approaches" (*Simians* 139-40) with "'postmodern' moves of the disaggregation of metaphors of single systems" (*Simians* 140), and Hayles, as I will discuss further in my work with H.D., argues that stream of consciousness writing, which is closely associated with modernist innovations in form, is less suited to, and maybe even unsuitable for, posthumanist experimentation. In contrast, this project will examine the ways in which the early twentieth century was fertile ground for posthumanist interrogation, both generally and specifically in Moore, H.D., and Loy's particular, and particularly modernist, circumstances. As much as this work is greatly indebted to the lenses that Hayles, Haraway, and others have crafted, it also stands as a response to the arguments that exclude modernism from posthumanism, and reframes techniques such as stream of consciousness (in H.D.) and impersonality (in Loy) as having posthumanist potential.

This project's response has two parts: first, the claim that posthumanism is not simply historical and does not only exist or come about with the internet age—indeed, many of Haraway's influential works were published before a widespread use of the internet—and second, that we can consider modernist concerns as posthumanist rather than just interested in alterity. Hayles's own quotation in the epigraph already opens up the first claim; posthumanism did not just spring up fully formed, and I will explore these entanglements of thought as they appeared in the early twentieth century. The second claim will be proven over the course of this work. The early twentieth century, with the First World War encouraging more mechanized fighting, work, and play, was already drawing together new, posthumanist questions about what constituted the human, how to responsibly interact with the non-human, and how to appropriately mourn and deal with the immense death toll that was pressing in on life—all aspects I will deal with in the coming chapters, and all aspects which move beyond a mere interest in alterity.

Hayles and Haraway's views may, I argue, stem from lingering, and at times limiting and misleading, categorizations of modernism as ordered and systematic—that is, categorizations that position modernism as inherently unable to work successfully with complex, overlapping networks. As Astradur Eysteinsson puts it in *The Concept of Modernism*, "Modernism is viewed as a kind of aesthetic heroism, which in the face of the chaos of the modern world (very much a 'fallen' world) sees art as the only dependable reality and as an ordering principle of a quasi-religious kind. The unity of art is supposedly a salvation from the shattered order of reality" (9). It is not that this claim does not pertain to certain modernist texts—Eysteinsson refers to T.S. Eliot's "Ulysses, Order, and Myth" to make this point—but that it has the potential to be reductive, so that critics must search for ordering systems in modernist art rather than paying attention to a modernist text's individual features. These definitions place modernism as a controlling, rational force and implicitly align it with comparable aspects in scientific humanism. While this may illuminate some aspects of some modernisms, it also misrepresents other modernist projects and facets, and this project will complicate this older, monolithic, yet still influential reading of modernism as "Modernism."

There are still important differences between the kind of postmodern posthumanism that Hayles and Haraway focus on and the modernist posthumanism I will discuss. This dissertation will also be sensitive to the ways that Moore, H.D., and Loy might *not* be posthumanist, the ways their work might connect to different networks of thought, approach topics from different perspectives, or take up different concerns. Again, this is in service of attention to modernism's complexity—to the ways modernist thought either refigures or is elsewhere in tension with posthumanist thought. These reconfigurations and tensions will necessarily occur, as modernism has a different set of concerns and contexts than twenty-first-century studies of posthumanism. Moore's animal poems are at times rooted more in humanism than posthumanism, H.D.'s work with Morse code negotiates with but does not always fully inhabit posthumanist identities, and Loy's eugenicist beliefs sometimes prevent posthumanist engagement. Nonetheless, viewing modernist contexts through the lens of posthumanism generatively shifts, redefines and expands both categories.

Despite these tensions, Haraway's work is especially important to this project, and her term "situated knowledges" provides an excellent focalizing term for the posthumanist processes that I argue Moore, H.D., and Loy *do* exhibit, and influences the feminist perspective of my project. Situated knowledge, Haraway argues, is a way of achieving a kind of "objectivity" without erasing subjectivity or claiming universality, and a way of constructing a scientific gaze that does not forget about embodiment. As Haraway puts it, "our insisting metaphorically on the particularity and embodiment of all vision (though not necessarily organic embodiment and including technological mediation), and not giving in to the tempting myths of vision as a route to disembodiment and second-birthing, allows us to construct a usable, but not an innocent, doctrine of objectivity" (*Simians* 189). She also points out that "Relativism is a way of being nowhere while claiming to be everywhere equally…. Relativism is the perfect mirror twin of totalization in the ideologies of objectivity; both deny the stakes in location, embodiment, and partial perspective; both make it impossible to see well" (*Simians* 191). For Haraway, an absolute relativism contains just as much danger as the universality often found in the liberal, humanist subject, and both tend to erase the embodiment of the objective, scientific gaze: they both come at once from nowhere and everywhere, a disembodied eye floating in the world.[4]

Accordingly, Haraway wants to re-embody the gaze, to situate it or localize it, while nonetheless striving for objectivity and knowledge. Out of this, she vouches for the "knowing self," a subjective positioning that seeks out objectivity. As she writes, "The topography of subjectivity is multidimensional; so, therefore, is vision. The knowing self is partial in all its guises, never finished, whole, simply there and original; it is always constructed and stitched together imperfectly, and *therefore* able to join with another, to see together without claiming to be another. Here is the promise of objectivity: a scientific knower seeks the subject position not of identity, but of objectivity; that is, partial connection" (*Simians* 193). This partiality opposes whole, monolithic vision and the universal and disembodied narratives of the liberal humanist subject, focusing instead not on imposing a one-size-fits-all narrative but rather on cultivating partial connections among many different networks and identities. Partial connections allow for multiple networks and intersectionality while admitting that the knowing self cannot see all these connections and networks at once or in their entirety. In this reading, objectivity need not be a monolithic or omnipotent viewpoint, and self and identity are partial, always connecting to external contexts, never whole and individual.

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[4] Ethnography has also taken up this view of situated, local, and partial knowledge. See Clifford Geertz's *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973) and *Local Knowledge* (1983).

Situated knowledges are the root of many of the particular and differing relationships I discuss, relationships that ramify this way of viewing the self, knowledge, objectivity, and subjectivity. I have already pointed to the influence embodiment has on these chapters, and the concepts of partial connections and situated knowledge encourage a human to understand a non-human other without attempting to own, master, or universalize it. This partiality and lack of mastery, I argue, produces a two-way connection, whereby this knowledge of the other might change the constitution of the self and the category of the human, just as the human might change that other. Moore's work with prosthesis and wonder in her animiles reflects a perspective of the partial self attempting to know the animal other, and she refuses the narrative of the "whole" body or this whole vision. Likewise, in *Asphodel*, Hermione seeks out the linguistic objectivity of Morse code, and this technology alters the way she views herself, her body, and the world. Loy's work, moreover, depends on this two-way, partial connection between self and other, as the female figure in her poetry acts a medium for the dead.

The tenets of situated knowledges are also found in Haraway's famous theorization of the cyborg, which also encourages partiality and fluidity rather than a binary thinking about identity. Moreover, the figure of the cyborg focalizes the feminist concerns of my work. Haraway's cyborg produces varied and positive models for feminine identity away from structures of power—models that Moore, H.D., and Loy's texts all explore. For Haraway, the cyborg is an important nexus and figure for thinking about the category of the human and the various boundaries we place on the human. She explains that "A cyborg body is not innocent; it was not born in a garden; it does not seek unitary identity and so generates antagonistic dualism without end (or until the world's end); it takes irony for granted" (*Simians* 180**)**. Likewise, she argues:

> A cyborg is hybrid creature, composed of organism and machine. But, cyborgs are compounded of special kinds of machines and special kinds of organisms appropriate to the late twentieth century. Cyborgs are … hybrid entities made of, first, ourselves and other organic creatures in our unchosen 'high-technological' guise as information systems, texts, and ergonomically controlled labouring, desiring, and reproducing systems. (*Simians* 1)

These quotations point to the posthumanist project to create and proliferate networks and relationships that question the validity of a central, unified, "human" identity. Although I do not deal specifically or literally when engaging in Moore, H.D., or Loy's works with the category of a cyborg in a traditional sense—that is, the physical melding of human and machine—the figure and theorization of the cyborg nonetheless looms large throughout the dissertation in the different intersections of non-centralized identity that animals, code, and death bring about. Haraway herself points to this in expanding the category of cyborg to be any "hybrid entity" made of "organism and machine," allowing for more metaphorical connections. In Chapter One, this manifests in Moore's prosthetic animal connections, while Chapter Two explores H.D.'s experiments in human encounters with Morse code technology. Loy's work with the mourned, ghostly body, although not marrying organism and machine, nonetheless works with the connection between human/living organism and the non-human/dead body.

In avowing multiplicity rather than binaries, and boundary blurring rather than dialectics, and hybridity rather than separate categorizations, Haraway is also making a specifically feminist argument. She argues that women, along with cyborgs and simians, are "boundary creatures" (*Simians* 2). To this end, Haraway urges feminist theory to embrace ambiguity and reject binary ways of thinking about womanhood and female and feminine identity. She argues that science, technology, and culture have traditionally been pitted against biology, nature, and the feminine in a series of binaries, and that posthumanist theories should reassemble and recombine these binaries. As she writes, "We have perversely worshipped science as a reified fetish in two complementary ways: [1] by completely rejecting scientific and technical discipline and developing feminist social theory totally apart from the natural sciences, and [2] by agreeing that 'nature' is our enemy and that we must control our 'natural' bodies" (9). This leads women's bodies to "enter the cultural body politic as defined by liberal [and radical] theorists of political economy, instead of by ourselves" (*Simians* 9). Haraway makes her issues with binary feminist thought and its implications explicit when, working from these points, she argues that "In the political and epistemological effort to remove women from the category of nature and to place them in culture as constructed and self-constructing social subjects in history, the concept of gender has tended to be quarantined from the infections of biological sex." She continues, stating that "'Biology' has tended to denote the body itself, rather than a social discourse open to intervention" (*Simians* 134). As a result, "feminists have argued against 'biological determinism' and for 'social constructionism'" but these critiques "have been less powerful in deconstructing how bodies, including sexualized and racialized bodies, appear as objects of knowledges and sites of intervention in 'biology'" (*Simians* 134).[5] Haraway argues here for a conception of female identity that is both natural and biological *and* at once a socially and culturally constructed discourse.

Haraway's influence on my feminist work on this point is twofold. First, her work with femininity reinscribes a non-essentialized, but not universal, body back into identity, constructing the specifically female body as a site of knowledge and as a juncture for a proliferation of subjectivity. Each of the three chapters will work from this view of the body, from Moore's depictions of the animal body, to H.D.'s embodied technological identity, to Loy's work with the ghostly body. Moreover, the forms of alternative embodiment Moore, H.D., and Loy present also expand and reconfigure particularly feminine identities, among others. Their works play in various ways with binary thinking about and strict categorizations of women, categorizations that at once dictate women should be domesticated and controlled, and yet disparage women for being emotional, bodily, and uncontrollable. In accordance with Haraway's cyborg, these authors use technology to respond to these binaries and to binary thinking in general. That is, Moore, H.D., and Loy re-evaluate the organic and natural through technology, and in so doing re-work femininity and womanhood in a posthumanist fashion. Moore's prosthetic animiles exceed notions of feminine, scientific humanist, and bodily containment, H.D.'s *Asphodel* provides a space of alternative embodiment through Morse code that becomes a space away from the female body while still acknowledging gendered bodily pain, and Loy meanwhile rereads the living body through technology and the feminized ghostly body. Likewise, my coda examines the way H.D.'s Madrigal Cycle moves away from traditional concepts of the domestic, natural feminine.

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[5] Haraway also notes that "Alternatively, feminists have sometimes affirmed the categories of nature and the body as sites of resistance to the dominations of history, but the affirmations have tended to obscure the *categorical* and overdetermined aspect of 'nature' or the 'female body' as an oppositional ideological resource" (134).

In each of these cases, as with Haraway's cyborgs, technology revises conceptions of the feminine as contained, domesticated, and natural. This results in liminal zones rather than regimented categorization, whether in Moore's contact zones, H.D.'s interaction with Morse code, or Loy's porous boundary between life and death. Nonetheless, I do not want to ascribe a monolithic feminist system to these poets, nor only credit these poets with working with posthumanist strategies in feminist ways. For Haraway, a radical response to multiple systems of oppression in capitalist patriarchy must be equally multiple and intersectional, moving away from "the disaggregation of metaphors of single systems in favour of complex open fields" which can work against “criss-crossing plays of domination, privilege, and difference” (*Simians* 140). In order to draw out these multiple networks, feminism will be only the primary facet of my discussion of their modernist posthumanisms, informing but not determining the ways their works reconfigure the human.

Finally, the modernist posthumanism of Moore, H.D., and Loy is also, crucially, a poetic modernist posthumanism.[6] Poetry and poetic prose are particularly suitable for, even conducive to, Moore, H.D., and Loy’s posthumanist reconfigurations and excesses of identity. In “Taking Lyrics Literally,” Charles Altieri argues that poetry can, like posthumanism, break down totalizing aspects of Enlightenment thought. As he argues, poetry (and particularly for him lyric poetry), denies the “very idea that ‘truth’ is a workable ideal for literary productions” and thus poetry “invites our exploring values that are opposed to the entire psychological apparatus set in place by Enlightenment idealizations about knowledge and judgment in accord with stateable criteria” (260); poetry, like Haraway’s situated knowledges, inherently responds to Enlightenment humanism’s categorizations of knowledge. Altieri also argues that poetry encourages a mode of attention that at once demonstrates our difference from poetic subjects and involves us in those subjects, enacting posthumanism’s play with the self and other. As he posits, poetry takes on an “imaginative force by keeping involvedness a predicate inseparable from self-reflection: our satisfaction in ourselves in such situations depends on our registering what unfolds before us as distinctively different from us and as capable of bearing values because of its articulation of that difference and that distance” (270). In this view, poetry demands an attention that can disrupt, extend, and reshape identity; it can estrange us from accepted definitions of ourselves and open up possibilities for identity outside of these definitions, all while reflecting back on our own identities and encouraging what Altieri terms our "involvement."

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[6] Although H.D.’s *Asphodel* is a novel, it is nonetheless a poetic prose novel, and I will make use of this liminal status, discussing both its stream-of-consciousness narration and its verse aspects.

Poetry has often been compared to embodiment: looking at Frank O'Hara, David Herd argues that "the step, in O'Hara's poetry, is integral to his thinking" (71), linking the rhythms of poetry to bodily movement. Altieri writes that the foundational force of poetry is "to feel one's body so intensely and so complexly that one has to reach out beyond it to imaginary extensions of those states" (278). This is a similar negotiation of situated knowledge, which produces an embodied experience that nonetheless moves towards something beyond itself—poetry here acts as prosthesis, connecting us to others. This concept of an embodied reality in excess of bodily constraints will come up again and again throughout this project: Moore's prosthetic animal bodies, though described in lavish detail, take on a sense of the unknown; Hermione's body is used as a conduit for objective code that produces a more slippery meaning; Loy's material work with language and the dead body blurs the boundaries between life and death.

Poetry is thus vital to the modernist posthumanism of this project and its authors. Throughout this dissertation I will ground my work in close reading of the poetic texts, indeed in the bodies of the text themselves, paying attention to poetry, particularly form, while my coda will negotiate between both close reading and the distant reading of the digital humanities in order to illuminate both interpretive perspectives. Poetry, with its reconfigurations—often bodily reconfigurations— of self, is an ideal form for portraying the shifts in thought and networks of knowledge involved in the posthumanist exploration of human and non-human relationships, and I will attend to forms of alternative embodiment both as they exist within the poetry and as the poetry constructs these forms.

Moore, H.D., and Loy's work comes alive newly under a posthumanist lens, and their work likewise enlivens and broadens posthumanism. Although Moore, H.D., and Loy model different strands of posthumanism and deal with diverse topics, from animal studies, to code, to necropolitics, their work is drawn together by an interest in technology, the body and, most importantly, an ethical commitment to the interrogation of the self and the exploration of the complexity of the other. This project is, as with Haraway, an exercise in partiality—in the partiality of the self and other, the partiality of the connections between modernism and posthumanism, the partiality of connections between authors—that nonetheless explores the junctures of modernism and posthumanism. These junctures, without being monolithic, are still rich in potential knowledges about modernism, posthumanism, and modes of being in the early twentieth century.

Designating Moore, H.D., and Loy's texts as posthumanist puts forth a particular perspective on these authors—this naming allows us to see their works from a different angle. While this posthumanist lens necessarily obscures other focal points in their works this is nonetheless a generative vantage point, and each author's posthumanist strategy works on more than one level: Chapter One explores Moore's prosthetic animals, arguing that the alternative embodiment of these subjects pays heed to the complexity and wonder of the other and responds to Moore's critical, often feminine, containment. Chapter Two focuses on H.D.'s work in *Asphodel* to interact bodily with Morse Code in order to find a spiritual Esperanto and escape bodily pain, while Chapter Three concerns Loy's undoing of the life/death binary and her revaluation of feminine identity away from Cartesian binaries. Characterizing these authors as posthumanist brings a new set of interpretations and meaning to their works, and helps sensitize us to both the thematic, technological concerns of their work and the underlying posthumanist attitudes these works display—this lens reconstitutes posthumanism through modernism and in turn reassesses modernism through posthumanism.

"Another armored animal": Marianne Moore's Prosthetic Animiles

In "'Plunder' or 'Accessibility to Experience': Consumer Culture and Marianne Moore's Modernist Self-Fashioning," Alison Rieke relates an episode from Elizabeth Bishop about Marianne Moore. When Bishop and Moore visited a zoo, Bishop was visibly upset at the caged animals while Moore, for her part, succeeded in cutting the hair off the head of an elephant to repair a beloved bracelet. Reike comments: "Though charming on its face, the incident subtly complicates Bishop's sketch of Moore. Bishop observes that Moore's passionate interest in the animals seemed to override any 'pain and outrage' at seeing them caged. Bishop expresses her own dismay" (151). In this anecdote, Moore's attitude is one of possession and appropriation, of ownership and, almost literally, dissection. To take a trinket from a caged animal, especially in contrast to Bishop's sympathetic concern, plunders—to use Rieke's term—the animal. Throughout the article, Reike addresses unsettling appropriating tendencies in Moore towards animals, despite and perhaps because of her fascination with them. Moore, Reike suggests, was at times too scientifically involved with these creatures to see them as anything more than specimens for human discovery or as commodities, and she links "Moore's interest in animal collectibles" to "her stance as a scientific precisionist and poetic naturalist" (159). In fact, Moore's interest in animals was varied; the Moore family shared animal nicknames with each other derived from Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in The Willows*, and her animiles, or animal poems, describe animal subjects in painstaking detail. Yet this interest, Rieke's comments indicate, also at times models a scientific humanist perspective, which takes in and records a world that the human mind, in its supremacy, can quantify and understand.

Much criticism on Moore re-affirms this scientific humanist perspective in her work. Writing on Moore's poetry, Natalia Cecire posits that "if modernist poetics involved a heroic, even scientific commitment to a realism more realist than realism, there nonetheless seems to be a critical suspicion that Moore may have even taken it a bit too far" (84). Moore's precise diction and her meticulous detailing have often led critics to argue that Moore casts an empirical and scientific eye on her subjects. Tara Stubbs identifies her as a "poet interested in the 'science' of etymology" (68), Kirstin Hotelling Zona notes Moore's "lifelong devotion to scientific precision" ("Strategic" 77), and William Carlos Williams writes that "with Miss Moore a word is a word most when it is separated out by science, treated with acid to remove the smudges, washed, dried and placed right side up on a clean surface" (318). These arguments can attribute, again, an unfortunate version of humanism to her poetry, if implicitly. In 1968's "The Method of Marianne Moore," R.P Blackmur compares her animiles[7] unfavourably to D.H. Lawrence's own animal poems, arguing that "In Lawrence you feel you have touched the plasm; in Miss Moore you feel you have escaped and come to the idea. The other life is there, but it is round the corner, not so much taken for granted as … not allowed to transpire" (85). In this interpretation, Moore's poetry is merely an academic exercise coming from a mind that is detached from lived life. Moreover, Moore's scientific observations take on qualities of dissection: in the same essay, Blackmur quips that Moore "is content with smallness" (84). These quotations as a whole attest to the tendency to view Moore's poetry, and particularly her work with animals, as still, dead, not poetry but minutiae, and as empirical observations.[8]

As I have argued in the introduction, not all versions or aspects of humanism are inherently pernicious, but this scientific humanist characterization of Moore's work not only simplifies and dismisses the complexity of the relationships her poetry presents, it also opens up her poetry to problematic associations, as in Bishop's anecdote. This perspective places Moore, as the human writer, in an omnipotent position, doling out these empirical observations and reaffirming the centrality of the human at the expense of the complexity of the non-human, so that Moore's animals become specimens rather than subjects.[9] Moreover, in strictly categorizing Moore, critics themselves engage in forms of her reduction, attempting to make her more quantifiable and knowable. H.D. designated Moore, Victoria Bazin reports, "The perfect technician" (63) in a review in *The Egoist* in 1916, while in 1929 Allen Tate identified her as a poet "whose verse emanates from a 'perceptive mechanism' rather than human sentiment" (63). This commentary renders Moore as a non-human other, but this is not a posthumanist otherness; it makes her into a precise humanist tool. Although this chapter will focus on the nuanced relationships between human and non-human, subject and object, here Moore becomes unfortunately conflated with her empirical observations: she becomes a quantifiable, personified instrument of humanism rather than human herself.

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[7] Notably for my work with prosthetics in this chapter, "animiles" evoke "similes"

[8] See further: Jennie-Rebecca Falcetta's "Acts of Containment: Marianne Moore, Joseph Cornell, and the Poetics of Enclosure" (2006) amd Joanne Feit Diehls, *Elizabeth Bishop and Marianne Moore: The Psychodynamics of Creativity* (1993).

Moreover, this implicitly scientific humanist perspective on Moore's work links Moore's poetry to the kind of Enlightenment knowledge Altieri associates with "stateable criteria" (260) and the pursuit of stable truth. Scientific humanism relies on "totalization in the ideologies of objectivity" (Haraway 191), constructing knowledge as a rational, objective pursuit that parses out truth from untruth—this is the construction of knowledge to which situated knowledges responds. In associating Moore's work with the tenets of scientific humanism, this criticism characterizes Moore's poetry as a contained and containing entity, placing a binary—and a boundary—upon that which is known and true and that which is unknown, without much interest in the in between; in this view, her poetry's perspective is acute and precise, but ultimately narrow.

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[9] Benjamin Johnson takes issue, as I do, with this kind of reductive categorization of Moore's animals. "The Jerboa," he argues, "resists the type of allegorical reading that would see in the jerboa a model for human morality, and leads us to see that the jerboa's fortitude and adaptability exceed human capabilities, and therefore mark our moral and aesthetic limitations" (63). Srikanth Reddy also notes and argues against the critical tendency to regard "The Pangolin" not as about the pangolin itself, but rather as about the abstract, moral virtue of grace. Reddy argues that these interpretations do not take into account that the poem, while at once about grace and human nature, is also very much about the pangolin itself as a subject.

Some critics also view Moore's animals as, if not scientific specimens, neat moral paragons that are largely reducible to allegories.[10] The move from scientific classification of these animals to viewing them as allegories still works from the same processes of containment, as emphasizing the neatness of Moore's animals parallels empirical, scientific observation in its faith in a complete, contained understanding of these animals. Critics such as Linda Leavell in *Prismatic Color* (191) and Ann Struthers in "Marianne Moore's Use of Grace in 'The Pangolin'" (130) read the pangolin of the poem's title as primarily representing "grace," reducing the animal, in the manner of a fable, to a one-dimensional moral or aspect with a clear and defined lesson. This kind of commentary is also closely associated with the tendency to see Moore's animals as curios. In his essay "Poetry in War and Peace" Randal Jarrell argues that Moore "sends postcards to only the nicer animals" (121) and that her "little animals" and "bric-a-brac" (122) exist only as contained, aesthetic fables. Joseph Cornell also refers to Moore's animals as "curious" (qtd. in Reddy 453), linking them to curiosities and small objects, as if they were specimens in a *Wunderkammer.* Likewise, T.S. Eliot linked Moore's animiles to "the pleasurable astonishment evoked by the carved ivory ball with eleven other balls inside it" (Surette, *Dilemma* 26-7).

This characterization also adds a facet of feminine domestication to the lexicon of containment in Moore's work. As Bazin writes," "Miss Moore" was seen as "the fussy, overly fastidious" poet "out of touch with modern life" (61), and Cecire notes that "there could hardly be a modernist writer more self-consciously fashioned as an Aunt Hepsy [Ezra Pound's term for a type his poetry wished to move away from] than Marianne Moore—famously celibate, 'nice' in both senses, continuously interested in popular culture, and given to the proliferation of detail" (102). These are qualities of domesticated, feminine containment: Moore is neat, polite, and detail oriented, but in fussy, fastidious ways that evoke embroidery rather than virtuosity. Viewing Moore's animal subjects as *Wunderkammer* curios transfers these qualities to her animiles: these "neat," "nice" moral paragons might astonish, but only pleasurably and politely. Likewise, Moore's detail is meticulous, proliferating, but not necessarily overwhelming. In this conception of her work, Moore's animiles, to quote "The Jerboa," will never be "too much."

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[10] As Victoria Bazin points out, there is a tendency to interpret Moore's animiles "as self-portraits or as moral emblems" (154).

My discussion will work against such characterizations of Moore and her modernism, combating depictions of her poetry as contained, whether through its association to scientific humanism or the domesticated feminine.[11] Instead, I argue that Moore engages with a modernist form of posthumanism—that is, she engages with posthumanist thought through modernist contexts and means—as a strategy to escape reductive categorizations of self and other, human and animal, and in so doing escapes her own containment. In fact, in her article title, Rieke sets Moore's scientific plundering in tension with 'Accessibility to Experience,' or Moore's interest and curiosity in the experience and subjectivity of animals. As Rieke argues, referring to the Moore family's animal nicknames for each other, "A preoccupation with animal natures permeated her … life from a very early age—her most intimate family bonds with her mother and brother [were] built upon these animal identities" (155). Moore's preoccupation with animals takes on many forms, and while her work at times does follow the scientific humanist lines of thought delineated above, her poetry also often registers the complexity and unknowability of the animal, turning her curiosity and preoccupation with animals from an appropriating, controlling move to a posthumanist exploration of the multiple vectors and partialities of knowledge.

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[11] Moore's posthumanism thus also acts as a response to her own critical, often feminine, containment; although Moore's response to feminine control is more oblique than H.D.'s and Loy's responses, it sets up processes of feminist escape into excess that the dissertation will explore further.

Her poetry thus extends into a posthumanist ethical project to respect the complexity and unknowability of the other. Moore plays with the unknowability of the other in poems such as “A Jelly-Fish” and “The Buffalo,” while in “The Jerboa and “The Pangolin,” the two main case studies of this chapter, Moore’s syllabic verse mechanically structures metaphors and similes that re-imagine and embody Moore’s animals alternatively through prosthesis. This prosthesis extends the animal identities beyond contained definitions and binary forms of knowledge, and creates poetic conditions that depict these animals wondrously as known, unknown, and unknowable, frustrating “plundering,” Enlightenment knowledge of these creatures and encouraging instead what Haraway names as “shapes of attention, listening, and respect” (*Species* 63) to the complexity of the other. The exotic nature of Moore’s animals often aids this unknowability, and the detail with which Moore wields her prostheses renders these animals as at once distinct and yet shifting in their meticulous comparisons to other animals. Moreover, the prosthetic hyperextension of her animals constantly creates links between and among animals and pushes through the various containments—both from scientific humanist discourses and feminine politeness—criticism has placed upon her work. Often times we are not meant to fully know these animals (we see them only through an accrual of various fragments of other animals) and their excessive, hyperextended nature prevents them from polite display in the *Wunderkammer*.

Finally, Moore’s prosthetic hyperextension also combats the normative bodily containment of the liberal humanist subject. The liberal humanist subject, as Hayles notes, has a "possessive individualism" (34). Moreover, again from Hayles, "Identified with the rational mind, the liberal subject *possessed* a body but was not usually represented as *being* a body" with a universality that "depends on erasing markers of bodily difference, including sex, race, and ethnicity" (4-5). The liberal subject's "possession" of a body does not allow for the loss of autonomy or control prosthesis might introduce, and markers of difference—such as disability—threaten its normative, neutral status. The liberal subject, like scientific humanism, operates from a desire for containment—here not of truth away from untruth, but rather of human self away from mechanical other, to better preserve its "wholeness." Moore's prosthesis speaks back to this ideal body and constructs excessive animal bodies through prosthetic fragments, denying anxieties about normative "wholeness" and moving on from Booher's description of transhumanist prosthesis as a contained, compensatory "A + B" relationship. Throughout this chapter, as with this dissertation as a whole, I re-interrogate and re-read assumptions about modernism and modernist writers: while Moore's mechanical, exacting aesthetic has been used to define—and indeed contain—her work as scientific and objective as well as neat and feminine, I will refigure Moore's animiles as sensitive, posthumanist negotiations and portrayals of otherness that combat the containment of scientific humanism, Moore's feminine domestication, and the "wholeness" of the liberal humanist subject.

Although criticism has long noted modernism's interest in animals and alterity more generally, critics have seldom viewed Moore's work through a posthumanist lens in a sustained fashion. Bazin's work comes close to this topic, and her work with Moore deftly parses out the mechanical aspects of her poetry, with Bazin arguing that "In the age of mechanical reproduction, Moore's machine aesthetic troubles the boundaries between the human and the non-human" (74). Bazin refers to, but only rather vaguely, the basic posthumanist "troubling" of the conventionally understood boundaries between human and non-human. In *The Feminist Poetics of Self-Restraint*, Hotelling Zona refers to situated knowledges and explicitly uses Donna Haraway's cyborg in her discussion of "The Fish." As she writes, in the poem the body "becomes inextricably wed to its surroundings; fish are buoyed by the sea in which they live, a chameleon feeds upon the light that paints its skin. Moore's explorations of embodiment find current expression in Haraway's cyborg, a fusion of human, animal, and machine" (30). While these observations are acute, they do not, however, deal in any specific way with posthumanist theory. They nod to posthumanism, brush up against it, but do not discuss what it would mean for Moore to be credited with an explicitly posthumanist poetics or a particularly posthumanist response to her poetic encounters with alterity. A more sustained and more specific posthumanist reading will shed light on further aspects and effects of Moore's modernist posthumanism.

Indeed, Moore's prosthesis works in explicit, specific ways: her figurative language, namely her metaphors and similes (evocative of "animiles"), transforms into prosthetic attachments, building up her animal subjects—a process her mechanical syllabic verse helps along. This specificity is necessary since, as Vivian Sobchack points out, prosthesis "whether noun or (more frequently) adjective, has become tropological currency for describing a vague and shifting constellation of relationships among bodies, technologies, and subjectivities" (19). Sobchack laments how in many metaphorical, theoretical studies of prosthesis "the literal and material groundwork of the [prosthetic] metaphor has been largely forgotten, if not disavowed" (20). Metaphor, she argues, "is, by tropological nature, a *displacement*: a nominative term is displaced from its mundane (hence literal, non figural) context and placed elsewhere to illuminate some other context through its *refiguration*" (21), so that prosthetic metaphors often abstract and erase actual lived experience with prosthesis. This is particularly true, Sobchack argues, when prosthesis is adjectival, that is when it "characteriz[es] and qualif[ies] other nouns rather than serving a noun function itself: 'prosthetic memory,' 'prosthetic territories,' and so forth" (25).

As this project explores how Moore's metaphors and similes act as prostheses, it necessarily engages in this abstraction away from lived experience, and there are necessarily limits on how much Moore's figurative language aligns with real-world prosthesis. Nonetheless, throughout the article Sobchack does relate her personal experience with prosthesis to various figurative complexes, from metaphor to metonymy (25) to synecdoche (26), indicating that figurative language can still evoke prosthesis. Moreover, Moore's metaphors and similes are nouns, not adjectives—they have immediacy in that they *are* the prosthetic unit and attach different qualities and perspectives onto the animal subject. Even so, the displacement of metaphor and simile is also potentially beneficial, as it defamiliarizes and re-contextualizes Moore's animal subjects. Figurative language such as metaphor and simile act as *both* as a connection and displacement. Like prosthetics, they merge two parts while pointing to a fracture, a space between these parts. Moore's figurative, prosthetic descriptions of these animals build these animals up through hyperextension and yet keep readers from fully grasping the animal, as the poems' language often reveals the lack of a fixed referent or meaning.

More specifically, Moore's prosthesis works through several effects that de-familiarize the animal. She creates prosthetic, cyborg-like animals by focusing on fragmented details of her chosen animal alongside what can feel like somewhat frenetic catalogues of comparisons with other animals. For example, the jerboa "is buff-brown like the breast of the fawn-breasted / bower-bird" (119-20). These moves of simile and metaphor hyperextend her animal subjects: they become composed entirely of add-ons, an effect that Moore's conspicuous and abundant alliteration emphasizes, flagging this strange jerboa as both an animal and as made up of words. Moore’s metaphors are particularly effective at this, as readers are forced not just to ask if the jerboa is brown *like* “the breast of the fawn-breasted / bower bird” (119-20) but also to confront its “chipmunk contours” directly and ask if the jerboa *is* also, somehow, a chipmunk. Metaphor produces a firmer attachment between parts, but Moore’s similes set up and venture these connections as well, constructing and hyperextending these creatures beyond their expected boundaries. Thus, although Sobchack worries that “unlike Donna Haraway’s nonhierarchical and hybrid cyborg, the metaphor of the prosthetic and its technological interface with the body is predicated on a naturalized sense of the body’s previous and privileged ‘wholeness’” (22), in contrast, Moore’s animiles deny wholeness or a singular, ideal form and celebrate the additive potential of fragmentation through prosthetic hyperextension and proliferation of connections.

Sobchack, in connecting prosthesis to figurative language, directs attention to Moore’s similes and metaphors, but Moore’s work with prosthesis also appears through other dimensions of her verse. Although Moore at times uses metaphor and simile to connect her animals to technological descriptions—the jerboa, in nearby lines, is also “silvered to steel” (132)—Moore’s figurative-language-as-prosthesis also takes on technological qualities through her mechanical syllabic verse.[12] Margaret Holley argues that Moore’s syllabic verse is made up of the interplay between mechanical and natural forces. For Holley, her syllabic metre works from one or two “model stanzas,” and Moore structures the rest of the poem through these stanzas. This creative process, Holley posits, fuses organic artistry and mechanical, set composition.

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[12] Bazin argues that Moore’s syllabic verse has a “mechanical” and “mathematical precision” and “structure” (65), and Hugh Kenner argues that “The Fish” must have been “conceived in a typewriter” (qtd. in Bazin 67). In his article “Poetry as Prosthesis” (2000), Brian McHale considers various forms of “machine poetry,” defining machine poetry broadly as anything with a fixed process of composition. Of course, this could include any poetry with metre, but Moore’s syllabic verse in particular, with its strong rhythms and frequent forced enjambments, seems especially drawn from a fixed mechanical process. McHale argues that “machine composition is always a cyborg” (24), and always prosthetic.

Moore's duplication of the organically formed model stanzas "transforms a unique, relatively organic pattern into a replicated, relatively mechanical pattern, so that one and the same syllabic configuration appears natural to one syntax and artificial to another" (186). Because of this, "her verse offers us a chance to observe the dissolution, or relative status, of … binary oppositions" (186). Syllabic metre's blend of the organic and the mechanical provides an explicitly technological, cyborg-like facet to Moore's prosthetic metaphors and similes. The frequent enjambment of Moore's syllabic verse—"the fawn-breasted / bower-bird"—increases these effects and renders these subjects more mechanical, as the often inorganic, at times unexpected enjambment of syllabic metre gives the impression of a machine. Syllabic verse thus emphasizes the effects of prosthesis, giving these animals a pieced-together impression and defamiliarizing or cognitively estranging them, preventing readers from seeing them as whole entities.[13]

Finally, the term "wonder," which I invoked above, also needs to be unpacked before I approach Moore's posthumanism. In using the term, I follow Seo-Young Chu's work in *Do Metaphors Dream of Literal Sleep?* Chu argues that science fiction as a genre is defined not by an attempt to describe the future, or robots, or any other particular fantastical or extraordinary topic, but rather by a characteristic approach to depicting these topics. As Chu argues, even though "traditionally science fiction (SF) has been understood as a genre whose objects of representation are hypothetical if not outright imaginary" (1), it is actually "a mimetic discourse whose objects of representation are non imaginary yet cognitively estranging" (3), and is a discourse that employs "high intensity mimesis" (7). This cognitive estrangement, Chu further notes, produces wonder, which she associates with a "horizon-effect of the known, the unknown and the unknowable" (5). In this sense, "wonder" is not only a readerly affect that the text produces, but also a way of depicting subjects that takes into account the known, unknown, and unknowable aspects of these subjects.

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[13] Viktor Shklovsky's 1917 definition of de-familiarization as a modernist technique is useful here, as Moore's use of language points to the constructed quality of poetry and re-structures our notions of the animal.

Although I am not categorizing Moore's work as science fiction, this is germane to my work with Moore's animal poems, which also take a non-imaginary object, and, through the torque of high intensity mimesis, render their animal subjects as familiar and unfamiliar, partially known and unknown, subject and object. Moore's famously lavish and technical detail creates this high intensity mimesis, but she also has the advantage of writing poetry, which further torques mimesis, and I will attend to what her work does as poetry, particularly formally and in her syllabic metre. Like Moore's prosthesis, wonder, as a juncture of the known and unknown, allows for accounts of the other that move beyond the structures of knowledge through which we have come to know these others. Wonder allows for the creation of imagined and alternative realities, experiences, and relationships, and can, in a posthumanist manner, reconfigure dominant and oppressive structures and realities. Poetry, likewise, has the power to reconfigure and to encourage readers to know and feel in alternative ways to the models dominant power structures set out, models that would have the human appropriate the animal.[14]

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[14] This feeling of wonder is aided in part, I argue, by what Hotelling Zona identifies as Moore's modernist "distrust of the Lyric I" (16), an attribute she connects to modernism's interest in impersonality and objectivity in the face of new scientific discoveries and the crumbling of universal belief systems. This impersonality, however, did not come about without tension, and modernists "attempted in a variety of ways to strike a balance between the individualistic thrust to 'make it new' and a growing wariness of universal truths" (15). Hotelling Zona argues that Moore embraced this tension even more than contemporaries such as T.S. Eliot and Wallace Stevens. As she writes, "Indeed, whereas other modernists sometimes saw this paradox as a problem to be solved, Moore unceremoniously marshaled it as the goal of her poetic" (16). Moore's work approaches notions of subjectivity with trepidation but without dismissing subjectivity, and this feature of Moore's modernism allows for a potentially posthumanist interplay between subject and object, known and unknown, in her poetry.

This is in some disagreement with Chu's argument, which posits that the lyric voice of science fiction actually helps with immersive, intense mimesis. As she writes,

> The qualities that … make a work of science fiction 'science-fictional' tend to coincide with the qualities that … make a lyric poem 'lyrical.' The coincidence lies in more than a shared intensity of figurative language … Lyric poetry is frequently soliloquy-like. Lyric voices sneak from beyond ordinary time. Lyric poems are inhabited by situations and tableaux transcending ordinary temporality. Lyric descriptions are charged with descriptive intensity. Lyric poetry is musically expressive. Lyric poems evoke heightened and eccentric states of consciousness. These statements … are true of SF as well. (13-14)

Admittedly, this is not in complete opposition with what I argue concerning Moore's poetry, for this is a distrust, not

Chu's work with wonder also helps me to refigure the polite, feminine containment of some characterizations of Moore's animiles, and I choose the term "wonder" over other related categories of experience such as the uncanny and the sublime in part because the term responds more directly to these associations. T.S. Eliot's comment that Moore's animiles are akin to "the pleasurable astonishment evoked by the carved ivory ball with eleven other balls inside it" (Surette, *Dilemma* 26-7) evokes a wonder that is polite and contained. These bric-a-brac and curio descriptions characterize Moore's work as more concerned with contained, feminized wonder than with the expansive, unknown wonder explored above. Chu's work with wonder as a horizon of the known, the unknown, and the unknowable counters this perception of Moore's work as a curiosity cabinet or *Wunderkammer*; without denying that there is a driving curiosity to Moore's poetry, it turns wonder from a controlled pleasure in small things to a defamiliarizing experience. Viewing her animiles as shifting contact zones frees these animals from the feminine confines of the *Wunderkammer* as they accrue shifting, various meanings, and frees Moore's work from this lens of domesticated, contained femininity. Likewise, these encounters destabilize the assumed primacy and superiority of the human being, as the animals are rendered excessive and unknowable and so are not neat foils to human experience.

Her animiles, however, do not always produce these kinds of experiences; they are not always wholly posthumanist. Commenting on Hotelling Zona's feminist interpretations of Moore, Bazin writes that

> In attempting to interpret Moore's poetry in relation to contemporary feminist theory, Hotelling Zona has neglected to establish Moore as a distinctly modernist feminist. In

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a dismissal, of the lyric 'I.' Indeed, if Moore's poetry were mere objective description this would hamper attempts to produce an encounter with the animal and an experience of wonder, not to mention deposit her back into the humanist tradition. It is this toggling between subjective and objective, I argue, that distinguishes Moore's particular use of high intensity mimesis and modernist posthumanism.

> doing so, Moore is once again returned to a site of aesthetic purity, detached from her historical moment and distant from her own contemporary concerns. (3)

Following Bazin, I want to be sensitive to Moore's own time and place so as not to reduce her once more in a different way. As a result, I do not want to imply that in my approach posthumanism is merely mapped onto an inert modernism or an inert Moore. Instead modernism—and even more specifically, Moore's poetry—reflects its own particular early twentieth-century version of posthumanism. Likewise, I avoid characterizing Moore's poetry, or any of the works I deal with in this project, as postmodernist in favour of rooting it in its particular place and time rather than re-inscribing it, in a wholesale fashion, within another movement or era. Modernism and its early twentieth-century milieu do exhibit patterns of attention to the same facets of the other that posthumanism exhibits. Nonetheless, there are times when Moore's poetry engages with problematic aspects of humanism or does not fully succeed in presenting a posthumanist experience to readers.

Moore's posthumanist rendering of these animals exists in a delicate balance not only between her modernism and posthumanism but between the known, unknown, and unknowable aspects of her animal subjects. If the human subject identifies too deeply with the non-human subject, this has the potential to become an appropriative relationship, wherein the human puts on, as a kind of mask, the animal or machine identity, thus smoothing over any real questioning of the human identity. This, as Wolfe argues, often describes the position of liberal humanism and its "Self-flattering 'benevolence'" (118) towards non-human others. Accordingly, a posthumanist experience can only fully manifest if a certain appropriating, colonizing relationship is in abeyance. On the other hand, the human cannot stand at arm's-length from the animal in this encounter either, for that would enact the position of scientific humanism, whereby the human comes from an objective angle to dissect the anatomy of the animal specimen without engaging with its identity. Both stances reach for what Rieke calls a "plundering" knowledge of the other rather than engaging with the complexity and unknowability of this other. Instead, Haraway values and encourages what she describes as a fluid, ambivalent and constantly alive symbiotic relationship—as in the relationship between herself and her Australian Shepherd, Cayenne, in their competitive agility work. Haraway writes of "multispecies coflourishing" and "species entanglements" that "[require] simultaneous, contradictory truths" (*Species* 105-6).[15] Posthumanist interactions are, to adapt Mary Louise Pratt's term, fertile contact zones of possibility and ambiguity: these contact zones provide beneficial opportunities to engage with the other, reshape myopic assumptions of human superiority, and exceed categorizations of self and other.

Moore's animiles do foster fertile, posthumanist contact zones through her figurative, prosthetic language and mechanical syllabic verse, which connect and hyperextend these animals. In "The Jerboa" and "The Pangolin," her figurative prosthetics—that is, prosthetic work enacted by way of figurative language—bring different parts of one animal into contact with another, embodying the animal alternatively and creating a subject that is more than the sum of its parts—equally known, unknown, and unknowable. This is mirrored on the level of the poems' metre and rhythm, as the bodies and syllabic rhythms of the poems themselves shift, disrupt, and reconfigure themselves, showcasing a form of alternative embodiment. "A Jelly-Fish" and "The Buffalo" set up and play with this unknowability, as Moore crafts intimate and ironic depictions of contact with the animal. Moore's animiles exceed and challenge normative ideas and narratives about the animal, and, through their prosthetic hyperextension, demonstrate that

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[15] This later work of Haraway's is also still partially founded on her notion in the early "A Cyborg Manifesto" of the Cyborg as a figure of dangerous "transgressed boundaries" (154) that owes no allegiances to morality or religion.

Moore's oeuvre should not be associated with implicitly feminine domestication and scientific containment. In short, Moore's strategic posthumanism—in the interaction of prosthetics and an interest in non-normative identity—works towards an escape from feminine containment, denies the fantasy of the whole, individual body, and frustrates narratives about the animal other.

"A Jelly-Fish," a version of which was published in 1909 in Bryn Mawr's *The Lantern* and then later published in 1959 in *O to Be a Dragon*, encapsulates Moore's work with wonder, and I use the latter version as a preface to my work with her longer animiles. Unlike works such as "The Jerboa," the poem does not rub up against or confront a kind of appropriating humanism, or self-consciously compare itself to the human as in "The Pangolin." Instead, the speaker of the poem addresses and interpellates "you," as you encounter a jellyfish, playing with interaction and the known, unknown, and unknowable. "A Jelly-Fish" renders a quiet, personal moment and mirrors the kind of everyday, accessible, and even fleeting symbiosis that Haraway champions in *When Species Meet*. This encounter is also devoid of the mechanical, prosthetic imagery of the other poems I will deal with, although Moore's syllabic verse, with what feel like mechanical effects, is still important. Nonetheless, the encounter is specifically posthumanist: the boundary troubling arises out of a relationship of wonder between the jellyfish and the reader, and moves beyond a modernist experiment with alterity.

"A Jelly-Fish" is brief but complex:

> Visible, invisible,
>   a fluctuating charm
> an amber-tinctured amethyst
>   inhabits it, your arm

> approaches it and it opens
>   and closes; you had meant
> to catch it and it quivers;
>   you abandon your intent (1-8)

Although Moore's other animiles often produce a higher resolution depiction of their animal subjects than does this one, this depiction of the jellyfish might still be considered through Chu's high intensity mimesis. Moore zooms in on reality, focusing in on the ephemeral quality of the jellyfish: its translucence, its floating tendrils, its quivering movement. The effect estranges us with respect to the jellyfish while nonetheless remaining faithful to its being; it expresses both known and unknown in depicting these characteristics without pinning them down, working through both the "visible" and "invisible" qualities of the jellyfish. Even formally, the poem resembles links in a chain, with interlocking in-and-outs, known and unknown, subject and other, as mirrored in Moore's hyphenation of "A Jelly-Fish."

The lineation also contributes to an effect of estrangement, as the lines continually shift in and out—equally estranging is how this short and quick lineation emphasizes that this is a jellyfish made out of words. Furthermore, the ins-and-outs of the lines mirror the "fluctuating charm" of the jellyfish. There is a shift between "you" and "it" throughout the poem that mirrors the jellyfish's moves between visible and invisible: the jellyfish, as the subject of the poem, controls the poem. The poem also pulls a kind of trick by describing the "fluctuating charm," the "amber-tincture amethyst," that we might assume to be the jellyfish. However, the next line clarifies that this amethyst merely inhabits "it," making it unclear—as Moore will do with the jerboa and the pangolin—exactly what part of the poem's description counts as the jellyfish. Nonetheless, as the poem goes on it becomes unclear what part counts as the jellyfish and what part counts as *you*. At the very centre of the poem, when “your arm / approaches it and it opens / and it closes,” the “it” could just as easily be “your” hand attempting to touch the jellyfish or the jellyfish itself. When “you had meant / to catch it and it quivers,” the second “it” could again be your own arm, or the jellyfish. For most of the poem, then, “you” enter into a symbiotic relationship with the jellyfish, as each figure could be mistaken for the other and yet both are needed for the experience. If you ultimately “abandon your intent,” it is because the jellyfish cannot be owned or grasped—posthumanist relationships are delicate, difficult equilibriums. The jellyfish, instead, slips away from the poem—and it does so because you as the human, in abandoning your intent, must confront an otherness that cannot be owned fully.

Modernist Contexts

The conditions for this kind of sensitive posthumanist work with the other emerge from Moore’s early twentieth-century cultural context. Post-Darwinian theories on evolution and the animal, as well as ever more sophisticated productions of machinery and prosthetics, particularly beginning after World War I, began to blur the boundary between human and animal as well as between human and machine. In humanist thought, the animal often defines the human through contrast and a subordinate positioning to the human. As Phillip Armstrong writes, “Claude Lévi-Strauss famously declared animals ‘good to think with’ (1963: 89), implying that animality mediates the construction of humanity, so that animals mean whatever cultures mean by them” (2). Darwin’s theories of evolution, however, disrupted this impulse to use animals only as a way to construct humanity and its superiority through opposition, as Darwinism emphasized “humanity’s link to the rest of the animal world” in a way that “surfaced as a recurrent and unnerving point of conflict in scientific and philosophical discussions” (Rohman 2). Human beings were no longer special anomalies in the world: Darwin's theories indicated the long and diversified history of biological development, linking humans not only to other mammals such as apes but, although further back, to reptiles and even insects. Our own development became inseparable from that of other species, as the engine of evolution and survival of the fittest drove all life.

Yet, as Carrie Rohman puts it in *Stalking the Subject,* "The deeply threatening nature of Darwinism is registered in the rapid development of social Darwinisms, the revamping of social hierarchies that valued given culture or gender according to its perceived distance from the animal in the chain of evolutionary progress" (22). The opportunity for species boundary blurring in Darwinian evolution often elicited anxiety and a further re-entrenchment in the superiority of the human as apart from the animal. Furthermore, for Rohman, this crisis was also present in psychoanalysis in the early twentieth century. As she writes, "Freudian ideology links the human with the animal *and* distances itself from that linkage" as "Psychoanalysis stages what Žižek would call an 'impossible convergence' of ontological opposites, in the human and animal, a convergence that modernism makes possible for the first time. And subsequently Freud's work, like modernism itself, must try to contain and control that unthinkable linkage" (22). Many responses to Darwinism, then, re-enacted this containing humanist response that separated the human from the animal.

As a result, when Moore's poetic contemporaries dealt with the question of the animal, their work often functioned from anxieties about, rather than a deeper engagement with, the other. Modernist poets often wrote on the animal, from T.S. Eliot's anthropomorphic cat imagery, famously in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and at length in *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, to D.H. Lawrence's animal poems, as in *Birds, Beasts and Flowers.* Yet for

Rohman, "The vigorous reentrenchment of animality away from the European subject in the work of T.S. Eliot, Joseph Conrad, and D.H. Lawrence reveals how deeply the animal threatened a destabilization of that subject." She further argues that "For writers like Eliot, and more complexly, Conrad, the animal reveals a breaking point beyond which they are not willing to let the subject go" (30). Although these modernists are interested in alterity, they are perhaps still more concerned with re-confirming rather than interrogating the human self through the non-human other.

Machine technology—and specifically for my project, prosthesis—was also at the forefront of the cultural psyche in the First Machine Age of the early twentieth century. New machine technologies created a stir of optimism and inspiration among modernist writers, and while modernist poets such as Eliot and Lawrence were examining the *animal* other, the modernist avant-garde, represented in movements such as Dada, Vorticism, and Italian Futurism, was working with the *mechanical* other. In "Blueprints for Babylon," David Ashford recounts the Futurist and Vorticist responses to new technological developments and the mass production that went along with it. Ashford relays F.T. Marinetti's thrill at the prospect of the tube and its potential to encapsulate the Futurist commitment to speed: "Marinetti's tube-car would have rattled and swerved through narrow tunnels far below London: the same ecstatic sensation of power and speed he had taken from automobiles, imparted to the Futurist through a mechanism that constituted an entire urban environment!" (738) Although Ashford argues that the Vorticist response to this technology was more ambivalent, Vorticist work nonetheless emerged from what was called the First Machine Age, and Wyndham Lewis often grappled with how to represent the machine in art.[16]

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[16] See his cover of *Blast* no. 2 (1912), "Timon of Athens," and "Figure Composition (Man and Woman with Two Bulldogs)," which each depict a meeting of human and machine.

A key feature of this new machine technology was prosthesis, and with wounded men—often amputees—coming back from World War I, prosthesis soon became a key feature of the cultural identity as a whole. Elspeth Brown's "The Prosthetics of Management" addresses early twentieth-century management consultant Frank Gilbreth and his wife Lillian Gilbreth, an industrial psychologist, and reveals the importance of prosthetics after the war. Both the Gilbreths were opposed to Frederick Winslow Taylor's theories on labour efficiency and developed their own methods. As Brown relays, over a number of years starting from 1912, Frank Gilbreth painstakingly photographed workers in various positions and worked on detailed motion studies to develop the most efficient movements for various tasks.[17] Since the Gilbreths' charts, visuals, and manuals focused on reducing unnecessary movements and even limbs, Frank Gilbreth soon began marketing their work towards the disabled men coming home from World War I. As Brown writes, "At a time when scientific management's reputation had been seriously undermined by years of sustained critique on the part of organized labor, Gilbreth effectively outflanked his critics by wrapping motion study in the patriotic flag of war hero rehabilitation" (263). Although the Gilbreths focused less on prosthetic limbs and more on changing the machinery to fit amputee veterans, they still rooted themselves in a discussion about how prosthesis could redefine and reconstruct the human body.

Early twentieth-century contexts for prosthesis have generated much critical commentary on the era, commentary on which I will build. For Hal Foster, the early twentieth-century reaction to prosthesis was divided between anxiety and excitement in what he calls "the double logic of prosthesis" (124). As he writes, the modernist era "still treated the body and the machine as separate entities, with the first often projected as a natural whole, the second as an autonomous agent. So opposed, the two could only conjoin, ecstatically or torturously, and technology could only be a ‘magnificent’ extension of the body or a ‘troubled’ constriction of it” (109). This magnificent extension of prosthesis, moreover, tried to make the body “more than whole” (124). Foster’s conception of prosthesis follows other commentary on prosthesis: for modernist critic Jessica Burstein, for instance, through the war “the soldierly body went through a transformation from a historical, wounded body into a non-historical aestheticized body” and “this new body, the prosthetic body, succeeds where the previous body failed” (142). Prosthetic technology in modernism often represents either the failure of the historical body or the rebirth of that body into a glorified aesthetic figure. Moreover, both constructions lament the loss of the normative, neutralized, and contained body of the liberal humanist subject, or else overcompensate by making the body “more than whole.” Thus, even though prosthesis introduces alterity to physicality, the prostheses of Foster and Burstein’s descriptions still proceed from humanist assumptions about the body, which is why, since these prosthetics threaten to disrupt the idealized “wholeness” of the liberal humanist subject, these descriptions are anxious constructions of the body.

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[17] Brown posits that Lillian Gilbreth, an educated professional, often wrote the works that would go on to be attributed to Frank (252).

Foster also argues that this modernist view of the double logic of prosthesis is not an either/or construction; this use of prosthesis is always both troubled *and* magnificent: facing the wounded, war-torn body, the modernist avant-garde in particular overcompensated for the anxiety that body produced, and so positioned the prosthetic as a glorified, aesthetic enhancement through which the human could become hyperextended and superhuman, as I will show in part through Jacob Epstein’s *Rock Drill*. As Foster writes, prosthesis is “a fetishistic operation—to turn an agent of trauma into a shield against this same trauma” (124). Through glorification, these conceptions of prosthesis often attempt to neutralize the fears of the incomplete body that both the soldierly body and the machine-as-body produce. The body, though enhanced by prosthetics, is still in full control of this machinery while these aesthetics partly erase or hide bodily incompleteness. As a result, this prosthesis becomes much like that of the modernist work with the animal I described above: the early twentieth century, when faced with a figure that could potentially question the superiority of the human, often used the other only to re-confirm the superiority of the human in a compensatory maneuver. In some ways, these maneuvers are potentially posthumanist, as they necessarily involve a melding of the human and the machine. Yet the desire to confirm the human and control the machine—as well as the adherence to normative ideas about the body—lacks the symbiosis and complexity of the other I identify in Moore, H.D., and Loy's posthumanisms.

Take the Gilbreths for example. Although they ostensibly worked for disabled war veterans, and advertised their work as such, Brown argues that their "work here is emphatically not with the physically disabled" (254). The Gilbreths created a series of photographs that purported to show the disabled in a variety of occupations, but these were often "an able-bodied person simulating a handicap" (266): one photo seems to be a dentist without his left limb, yet Lillian Gilbreth's correspondence openly admits this was an able-bodied man who agreed to show how to clean teeth one-handed (266). In this photo, the disabled war veteran is aestheticized and then evacuated from the depiction, and as Brown writes, "There is no evidence that the Gilbreths did much work besides the rhetorical with the disabled during Frank's lifetime" (271): the Gilbreths did not re-read ideas of the hale body, and instead used prosthetics in order to maintain received ideals about this hale body and to help the disabled reach these ideals, as with the supercrip. Furthermore, "the few examples that mark their work before Frank Gilbreth's death in 1924 represent disabled workers whom the Gilbreths came across in the course of their general motion study contracts, and most of these few disabled workers were not war-disabled" (271). Although historical anxieties about the wounded soldier allowed the Gilbreths to make money for their motion study consultations, the soldiers themselves, perhaps because of these anxieties, had no lived place in the project, and the Gilbreths rendered the trauma of prosthesis controllable through its merely referential status in their work.

Wyndham Lewis' article "The Machine" further indicates the need to control and glorify the prosthesis to which this incomplete, anxiety-ridden body may connect. Lewis argues in the article that his age has not successfully changed the world with new technologies. Yet he does not desire a restructuring of the human, but laments that the non-human did not provide a way towards, in his words, the superhuman. He writes that "Meanwhile *the human* seems to have the advantage of the *non-human,* or the superhuman. Where men have physically been able to act the giant, and chop through nature, instead of crawling over it, in the manner of Lilliput … they have not been able to supply the appropriate *mind* for the super-body, that is the trouble" (171). In this quotation, Lewis gestures towards—but does not value—a posthumanist frame of mind, one that is supple and sensitive, which attempts to immerse itself in the other, or crawl through it, rather than overwhelm it, or chop through it. His goal here is to uphold the notion of the superhuman as something that will eventually allow humans to wield the non-human and become glorified and superior. Lewis argues that we are locked in a battle with the machine, which could be "destructive of all value and human significance" (174). Although these opinions are not representative of all of Lewis' work,[18] "The Machine" describes an anxious battle for human control over the machine, before it controls us. The machine—and by extension the prosthetic—can make us glorified and superhuman only as long as we have complete control.

The Vorticist Jacob Epstein's sculpture *Rock Drill* appears at first to work from similar lines of thought. Epstein describes the sculpture, which shows a sleek robot with a drill:

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[18] See *The Wild Body* (1927).

> It was in the experimental pre-war days of 1913 that I was fired to do the Rock Drill, and my ardor for machinery (shortlived) expended itself upon the purchase of an actual drill, second hand, and upon this I made and mounted a machinelike robot, visored, menacing, and carrying within itself its progeny, protectively ensconced. Here is the armed, sinister figure of today and tomorrow. No humanity, only the terrible Frankenstein we have made our selves into. (48)

This quotation, with its menacing and terrible Frankenstein, mirrors Lewis' depiction of technology in "The Machine," where humanity's relationship with machinery is a Hobbesian power struggle, and Epstein's effort to depict the robot seems to expend and exhaust him. The figure is hyperextended: we cannot see where the robot ends and the rock drill begins, yet the prosthesis presented here does not even need the organic. Instead, it is a machine attached to a machine, what Epstein names as the robot's progeny. The mechanical, through prosthesis, has discovered autogenesis, and wiped out the need for human creation or interaction. This is a nightmarish, non-human world in which the machine has emerged the victor.

I argue that Moore's prosthesis, in contrast, creates a different kind of hyperextension, one that works through acceptance of fragments and not through the paradigm of a transhumanist, zero-sum game between human and non-human—her prostheses are not either/or constructions, and Moore does not dream of the contained, individual, whole body. Moore's poetic catalogues, which continually and mechanically add-on to her animals, neither seek comfort in an idealized pure human wholeness nor fear the ascendancy of the mechanical. By wielding prosthesis in these ways, Moore reworks the bodies of her animal subjects and presents alternative ways of viewing their physicality by connecting them to other animals. Her poetry never gives a seamless, unified view of her jerboa or pangolin, but accrues their identities through a building up of disparate parts. As a result, unlike the "A + B" attachment of prosthesis I referred to in the introduction through Booher's work, which creates an ideology of containment around the human body next to the mechanical part to better preserve the ideology of normative wholeness, Moore's prostheses instead produce truly hybrid identities that exceed their organic and non-organic parts. Her work with prosthesis does not separate, but intertwines, organic and machine, and is a strategic response to controlling, contained ideas about both human and animal identities and bodies.[19]

Moore achieves such prosthetic hyperextension through a meticulous exploration of her animal subjects, as she compares these animals to machines, objects, and other animals in ways that prosthetically attach unfamiliar qualities onto these subjects, encouraging readers to see them in new ways. In this work, Moore becomes a modernist posthumanist, as her poems draw from the developments of her time to actively question the self and explore the other with modernist tools—often the very tools of the avant-garde artists I have been discussing. Moore was an avid reader of Darwin, and she was not only aware of these avant-garde movements but also somewhat actively involved in them. She read *Blast* in 1915 on a visit to the Library of Congress and composed the tribute "Ezra Pound" after reading it.[20] This does not make Moore a better modernist or even a better posthumanist than her contemporaries. On the contrary, her poetry works alongside and among their work, and Moore writes in dialogue with her age. In short, I do not focus on elevating Moore as an anomaly, but rather trace out the specific ways her work with animal subjects, in responding to her particularly modernist milieu, manifests as posthumanist.

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[19] Although my reading of *Rock Drill* helps to define my work with Moore's posthumanism, I want to work against seeing Epstein and Moore in a complete binary and contributing to easy definitions of certain kinds of modernism, humanism, or posthumanism. In this spirit, I do not want to characterize Vorticism as only engaging in the domination of the machine, just as I do not want to view the Italian Futurist use of prosthetics as a project for the simple glorification of the human, since this glorification actually points to and is predicated upon a great loss. Indeed, Epstein actually discusses two different versions of *Rock Drill*, one of which is summed up above and appears in opposition to Moore's work. His second version, however, may actually extend her work. Later, when Epstein offers a different account of *Rock Drill*, he writes: "I might, perhaps, say something about the representative element in it—a man is working a Rock Drill mounted on a tripod, the lines of which, in the drawing, continue the lines of his legs. The two lines converging on the centre of the design are indications of a rocky landscape … People will admire the 'Rock Drill' because they have no preconceived notion as to how the thing expressed by it should be expressed" (274). This seems to engage with a hyperextension and prosthesis similar to what I argue occurs in Moore's poetry. For one, Epstein is now arguing for seeing the figure as human rather than a robot, and this passage lacks the anxious tone of the earlier account. With this perspective, *Rock Drill'*s hyperextension becomes less formidable. The longer one looks at it, the more the blocky, rock-like shapes of the man make him appear to be like a drill himself, or a rock, or anything but a man, while the sinewy lines of the drill become more organic, even symbiotically attached to the man astride the drill. We cannot tell where the man ends and the mechanic drill begins, calling into question the true dominance, wholeness, and even purity of the human figure.

Before discussing Moore's other animiles, I lead into Moore's work with a discussion of irony in "The Buffalo" (1935) as a comparison and a tension-point for what I argue she does with wonder. This is because irony uses almost opposite—though not mutually exclusive—means from high intensity mimesis to achieve similar effects of ambiguity surrounding the known and the unknown. In the poem, Moore ostensibly describes the animal of the title, the buffalo. As the poem goes on, however, the buffalo accrues many other associations and meanings; the description takes on a fragmentary quality rather than cohering into a "whole" buffalo, and the buffalo is built up through its component parts as well as the component parts of other animals. The speaker describes the buffalo in pieces: initially, the poem notes the "incurved horns" but then quickly moves to a description of "soot-brown tail-tuft on / a kind of lion" (6-7). The speaker then launches into a more sustained description (of a kind) of the buffalo:

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[20] The poem, in full, reads:
Ezra Pound:
"Frae bank to bank, frae wood to wood I rin."
The rinning that you do,
Is not so new
As it is admirable.
    "Vigor informs your
SS Shape" and ardor knits it.
Good Meditatio
And poor Li Po;
And that page of *Blast*, on which
    Small boats ply to and
Fro in bee lines. Bless *Blast.* (*Poems and Translations* 79)

The modern
ox does not look like the Augsburg ox's
portrait. Yes,
the great extinct wild Aurochs was a beast
to paint, with stripe and six-
foot horn-spread--decreased
to Siamese cat-

Brown Swiss size or zebu-
shape, with white plush dewlap and war-blooded
hump; to red-
skinned Hereford or to piebald Holstein. (12-22)

In this passage, the poem describes buffalo first through both pieces of itself and of other animals such as the lion. This gives the animal a fractured composition, encouraging readers to face the limits of their abilities to comprehend the animal. When the speaker moves onto complete animals, they are still not quite the buffalo, but varied relatives—the ox, the Aurochs, a Hereford or a Holstein. Even then, the speaker describes an extinct animal—the Aurochs—and a painting of the Aurochs, the Augsburg's ox. Moore gives different, disjointed aspects of the animal subject, rendering this buffalo complex, multifaceted, and above all difficult to grasp: some of these comparisons are not the buffalo at all, and some cannot be found in nature. The reader is confronted with a gap between the text's language and the reality it is still attempting to reference. The modern ox does *not* look like the *portrait* of the Augsburg ox, which is also not the Augsburg ox itself—the poem's language slips through various referents for the buffalo, but never lands on the thing itself. This is assuredly not high intensity mimesis, but rather a piling on of detail that has no correlation with reality. Yet the effect is nonetheless complementary to high intensity mimesis, and can help a posthumanist reading of Moore's work. This distance from the actual buffalo signals the irony of the poem as well as a skepticism about the possibility of trying to capture the essence of anything. Moore's speaker begins to describe a buffalo, yet ends up describing an artwork of something that is related to the buffalo, but that is *also* actually a creature that is already extinct, creating a negative space around the "real" buffalo that allows space for the unknown.

Directly after these lines Moore writes that "some would say the sparse-haired / buffalo has met / human notions best" (24-5), and the speaker presents various comparisons of buffalo kin and the work they do for humans: the Vermont ox "haul[s] maple-sap" (30) while the buffalo will "cheerfully assist" (45). Throughout, the speaker's tone exhibits a wryness about the folly of humans and what they value, particularly what they value in animals. Namely, compliance: the Indian buffalo are "led by bare-legged herd boys" (55) and "need not fear comparison / with bison" (57-8), as if they feared they would be found wanting. This ironic tone points out the way human notions construct these animals for our own narrow purposes. As above, there is no real buffalo to be had here: before this particular catalogue of buffalo uses, there has been no concrete description of the buffalo, and even afterward the speaker switches between "Indian buffalo," "bison" and "ox." We are left with our own depictions, our own paintings, and our own notions of these animals. Moore's ironic tone makes it clear that all that remains are our own values reflected back at us. Irony then becomes an organizing principle of this poem, including the linguistic irony in the ekphrastic description of the Aurochs: the more language attempts to get at something, the further away from the thing it goes and the more it plays into human notions. In "The Buffalo," Moore wields irony to reveal our humanist narratives about animals but also to reveal how language serving such humanist narratives and needs can fail and deceive, ultimately leaving the depiction of the buffalo ambiguous. This irony does not describe the horizon of the known and unknown, but it nonetheless highlights the unknowable, refusing to contain or pin down the buffalo.

Moore's Animiles

This is not to say that Moore's poetry does not, at certain times, exhibit humanist tendencies or simply non-posthumanist tendencies. In order to contextualize and accurately portray Moore's animiles I will first explore the ways in which her work may sometimes stand in tension with posthumanism. It is important to acknowledge that Moore's work functions in many different registers, sometimes all at once, and recognizing where a humanist view of Moore does have validity may cast the features of her less-discussed posthumanism into relief, as in "The Plumet Basilisk" (1935). "The Plumet Basilisk" describes, in Moore's notorious detail, a series of exotic lizards from remote places around the world such as Costa Rica and Malaysia. At other times in Moore's poetry, the exotic and unfamiliar nature of her animals prevents humans from incorporating these animals into their narratives. However, in "The Plumet Basilisk," the exotic nature of the lizards, as well as the mythological nature of both the title animal and the dragons that are woven through the poem, often create views of these creatures through a plundering human perspective. Where Moore recreates real animals in poems such as "The Jerboa" and "The Pangolin," here the imaginary qualities of these animals make them easier to inscribe in human myths.

Moore writes of the Malay Dragon:

> We have ours; and they
> have theirs. Ours has a skin feather crest;
> theirs has wings out from the waist which is snuff-brown or sallow.
> Ours falls from trees on water; theirs is the smallest
> dragon that knows how to dive head-first from a tree-top to something dry (16-20)

The continual repetition of "ours" and "theirs" claims ownership of the myths surrounding the dragon and thus claims ownership of the animal itself as well as its lizard cousins. A myth uses stories or beliefs surrounding both real and imagined animals to define humanity, and as such myths are often appropriating forces. The repetition of the "us" and "them" construction also creates a strict dichotomy between "self" and "other" that denies the kind symbiotic relationship Haraway champions, so that humans both appropriate and own the dragons while strictly dividing dragon from human. Each detail given about the Malay Dragon[21]—its waist-level, snuff-brown wings, its diving abilities—is written in a way that others it from "our" own dragon, which has a skin feather crest in the place of wings. If, in the early twentieth century, Darwin's theories drew humanity closer to animal ancestors yet elicited reactions that bound humanity off, Moore seems to parallel this same bounding off. This is a way of claiming a reductive knowledge of the other as merely "not-human" while affirming a totality of knowledge in the human as something "not-other." If "The Jerboa" and the "Pangolin" resist total appropriation through prosthetic fragmentation, the creatures described in "The Plumet Basilisk" instead contribute to unbending categorizations and knowledge structures about what the human is and is not.

This split between "us" and "them," however, can also be read as an acknowledgement of alterity, a respect for the distance between one's self and an other. There is also, as with "The

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[21] A dragon from Indonesian myth.

Buffalo," a sheen of irony throughout, a wry smile that lightly makes fun of such myths. In "The Plumet Basilisk" the Costa Rican dragon "meet[s] his / likeness in the stream, and, king with king," (6-7) stands up and "runs on two legs" (8): in this, Moore seems to be making fun of both the arrogance of the dragon as well as its myth. Yet despite this potential double meaning, Moore's speaker later comments on how "the basilisk portrays / mythology's wish / to be interchangeably man and fish" (79-81): human desires create and shape the basilisk, as it is the human "our," aligned with the speaker, who is building these mythologies. Furthering this claim, the speaker writes:

> This is our Tower-of-London
> jewel that the Spaniards failed to see, among the feather capes
>
> and hawk's-head moths and black-chinned
> humming-birds; the innocent, rare, gold-
> defending dragon that as you look begins to be a
> nervous naked sword on little feet (104-09)

In this passage, Moore brings in a colonial discourse of ownership, framing the basilisk as a contained Tower-of-London jewel that lies between two figures that wish to possess it, the "Spaniards" and "us." Furthermore, the basilisk's elusiveness and the way it shrinks at our gaze makes it more desirable. Under that human gaze, we make it a "nervous naked sword on little feet"—not something that challenges us, or enters into a symbiotic relationship with us, but something quietly padding and unthreatening, although perhaps ironically so. In Jacques Derrida's famous episode with his cat in "The Animal That Therefore I Am," Derrida becomes surprised as his cat looks back at him, and this encounter causes him to feel shame in front of this "insistent gaze" (372). Here, however, the human is in control of the gaze, while the "nervous naked sword" is without force.

Even so, this might prompt posthumanist thinking, since in staging this colonizing gaze Moore encourages us to recognize the gaze's power over the animal, and the ways humanism, and anti-Darwinian reactions, try to make the animal smaller, inferior, and less worthy of investigation. The "Plumet Basilisk" might then foster a consideration of posthumanist responses through its humanist perspectives. "The Jerboa," which was published in the same 1935 collection as "The Plumet Basilisk," carries this technique further along. Like "The Plumet Basilisk," the poem exhibits appropriating and even colonizing forces and narratives—through art rather than mythology—that shape and determine the animal. "The Jerboa," however, launches an explicit and posthumanist critique against these appropriating, containing, and reductive forces. Charles Burger points out that in "The Jerboa" "The keenest edge of the dart [is] aimed at colonizing empires and the patriarchal values they always uphold" (159) and instead, as Bazin argues, the poem attempts "a form of representation that honors the other without exploiting or appropriating it" (179). In fact, I argue that Moore's prosthetic construction of the jerboa, with the help of formal and linguistic techniques, builds up a creature that exceeds, and even responds to, colonizing forces.

"The Jerboa" is split into two parts, "Too Much" and "Abundance." In "Too Much," the speaker relays a colonial catalogue of animal art that is often built on the backs of slavery. "Too Much" describes how

> A Roman had an
> artist, a freedman,
>   contrive a cone—pine-cone

> or fir-cone—with holes for a fountain. Placed on
> the Prison of St. Angelo, this cone
> of the Pompeys which is known
>
> now as the Popes', passed
> for art. (1-8)

Although the poem opens with "an / artist, a freedman," perhaps linking the freedom of the artist to his work *as* an artist, "freedman" primarily brings to mind that this man was once *not* free, and points to those who are still enslaved. The contrived pinecone is placed on the Prison of St. Angelo, a lavish Papal fortress that was nonetheless used as a prison. The rest of "Too Much" follows the lines of influence between empire, colonization and enslavement, and art. This slavery begins to include animals and carved animal objects. Moore writes how

> Others could
> build, and understood
> making colossi and
> how to use slaves, and kept crocodiles and put
> baboons on the necks of giraffes to pick
> fruit, and used serpent magic.
>
> They had their men tie
> hippopotami
> and bring out dappled-dog
> cats to course antelopes, dikdik, and ibek;

or used small eagles. (13-23)

This description of menagerie animals soon transforms into art objects as,

These people liked small things;
they gave to boys little paired playthings such as
nests of eggs, ichneumon and snake, paddle
and raft, badger and camel;

and made toys for them-
selves: the royal totem;
and toilet-boxes marked
with the contents. Lords and ladies put goose-grease
paint in round bone boxes – the pivoting
lid incised with a duck-wing

or a reverted duck-
head; kept in a buck
or rhinoceros horn (39-51)

The empires of Pompey create and own each of these animals, real or contrived (12-13). As with the myths of "The Plumet Basilisk," these animals are seen only through the ambitions of colonizing and appropriating human forces and, as the catalogue goes on, these forces more easily control them and make toys of them. They start out as menagerie animals, or even as the domesticated figurines with which Moore is often credited—the tied up hippopotami, the hunting animals used to kill antelopes—and the poem aligns these animals with the slaves that begin the passage. The Romans reduce these animals to playthings, and they become only fragmented by-products such as nests of eggs, before the poem reduces them into even smaller items, totems and decorations for toilet boxes—the patterned stanzas also resemble these kind of art objects. The form of these passages cuts the animals and their various transformations off from each other, almost always reserving a full line for each animal or animal object: the poem separates these animals from one another and dissects them. The rhythms and rhymes of the poem, as in "They had their men tie / hippopotami," place such emphasis on the syllables—unsurprisingly for syllabic verse—that the animals are chopped up further, cutting up the word "hippopotami" and the animal itself. The rhymes also add emphases, contributing to this effect.

Moore is not attempting to depict the menagerie animals in a faithful, if poetic, way, nor is there a sense of the unknown produced here. Where in other sections her mechanical syllabic verse fragments animals in order to stitch them back together in new ways, these catalogues are never generative. Furthermore, unlike "The Buffalo," Moore's speaker does not refer to a work of art in order to create a conceptual distance from these animals. Instead, the Romans—and the lines of the poem—reduce these animals to *objets d'art*. While this first section of the poem laments the reduction, appropriation, and plundering of these animals, in another sense it is also complicit in this plundering and reduction, as the poem cannot seem to stop producing this intricate detail. The poem's conspicuous alliteration, which estranges the jerboa, here makes these animals quaint, with the "goose-grease" in the "bone boxes." Tight, short, masculine rhymes such as "duck" and "buck," or the close rhyme of "dikdik" and "ibek" complement this effect; "Too Much" participates in the very reduction it critiques.

As a result of this complicity, the relationships within the poem are complex, which has led to discussion and disagreement on the relationship between "Too Much," and the second half, “Abundance,” which describes the titular jerboa. In “Abundance,” in contrast to the animal playthings of the first section, the jerboa is built up prosthetically, yet there is not a simple contrasting relationship between the two sections. In *Poetic Animals and Animal Souls*, Randy Malamud argues that the two parts are opposed to each other and that the poem warns against mistreating animals (118). Benjamin Johnson, however, argues that

> The poem itself bears far more resemblance to the inventive art objects of the Egyptians than the easy freedom of the jerboa, and it is difficult not to find oneself taking pleasure in the curious scenes of wealth Moore simultaneously constructs and condemns. We discover in the poem’s final stanzas that in order to understand this creature, Moore has to return to the language of well-wrought artifice that defines the first section of the poem. ‘The Jerboa,’ then, is a poem about nature and artifice in which artifice finally proves inescapable. (72)

Moore’s description of the jerboa does echo her overwrought language discussing the Egyptians and Romans, and as a result I disagree with Malamud, as it seems the two parts intertwine rather than oppose each other. I argue, however, that the effect is not to show how artifice proves “inescapable,” but rather to hint at a possible symbiotic relationship between the colonizing forces in the poem and the jerboa, a relationship that encourages critique through comparison and even through complicity. That is, the poem’s language acknowledges the domestication and colonization of these animals, but colonization’s interaction with the descriptions of the jerboa defamiliarizes these forms of colonization, making them less domineering.

Yet in my reading, Moore does not return verbatim to the same well-wrought language of the first section: her laborious, even disconnected detail is still present, yes, but her prosthesis welds the parts together to render the jerboa as an object of Chu’s wonder—as a intersection of the known, unknown, and unknowable—rather than a categorized woodcut trinket, and therein lies both the connection and contrast between the two parts. Malamud, likewise, is right to note that the poem recognizes appropriation and animal cruelty, but again the critique of this colonization is not simple or reducible; the poem is complicit in these appropriating and colonizing forces. Instead, the jerboa becomes stitched into this colonizing narrative, and readers are forced to take account of, to engage with, and assess what occurs in the first part of the poem and how it affects the second—the two work off of one another, as do humanism and posthumanism, but exactly how they do this is left for readers to interpret.

That there is some relationship between the two parts is evident before the poem even gets to the section "Abundance"; the two sections clearly stand in dialogue with one another, as flagged by the chiming of their titles. From the poem's title we expect the jerboa's appearance, and feel its presence throughout. The jerboa even makes an appearance before "Too Much" is done: The desert rat is introduced after discussing the "Pharaoh's rat, the rust- / backed mongoose" (80-1). Moore's speaker relays that

No bust
of it was made, but there
was pleasure for the rat. Its restlessness was
its excellence; it was praised for its wit;
and the jerboa, like it,

a small desert rat,
and not famous, that
lives without water, has

happiness (81-9)

The speaker goes on to describe the jerboa's desert home, ending by saying "one would not be he / who has nothing but plenty" (96-7) before coming officially to the second section, "Abundance." Even then, this section begins with a call back to the first, as the speaker argues

Africanus meant
the conqueror sent
from Rome. It should mean the
untouched: the sand-brown jumping rat—free born. (98-101)

From the jerboa's connection to the king's rat, to the Roman conquerors that re-appear in the second section, the two parts intertwine. They signal on a macro formal level that the jerboa in some way informs how we see this Imperial animal art and that this Imperial art informs how we see the jerboa. As a result, Moore primes readers to look for connections and interrelations even between and among seemingly disparate things. Just as the poem both critiques and is complicit in these colonizing, reductive forces, the jerboa both connects to these forces, and yet it is also in its own section as a response or counterpart to this appropriation.

With this in mind, we can begin to examine how these connections play out, particularly on the level of Moore's prosthetic descriptions, which construct the jerboa's body alternatively, rendering its identity as in excess of the boundaries and categories of the animal trinkets. These prosthetic descriptions posit a posthumanist ethics of attention to the animal other, an attention that moves towards complexity and the unknown instead of simplicity, control, and contained wholeness. Moore's speaker describes the jerboa in the terms I have noted earlier:

Looked at by daylight,
the underside's white

> though the fur on the back
> is buff-brown like the breast of the fawn-breasted
> bower-bird. It hops like the fawn-breast, but has
> chipmunk contours – perceived as
>
> it turns its bird-head— (116-22)

As with "The Buffalo," other animals are attached to and build up the jerboa, a hybridity that Moore's hyphen use again further emphasizes. Moore's mechanical, syllabic verse adds aspects—a back, then a chest (which is like a bower-bird), then contours (a chipmunk's)—onto the animal in piecemeal fashion, and each new line hyperextends the jerboa through the mechanics of the syllabic verse and the figurative language, particularly the metaphors. The passage moves from similes—"like the fawn-breast"—to metaphors, and the jerboa is not only compared to the chipmunk and a bird-head but also actually begins to register as itself possessing these qualities, strengthening the prosthetic attachments to other animals. Importantly, there is no anxiety here about the contained whole body, as the prosthetic, hyperextended quality of the jerboa invites a view of the animal as a complex, if othered, subject. The jerboa is an endlessly varied "whole," at once fluid and fragmentary. In the first section the catalogues separated and reduced various animals into delicate items, but here all these are opulent catalogues that exist to build up, not reduce, one free-roaming creature. These details slowly accrue into a high definition description of the Jerboa that nonetheless does not make one feel as though one knows everything there is to know about the constructed creature. This is true not just for the jerboa, but also for the bower-bird and chipmunk: we get a sense of what these animals are like through their relationship to each other and physical similarities, but we are also brought to the horizon of the unknown and unknowable, of what has been left out of this careful detail and the ways a jerboa does not look like, and is not, a chipmunk or a bower-bird. The prosthesis here points both to a connection and a seam between the animals, constructing excess through fragmentation and a denial of the idealized, normative "whole" and hale body.

Moore's work with rhythm supports these processes. Her relatively consistent syllabic verse rhythmically mirrors the first section: "Looked at by daylight / the underside's white" matches with "They had their men tie / hippopotami" (19-20) in the 10 syllable count; this twinning of the two parts encourages the reader to confront what has come before by comparing the free-roaming jerboa to the stiff animal trinkets. The speaker describes the jerboa further:

> it turns its bird head—
> the nap directed
>   neatly back and blending
>   with the ear which reiterates slimness
>   of the body. The fine hairs on the tail,
>   repeating the other pale
>
> markings, lengthen until
> at the tip they fill
>   out in a tuft—black and
>   white; strange detail of the simplified creature,
>   fish-shaped and silvered to steel by the force
>   of the large desert moon. (122-33)

Moore's syllabic verse mechanically breaks apart these aspects of the jerboa but, unlike the first part, simultaneously builds towards a new view of the jerboa. Each of the jerboa's body parts is separated—the breast, the head, the ear, the tail—as the syllabic verse chops up the jerboa to emphasize the "strange detail" of this "simplified creature," and re-attaches it to these various animals—a bower-bird breast, a bird head, a fish-shaped tail. The words "repeating" and "reiterating" as well as the phrase "silvered to steel" also give a mechanical impression. We are continually brought into a knowledge of the creature through intersections with other creatures, but this move also encourages us to see all that we do not know about this creature, the features about the jerboa that, as with the buffalo, the poem cannot exactly pin down, contain, or understand. There is a wondrous intersection here between the known, unknown, and unknowable qualities of the jerboa as well as the qualities of the figurative animals to which Moore connects the title animal. Moreover, the connections to other animals illustrate the creatures as if they were in a complex Darwinian ancestral tree. The very proliferation of fragmentations points to captivating, multi-faceted, and interconnected beings, as well as to a curiosity and an impulse to attempt to know these animals without reducing or colonizing them.

Furthermore, the conglomeration of the jerboa's parts encourages a posthumanist attention to our assumptions and narratives about animal others. With no easy narrative about the jerboa to grasp, the poem confronts readers with an experience that gives a choice about how to engage with, valence, and construct the exotic jerboa, even when many readers may have no idea what this jerboa looks like in the first place. This construction of the jerboa then repositions the colonizing narratives of the previous part that were imposed on the creature, as the animal cannot be reduced to a trinket. This means readers must piece the jerboa together themselves, without recourse to any cultural knowledge and without much help from the poem, which actually hinders a complete view of the creature even as it ambiguously connects it to more controlling colonizing narratives. The deadpan tone of the poem—which obscures exactly how far this critique of abundance goes—combined with irony on the subject of these Roman animal playthings also aids this impression. Moore gives readers no foothold into any moral, if there is one, and there is little help when attempting to orientate one's self to the poem. Should readers cast around they may only perceive a hint of wryness in Moore's loving, detailed—yet critical—descriptions and catalogues of the animal menageries. The two parts of the Jerboa interact with and affect each other, but not in overdetermined ways.

Finally, the effects of Moore's figurative language and her mechanical syllabic verse protect these animals from appropriation and reveal language as mechanized: words become rhythmical patterns and discrete units that build into a larger animal but are never unified into a complete whole. Moore's work lays the minute pieces of language bare; she bares the device. This language defamiliarizes the jerboa, disrupting the usual process of representation as the poem calls attention to its own constructed, enjambed, and formatted quality—again, the poem calls out and participates in artifice. This of course, is the core of the study of Saussurean semiology: that language can be split up into component parts that are arbitrary, contain no essential meaning, and only have meaning in relation to one another. Likewise, Moore's speaker points not to the underside of the jerboa but to the "bower-bird," not to its breast but to the "chipmunk." The suggestion is that there is no essentialized, "whole" thing here, no pure jerboa, and as a result we as readers cannot entirely get at it, since Moore's language fails to get at it. Throughout, then, Moore's poem critiques reductive narratives about animals—even while acknowledging the allure of these narratives—and recommends careful attention to the complexity of the other.

"The Pangolin," published in 1941 in *What Are Years*, again reconstructs the pangolin's body prosthetically and moves away from appropriation of animals and into attention to the complexity and unknowability of the other. "The Pangolin" serves as a companion study to "The Jerboa," for where "The Jerboa" works against colonizing forces, "The Pangolin" connects and responds to the individual human. Moreover, where in "The Jerboa" the explicitly mechanical aspects are confined largely to Moore's mixture of the mechanical and organic in her syllabic verse, "The Pangolin" itself is described in mechanical terms. The speaker opens by describing

> Another armored animal—scale
> lapping scale with spruce-cone regularity until they
> form the uninterrupted central
> tail-row! This near artichoke with head and legs and
> grit-equipped gizzard (1-4)

The speaker compares and links the pangolin variously to the mechanical quality of armor, a spruce cone and an artichoke. The speed with which these metaphors pile on top of each other makes them seem as though they are moving parts of the complete pangolin. Pangolins also "have the not unchain-like machine-like / form and frictionless creep of a thing / made graceful by adversities" (52-4), connecting the pangolin at once to a machine and an animal thing. These comparisons to machines continue, and then morph into a comparison with the human. Moore writes that "A sailboat / was the first machine" (65-6) but then quickly switches to

> Pangolins, made
> for moving quietly also, are models of exactness,
> on four legs on hind feet plantigrade,
> with certain postures of man. (66-9)

Moore's mechanical metre aids the various composite identities of the pangolin, splitting the content and emphasizing the pangolin's prosthetic nature. The pangolin keeps crossing and transgressing boundaries through its figurative language, moving from an artichoke, to a chain-like, machine-like thing. As in "The Jerboa," the form of the poem keeps breaking up what the pangolin is, exactly. The line break reinforces this skipping of "not unchain-like machine-like," and then continues with "form and frictionless creep of a thing" – landing on "thing" before moving to "made graceful," emphasizing the pangolin's thingness and its fragmented otherness. The pangolin has a composite nature akin to the poem's form—an artichoke head, an essence comparable to a sailboat, and even certain postures of man. These techniques make it difficult to contain and colonize the pangolin, posing difficulties to readers' ordinary modes of comprehension, preventing them from absorbing the whole pangolin, or even assuming that a whole understanding of the pangolin's subjectivity or physicality is possible.

Moore then qualifies this "man":

> Bedizened or stark
> naked, man, the self, the being we call human, writing-
> master to this world, griffons a dark
> 'Like does not like like that is obnoxious'; and writes error with four
> r's. Among animals, *one* has a sense of humor. (77-81)

Unlike the jerboa, the pangolin is directly compared to the human, and this results in a further challenge to humanist narratives through modernist means. The poem casts doubt on humanity's powers of comprehension: where in Social Darwinism certain groups used comparisons to animals and races they saw as inferior in order to feel superior, in "The Pangolin" the human does not look superior next to the animal. The "naked, man, the self, the being we call human, writing- / master to this world" seems a deeply skeptical pronouncement when embedded in this fragmented poem, and casts doubt even on the position of readers. For although man is allegedly "the self" in our own narratives, his own writing-master, here our narratives and powers of rationality cannot master this animal subject, and so throw these powers into question.

The text again reveals language as constructed rather than inherently meaningful. The language of the poem is metonymic and full of shifting comparisons—the word "artichoke" stands in for the pangolin, just as the "Thomas- / -of-Leighton Buzzard Westminster Abbey wrought-iron / vine" (23-4) stands in for the pangolin's much talked about grace—this reveals the lack of inherent, fixed meaning in words. Moreover, in one passage, Moore writes that "A sailboat / was the first machine. Pangolins, made / for moving quietly also, are models of exactness" (65-7), forcing the reader to make the connection between the sailboat and the pangolin and consider why they are both models of exactness. Is it because they are both machines? The gaps in language here, as well as that language's instability—Moore keeps sliding around from one focus to the next—indicate that language itself cannot convey undisputed truth, and is not imbued inherently with the truth of the world.

In these descriptions of the jerboa and the pangolin, Moore's prosthesis torques reality, rendering her animals in intense mimetic depictions. The resulting wonder stitches together the knowable, the unknown, and the unknowable, creating animal subjects that are at once detailed and distinct, yet slippery and shifting. The exotic quality of the animals emphasizes this unknowability, as these animals exist in a cultural imagination and yet they are not familiar enough to pin down into rigid narratives. Moreover, Moore's poems continually point to language's constructed properties, allowing for further fluidity and further interrogations of set narratives that rest on essentialized ideas of these animals. Posthumanism, as the rest of this project will testify, may be most generatively seen as an open system, one which invites tensions and responses, and which interrogates and opens up closed and regimented systems of thought. Moore's work with prosthesis contributes to this openness and critique via a refusal of the anxieties of the prosthetic body, containing narratives about the animal other, and even the feminine, domesticated status of Moore's own poetry.

Moore's Ecological Networks

To that end, I close with an exploration of a brief tangent derived from Moore's other animiles that also addresses new, potentially posthumanist, avenues into ecology, opening Moore's ethical strategies up further. I have focused throughout on Moore's hybrid, prosthetic animals and the posthumanist relationships they both form and encourage. Posthumanism's focus on interconnections—between subjects, objects, and contexts—serves ecology well, and poems such as "The Arctic Ox (Or Goat)" (1959) and "An Octopus"(1935) attend to the ecosystems and networks these animals live in, both physical and political. Rieke, who discusses "The Arctic Ox (Or Goat) and "An Octopus," argues that "The Arctic Ox (Or Goat)" "causes us to ponder Moore's apparent ambivalence about animal consumption" (168). Rieke sums up the poem, writing that it "advocates consuming the fur of this creature for one reason: the animal need not be killed for it to be turned into useful, fashionable apparel" (168), positioning the poem as an economical yet ethical argument for not killing animals.

Rieke's statements about the moral argument of the poem are insightful, but these statements also reduce Moore's work, once more, to empirical facts and observations. Rieke sees only good, practical economic sense as the driver of Moore's ethical decision. She also notes that the poem is, of course, playful and somewhat ironic—although you would be hard-pressed to find a poem by Moore that does not exhibit such a ludic, satirical tone. In fact, this ironic sheen can, by virtue of its fluidity and recognition of different perspectives, encourage posthumanist readings that move beyond empirical facts and observations. A good-natured but firm speaker controls the poem, advising that

> To wear the arctic fox
> You have to kill it. Wear
> *qiuviut* – the underwool of the arctic ox –
> pulled off it like a sweater;
> your coat is warm; your conscience, better. (1-5)

And later on refers to

> Chinchillas, otters, water-rats,
> and beavers keep us warm
> but think! A 'musk ox' grows six pounds
> of *qiuviut*; the cashmere ram,
> three ounces – that is all – of pashm. (21-5)

Evidently, Rieke is right to notice the playful but practical economic drive behind the ethics of the poem. Yet I would argue that there is more to the poem than this simple advice. That is not to say that I wish to read Moore's ethics as less economic and somehow more emotional. Instead, I draw attention to how Moore's animal catalogues show a deep interest in a complex web of animal ecosystems. Moore creates a series of linkages between the animals of the poem and their economic position: the poem connects the arctic fox to chinchillas, otters, water-rats and beavers by virtue of their economic desirability and their ecosystem. Yet human notions do not fully determine the animals' economic value—animal needs also determine this value. Moore's speaker describes

> Mountain Valley water,
> dandelions, carrots, oats –
> encouraged as well by bed
> made fresh three times a day –
> to roll and revel in the hay.
>
> Insatiable for willow
> leaves alone, our goatlike
> *qivi*-curvi-capricornus
> sheds down ideal for a nest.
> Song-birds find qiuviut best. (51-60)

After discussing the human desire for various furs of various animals, this passage traces the animal uses of fur for animal bedding and nests. It also pays attention to the diverse flora of carrots, oats and willows in this animal ecosystem, building a lush and detailed animal world. If "The Buffalo" makes fun of human uses for animals, "The Arctic Ox (Or Goat)" makes sure to include animals' uses for their own products, illustrating a whole, animal-exclusive ecosystem of needs and commodities. The complexity I have been discussing thus exists here not in a description of a single animal but in a larger network and ecosystem.

Rieke names this late poem as an example of the evolution and crystallization of Moore's ethics and self-fashioning. I, however, connect it to Moore's earlier work, "An Octopus," a poem about Mount Rainier's various flora and fauna and the enormous glacier at its summit (which is the octopus of the poem). Although Rieke argues, to my mind rightly, that "An Octopus" "unreservedly catalogues its flora and fauna, mineral and gem deposits, as a virtually unexploited natural habitat" (165), she does not deal at length with "An Octopus" and does not connect the poem directly to "To An Arctic Ox (or Goat)," even as the two poems showcase in tandem Moore's attention to the complex, interconnected webs of animal ecosystems. In "An Octopus" Moore builds up the vast, icy mountain and illustrates its various inhabitants. The mountain's glacier is named as an animal in the title of the poem, and points to a sympathy between the environment an animal lives in and the animal itself.

Moore's careful, detailed attention and documentation of the flora and fauna further attests to the importance of that ecosystem and relationship, as Moore makes the mountain come alive:

> The rock seems frail compared with their dark energy of
> its vermillion and onyx and manganese-blue interior expensiveness
> left at the mercy of the weather;
> 'stained transversely by iron where the water drips down,'
> recognized by its plants and animals. (18-22)

the speaker later asks, "What spot could have merits of equal importance / for bears, elk, deer, wolves, goats and ducks?" (39-40). As with "The Pangolin," Moore builds up these comparisons and interconnections almost frenetically, constantly creating links between flora and fauna in a way that emphasizes the prosthetic hyperextension—there is always more. But where these same characteristics partly obscured the jerboa and the pangolin even while connecting them to other animals, here these links showcase the massive ecosystem of the mountain, extending the animal comparisons outward to an entire environmental complex. Mount Rainier flourishes with a web of animals, such that the poem is not just about "The Octopus," but arguably maintains a posthumanist frame of awareness to the wider web of ecosystems. Moore's insertion of quotations also mirrors this ecosystem in intertextual form, linking the poem outward to these intertexts and their contexts, creating a literary network. Where critical attention to "An Octopus" has often focused on Moore's modernist, myriad insertion of this variety of quotations,[22] in this reading these inserted quotations mirror the myriad, varied animal ecosystems on Mount Rainier. As a result, the famous line "Neatness of finish!" (177) that closes out the poem belies the sprawling, complex and interconnected world of the poem.

Given Wolfe's, Haraway's, and other posthumanist theorists' interest in the ecological aspects of posthumanism, following these strands in Moore's poetry may be fruitful: attention to the symbiotic relationships and hyperextension of her individual animals may grant access to larger symbiotic relationships of ecosystems in her poetry. Working on this macro level, Moore's work may be read as exploring further connections and assumptions not only between individual animals, but also between and among animals and their ecosystems. This line of thinking would again allow for expansion and movement within Moore criticism away from the reductive, implicitly humanist commentary with which the chapter opens, providing another way to connect her supposed curios into a bigger, more amorphous web. Moreover, this could extend Moore's ethical posthumanist project, building from Rieke's chronological work with Moore's ethics but also delving vertically into the ethics of Moore's individual poems, working through the various networks and webs of her posthumanist principles.

This chapter emphasizes the multi-faceted qualities of Moore's modernist posthumanism and the way posthumanism illuminates her modernist techniques even as these techniques remain embedded in early twentieth-century contexts. The developments of Darwin's theories of evolution and technological advancements, including work with prostheses after World War I, often elicited responses that re-confirmed human superiority. Yet in Moore's poetry, something else happens: prosthesis and syllabic metre build and hyperextend Moore's animiles, so that these poems explore the complexity of the other as a challenge to definitions of the individual human self, and body, particularly the "wholeness" of the liberal humanist subject. Moore's modernist poems then help to re-contextualize posthumanism, extending it to eras other than the twenty-first century. Likewise, Moore's posthumanism refigures this modernist play of identity as not merely play but also as a serious attempt to interact with non-human others in ways that avoid a reduction of their complexity. Moore embodies her subjects alternatively through prosthesis so that they exceed the boundaries of normative categorizations of identity and wholeness. In this, her modernist posthumanism may also be credited with a feminist bent, as Moore's modernist posthumanism consciously and strategically moves away from the feminine containment and domestication—as well as the containment of scientific humanism —criticism often attributes to Moore's works, and into shifting contact zones and multiple, ironic, and even contradictory reconfigurations of the idealized "whole" body. Moore's modernist posthumanism is a constellation of sensitive responses to the conditions of modernity, a sophisticated and yet at times contradictory registration of the other, a complex web of ecosystems, and a wondrous perspective on life in a diverse world.

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[22] See Leonard Diepeveen, *Changing Voices: The Modern Quoting Poem* (1993) and Elizabeth Gregory, *Quotation and Modern American Poetry* (1996).

"I am a wire simply": H.D.'s *Asphodel* and Morse Code

When *Asphodel*'s Hermione first meets her romantic interest Walter, who is a descendant of Samuel F.B. Morse, she begins to conceive of communication as embodied, technological code. As she puts it, "I couldn't myself sit so still here, not saying anything afraid lest for some little breath I might move in some way, get out of key with something and the message wouldn't get through. Morse code. I am a wire simply. But one doesn't really choose casual instruments" (28). In attempting to communicate, to get the message through, Hermione models herself as mechanical receiver: she embodies herself alternatively through code, becoming "a wire simply," not a casual instrument but one specialized for the task of receiving code. In its combination of communication technology and technological embodiment, this moment draws together the two crucial and interconnected sections of this chapter and works as a keystone quotation throughout. In *Asphodel*, Hermione identifies with communication technology, particularly Morse code, both physically and mentally, and attempts to harness this code towards a spiritual Esperanto, which helps her to construct a rhizomatic, machinic identity.

In botany, a rhizome connotes a multiplicity of roots, with each root having the potential to create a new plant. In invoking the machinic and the rhizomatic, I draw on Felix Guattari's concept of the machinic consciousness, a consciousness that blends the organic and the inorganic to produce what he calls rhizomatic—or multiple—connections. Likewise, Gilles Deleuze and Guattari's theorization of the rhizome has greatly aided posthumanist theories, as it provides a framework for viewing identity as non-binary and non-essential, and as existing in a creative multiplicity. Although the transitional, modernist features of Morse code ultimately prevent Hermione from universal communication, these same features open up Morse code to rhizomatic connections and lend it the potential to become what Haraway calls a powerful and creative heteroglossia (193), or a language that has multiple sources and meanings. A machinic identity, such as the one Hermione forms through Morse code, combines the human and the machine in varied ways, allowing for multiple connections instead of dichotomies, binaries, and reversals—a theme that runs through this work.

In H.D.'s work, technological code also allows for a posthumanist vision of embodiment through a form of alternative embodiment. The twentieth century, Cecelia Tichi posits, fostered a conception of the human body as "a machine for the consumption and production of energy" (xii). In *Bodies and Machines*, Mark Seltzer notes the ways machines such as typewriters fundamentally changed our bodies and writing (16)—or, as Friedrich Kittler argues in works such as *Discourse Networks*, our ideas of our bodies and our writing. *Asphodel* displays and responds to such developments: the novel is shot through with the psychological and physical aftermath of war, and concerns itself with the advent of both destructive and informational technologies. More specifically, *Asphodel* meditates on how Morse code models new modes of communication and embodiment amidst more destructive technologies, and Hermione imagines herself in different, non-human bodily configurations. Importantly, H.D.'s alternative embodiment negotiates strict categories of femininity, creating a space away from the painful experience of the gendered body while simultaneously acknowledging this pain. These processes occur in a particularly poetic atmosphere, and Hermione's stream of consciousness and interest in code often highlights particular words and states of mind over narrative development.

Influential feminist criticism on H.D. has already explored the implications of the coded, lesbian language in H.D.'s Madrigal Cycle—the romans à clef *Paint it Today*, *Asphodel*, *Bid Me to Live,* and *HERmione*—in great depth.[23] Nonetheless, I suggest a different kind of code ripe for exploration within *Asphodel*: informational code. This renewed look at the concept of codes in H.D.'s work provides, in turn, a renewed look at how H.D.'s prose novel defines and forms identity. This chapter also responds to certain other critical lineages that position H.D.'s work as averse to technology, and so shifts the focus from interpreting H.D.'s motives for eschewing technology to investigating how these technologies might actually function, positively or negatively, in her work. For my purposes, Hayles's work *How We Became Posthuman* best reveals the ways H.D. uses informational code to form and express identity. In investigating how modernism and posthumanism intersect and illuminate each other, I take account of where H.D.'s texts and Hayles's theorizations might diverge from each other as well as where Hayles's work may not accommodate what is at play in H.D.'s texts—namely in H.D.'s stream of consciousness and her twentieth-century context. Nonetheless, the intersection of H.D. and Hayles produces not only a particularly modernist posthumanism, but also a posthumanism unique to H.D. Although criticism has often discussed modernism's relationship to technology and machinery,[24] posthumanist theory's lexicon as well as its focus on identity formation through technology can re-invigorate this work.

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[23] For example, see Cassandra Laity's introduction to *Paint it Today*: "In order to understand the personal, social, and psychological dynamics of the lesbian identity that H.D. re-created in [her] novels . . . it is important to

Some of these terms and processes need further clarification. First, I argue that H.D.'s work with alternative embodiment derives partly from Caroline Walker Bynum's discussion of the body as a "locus of redemption" (15**)**, a term Miranda Hickman makes use of in her work with H.D.'s *Nights* in *The Geometry of Modernism*. Although, as I will discuss, discomfort rather than redemption characterizes Hermione's body, viewing the body as a locus of redemption

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recognize the system of 'codes' she uses to differentiate and articulate modes and levels of lesbian desire." (xxi) Likewise, Kathryn Simpson traces out the coded desires contained in the gem imagery of H.D. and Virginia Woolf—see her "Pearl Diving: Inscriptions of Desire and Creativity in H.D. and Woolf" (2004). For more on these codes, see Susan Stanford Friedman's *Penelope's Web: Gender, Modernity, H.D.'s Fiction* (1990) and *Signets: Reading H.D.* (1990), in particular, Cassandra Laity's contribution, "H.D.'s Romantic Landscapes: The Sexual Politics of the Garden" (110–28).

[24] Many of these studies are quoted here, but for larger overviews see Tim Armstrong, *Modernism, Technology, and the Bod*y (1998) and Sara Danius, *The Sense of Modernism: Technology, Perception, and Aesthetics* (2002).

acknowledges the role of the corporeal in H.D.'s work with visionary states, as the body itself can transform itself and enlighten subjects.[25] Second, my contention that Hermione's alternative embodiment constitutes a machinic identity—instead of, for example, a mechanical identity—deserves careful glossing as well as brief historicizing. In his study of posthumanism in D.H. Lawrence, Jeff Wallace succinctly summarizes Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the machinic and rhizomatic. As he writes, in the machinic

> the properties of spontaneous and unpredictable life are translated into a nonorganic vitalism for which the term 'machinic' is used. The temptation to assert an organic-mechanical dichotomy is thus overridden by two differently inflected versions of the machine, the first of which, the machinic, decisively parts company from its industrial predecessor. 'Mechanical' in this vocabulary retains its traditional sense of a closed entity or system with a specific function, while 'machinic' comes to designate something new – not an object or entity at all, but a process, a way of making circuits or connections between things along … 'rhizomic' lines. (105)

Rather than pitting the mechanical against the organic, the machinic melds the human and the machine and allows for multiple, rhizomatic connections instead of dichotomous ones. In a machinic identity the human body becomes its own system, open to a myriad of connections and circuits, to use Wallace's terminology. The same processes occur when Hermione opens her body up to the machinery and technology of Morse code, and her body is an integral part of these technological connections. This exploration of the non-binary connectivity between the organic and the inorganic sets up a ready connection to the posthumanist work of theorists such as Hayles and Haraway, as their work also explores a free-play of organic and inorganic connectivity.

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[25] Likewise, machinery and technology are distinguishable from one another. Machinery comes as a result of technology; machinery is a physical product of technological advancements and inventions. Thus, the machinery of war Hermione describes may be considered a product of modernity and technological advancement. Morse code in general is a modern *technology*, but its individual components—the signals, and tape, for example—constitute the machinery of this technology.

Timothy Campbell's work on modernism and wireless technology also concretely sets up the ways technology and the body function throughout *Asphodel*. Campbell's *Wireless Writing in the Age of Marconi*, making significant use of Kittler's theories on the ways technological systems affect art, argues for the creation of a more complete picture of wireless technology as a total interface with particular effects on twentieth-century thought. Campbell argues that while radio theory has been the critical focus of modernist scholars in recent years, Marconi's wireless systems were affecting notions of writing and the body long before radio technology. Thus, there is an incomplete critical picture of Marconi's wireless interface. Campbell describes the distinct characteristics of this interface, including the "inscription of a voice onto a disk or in (type)writing, as well as its later retrieval and transmission" (xiv), and distinguishes Marconi's wireless invention, which requires a human listener to discern and interpret often weak signals, from Morse Code, which still used wires and tapped out its signals onto tape (3).

These characteristics, Campbell argues, produced a unique enmeshment of body and machine technology. As Campbell writes,

> The wireless separator, unlike his telegraphic predecessor, has no time to interpret the series of dots and dashes inscribed by the Morse machine onto tape, as he is engaged first in hearing them through the headset and then, with a little practice, in instantaneously transcribing them onto paper. The wireless interface therefore couples a hand that writes with an ear that has been trained to capture acoustic data out of a noisy channel. (11)

For Campbell, Marconi's wireless technology couples the human hand and ear with the machine in a way that Morse code does not, subsequently creating a machinic identity in the connection of ear to signal. Although Campbell's work much aids my own, I would nonetheless argue that while Morse code and Marconi's technology do indeed have distinct traits that set them apart from one another, users and bodies can nonetheless connect with Morse code to produce a different machinic identity. Moreover, although Campbell argues that human interpretation is necessary to Marconi's system because a human listener must be present to receive signals while Morse code is merely tapped out onto inanimate tape, this does not take into account that the listener might not be present, despite whether or not the machine is receiving signals. Both systems must then have active (at least to a degree) participants, and both—and Campbell notes this—rely on interpretation and decoding.

In *How We Became Posthuman*, Hayles discusses how code affects identity formation. For Hayles, there is a shift in posthumanism from an ontology based on a post-structuralist, Derridean dialectic of absence/presence towards a dialectic of pattern/randomness modeled on information theory. Where floating signifiers and Derrida's freeplay of signifiers characterize poststructuralist language, computer code, information, and laws of entropy characterize a posthumanist language. Moreover, Hayles argues that information systems such as computers fundamentally shift not just our mentalities, but also our bodily identities. In the introduction of *How We Became Posthuman*, Hayles cites Hans Moravec's posthumanist prediction that one day, given the current rate of technological advancement, human consciousness, and thus human identity, will be able to be downloaded into a computer (1). However, Moravec's vision is only one conception of posthumanism, one prediction of how our identities will change in our interaction with technology—and it is a vision that Hayles critiques. As Hayles puts it, this is "a roboticist's dream that struck me as a nightmare" (1). She argues that Moravec is mistaken in thinking that as we advance our technology and move towards a computer identity we must discard our bodies to embrace posthumanism. "How," she asks, "was it possible for someone of Moravec's obvious intelligence to believe that mind could be separated from body? Even assuming such a separation was possible, how could anyone think that consciousness in an entirely different medium would remain unchanged, as if it had no connection with embodiment?" (1) One of Hayles's goals in writing *How We Became Posthuman* is to assert that although many posthumanist perspectives diminish the importance of the body, a posthumanist identity is never without a body.[26]

There are, as I have again noted, nonetheless important historical and aesthetic differences between modernism and posthumanism, and Hayles herself argues that modernist stream of consciousness is counterintuitive to posthumanist identity formation. For Hayles, new media texts, with their multiplicity and interconnection via hypertext, are more representative of a computer consciousness. Conversely, as Sherryl Vint writes, "modernist interior monologue can be understood as something that works to suture over and hide from view the disrupted processes that are generating the phenomenon of consciousness and that give the illusion of a continuous self" (126). Here, the stitching of stream-of-consciousness writing that characterizes many of H.D.'s texts actually works to obscure a more posthumanist, machinic identity in presenting a smooth, consecutive thought process. In discussing the posthumanist illumination of H.D.'s works, then, I must attend to the ways her modernism may not align with, or may produce different responses to, Hayles's posthumanist theories on twenty-first century texts.

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[26] Andrzej Gasiorek's *A History of Modernist Literature* (2015) discusses a similar network of themes in James Joyce's *Ulysses* on pp. 375-77, indicating a larger modernist interest in the potential for technological embodiment. Gasiorek argues that Joyce wanted to show that human beings were "embodied creatures whose mental capacities should not be allowed to disguise their corporeal existence" (375), and notes Joyce's interest in and anxiety about technology (376).

Yet out of these differences comes a particularly modernist posthumanism, as these intersections produce fruitful tensions and conflicts that allow us to re-interrogate not just modernism but also posthumanism. Hayles is right to identify a smoothing impulse in stream of consciousness, particularly when compared to new media texts, which are embedded from conception with multiplicity and disruption in the form of hypertext. Yet I also want to caution against generalizing stream of consciousness as unsuited to posthumanist exploration.[27] More specifically, it may be reductive to characterize all stream of consciousness in the same manner, and I will argue later in this work that H.D.'s own particular stream of consciousness style does not suture but rather disrupts consciousness.[28] This stream of consciousness operates as a matrix for H.D.'s engagement and identification with informational code, disrupting and proliferating identity.

H.D. in Criticism

My work also takes a different vector than much criticism on H.D., intervening in interpretations of her fiction. Discussions of H.D.'s engagement with technology are few and far between—and not without reason. When investigating technology in H.D.'s texts, there appears, at first, to be less of an intertwining of the human and the machine and more of a dichotomy between the two. More particularly, *Asphodel* often positions war as destructive to humanity and aligns it with technology and the masculine while portraying the feminine more positively as organic, mystical, creative, and even life-giving. While the novel does not explicitly mention particular technologies and newer machines of war, the First World War was often seen as a new era of mechanized fighting. The continual refrain throughout *Asphodel* is of "Man, men, men, men, men. Guns, guns" (190), and this image of guns and men is more specifically an indictment of the merging of men and new machines of war. H.D.'s invocations of guns throughout *Asphodel* perform a metonymic function, linking the guns not only to masculinity but also to the forward march of technological modernity and the ever-newer machines of the First World War.

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[27] The Madrigal Cycle, with its multiple retellings of the same era of H.D.'s life and the largely unfinished quality of its unpublished texts, can give consciousness a multiple draft quality, something I touch on in the coda.

[28] Melba Cuddy-Keane makes a parallel argument to this in "Virginia Woolf, Sound Technologies, and the New Aurality" (2002) when she traces out the ways wireless technology and the diffusion of sound in radio pervades Woolf's writing. In works such as *To the Lighthouse*, Cuddy-Keane argues, sound envelopes the entire text, floating through the airwaves.

When Hermione sees her husband Jerrold go to war, she relates her experience of war technology and men in the following:

> Trains rumbling. Trains. Rumbling. Smoke to be breathed in layers, breathed in and out, like cotton wadging. Cold. O it was cold that winter. Cold. Winter. There are no fields . . . Cyclamen was lying and broken horns of cyclamen in that smoke and rumble gave an added fragrance. Trampled flowers smell sweet. Was this the end? Was this the end? Hysteria but suppressed. Hysteria suppressed goes to the head like wine and you make pictures, patterns and she was quiet and she felt her eyes clear and staring […] Faces, people, men, officers, red tape, men, men, men, drag gin bundles, dragging packs, hat titled, swank, officers. Trains. Smoke. A lover. A lover. No one would ever think it was a husband. 'Over the top.' Why must he say that, standing in the window. She wasn't a soldier. Over the top … going, going, going, going … Jerrold. (137)

In this passage, mechanical, rumbling trains trample the traditionally feminine images of flowers. The passage elides machinery with the war-going men: the "men, men, men" are almost indistinguishable from the trains and the smoke. Meanwhile, it depicts the hysterical woman as trapped in the middle of the impulses of men and machines, along with the trampled cyclamen bloom.

Later in the novel the now-pregnant Hermione takes on the mystical persona of Morgan le Fay and thinks of “Men, men, men, men. There were thousands of men. War dripped its rose-red petals, life upon life and love upon love and lilies rose up across the broken trenches. Guns creep nearer, nearer, will the guns prevail? Morgan le Fay drink deep, breathe deep, don’t lose your little witch-like pathos and your witch-like beauty” (161), and later the refrain of “men, men, men, men, men. Where had these men come from?” (161) appears once more. The mystical, witchlike Morgan le Fay aligns with organic flowers, flowers which grow and live despite male trench warfare and destruction. Furthermore, Hermione connects this mysticism to life and childbearing as she continues: “How do you feel when the guns go, clutching at life? Life, life, life, they wore it like a white flower to be tossed away. O but you gave them life. I know, mothers, mothers, mothers. But I am a mother. I mean I am not, was not” (122). In these passages, machinery and modernity seem dangerous, nightmarish, and antithetical to womanhood and continued life and childbirth.

This view—that masculine war machinery threatens not just womanhood but also life—was not uncommon during and after World War I. As the feminist movement became more prevalent, many women felt that destruction and war belonged exclusively to the male sphere, gendering war, destruction, and technology. In Ray Strachey and Eleanor Rathbone’s anthology of essays on feminism, *Our Freedom and its Results*, Mary Agnes Hamilton looks back on the early feminist movement and writes that early feminists claimed “Women were nearer to Life, and therefore would, if permitted, at once revolutionize social conditions and bring about peace on earth” (260). Vera Brittain’s “Can the Women of the World Stop War?” advocates for Pacifism based partly on this feminist principle. War is “always hostile to women’s interests” (70), particularly from the biological perspective of childbirth. As she writes, “it is useless to have an ideal nursery if you do nothing to prevent that nursery from being blown to bits within the next few years" (71).

The concepts of masculinity were also changing in war as the body became an increasingly important ideological terrain. War discourse emphasized the physicality of men, turning the male soldier into a hyper-masculinized, corporeal, and active body while often relegating women's bodies to their reproductive functions. Pearl James comments on this effect via Lawrence's *Studies in American Literature*, where Lawrence claimed that "The very women who are most busy saving the bodies of men … these women-doctors, these nurses, these educationalists, these public-spirited women, these female saviours: they are all, from the inside, sending out waves of destructive malevolence which eat out the inner life of a man" (103). In Lawrence's view, James posits, "male bodies suffer not from wounds but from illness caused by a monstrously strong New Woman" (29), but these quotations also indicate the bodily discourse surrounding the soldier during World War I. For Lawrence, the soldier's body is in danger because it is at its most vulnerable and, presumably, least masculine when being rescued by working rather than reproducing women. This dialectic feeds directly into the battle of the life-giving properties of womanhood against wartime destruction, as wartime hyper-masculinity—and its attendant destructive qualities—here encourages childbirth and binary gender roles. Nonetheless, the definition and implications of the body, both male and female, were in a complex flux during the First World War, and feminists such as Vera Brittain in fact championed the working woman.

Critics have also written on H.D.'s particular aversion to this kind of masculine militarism and its attendant technology, which she saw as destroying the beauty in the world and in art. In 1914, H.D. wrote an unpublished review of W.B. Yeats' *Responsibilities*, and her response to machinery is much-quoted. H.D. criticizes the masculine machine aesthetics of movements such as Vorticism and "the great overwhelming mechanical daemon, the devil of machinery" (128) for destroying beauty. Moreover, "the war is the hideous offspring" (128) of this machinery. Claire Buck cites this review to argue that the war spurred H.D.'s turn away from modernity (73), while—as Buck further points out—critics such as Susan Stanford Friedman, Gary Burnett, and Diana Collecott "have used [the *Responsibilities* review] to establish H.D.'s early consciousness of the connections between militarism and a modernist aesthetics associated with heterosexual masculinity" (73).[29] In *Asphodel*, where masculinity intertwines with both militarism and modern war machinery, H.D.'s work advocates for the feminine and mystical while repudiating destructive, masculine war machinery. Since any works making machinic claims about her texts must contend with this mechanical, masculine antipathy, criticism has not fully explored the technological aspects of H.D.'s work. How might *Asphodel* function as a text that engages with a machinic identity if technology stands for death and oppressive masculinity?

However, H.D.'s relationship to technology is not always so negative or so binary: critics such as Susan McCabe have considered H.D.'s complex relationship to film technology,[30] and H.D. herself exhibited a shifting, often positive view of technology throughout her writing, particularly in "Notes on Thought and Vision." Moreover, I argue here that H.D.'s relationship to communication technology, as opposed to technologies of war, is nuanced and ultimately positive. Matthew Kibble, who also speaks to communication technology in H.D., directly responds to the *Responsibilities* review. Kibble argues that for H.D. technology was potentially redemptive and spiritual, and that in *Asphodel*, as Hermione searches for a universal language—

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[29] See Burnett, Gary. "H.D.'s Responses to the First World War" (1988), Collecott, Diana. *H.D. and Sapphic Modernism 1910–1950* (1992) and Stanford Friedman, Susan. *Penelope's Web* (1990).

[30] Susan McCabe, *Cinematic Modernism: Modernist Poetry and Film* (2005).

what she calls a spiritual Esperanto—technology becomes "imaginatively reconstructed in terms of an artistic feminine spirituality, in place of the destructive 'devil of machinery' that H.D. attacked in her review" ("Still-Born" 551). Although Kibble's work is useful to my own, particularly in its focus on spiritual Esperanto, in arguing for the conversion from the mechanical to the spiritual he overleaps the way technology functions in real, complex ways throughout the novel.[31] As a result, a closer look at the ways *Asphodel* both criticizes and uses technology is needed.

The concept of the body in H.D.'s work can also be a difficult subject to untangle, and criticism has employed several different perspectives on the body in H.D. that are often in tension with one another. Moreover, as I will discuss more specifically later, these perspectives often share an interest in discussing the body as a catalyst for visionary consciousness rather than discussing the body itself—an oversight that I seek to correct in order to further enrich the body in H.D.'s work. Stanford Friedman's influential articulation of H.D.'s gynopoetics, which roots H.D.'s feminist power in her writing of the maternal body, has made particular assumptions about both the body in H.D.'s work and her visionary project that are somewhat reductive and that continue today despite critical intervention.[32] For one, Hickman has already convincingly argued for H.D.'s ambivalence towards the childbearing body. As Hickman posits, "For H.D., the undesirable qualities are often exemplified by a heavy body, especially a childbearing female body" (20) as H.D. looks for "liberation from everyday corporeality, and thus a receptivity to visionary consciousness" (136). In Hickman's view, the pregnant body, with its reminder of corporeality and heavy physicality, can often block this visionary consciousness rather than, as in Stanford Friedman's conception, promote it.

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[31] In *Modernist Writings and Religio-scientific Discourse* (2010), Lara Vetter fleshes out these arguments, positing that scientific and spiritual developments were linked during the early twentieth century.

[32] See Miranda Hickman's chapter on H.D.'s *Nights* in *The Geometry of Modernism* (2005) for a fuller discussion of Friedman's gynopoetics and the ensuing response.

Indeed, *Asphodel* often elides the mundane reality of pregnancy, even as it emphasizes the body's life-giving properties. As Hermione says in the above quotation: "I know, mothers, mothers, mothers. But I am a mother. I mean I am not, was not" (122). The passage presents the mothering, pregnant body not as a body but rather as a state of limbo, neither present or in the past, referencing H.D.'s stillborn child. Hermione further describes her pregnant body, stating that "she was caught back into her body, caught back into the body of Mrs. Darrington, the person she was, it appeared, still, caught back, held into it, like a bird caught in a trap, like a bird caught in bird-lime, caught and held in it" (144). The bird here, as elsewhere in H.D.'s work, becomes code for the body, tying in H.D.'s use of code to her own embodiment. Moreover, the pregnant body—the body of the married Mrs. Darrington—cages Hermione and does not grant access to the visionary. Likewise, it is when she is pregnant that Hermione takes on the Morgan le Fay persona, exploring the mystical through her body even while distancing herself from this body's corporeality. Kibble also acknowledges "the tone of grotesquerie and repulsion with which the body is treated" in 1919's "Notes on Thought and Vision" (*"*Sublimation" 45), although he also recognizes the various ways H.D. values sensuality in the text. This strategic ambivalence about the ordinary body might function as an effort to refuse the corporeal world of guns and men, particularly as these men themselves have turned hyper-corporeal and hyper-masculine through war discourse. Yet this ambivalence also appears to align H.D. more with Moravec, whose "roboticist's dream" (1) of freeing the mind from the body struck Hayles as a nightmare, than with Hayles herself.

H.D.'s ambivalence about the ordinary body is also an ambivalence about and response to the normative, contained feminine body, and her alternative embodiment both acknowledges the stress patriarchal systems—systems which uphold the male, disembodied universality of the liberal humanist subject—place upon the gendered body and exceeds these normative expectations. Moreover, H.D.'s visionary aspirations are complex: when H.D. criticizes masculine destruction above, part of her attack nonetheless includes the life-giving properties of the female body. It bears repeating, then, that there is no uncomplicated celebration or indictment of the female body throughout H.D.'s work, as the novel produces the body discursively in various ways that are at times in tension with one another. Indeed, these anxieties speak volumes about the importance of the body in H.D.'s, work, and Lara Vetter argues that "fear about control over the body is, not surprisingly, particularly fraught for women writers" (*Discourse* 18). H.D. presents a complex, even contradictory, relationship with the body throughout *Asphodel* and her work with alternative embodiment, indicating the need for further exploration of what she does with the body in the novel.

This chapter provides yet another response to this scholarship on H.D. and the body, one that investigates how the body itself might function in this visionary process. Stanford Friedman's gynopoetics accords the maternal body special status that then aids H.D. and her protagonists in achieving a visionary experience. Likewise, Hickman's focus on the geometric body, as I have quoted, rightly notes the way H.D. moves away from the everyday corporeality of the pregnant body in order to achieve this visionary consciousness. Both these critical viewpoints argue either for H.D.'s aversion to the ordinary body or her attraction to the special body in order to achieve a visionary state, but these accounts often overleap what the body itself might actually be doing in these visionary processes. Although I argue that H.D. seeks out a kind of alternative embodiment in her engagement with technology, I am also interested in the way the physical, uncomfortable body precedes this visionary consciousness and in the way this alternative embodiment acknowledges this pain and discomfort. Accordingly, this chapter explores the body neither as a life-giving vessel nor a geometric entity but rather as a physical reality. H.D. creates the pained body, in Elaine Scarry's terms, as a political entity, and H.D.'s alternative embodiment is a posthumanist response to the restrictions of the gendered body.

In this way, the project intersects with Haraway's work in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*. As the introduction discussed, Haraway is concerned with breaking down dichotomies of thought, among them nature and culture, science and art, objectivity and subjectivity, body and mind. Haraway, in refusing to privilege one discursive system over another, instead explores the various points of connection between apparently opposed categories of thought, and as a result champions a self-identification and self-knowledge that is equally non-hierarchical. Haraway's situated knowledges are an attempt to redefine scientific objectivity away from monolithic, enlightenment rationality and move towards interconnected, complex modes of being and knowing. This is a helpful, incisive way of viewing H.D.'s use of the body and embodiment throughout *Asphodel*: the novel connects the body to a visionary mode of knowing, but it is also itself a situated knowledge worthy of study both as a part of and apart from this visionary mode. Thus, I argue that when Hermione seeks out sublimation through technology and technological communication, it is better characterized not as transcendence but rather as alternative embodiment—and it is an embodiment that her corporeal body still underpins. Moreover, while I roughly divide this chapter from here on into concerns of technology and concerns of the body, the two connect to and inform one another.

Hayles's work is also helpful in nuancing different discursive constructions of the body. In *How We Became Posthuman*, Hayles distinguishes between the term "body," which is a Foucauldian construct and acts as a general, normative concept, and "embodiment," which indicates a personal, and non-normative experience of a particular body. Hayles's work acknowledges the normative discourses that place pressure on the body, particularly the female body, and the embodied ways women can register and resist these discourses. I argue, in turn, that H.D.'s resistance to the body is in itself an embodied act that highlights her physical discomfort amidst patriarchal attempts to control and define her body, granting her a space away from these pressures while never denying or idealizing physicality. For although Hermione wishes to deny the normative body, this denial often only underlines her experience of the pressures and narratives patriarchal systems place upon her body.

Hayles and Information Theory

To set up the ways modernist Morse code works within *Asphodel*, it is necessary to set up Hayles's work with information theory and flickering signifiers. For Hayles, there is a shift in posthumanism from an ontology based on a post-structuralist, Derridean dialectic of absence/presence towards a dialectic of pattern/randomness modeled on information theory and the concepts of entropy and randomness.[33] Although Hayles's work on this topic is intricate and useful, it is Lance Schachterle's discussion of information theory that introduces the particular concerns of my argument. As Schachterle points out, the units in an informational transmission "may be arbitrary and may mean nothing at all: the measure of success in an information system has nothing to do with the subjective value of the messages communicated to a human audience" (193). Schachterle continues,

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[33] Although Hayles's posthumanist theories are a twenty-first century phenomenon that can only be retroactively applied to H.D.'s modernist texts and milieu, in *How We Became Posthuman,* Hayles herself acknowledges that posthumanism is a slow process and often a recursive one (6).

> [C]onsider an imaginary message system made up of a single sentence, of any length or degree of complexity you like. In this information system the only choice is whether or not to communicate the sentence. The degree of freedom is minimal: either the sentence is sent, or it is not. Differentiation, choice, and entropy are low. Then consider an information system constituted of all the words in the sentence, which can be arranged in any fashion, language, or code. 'Greater freedom of choice, greater uncertainty and greater information' become available to our imaginary system: not only may the original sentence be or not be sent, but other meanings may be crafted from the words as well. And of course if we make the basic units the letters of the words rather than the words themselves, the freedom, uncertainty, and information increase again. (193-4)

The success of an information system is based on the *potential* for meaning rather than meaning itself. Of course, this does not mean that transmissions cannot contain meaning, just that building greater signification potential inherently relies on greater entropy and arbitrary white noise within the information system.

> This interplay between the signification of the transmission and the entropy of the information system that produced it is at the heart of what Hayles sees as the posthumanist dialectic of pattern/randomness. The movement from a post-structuralist dialectic of absence/presence to pattern/randomness has specific characteristics. Hayles reframes Jacques Lacan's notion of floating signifiers, morphing the concept into what she names flickering signifiers. For Lacan, as

> with Ferdinand de Saussure, language exists in a complex, relational network, and the post-structuralist dialectic of absence/presence is so named because it relies on the presence or absence of other signifiers and significations in these networks to create context and therefore meaning. In contrast, Hayles argues that the information age ushers in flickering signifiers, which exist "as a flexible chain of markers bound together by the arbitrary relations specified by the relevant codes" (31). At any point, however, the transference of meaning between flickering signifiers could be disrupted or garbled. Because of this, Hayles argues that flickering signifiers are examples of an ascendant dialectic of pattern/randomness: a posthumanist language produced by a culture steeped in computer code is one that shuts on and off, that can short-circuit, and that contains broken links. In other words, entropy can overwhelm this language, so that suddenly it may mean nothing in the linguistic sense. Moreover, even with the arbitrary relations of information theory, there is the potential for a non-arbitrary, one-to-one correspondence here between signifier and signified in this chain of meanings, which shifts language from a relational web to an actual code.

In this conception, certain forms of modernist stream of consciousness might prevent this dialectic of pattern/randomness and support Hayles's wariness of stream of consciousness, as discussed above. Code allows no room for ambiguity or shifting meaning, thus the emphasis on *flickering* signifiers: their meanings toggle (although they can be disrupted), rather than mutate, which might run counter to the slippage of stream-of-consciousness writing. Indeed, at times in *Asphodel*, Hermione's attachments to different words, concepts, and meanings go through multiple changes, and each meaning leaves its residue on the next. In this sense then, the poetic narration exists within the dialectic of absence/presence, and floating signifiers mutate rather than work in a chain of signification. Yet this is not the only mode that H.D.'s stream of consciousness operates in, and Hayles's concept of technological code can illuminate *Asphodel* in surprising ways, for at other moments in the text—as I will explore at the end of the section on coded language—this stream of consciousness does construct a posthumanist identity.

Yet when *Asphodel* was written, in approximately 1921, the very concept of code was in transition. Consequently, this code must be spoken of somewhat differently from Hayles's computer code: even as this code shares characteristics with Hayles's binary computer code, it also allows for shifts of meaning that require interpretation. In the early twentieth century, code was primarily thought of and used in cryptology. The term cryptology encompasses both cryptography—the creation of coded ciphers—and cryptanalysis—the breaking of ciphers. Mechanical cryptology gained momentum particularly during and just after World War I, when telegraphy and Morse code were not just in widespread commercial use, but were being further developed for military use and becoming more mathematical and systematic (xix). The British intercepted the German Zimmerman telegram in World War I and crucially used cryptanalysis to break the code and gain advantage over Germany. The Enigma machine was patented in 1918, and Germany and a host of other countries developed cryptographic machines consistently during the interwar years. Alan Turing, of course, went from working on cracking the Enigma code and working on the Bombe at Bletchley Park to developing the Universal Turing Machine, known as one of the first computers; the years of the First World War leading into World War II are transitional periods into more modern, mechanized, and eventually computerized uses of code.[34]

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[34] There is even a through-line from H.D. to code breaking via her daughter Perdita, who worked at Bletchley Park during World War II.

Morse code itself does not count as a cipher: it is not secret and its key is widely available and standardized. As Craig Bauer relates, "The invention of the telegraph and the desire to decrease the length of messages sent in that manner, in order to minimize costs . . . led to nonsecret *commercial codes* in which phrases were replaced by small groups of letters" (xvii). Yet nonsecret commercial codes actually spur cryptology on, as wartime codes were usually translated into Morse code and sent through telegraph. Bauer writes that "broadcast messages are so easy to intercept that they may as well be sent directly to the enemy. By comparison, it is much more difficult to get messages that are conveyed by a courier. Thus, the telegraph (and radio) made cryptology much more important" (48). Even if Morse code cannot protect the secrecy of a message, it allows code to be easily transmitted and necessitates modernist cryptology. In fact, during World War I, the Germans developed the ADFGX and later the ADFGVX code, so named because these were the only letters in the ciphertext, which "were specifically chosen for their ease in being distinguished from one another when transmitted in Morse code" (Bauer 189). Morse code became the medium through which to transmit ciphers, and is imbricated deeply in these ciphers. While *Asphodel* focuses on decrypted Morse code, in so doing it also involves ciphers, code construction, and code breaking; each are implicated in one another.

I will briefly discuss the Enigma machine in order to illustrate how information theory works in modernist cryptography and to indicate the way mechanical cryptanalysis actually involves the human and encourages a machinic identity. Andrew Hodges explains, "The right way to use the Enigma, like any ciphering machine, was to guard against the probable word attack by such obvious devices as prefacing the message with a variable amount of random nonsense" such as "inserting X's in long words, using a 'burying procedure' for stereotyped or repetitious parts of the transmission, and generally making the system as unpredictable, as un-mechanical, as was possible" (184). Crucially, Adrian Mackenzie argues that the Enigma machine was finally cracked because these "un-mechanical procedures" were not followed, bringing "the billions of possible combinations inherent to the Enigma's rotors and plugboard within range of the millions of combinations open to Bombe analysis" (370). What is perhaps most interesting here, besides the way that information theory is embedded in code breaking, is the way that randomizing procedures for Hodges are "un-mechanical," a note that Mackenzie picks up on. This, I argue, is an example of the way modernist cryptology forms a machinic identity, opening up multiple points of connection between the human and the machine, connections that disrupt ideological binaries between the two: the machine can contain un-mechanical procedures, and here it is the human who must perform randomizing functions. Human beings—and their bodies—are also embedded within these informational procedures, becoming very much a part of an informational system's randomness when sending a transmission, as the creator of the transmission must physically insert this un-mechanical random information. In the case of the Enigma machine, this means turning and repositioning cogwheels and using plug boards. Earlier codes further involved the human because of the need for a non-mechanical way of creating randomizing functions, as with one-time pads and other keywords to create substitution codes (106).

These rhizomatic, machinic connections are present in other tasks humans must perform in modernist era code breaking. The transmission's intended recipient must interpret the Morse code, and then write out and interpret the decrypted output. The unintended recipient, the eavesdropper, has even more work ahead of him or her. Much of code breaking is based on frequency analysis and guesswork rooted in mathematics. There is no one attack that suits all ciphers, and code breaking involves much trial and error, flexibility, and interpretation, particularly in World War I, when there was little mechanization. Even as British interlopers may have used the Bombe to decode enemy transmissions, a human must still interpret the message's significance rather than a central processing unit. Perhaps it is not surprising then that the term "computer" originally applied to human workers—a fact that Hayles plays off of when she names her book *My Mother Was a Computer*. Thus, it does not seem entirely accurate to characterize this emergent version of coding in the same way that Hayles views computer coding, particularly when one considers this human involvement. In some ways, cryptanalysis does function in line with Hayles's code in its chain of signification: if one discovers the correct key, the encrypted letters cascade into the intended meaning, working—on a smaller scale—in much the same way as computers translate alphanumeric code into binary and then pass it along to higher-level functions. An incorrect machine set-up or an inattentive transmitter or receiver will also occlude the meaning, as cryptology is not entirely a post-structuralist proliferation of meanings: even in this code, there is one particular meaning to be had, which is precisely what makes code-breaking difficult.

Yet code-breaking in World War I and II were largely un-mechanized, and the handwriting and interpretation involved did end up producing a "single marker" that *was* "an ink mark on a page" (Hayles 30). In Hayles's terms, this chain of meaning produces flickering signifiers that ultimately convert to floating signifiers through human involvement and interpretation. As a result, although this promise of universal, non-arbitrary code is what attracts Hermione to Morse code in her search for a spiritual Esperanto, it is a promise that must remain unfulfilled. Particularly in wartime, the interpretation of the various possible meanings of the end message was crucial, and open to the same possible ambiguities as Lacan's post-structuralist view of a linguistic system. Hayles argues that the post-structuralist dialectic of absence/presence (derived from Saussurean semiotics and floating signifiers) can co-exist alongside pattern/randomness (derived from computer code and flickering signifiers) (248), and in the informational system of early to mid-twentieth-century cryptology, the two intertwine. Cryptology becomes both about ascertaining the correct key to decode a transmission's pattern amid its randomness *and* about interpreting it in a relational web of meanings.

H.D. and Morse Code

As I have noted, Kibble's argument that technology in *Asphodel* becomes "imaginatively reconstructed" in spiritual terms fails to take the historical contexts of modernist era code (explored above) into account. Although technological engagement does seem to be a spiritual experience for H.D., Kibble's analysis frames the connection between technology and identity not as posthuman but rather as alchemy. H.D.'s uneasiness with technology in the Yeats review and throughout *Asphodel* conveniently resolves if machinery converts instantly into a spiritual instrument. Kibble argues that in order to aid Hermione's spiritual quest, this technology must be "reconstructed": Hermione must dismantle the mechanical and then elide it for it to be of any use to her feminine spirituality. The emphasis here is on the end result—the spiritual Esperanto—rather than the process and the technology from which this comes.

I argue instead that informational code, particularly in communication technology, impacts Hermione's identity and this spiritual Esperanto because of exactly what it is—technology. The wide communication of Morse code allows Hermione to perceive herself as a decoder and the world as more open and intelligible. Yet where for Hayles code can disrupt or stymie meaning, transitional Morse code allows Hermione to reinterpret meanings from that code with the aid of her scientific heritage via her scientist father, Carl Gart, and her mathematician brother, Bertrand. This requires Hermione to at once identify herself, often bodily, as a mechanical receiver and decoder of transmissions as well as an attentive, human interpreter of the decoded information. This follows a machinic model of identity, and a variety of technological connections build Hermione's identity as both human and machine. This is not to say that Hermione—and H.D. by proxy—is not wary of technology, but even this wariness suggests a complex engagement and negotiation with technology rather than an elision of it or merely an alchemical reaction that utterly transforms this technology.

While in Europe, Hermione meets Walter Dowel, a pseudonym for Walter Morse Rummel, who is, as I noted, a descendant of Samuel F.B. Morse. Hermione feels an affinity towards Walter immediately thanks to her own scientific upbringing. Hermione's first mention of spiritual Esperanto immediately precedes her first meeting with Walter and is prompted by the thought of her father and her brother Bertrand reading scientific books. Perhaps homesick and uncomfortable in a new European culture, she thinks, "Mathematics is a language common to all people—dots and dashes—why don't we all speak a common language of dots and dashes and colours? Why must we be divided, hating each other, never understanding? There ought to be a sort of Spiritual Esperanto" (25). These dots and dashes predict the dots and dashes of the technology of Morse code with which Hermione associates Walter. This passage also indicates that it is not just that universal language is achievable through technology but also that this language must be rooted in and modeled from technology. Likewise, Hermione's first description of Walter indicates the potential she sees in Morse code communication; as she explains, "His grandfather invented the morse code. Telepathic. I mean telegraphic or something" (26). This conflation of telegraphy and telepathy points to her belief in Morse code's ability to communicate transparently and universally. Throughout *Asphodel*, technology is something both personal to (in her heritage) and positive for (in its communication potential) Hermione's identity.

Nonetheless, when Hermione does meet Walter, she wants to reach out and connect to him but has difficulty doing so; she struggles to create this spiritual Esperanto and set up this communication. The way she expresses this attempt to communicate, however, is through Morse code, and, once more, their mutual scientific inheritance. Here is where the opening quotation of this chapter comes in, as she thinks, "I couldn't myself sit so still here, not saying anything afraid lest for some little breath I might move in some way, get out of key with something and the message wouldn't get through. Morse code. I am a wire simply. But one doesn't really choose casual instruments. . . . But it's worse, much worse, much more triumphant for us, quiet, who have Morse codes and Gart formulas to fall back on" (28). As noted at the opening, in seeking to become a mechanical receiver for Walter's dots and dashes, Hermione embodies herself alternatively through the pronged wire. She must also be in the right key, with the proper set-up and the correct information in order to receive this message properly and to control the entropy of this system. The correct key, it seems, is the shared inheritance of Morse code and her father's scientific background. This is then a personal, familial connection to code, which shifts technology's previous association with large-scale, faceless warfare and men and guns. Moreover, in expressing her identity through the physicality of the wire, Hermione also engages in a machinic identity, embodying herself in both human and mechanical terms, which I will explore in detail later. She must sit still and control her own body while imaginatively becoming the wire. She is not either human or machine, but both. Furthermore, this machinic identity centers on connectivity, as Hermione fashions herself as both the transmitter and receiver of a variety of messages.

Walter's music also connects to Hermione's exploration of Morse code, and her discussions of his music help her to further define her work with code and her own identity. The piano, Walter's instrument of choice, makes a particularly good parallel to Morse code: not only does it need to be in key, but it also has physical keys and works primarily through wires. Music contains several other features that Hermione identifies in code: music and Walter's notes go "on and on and on" (30)—a phrase she also uses to describe Morse code—and Hermione compares Walter to "water simply that welled up and up. Up and Up. He was the water simply. Fresh water, mountain water that ran and ran and ran" (45). These images produce an endless flow of signification and parallel Hermione's identity as a wire simply. Hermione also characterizes Walter's music as transparent and exact, particularly when compared to the music of others. Whereas Hermione describes Walter's music as attempting to get at something (35), when she compares it with Vérène's cello she thinks that this "was music of another order. Not of the Morse code Gart formula order. Not of the order of the music of the spheres and Plato actually getting the thing down, making the exact statement" (38). A little later, she describes Walter's music as "transparent. Who said there was colour in music? Someone, somewhere. People now were always saying it. Colour in music, sound in pictures. Colour. There was no colour in this thing" (44). Walter's music is akin to Morse code because it allows for simple, transparent communication of meaning, without a mixing of signifiers or synesthesia; it is clear, colorless, flowing water.

These kinds of images of technology exist throughout H.D.'s work. In "Notes on Thought and Vision," H.D. details how to become a proper receptor for artistic messages through the "over-mind," and she does so with the diction of electricity and Morse code. As she writes, speaking about the sculpture of the charioteer at Delphi, “If we had the right sort of brains, we would receive a definite message from that figure, like dots and lines ticked off by one receiving station, received and translated into definite thought by another telegraphic centre,” and just below that, “We want receiving centres for dots and dashes” (26). Just after this section, she writes, “Two or three people, with healthy bodies and the right sort of receiving brains, could turn the whole tide of human thought, could direct lightning flashes of electric power to slash across and destroy the world of dead, murky thought” (27). The act of receiving spiritually or artistically is a mechanical process involving the dots and dashes of Morse code, and it produces electricity. Moreover, this current can sweep away the dead, murky thought to perhaps produce a spiritual Esperanto that is something living, forceful, and vitally communicable. In searching for this Esperanto through technological code, Hermione seeks out the universality of a code system.

Yet in order to achieve this universal language, Hermione must first decode it—it is not universal at first, and Hermione does more with Morse code than just model herself as a mechanical transmitter/receiver: she is also an interpreter of the physical inscriptions of the code. While interpretation re-introduces the inherent limits and failures of language, these failures also render this code language subversive and powerful in its own right. Again speaking of her relationship with Walter, she describes how there is “Morse code going on and on and on. Everything he did was written carefully away somewhere in a big book. . . . He is certainly writing things for me, dots and dashes, things that I and only a few people (Hermione) can read. And there is Hermione knowing all about it. Something to have a Hermione, a negative instrument” (30). This passage translates the flickering signifiers of Morse code into physical markers as Hermione refers to the physical marks that Walter might make, physical writings and dots and dashes that she must read and de-code. However, there is some irony in this description, a sense that Hermione and Walter actually *cannot* communicate. This is a lack of communication that the universal language of Morse code only emphasizes, and indicates a fundamental difficulty of communication that I will explore further.

This code can also transition into a relational web of floating signifiers. Later on, Hermione thinks, “What could one say or how could one say it? ‘Don’t worry at me.’ That was the only thing to say but Hermione couldn’t say it. Walter has, O it’s so odd, a sort of brain. I have too. . . . It’s the Gart formula and the Morse code between us. One couldn’t say that. She had hardly formulated it. But there was something of a butterfly rimed with frost between them” (34). This technological code can transmit between Hermione and Walter, who have the same kind of brain, echoing H.D.’s words in “Notes on Thought and Vision,” and thus the right set-up to receive these transmissions, the right kind of bodies. Nonetheless, there is still ambiguity when interpreting the transmissions. Hermione does not know how to interpret, express, or “formulate” the connection that she and Walter have, and the messages that go between them. In order to attempt to formulate it, she must go away from the one to one relation of code and into metaphor, the “butterfly rimed with frost.” However, this also affects the universality of this language: although the mechanics of Morse code share features with non-arbitrary code, these mechanics require interpretation, which in turn opens up this language to *mis*interpretation and slippage. Perhaps, then, this is why Hermione seems to increasingly move away from viewing language and the world through Morse code, and why there are no references to Morse code in the second part of *Asphodel*.

Walter and his music also register this difficulty of interpretation. Just before Hermione contemplates this image of the butterfly, she describes Walter as “a sort of moth that has frozen, frozen—it’s all very inexact—a sort of moth whose feathers are snow crystals—O dear” (33).

This passage indicates, with its final "O dear," exasperation with descriptive language. Moreover, examining this passage in conjunction with the "butterfly rimed with frost" reveals the two phrases as rough translations of each other; the butterfly is an "inexact" linguistic slippage of this frozen moth. Moreover, while Walter's music was clear and transparent, later in the novel music becomes layered and synesthetic. In one passage, music ties together Hermione's stream of consciousness thoughts on taste, sound, and sight, and finally into Morse code: "The bells of Saint Clement's. Lemons. Not lemon light, silver rather, those high bell notes. Notes, bells . . . who is it in me, what is it in me, hears bells, notes, Morse code . . . Gart formula . . . Walter could you tell me?" (73). In this passage, the church bells' music does not put forth a single, indisputable meaning, but rather exists in this network of floating signifiers, moving between lemons, to light, to color, to Morse code, so much so that Hermione finishes by invoking Walter (and his transparent music) in a plea for interpretation. This music—and the Morse code with which Hermione associates it—is a network, not a universal signal, and Morse code may not have as much potential for powerful, transparent communication as Hermione hoped.

Yet it also is important to remember that even Hayles's computer code contains the possibility for failure in the form of disruption—and these failures are not always unfortunate. In fact, Haraway claims that linguistic failures are crucial to posthumanist theories. In *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*, Haraway argues, "Cyborg politics is the struggle for language and the struggle against perfect communication, against the one code that translates all meaning perfectly" (188) in a world where traditional disciplines of science and biology translate *"the world into a problem of coding*, a search for a common language in which all resistance to instrumental control disappears and all heterogeneity can be submitted to disassembly, reassembly, investment, and exchange" (176, emphasis in original). This is not to align H.D.'s work too closely with Haraway's conception of the cyborg, which is a figure fraught with different conflicts and open to different connections. Nonetheless, Haraway's larger point—that, at their most fruitful, computer coding and computer language do not perfectly translate the world into binaries but rather produce partiality and multiplicity of meaning—still stands. Slippages and failures in language and code are potentially welcome disruptions in these hierarchies of thought. Instead of a common language, Haraway recommends a "powerful infidel heteroglossia" (193) to disrupt this monolithic understanding of the world. Hayles's own acknowledgement of the disruption possible in code indicates a posthumanist language that is riddled with short-circuits and openings for questions as well as dissent. Both Hayles's and Haraway's discussions of the disruptions of posthumanist language allow for an alternative to a binary understanding of code.

If Hermione struggles to create or maintain this spiritual Esperanto due to Morse code's transitional qualities, this may yet be a welcome failure that encourages heterogeneity and rhizomatic connections. For example, although Hermione moves away from Morse code in Part II, electricity and technology still imbue this language with power; language has not entirely reverted back to the dialectic of presence/absence. She ruminates on the potentiality of words, thinking, "Out of the dust, the most minute electric distillation was contrived and gun-powder resides in the words, the electric shimmer of the sun" (186-7). Then later, she thinks of how "The sun and glint of sun on marble remains in just such words" (186-7). After this, she focuses on the word "Syracuse" in an Italian travel advertisement: "read 'Syracuse' in a dark tunnel of a railway station and shut your eyes for in a moment the whole station may explode; that's the way with those words but they bide their time. Treat them carefully, speak to them (if you dare) softly, intone, sing or chant or whisper them. But know—know—know—that they are full of power" (186-7).

This language invokes the realm of floating signifiers: the power of language lies precisely in its arbitrary quality and its ability to mean more than one thing at the same time, giving the layered effect to the word "Syracuse." The meanings of words bide their time through multiple permutations—and through multiple uses such as speaking, singing, and whispering—until, in a surprising moment, an older, ancient meaning comes through; mutability is the very source of language's power. However, this newly invigorated language connects to "electric distillation" and "gun-powder"—to the electricity that also powers Morse code and to signposts of modernity. In this sense, the Morse code language that Hermione explores in Part I remains as a framework for this language. Hermione learns to cobble together a powerful, but not infallible, heteroglossia from the partial connections of floating and flickering signifiers in transitional code.

Moreover, Morse code fundamentally alters Hermione's perception of reality and her place within it, modifying some of her conceptions about destruction and modernity and providing her with layered perspectives of the world. After identifying herself as a receiver and interpreter of Walter's transmissions, she feels around her

> something in the air. Paris. Something there are no words for. Walter was right with his harps and his absolute conviction that there were things, notes, voices in the air about them. X rays, Morse code. Telegraphs and so on. We are only just beginning. People will think of us the year 1912 circa (was it?) somehow crude and old fashioned even doubting, thinking, thinking such things odd. But we didn't. Not us. Not Walter, Hermione, Josepha.

> Are we ahead then of people? O this is horrible. What will people think 1922 or 1932 or some great age like that, ten, twenty, thirty years from this year? They will catch us when they know that we are ahead of them. (37)

This section is remarkable because technology connects not to war machinery and destruction—even as the short bursts of sentences mirror the "guns, guns" of earlier—but rather to the future, and once more with Walter's music and its capacity to communicate. Crucially, this is one of the only times Hermione speaks of a future at all beyond the war. Although this occurs before Hermione experiences the war in *Asphodel*, with H.D. writing the novel in 1921, this imagining of a future beyond the coming war is still important and affirming. Instead of machine technology destroying life, here telegraphs, X-rays, and Morse code give the vibrant feeling that there is "something in the air," and this is "only just beginning." This is not without anxiety—Hermione worries about being ahead of people and calls it horrible—but the end result is that these technologies cause Hermione to feel that there is a future to move ahead to, even if there is still some ambiguity in her feeling towards technology and even a potential fear of the posthuman. Technology is not just a throughway to spiritual Esperanto, but also integral to a future steeped in communication and transmission.

Notably, this is not a seamless, perfect communication, but rather a heterogeneous layering of transmissions: notes, voices, X rays, Morse code, telegraphs, and more unidentified, communications. Moreover, it is Hermione's awareness of these layered transmissions that makes her feel out of time and ahead of people: these transmissions give her a dual perspective of reality, both in the year 1912 and outside of it. Furthermore, H.D.'s particular stream-of-consciousness style, which both frames and describes these interactions, takes on the characteristics of a heteroglossic transmission. H.D.'s stream of consciousness is malleable, and at times mirrors the flow of information. It can imitate the rhythms of Morse code; it can flow quickly through the novel, mirroring radio waves; it can disrupt this flow with a new thought. Take the above example: Hermione begins with "Something in the air. Paris. Something there are no words for," paralleling the stop-shudder rhythm of Morse code transmissions. Yet the next line, "Walter was right with his harps and his absolute conviction that there were, things, notes, voices, in the air about them," rushes along like it, too, is a radio wave speeding through the air. This flow of thought then interrupts itself, as Hermione interjects with "[a]re we ahead then of people? O this is horrible," garbling the flow of communication with a new thought. Because this stream of consciousness represents Hermione's own consciousness, these parallels to transmission in poetic narration are imbricated in Hermione's very identity. Ultimately, this stream of consciousness operates as a poetic matrix for the aspects of H.D.'s engagement and identification with informational code I have been discussing. Technology is not merely the "devil" (128), and it can be a powerful tool for constructing modernist language and, through this, identity.

Although the slippages of code ultimately frustrate this search for a spiritual Esperanto, Hermione's work in attempting to decode and communicate with this language nonetheless reveals *Asphodel* as a lush and vital exploration of a machinic identity. In this sense, the promise of Morse code, and of a spiritual Esperanto born from code, is not finally of perfect communication but rather of a layered rhizomatic language, a heterogeneous mode of technological and spiritual communication, and a multitude of perspectives—all characteristics that can be found in the very form of the novel and its poetic interest in what words (and code) can do. Hayles's work makes *Asphodel*'s messages more definite, pulling into focus new connections and complexities. My work also re-illuminates and re-focuses posthumanism:

H.D.'s particularly modernist posthumanism shifts and questions the boundaries of identity formation that Hayles puts forth. Modernist, transitional Morse code and cryptography reimagine Hayles's theorization of computer code, and her theories take on new characteristics. Although for Hayles stream of consciousness, because of what she sees as its suturing, smoothing techniques, presents an obstacle to a posthumanist reading or identification with a text, in *Asphodel* this stream of consciousness not only mirrors but also encourages Hermione's engagement with technology; looking at both the intersections and the divergences of modernism and posthumanism expands and reconstitutes the borders and definitions of both categories.

Posthumanism and the Body

The body also plays an important role in H.D.'s engagement with code and communication technology, not despite but rather because of H.D.'s noted ambivalence to the body. I will spend the rest of the work here outlining the way the body functions in Hayles's theories and subsequently in *Asphodel* as it underwrites Hermione's engagement with the technology above. Again, for Hayles, the body is an important feature of any interaction with technology, even if posthumanism often diminishes or obscures this importance. Hayles's foregrounding of the body is not utopian or, to frame it in the terms I discuss above, perfect. Instead, in emphasizing the body in information technology, Hayles takes a feminist perspective, laying bare not only the ways technology omits bodily experience, but also the ways technology omits and even controls *female* bodily experience, often using the same logic as constructions of the liberal humanist subject. In so doing, I argue that Hayles's work sensitizes us to how the body—and H.D.'s ambivalence about the normative female body—functions in *Asphodel*'s explorations of technological identity. H.D.'s work with posthumanism and alternative embodiment through Morse code functions as a strategy to both acknowledge gendered bodily pain under patriarchal structures and move away from this pain.

One of the most poignant examples of the omitted female body in *How We Became Posthuman* is the figure of Janet Freed. Freed was the secretary of cybernetician Warren McCulloch, and Hayles stumbles across her in a picture printed in an interview published about the Macy Conference, a cybernetics conference McCulloch organized. A large group of conference organizers and attendees (mostly male) partially obscure Freed, and the caption of the photo mislabels her as "Janet Freud." Hayles knows she must be Freed, the woman "responsible for turning these men's (and a couple of women's) words into type" (81). Hayles muses on her image: "What are we to make of Janet F., this sign of the repressed, this Freudian slip of a female who, with a flick of a 'u' … goes from Freed to Freud, Freud to Freed?" (82).

Hayles further argues that male-dominated spheres, particularly in information technologies, often elide women's identities, bodies, and physical labour. Janet Freed, occupying the gendered position of secretary, physically transformed the thoughts of these men (and some women) into type. Ironically, her performance of this labour makes it easier to sustain the illusion that information technology and cybernetics are separate from the body. Hayles writes,

> Thinking of her, I am reminded of Dorothy Smith's suggestion that men of a certain class are prone to decontextualization and reification because they are in a position to command the labors of others …. The man speaks, and she writes on her stenography pad (or perhaps on her stenography typewriter). The man leaves. He has a plane to catch, a meeting to attend. When he returns, the letter is on his desk, awaiting his signature. From his point of view, what has happened? He speaks, giving commands or dictating words, and things happen. A woman comes

> in, marks are inscribed onto paper, letters appear, conferences are arranged, books are published. Taken out of context, his words fly, by themselves, into books. The full burden of the labor that makes these things happen is for him only an abstraction, a resource diverted from other possible uses, because he is not the one performing the labor. (82-3)

Although for McCulloch information and his ideas appear as disembodied, to Janet Freed this information is inextricably tied to her own labour and her long hours typing. As Hayles puts it, "Janet Freed knows that information is never disembodied, that messages don't flow by themselves, and that epistemology isn't a word floating through the thin, thin air until it is connected up with incorporating practices" (83). Freed symbolizes the silent, often obscured labour women perform, particularly in information technology where male narratives champion the mind at the expense of the body.

Hayles also posits that these processes, taken on a larger scale, promote a falsely universal notion of being which posits that we can all, as in Moravec's vision, equally transcend physicality and move into code, even as this transcendence is built on the backs—and fingers—of those interpellated as women in a system. This posthumanism shares an insidious affinity with liberal humanism. Hayles writes that,

> one could argue that the erasure of embodiment is a feature common to *both* the liberal humanist subject and the cybernetic posthuman. Identified with the rational mind, the liberal subject *possessed* a body but was not usually represented as *being* a body. Only because the body is not identified with the self is it possible to claim for the liberal subject its notorious universality, a claim that depends on erasing markers of bodily difference, including sex, race, and ethnicity. (4-5)

Just as cybernetics often erases women's bodies and physical labour, so too does this universalizing notion of technology deny multiple sites of subjectivity and identity in service of this equalizing narrative.[35]

This universalizing narrative has a fruitful parallel to Michel Foucault's discourse analysis of the body. As Hayles writes, "Coincident with cybernetic developments that stripped information of its body were discursive analyses within the humanities, especially the archaeology of knowledge pioneered by Michel Foucault" (192). In Foucault's conception, the body is "a play of discourse systems" (192), creating a "postmodern ideology that the body's materiality is secondary to the logical or semiotic structures it encodes" (192). Foucault's body, Hayles suggests, functions more as a Platonic ideal than a breathing entity, as this definition of the body "diverts attention away from how actual bodies, in their cultural and physical specificities, impose, incorporate, and resist incorporation of the material practices he describes" (194). To reinvigorate the body with individual subjectivity and material existence, Hayles differentiates between the term "body" and the term "embodiment." In these definitions, "Embodiment differs from the concept of the body in that the body is always normative relative to some set of criteria" (196). She continues, arguing, "whereas the body is an idealized form that gestures towards a Platonic reality, embodiment is the specific instantiation generated from the noise of difference. Relative to the body, embodiment is other and elsewhere, at once excessive and deficient in its infinite variations, particularities, and abnormalities" (196-7). In other words, the body corresponds to the kind of universalizing tendencies of cybernetics: Foucault's work strips the body of its context and turns it into to discourse just as Janet Freed's bosses' inadvertently strip her bodily labour from cybernetics.

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[35] The paradoxical narratives of liberal humanism also simultaneously erase women's bodies and relegate them to their bodies, a bind I will explore in Mina Loy's poetry.

Hayles also introduces the complementary concepts of inscription (which relies on the normalized body) and incorporation (which relies on embodiment). She writes that, “Like the body, inscription is normalized and abstract, in the sense that it is usually considered as a system of signs operating independently of any particular manifestation” (198). Furthermore, the significance of inscriptions “derives from the concepts they express, not from the medium in which they appear” (198). In contrast, “An incorporating practice such as a good-bye wave cannot be separated from its embodied medium, for it exists as such only when it is instantiated in a particular hand making a particular kind of gesture” (198), even as the two concepts—like the dichotomies of absence/presence and pattern/randomness—are not inimical to each other (199). Hayles’s work introduces a particularly feminist perspective on these issues of information technology, code, and embodiment. She intervenes into these scientific discourses, which universalize and normalize the body and human identity into monolithic, often patriarchal concepts, and instead makes space for individualized, incorporated responses to these technologies, just as H.D. does with alternative embodiment.

***Asphodel* and Embodiment**

This aspect of Hayles’s work illuminates H.D.’s relationship to the body, particularly in technology. When I read Hayles’s acknowledgement of the elision of physical female labour in technology and her discussion of the normative discourses of the body it becomes easy to see why Hermione embodies herself alternatively through the floating air waves of Morse code. If H.D. was wary of the destructive, masculine aesthetic that could destroy female creativity, *Asphodel* enacts a similar fear on the body, as H.D. fears the body’s subjugation to patriarchal discourse and desires to transcend and exceed this subjugation and the pain the body feels in this subjugation. Nonetheless, I argue that this desire to transcend is not passive, but active, and does not ultimately discard this body; the body's discomfort acknowledges this subjugation. That is, H.D. does not entirely run away from the body or its pain, and her alternative embodiment acknowledges this pain while putting the female identity at a remove from it. Through this alternative embodiment, Hermione aspires towards a new inscription, one that moves away from normalization, in order to get out of and mean something beyond her gendered body, even as this form of alternative embodiment gestures to the incorporation and pain of that body.

Thus, I suggest two things about H.D.'s response to the body and technology in what follows: first, that if we follow Hayles's argument, no contact with technology, even information technology, can totally elide or obscure the human body, and we must thus look closer at the ways the novel sets up the body in relation to technology. Second, that there may be something illuminating in investigating H.D.'s relationship to the body through Hayles's idea of embodiment. That is, instead of representing a normative, controlled, Foucauldian body, both Hermione's alternative embodiment (driven by a reworking of inscription) and her human body (defined by incorporation) might provide resistance to or space within the patriarchal narratives imposed upon the likes of Janet Freed. H.D. is ambivalent about the ordinary body because this body is more susceptible to normative, patriarchal discourses, and this alternative embodiment pushes back on as well as acknowledges these systems.

This section assesses the feminist potential of H.D.'s alternative embodiment, but this requires fastidious work. In *Body Drift*, Arthur Kroker directly compares Hayles's work with that of French feminism. As he writes,

> Intentionally, or not, very much in the tradition of new French feminism, with its insistence of literally writing a woman's body into existence—a body which is

> authored less hierarchically than by labored scribbles, broken margins, repressed silences, a scream for social recognition that will be heard and, finally, embodied—Hayles finds the possible dimensions of a new woman's body in code. (76)

Kroker's quotation helpfully recalls late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century discourses of the New Woman Lawrence so deplored in the opening of this chapter. Just as Hayles's code constructs new identities for the twenty-first-century woman, so too does H.D.'s Morse code make new modes of being available to the twentieth-century woman. However, the body in *Asphodel* does not slide so easily into this *écriture feminine*. Patriarchal discourses do indeed repress and marginalize Hermione's body, and Kroker's language here recalls the palimpsestic creation of identity that runs throughout H.D.'s work. Yet H.D. does not reclaim this bodily pain past acknowledging it, and although Hermione's body is necessary to transcendence, so too is her mind. The body in *Asphodel* is a component of its writing and its spirituality, but not this writing's end. As such, *Asphodel* presents an alternative feminism to both the French feminism Kroker describes and the feminism Hayles writes of, where Hayles is far less ambivalent about the body. *Asphodel*'s feminism acknowledges the body, its pain, and its role in identity formation, but it does not criticize the need to give up or forsake the body, even symbolically.

Hermione personally feels gendered bodily restrictions throughout *Asphodel*. For much of the first half of the novel, Hermione's engagement to George Lowndes defines her role in society and reflects upon her character, particularly in foreign London. Fayne and her mother Clara question Hermione on the exact nature and status of her engagement to George, indicating that the terms of this engagement should constrain her behaviour and implying that unless she is completely free of the engagement she is not free herself. As Fayne remarks, "Don't you think it would be the height of foolishness of Hermione to see George Lowndes here away from home, in London where conventions are so strict, where everything is different?" (40). *Asphodel* portrays George as possessive on multiple occasions. After Fayne is married herself, George demands that Hermione not travel with Fayne and her husband, as Hermione describes how "George had her, tucked her into his velvet crook of his velvet monkey jacket" (86), controlling her body with his own body. Furthermore, the novel describes George with the lexicon of heaviness that H.D. is averse to, as a "distorted, heavy George" (96).

Marriage and patriarchal conventions, through the figure of George Lowndes, thus control Hermione's bodily agency. The novel even describes Hermione's marriage to Darrington in terms of possession, although at times it is she who possesses him, taking on the role of the mother he always wanted (61). She reflects at one point that "She seemed to hold the soul of Jerrold Darrington in her hands. He was right when he said he wanted a beautiful mother. He was her child" (65). Moreover, when Hermione reflects on her marriage with Darrington it is with discomfort at his legal possession of her. She thinks, "She was damn sick of it. Quaint. She was a quaint person. They would keep on saying it. Hit or miss. Well … she wouldn't be quaint. Hit or miss. Mrs. Jerrold Darrington, a person. A person. Quaint, a hybrid. No hybrid" (69). The repetition of quaint indicates the reduction of personhood that being Mrs. Jerrold Darrington brings, a personhood Hermione struggles to assert.

As a result of the pressures and containments of these patriarchal systems, the female body is often in pain throughout *Asphodel* and H.D.'s other works. When Hermione receives a letter from Fayne Rabb informing her that, despite the romance between herself and Hermione, she is now married, Hermione describes how "The letter burned, vitriolic blue acid in her hand … The touch of the letter left a scar across the fingers that opened it, scar of burning acid, not of fire, scalding not searing" (76). Likewise, In *Bid Me to Live*, Julia often expresses her discomfort in her unfaithful, restricting marriage through bodily pain. Rafe notices her trembling as she thinks, "this was the terrible moment when something was about to happen" (16). When he comments on her tremor a second time, she explains, "It's the way I crooked my elbow" (17). This bodily pain is psychosomatic: a response to the stresses of patriarchal possession and containment.

The body in *Asphodel*, unwillingly shaped and restricted by these forces, is then contained and cumbersome, tender and hurting. Moreover, for Elaine Scarry, writing in *The Body in Pain*, the pain of the body is so difficult to express that it disrupts language, even as the ways we do express pain can implicate us in a public sphere as social beings (3). As she writes, "what is quite literally at stake in the body in pain is the making and unmaking of the world" (23), since physical pain both threatens language and expression yet, if it can be expressed, can become an act of creation. The depictions and expressions of Hermione's body and its pain throughout Asphodel are a testament to and a trace of these normative, patriarchal stresses upon the gendered body; her body becomes a political, public symbol of these stresses.

H.D.'s alternative embodiment takes this process further, as alternative embodiment, through technology or otherwise, allows Hermione to acknowledge the discomfort and pain of the feminine body and recognize the desire to overleap this body in pain, all while imagining new possibilities for that body in excess of the normative demands placed upon it. In this sense, the body in *Asphodel* is both a testament to *and* a prophecy for the gendered body. Often when the body does appear in *Asphodel* the text imaginatively substitutes it with another concept, modeling an alternative embodiment. Hermione relates one vision where

> I saw myself grow up against my self and knew in a few days the white lily bud

> would strike the top of my head which is my brain, which is my skull. Then, if the lily-bud had struck the top of my head (the metal layer that was my brain) it would have withered simply. My head would have withered simply as a lily itself (any French lily) seared by cannon flare. Lilies that fall and lie fallen, the lily of me grew up and up and up because I let the head go. (151)

Hermione wants to replace her skull with a lily, to have her head go up and up away from her. This substitution also occurs in particularly sexualized moments, which Hermione only rarely describes. Relating her physical relationship with George, Hermione thinks "But she couldn't *marry*. You couldn't of course marry him. No. Of course not. Hybiscus red and … famished hyacinths" (75) and describes how "famished and forgetting Hermione had lifted hyacinths to George Lowndes' kisses" (81). This figurative language of her sexualized body, which substitutes the female body and its actions for the images of flowers, is an attempt to prevent marriage and men from possessing this body, protecting Hermione from corporeal control. Nonetheless, these processes are still physical: Hermione does not dissolve her body in these instances; she transfigures it into an alternative body, one less susceptible to control.

Additionally, at times the novel portrays the body as a cumbersome shell that Hermione has only partially succeeded in leaving. Describing her mental state at one point during *Asphodel*, Hermione relates that "It was like having a body and being dead, mercifully, and then someone coming and saying no, you aren't dead, you are only half-dead, crawl back to your body" (144). She often describes herself throughout the novel as in a ghostly in between state where "She was burnt out, pale in her burning. But there was no jasmine. She was not yet ghost" (129), speaking of "This death in life, this ghost in life, this life in death" (131); *Asphodel* continues to note the bodily destruction of war. This is a novel with no body to grasp, stuck in the in between, half-dead, half-corporeal state. Between her grief over this masculine destruction and her struggle against the patriarchal possession of the female body, Hermione finds it undesirable to inhabit or celebrate the body.

Yet it is this in between state that fuels a poignant, acute bodily discomfort, a discomfort that is in fact the engine of many of Hermione's interactions with technology, paralleling her pain in patriarchal systems run by men and guns. To this end, I take a final look at Hermione's first acquaintance with Walter and her attempts to create herself as a mechanical receiver, for this information process painfully involves her body. It is not enough for Hermione to turn wholly into a receiving machine; she must interpret the signal but also physically decode it. To quote the passage in full again, Hermione thinks "I couldn't myself sit so still here, not saying anything afraid lest for some little breath I might move in some way, get out of key with something and the message wouldn't get through. Morse code. I am a wire simply. But one doesn't really choose casual instrument" (28). As Hermione readies her body to receive the message, to get in key with it to make sure it will come through, the overall effect is to diminish her body and become "a wire simply." She cannot take a breath or move for fear of disrupting the information with her physical form and ruining the transcendence this communication might offer. In other words, what she desires here is to achieve inscription: to allow the meaning of the message to be communicated outside of the context of her body.

Nonetheless, at first glance, this body seems to re-inscribe problematic politics. In *Volatile Bodies*, Grosz identifies several superficial ways philosophical theories and cultures represent and discuss the body. At one point, Grosz criticizes the way

> the body is commonly considered a signifying medium, a vehicle of expression, a mode of rendering public and communicable what is essentially private .… As

> such, it is a two-way conduit: on one hand, it is a circuit for the transmission of information from outside the organism, conveyed through the sensory apparatus; on the other hand, it is a vehicle for the expression of an otherwise sealed and self-contained, incommunicable psyche. It is through the body … that he or she can receive, code, and translate the inputs of the 'external' world. Underlying this view too is a belief in the fundamental passivity and transparency of the body. (8)

Hermione is perhaps attempting to make her body passive and transparent in order to receive this message. As Grosz points out, this can limit the feminist potential of the powers of the body, since this treatment of the body regards it as merely a passive object. Likewise, in *Engendering Inspiration*, Helen Sword portrays poetic inspiration as "a concept steeped in oxymoronic logic: a power achieved through powerlessness, an authoritative posture maintained through abjection" (1): this communication and inscription might construct a passive, docile, and normative body, despite any potential power or relief these processes might also give.

Yet although Hermione's body here is not active, it is neither transparent nor passive, as in Grosz's conception: her bodily discomfort is acute, palpable, and incorporative, particularly in the context of the other discomforts Hermione's body suffers throughout *Asphodel*. The stillness of her breathing and the desperate need to not get out of key does not make the body invisible but rather underlines its efforts. Even as technology and transmission are attractive to Hermione because of their transcendental potential, Morse code still necessitates physical involvement. It is clear also from the previously quoted passages of "Notes on Thoughts and Vision" that H.D. did not view reception as passive or even necessarily transparent. To quote them again, H.D. writes that "If we had the right sort of brains, we would receive a definite message from that figure, like dots and lines ticked off by one receiving station, received and translated into definite thought by another telegraphic centre" (26), and just after that "Two or three people, with healthy bodies and the right sort of receiving brains, could turn the whole tide of human thought, could direct lightning flashes of electric power to slash across and destroy the world of dead, murky thought" (27). In order to receive properly we need not only "the right sort of brains" but also "healthy bodies": the two must work in tandem. Moreover, it *is* work; in the first passage H.D. makes clear that reception translates the message into "definite thought": it brings the message into focus. The result of this reception also produces action in the electric currents that can slash through murky thought. Reception of art, or of communication technologies, is thus not a passive position but rather a labour towards increased awareness. As with Hermione's transfiguration into a lily, to become "a wire simply" does not mean to become nothing; it is to be at once enduring and flexible. A wire is a receptor, yes, but it is also *itself*, a physical object taking up space, tuned and molded to a frequency. In this sense, Hermione seeks alternative embodiment rather than simply a visionary state.

This bodily state, to continue Scarry's work, also represents something political in its pain. This aggressive, forced stillness, or the immense resolve Hermione shows in crawling back to her body when it is asked of her, both attests to and protests the way more valued male, liberal humanist narratives control and yet forget women's bodies—this form of alternative embodiment can exceed some of the pressures, containments, and pain of the gendered body, but it cannot alleviate the pain completely. When Hermione identifies mechanically as a receiver of transmissions, when she seeks out a spiritual Esperanto through Morse code, she takes advantage of these male, established, scientific systems and empowers her identity and her self-expression. Yet to do so—to identify as a machine that can receive these apparently disembodied messages—not only requires physical labour but also lays bare the discomfort and pain

Hermione is trying to overleap with technological transcendence. I argue, then, that Hermione's forced stillness becomes, in Hayles's terms, an incorporating gesture that reveals the subjugation of female bodies within both technology and their personal lives, even as her alternative embodiment reaches towards inscription away from this body. Hermione's alternative embodiment is an acknowledgment of personal pain *and* a space outside of, or alongside, that pain and those bodies. Moreover, this mixture of inscription and incorporation in alternative embodiment resists generalizing, controlling narratives of the body: this is a body of discomfort and refusal, and a bodily act in itself.

Hayles's posthumanism illuminates new, feminist avenues into H.D.'s work as well as new avenues into posthumanism. Hayles's posthumanism emphasizes aspects of H.D.'s work that criticism often downplays, namely her work with the body and with technology. H.D.'s difficulty with and anxiety about both technology and the body actually gives reason to further investigate the ways these topics function, in fine-grained ways, in her work. Although the slippages of code ultimately frustrate her search for spiritual Esperanto, Hermione's various de-codings and the novel's stream-of-consciousness form produce multiple relational sites of meaning. According with Hayles's theories, H.D.'s work with technology is not separable from her body: in "Notes on Thought and Vision," H.D. encourages a complex interconnection between body and mind in *Asphodel*, and her technological processes produce an alternative embodiment. Nonetheless, this alternative embodiment desires to get away from, even while acknowledging, the pain and containment of the gendered body in normative, patriarchal systems of identity. H.D.'s alternative embodiment offers a posthumanist, feminist strategy to carve a space for this gendered body outside of such norms and this containment. This work also provides a new perspective on H.D.'s feminism, one that lies between a feminist reclamation of mental faculties and feminisms influenced by *écriture feminine*. *Asphodel* does not celebrate the body as the entire locus of identity, and Hermione's body frustrates and holds her back even as it, as in *écriture feminine*, becomes a transcript of both the struggles and transgressions Hermione experiences and performs. Despite the constricting discourses around the female body, H.D.'s modernist posthumanist work with technology and alternative embodiment constructs the body as a complex, political negotiation.

"Our tissue is of that which escapes you": Mina Loy and the Ghostly Body

In 1918, Mina Loy's husband Arthur Cravan disappeared off the coast of Mexico while attempting to sail to Buenos Aires. Cravan and Loy were living in Mexico City, but with the United States putting pressure on the Mexican Government to find draft dodgers they decided to go further south. The couple, along with Bob Brown and his wife Rose, purchased and began to refurbish a sailboat—Cravan, their plan went, would embark on it first, with Loy meeting him later. Carolyn Burke describes how "As they transformed the old craft into a primitive yacht, their work became play; too far away to hear each other, they banged on their implements with whatever came to hand, hammer or wooden spoon, and soon devised 'a primitive system of signals to keep in close communion' . . . . When Cravan ran one of these signaling devices up the mast, he was ready to set sail" (264). After this, Cravan

> was so excited that he decided to test the boat the same day. While Mina waved from the pier, a breeze caught the sail and Cravan set off. She watched the boat rush toward the open sea and the sail dip out of sight. As his friends waited nervously for him to return from Puerto Angel, she grew worried. After several days, when there was still no sign of him, Mina became so frightened that she could neither speak nor move. She waited for him on the beach, wrapped up in his coat. But Cravan did not return. She never saw him again. (264)

Burke then describes how, in her grief, Loy attempted to communicate with Cravan, and "When she started knocking on the bed frame to send him a message, [the Browns] began to doubt her sanity" (264). Loy could not accept that Cravan was dead, particularly as she could never see his body or find closure. The mystery surrounding his disappearance and the absence of a body kept Loy in hope, and she agonizingly searched for Cravan in the following years. Although I treat

Cravan's disappearance as the central event for this chapter, further deaths bookend his 1918 accident: in 1905, Loy's one-year-old daughter Oda died of meningitis, and Loy "nearly went mad with grief" (Burke 98), often fearing later that her daughter Joella would meet the same fate. Finally, in 1923, Loy's son Giles died from cancer at age fourteen (Burke 327). Death became a part of Loy's life, prompting Loy to think about the body, and bodily identity, as radically vulnerable and permeable to outside forces.

The absence of Cravan's body in his death is particularly important not only to my argument in this chapter, which I will unfold shortly, but also to Loy herself. Loy often defined Cravan through his body—and as this chapter will discuss, she often defines identity through embodiment. As Burke writes of their courtship,

> Once [Loy] could see that she *was* in love with him, this 'Gargantuan boor' became a 'monster as lovely as Venus.' She thought of writing her Song of Solomon now that she knew what it was to love body and soul. Like a dancer, Cravan *was* his body. He identified with his physical being, which had struck her as cold but now seemed eloquent. She admired his physicality, the bone structure emerging from his compact form, his arms' 'subtle contour' and the 'extreme delicacy' of his wrists, tapering off into 'the almost independent intelligence of his Michelangelesque hands.' (241)

With Cravan's identity rooted in his body, the disappearance of this body into a death that could only ever be presumed is all the more of a blow. This disappearance also prolonged Loy's grief, and Cravan's simultaneous presence and absence created a permeable boundary between life and death. It did not help that once Loy arrived in Buenos Aires people "were already speculating that Cravan had sailed to Tahiti—the first in a series of myths and legends that would grow up about him" (Burke 268). Loy's banging on the headboard, moreover, recalls not just Morse communication in *Asphodel*, but also the spiritualist movement's (via the Fox sisters) predilection for wall-banging to reach the dead. Cravan's disappearance intermingles and suspends life and death, both for the griever and for the grieved. Cravan himself becomes a myth: neither dead nor living, either disappeared to the bottom of an ocean or to the coast of Tahiti. The story of his disappearance and death, then, reaches across the boundaries of fiction and reality, life and death.

This chapter also works from a second layer of bodily ambiguity present in these anecdotes: that of Cravan's ambiguous and shifting gender identity as he becomes feminized in Loy's descriptions of his body. Under Loy's loving gaze, Cravan turns from the hyper-masculine, macho pugilist (Burke 235) to a feminized male body, one defined by its eloquence, its subtlety, and its delicacy. Loy's early poetry investigates the female and feminized body, and this feminized body influences her work with the ghostly body after Cravan's death. In Loy's conception, the ghostly body is an androgynous, even feminized body that represents both an absence and a physical presence. This ghostly body, which exists in a state of feminine excess that pushes through patriarchal boundaries, frustrates gendered mind/body binaries as well as the boundary between life and death and the necropolitical control of this boundary.[36] As Liz Bondi writes, "Descartes' treatment of mind and body as basic and mutually exclusive categories set in train the liberal humanist differentiation of rational, independent, self-directing agents from the emotional, irrational, messy materiality of bodies, together with gendered connotations of these oppositions" (6). This chapter is thus less concerned with the details of Descartes' thought and more concerned with the way the mind/body duality is represented in humanist discourses that devalue the feminine and the body—discourses to which Loy's constructions of feminine and ghostly bodies respond.

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[36] Some of these complexes of thought surrounding the body are present in Loy's "Anglo-Mongrels and the Rose" and its surrounding criticism, and although I will not look specifically to this poem in my close reading, it does prove useful in its concept of the mongrel as a hybridized, non-essentialized identity. Marjorie Perloff has argued that Loy's lexicon in the poem and the physicality of the poem's words produce a mongrel identity. As she notes, the images "jostle with conceptual nouns, puns, and aggressive rhymes, in a curious 'mongrelization' of linguistic registers" ("English" 201 1998). This gives another facet to Loy's alternative embodiment in her poetry, as the bodies and materiality of these words are reshaped and recombined in relation to one another. Both the characters Exodus and The English Rose are built up as hybrids at the level of Loy's diction, combining and separating through the tension between sound, meaning, rhyme, and register, creating what Perloff names a "curious polyglossia" (206). Likewise, critics such as Amy Feinstein have already used the mongrel identities of the poem to examine Loy's other works, with Feinstein arguing that in *Goy Israels*, "Through this mongrel protagonist, Loy most fully articulates the fundamental contradictions of Jewish life in *fin-de-siècle* Britain and unabashedly places a racial sense of Jewishness and non-Jewishness at the fore of her interrogations of art and morality" ("Interrupted" 337). This interest in the contradictions of identity and a hybrid notion of the self that cannot be reduced or essentialized is at the core of Loy's work with the body, particularly the female body.

Loy's response to the liberal humanist subject constitutes a posthumanist ethical strategy to imagine and construct non-binary, non-normative identities that are both in excess of and established in the body. Loy's work with the feminine and the ghostly body allows her to conceptualize new, alternative modes of embodiment, and to imagine more progressive identities outside of the liberal humanist subject, particularly for women. The bodies of Loy's poetry undergo ideological changes, moving from contained, devalued positions into states of bodily excess that challenge Cartesian and necropolitical binaries. As a result, this chapter will look first at the female bodies in Loy's early poetry in order to discuss and nuance her work with the feminized ghostly body after Cravan's death. Working as she does with the ghostly body, Loy's consideration of the body and the changes it takes on through forms of alternative embodiment is more abstract and theoretical than that of Moore and H.D., but this often allows for a further slippage of identity away from binary definitions, and Loy often shuttles between exploring bodily identity and exploring identity as something beyond the body.

Loy's alternative embodiment and her posthumanist interrogation of necropolitics emerge directly from twentieth-century and modernist contexts such as the development of the spiritualist movement (out of the nineteenth century) and, most especially, Loy's work with Italian Futurism and eugenics, Christian Science, and the concept of modernist impersonality.

These movements, which often centred on technological advancements, shaped Loy's conception of the body, identity, and embodied identity. More particularly, these movements encouraged non-binary thinking about the body and soul as well as life and death, helping Loy to cope with Cravan's disappearance. Thus, reading modernist works such as Loy's through posthumanist thought renews older categories of modernist thought, particularly modernist impersonality. Conversely, in discussing such movements as Italian Futurism and Christian Science through posthumanism, this chapter also reworks posthumanist structures of thought.

This investigation extends my work with Moore and H.D.'s forms of alternative embodiment, although in this chapter I will primarily view Loy's work through Rosi Braidotti's posthumanist approach to necropolitics. Loy's modernist posthumanism, moreover, should not be divorced from the enormous loss from which it springs; Loy undoes binaries not only as an act of critique but also as an act of mourning—more specifically, as I will elaborate further on, as an act of resistant mourning, which is itself an attempt to keep the boundary between life and death porous. In fact, the metaphor of "undoing" these binaries comes from Judith Butler's idea in *Precarious Life* that "we are undone by each other" (23), and links to the way we mourn each other: Cravan's death undoes Loy, and her grief over this death in turn undoes the binaries between life and death. This "undoing" allows for an unbinding of normative constructions of identity on which the liberal humanist subject is modeled. Even as it arises from pain, this undoing, in stripping down the self and the life/death boundary, reshapes the body and identity away from normative boundaries, and encourages the production of alternative embodiment and non-normative identities. Mourning is a stimulus for a posthumanist reexamination and re-imagination of the binaries between life and death, body and soul. Finally, poetry itself plays an important role here. Loy's poetry, especially as spurred by resistant mourning, takes on physicality and a body itself, which further reconfigures the body in life and death. Consequently, I will attend to the way Loy constructs her poetic bodies, mainly through the form of her poetry and the physicality of the words on the page, in order to spur on alternative embodiment. Her poetry's lineation, rhythms, and form often encourage the extension of her bodies past normative boundaries, modeling, through the very materiality of the words, an alternative embodiment.

Twentieth-Century Contexts

While framing it as a testament to mourning, I also frame Loy's work with the feminized, ghostly body as a posthumanist response to the mind/body binary first set out by Descartes and upheld throughout the twentieth century through the figure of the liberal humanist subject. Famously, the mind and body are seen as separate entities in Cartesian thought. In this separation, moreover, the mind/soul is depicted as a ghost—as ephemeral and beyond physical concerns—while the body is depicted as a machine – hollowed out, lacking intent or consciousness. As Pavlina Ferfeli puts it, "the 'ghost' in the machine becomes the spirit or soul which has vacated, in another act of disempowering and decontextualizing the body from the experiential, social, and political field" (45), even as Susan Bordo points out that this view of the body as machine comes from "The seventeenth-century philosophic conception of the body … mirroring an increasingly more automated productive machinery of labor" (103). Inherent in this thinking is an eternal, essentialized conception of the self that remains intact throughout historical and social changes. This is the building block for the universal (yet male), humanist subject posthumanism often interrogates. Women and the female body suffer acutely under these ideological structures, which essentialize women and relegate them to the physical, the mechanical, and the animal without regard for their intellect, soul, or larger, more complex identities.[37]

Although posthumanism of the late twentieth century also responds to binary views of the body, mind, and even life and death in favour of excess, contradiction, and multiplicity, these binaries were already being questioned in the early twentieth century, often via scientific and technological developments in spiritualism, Italian Futurism, eugenics, and Christian Science. Spiritualism has an obvious parallel with the work Loy does with the ghostly body and the permeable boundary between life and death. Discussing the spiritualist movement, Vetter points out that in the early twentieth century "the explosive theorizing of Albert Einstein and the discovery of radium by Marie Curie injected an air of mystery, ineffability, and abstraction into scientific ways of seeing the world" (*Discourse* 1), intertwining scientific discovery with mysticism.[38] This was true not only of movements such as Christian Science, but also other occult practices such as Madame Helena Blavatsky's theosophy, which "asserted its links to science rather than religion" (Wilson 6). For Helen Sword, this spiritualism connects directly to modernist concerns, as "like modernist literature, popular spiritualism sought to embrace both authority and iconoclasm, both tradition and innovation, both continuity and fragmentation, both the elite mystique of high culture and the messy vitality of popular culture" (*Ghostwriting* x). These endeavours significantly involve the body: for Vetter, electromagnetism and other scientific discoveries rendered the body permeable as "the human body was increasingly seen as vulnerable to penetration—by everything from radio waves to medical instruments" (*Discourse* 1), a common Futurist line of thought of which Loy would have been aware. Vetter argues that Loy's work with electromagnetism questions traditionally heterosexual conceptions of the body, even as she does not move entirely beyond a heterosexual binary.

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[37] Once more, Elizabeth Grosz's *Volatile Bodies* (1994) is an excellent source for this.

[38] Another well-known study on spiritualism is Leon Surette's *The Birth of Modernism* (1993). In the text, Surette focuses on the occult, writing that "Occultism sees itself as the heir of an ancient wisdom—either passed on from adept to adept or rediscovered in each new generation … the most important point of contact is in the field of myth studies, for the occult movement regards myths as records of contacts between the human and the divine" (7). Yet although Surette argues that the occult interests of writers such as T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, James Joyce, and even W.B. Yeats have been dismissed or downplayed from a misplaced sense of shame, Surette himself seems to reintroduce this sense of shame when he discusses spiritualism, which he implicitly feminizes—he defines it through the Fox sisters—and characterizes as a branch of the occult that is less worthy of investigation and even somewhat anomalous. As he writes, "There is also, it must be admitted, a branch of the occult more interested in magic and communication with spirits or gods than in metaphysics or history. W.B. Yeats's participation in séances, spirit manipulations, evocations, and the like is unusual for the occult artist" (23). In contrast "The theurgic practices of such occultists as Crowley, Levi, and Josephin Peladan were quite distinct in provenance from spiritualist séance, even though the latter were very common. … Spiritualism, however, communicates exclusively with deceased humans and with neither gods nor demons. Nor is the séance truly theurgic, for it does not produce magical events" (24). Surette's confessional tone in admitting to this branch, and his focus instead on what he calls the scholarly (27) work of more mainstream occultism implicitly characterizes (feminized) spiritualism as unworthy of "scholarly" attention.

The spiritualism that Vetter and Sword discuss, moreover, has the potential to subvert dominant cultural discourses of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, as spiritualism, mesmerism, and mediumistic pursuits accrue feminine qualities that, while at times used in service of patriarchal ends, were often affirmative and flexible. I will explore many of the same aspects in Loy's poetry, which also puts forward flexible, feminine bodily identities that are nonetheless entwined in patriarchal discourses. Sword describes "mediumistic discourse" as "a destabilizing, low cultural, often implicitly feminized mode of speech and writing" that often deployed "traditionally 'feminine' behavioral traits such as passivity, receptivity, and insensibility" (*Ghostwriting* xi). Moreover, female mediums' work was often co-opted by the men who wrote and profited from their stories, putting this feminine genre "in the service of intellectual commodities typically coded as male, for example, knowledge, productivity, and reason" (*Ghostwriting* 3). In *Engendering Inspiration*, Sword also acknowledges the dangers of mediumistic practices, noting how "female prophecy [often] devolves from entrancement—a god's literal entrance into, and possession of, a woman's mind and body—rather than from an active penetration of male power structures" (2). Nonetheless, it was a movement that prominently featured and involved women, so although the feminine empowerment of mediumistic practices is often vulnerable to dissipation, the movement also had an "elastic capacity" (Sword *Ghostwriting* 3), and women were also often able to use it for their own ends. In Loy's works female and feminized bodies become spiritualistic mediums for the dead as well as templates for the ghostly body, negotiating patriarchal structures along the way.[39]

Italian Futurism, with which Loy also engaged, also emphasizes the permeability of the body as well as the body's mechanization and its excess of identity, even as it generally provided only male and masculine examples of the body. The male Futurist body was often portrayed as an external piece of machinery, with Christine Poggi noting "It is [the] ability to desensitize the body, to experience it as pure exteriority, that allows Marinetti simultaneously to treat it as a weapon and to marvel at its wounds" (29). Loy's bodies also exhibit this "pure exteriority" at times, but often without the glorification of war and weaponized machinery that became the hallmark of the movement. Moreover, Italian Futurism's central questions, Poggi writes, were

> How to imagine the body's boundaries—as both permeable, shifting, and open to fusion with the environment, and as rigid, closed, and resistant to penetration? … How to respond to the body's temporality, its inevitable mortality, and reversion to (mere) matter? And finally, how to create (and believe in) an immortal man/machine hybrid, a body always already posited in the future tense? (20)

This interest in "a body always already posited in the future tense," aside from signaling the figure of the cyborg, echoes how Loy positions the female body as a template for the ghostly body and echoes the presence/absence of Cravan's body. Moreover, Poggi's quotation reveals that this is a historical, modernist interest: if the rise of technology prompted modernist writers to reimagine their bodies, one consequence of this was to think of these bodies as always in process, perhaps, always upgrading, reforming, and looking to the future. With wireless technologies floating through the air, it seemed ever more possible to bridge life into afterlife. Loy's effort differs, however, from the Futurists' rather transhumanist desire to wed (and weld) their bodies to machinery in order to attain immortality, at least in this conception of Futurism. The Futurists signal a desire to banish death,[40] whereas Loy's poetry indicates a desire to reach out to death, to make the afterlife physical.[41] Despite Loy's interest in embodiment, her language is often abstract and surreal. Nonetheless, this abstraction allows Loy to explore non-normative, alternative ways to represent the body and to avoid essentializing that body. For example, as I will explore shortly, "The Dead," which describes the ghosts of fallen soldiers, begins with these soldiers stating "We have flowed out of ourselves" (1), indicating their abstraction from their own bodies. Yet the poem is filled with physical and material imagery as the soldiers compare themselves to the living, from "their eyelashes" which "polish stars" (7) to the "spit" of their "passions" (10). Abstraction for Loy is a starting point for imagining alternative embodiment, and she uses it as a foundation to erase normative understandings of the body and re-draw the physicality of the excessive, non-normative body.[42]

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[39] Bette London's exploration of mediumship in *Writing Double* (1999) also discusses the doubled, two-way interactions mediums have not only with their purported spirit messengers, but also with their position in the cultural imagination. London's arguments parallel both Loy's early interest in the complex double binds women's bodies face and the permeable boundary between life and death.

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[40] Nonetheless, Marinetti's famous maxim that war is "the only hygiene of the world" ("Manifesto" 42) also glorifies death.

[41] Notably, Marinetti also writes in "The Founding Manifesto of Futurism" (1909) how "Death, domesticated, met me at every turn, gracefully holding out a paw, or once in a while hunkering down, making velvety caressing eyes at me from every puddle" (40), indicating not only a reaching out but a domestication and feminization of death that this chapter will also explore.

[42] Loy's poetic bodies exhibit the desire to exceed boundaries and categorization, with female bodies in particular desiring to exceed patriarchal boundaries, linking them to the abject. Loy's linguistic abstraction works well with the abject, as the abject is also both physical yet abstract, since it by definition cannot be categorized. In misogynistic discourses, women's bodily excess is treated as prurient and undesirable. Kelly Hurley defines the abject through Mary Douglas's work, in which the abject "encompasses those entities perceived as 'impure' within a given culture" and "those [entities] which trouble a culture's conceptual categories, particularly the binary oppositions by means of which the culture meaningfully organises experiences" (139). Likewise, Julia Kristeva positions the abject as "the inbetween, the ambiguous, the composite" as it "disturbs identity, system, order" (4). Loy often works against purity

Futurism, particularly its belief in the ability of the body to progress beyond its traditional boundaries, also informed Loy's work with eugenics, which in turn informed her work with the body and alternative embodiment. I speak to eugenics rather broadly in this chapter, examining the beliefs and practices in the early twentieth century that sought to advance the human race through improving the body and genetics. Yet, as Vetter points out, Loy's interest in eugenics is paradoxical: "Consistent with Christian Science notions about the body, Loy argues that if one fully comprehends the illusory nature of the physical, a break with genetic, biological automatism—and racial identity and memory—is possible. Her formulation seems paradoxical, for race is conceived as genetic but genetics are part of the material world that does not exist" ("Cosmopolitanism" 57). For Loy, then, the body is both a physical presence capable of programmatic improvement and yet it also exceeds this physicality and the inherent boundaries within the physical, moving into the illusory and ideological, creating the potential for an alternative embodiment. This is the beginning of Loy's posthumanist response to Cartesian binaries and the liberal humanist subject through alternative embodiment, whereby the body can at once become ghostly, and exceed its own boundaries, without being denied its physicality or ever becoming anything other than a body.

Nonetheless, Loy's paradoxical work with eugenics also prescribes control of the body alongside this excess, particularly through prescribed gender roles, as I will explore later in her work in "Feminist Manifesto," "The Widow's Jazz," and "Mexican Desert." Indeed, eugenics does not always subvert normative discourses in posthumanist fashion, but bolsters these discourses in its attempts to control the body. Nonetheless, I argue that eugenics is not only a

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and containment, and her play with the abject and women's bodies claims the abject as a feminist tool. In Loy's poetry, excess and the bodily abject form an essential and positive aspect of bodily identity. Although I will not focus on the bodily fluids of Loy's female figures, the lineage of the abject is in these bodies' very desire to exceed given boundaries. Kristeva's argument that the corpse is the ultimate abject emphasizes this further.

necessary but also at times a generative lens with which to view Loy's work. In so doing I acknowledge, along with critics such as Marius Turda, Donald J. Childs, Persephone Emily Harbin, and Daylanne K. English, that while eugenics often perpetuated harmful and racist ideologies—most infamously seen in Nazi eugenic strategies—and while these constraining discourses produced and encouraged racism, in the early twentieth century eugenics was also, as English puts it, "so pervasive that it became nearly invisible as an ideology" (33). Likewise, eugenics is a driving ideology of Loy's poetry, and it is necessary to address Loy's interest in eugenics to understand many of the processes of her work with alternative embodiment.[43]

Moreover, eugenic thought often entailed not just regimented optimization but a drive towards opportunity and potential. Eugenics as a discourse in the early twentieth century always involved possibility, for inherent in the drive to better the species is the progression forward into a possible future, and some eugenicist beliefs were additive rather than controlling or exclusionary. Indeed, Joshua Schuster argues that Loy's work should not be defined through eugenics but instead through what he calls biotopia, or the search for a better, more utopian world through the body. For Schuster, seeing Loy's work through the lens of biopower and eugenics unfairly limits her poetry, as "it suggests that only power and control truly define the connection of biology to politics. This determinist model of control itself seems questionable if we begin to consider how, after Darwin and Bergson, the organic can be understood as contingent, constantly variable, and tending towards complexity" (24). Thus, while this chapter will primarily address the harmful, limiting qualities of eugenics, the contemporary sense of the open possibilities of eugenics will also be acknowledged, as these possibilities for the body in eugenics are also a part of Loy's larger work with embodied identity.

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[43] For example, in "Feminist Manifesto" Loy writes: "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" (155).

Finally, as Vetter's quotation above attests, Loy's belief in Christian Science, the doctrine founded by Mary Baker Eddy, also contributes to these alternative, non-binary views on the body and identity. In Tim Armstrong's investigation of the role of Christian Science on Loy's and Joseph Cornell's work, he notes that "the sect de-emphasized the actual body, whether that of Christ or the body of the person, and the material world generally" (205). Moreover, for Christian Science, the mind could overcome the ailments of the body, and the mind took primacy over the physical. Nonetheless, although this may seem like a Cartesian view of the world, whereby the mind can control and has supremacy over the body, in practice Christian Science often allowed a play with the boundary between mind and body. Armstrong further writes,

> paradoxically, despite the denial of the importance of physical life in Christian Science, the body is the ground where its power must be proved … it must, in its return to health, testify to the primacy of the Spirit …. You are not ill or infirm, the Christian Science practitioner insists; you only think you are; and if you can only understand your error the illness will go away. In this paradoxical situation, the subject both knows and does not know about the status of her body; its materiality is both transcended and returns as evidence. ("Loy and Cornell" 210)

Despite Christian Science's belief that the mind controls the body, this conception of the doctrine suggests that the mind and body are linked and dependent on one another, even as the body is positioned as subordinate to the mind, indicating Christian Science's convoluted thinking about the body and identity.

Loy herself came to Christian Science through illness and a fear of death, and her beliefs in it were also paradoxical. Her daughter Joella had fallen ill, becoming paralyzed and comatose, and Loy worried that, like Oda, Joella would die prematurely. Burke relates how "In desperation

Mina turned to Mrs. Morrison, a Christian Science practitioner with a following in the artistic community.… Mrs. Morrison's treatment, combined with orders to feed the child beef broth and donkey's milk, produced some improvement, and Mina became convinced that practitioners performed miracles. From then on she went regularly to the Christian Science Church" (117). After converting, Burke argues that Loy "sought solace in the one spiritual practice that promised to bridge the gaps between mind and body, Judaism and Christianity, the commercial and the saved" (131). For Loy, then, the salvation Christian Science offered was liminal and contradictory, existing in between doctrines, society, and the mind and body. Loy's devotion to Christian Science was then always individual as well as malleable and even contradictory, and I argue that this malleability was a cornerstone of her devotion. Moreover, this devotion grew from her concern with the death and the vulnerable bodies of her children, and, as I will argue, informs her poetry mourning Cravan's disappearance.

These aspects of Christian Science also contribute to Loy's fraught relationship with the concept of impersonality and influence the way she views identity. Christian Science, with its belief in the power of the will over the body, is, I argue, parallel to the struggle with what T.S. Eliot in modernist thought calls "personality." The will that Christian Science advocates for is in many ways a desire for a whole, controllable personality rather than the more twentieth-century, modernist view of personality as opaque, uncontrolled, and subject to the vagaries of context—what Christina Walter characterizes as a "personality [that] emphasized complexes and conditioning over and against the individual will" (*Optical* 132). Yet Christian Science's acknowledgement of the intertwining of body and mind belies this controlled view of identity: no sooner does the religion expound on the powers of the will than it admits that forces other than the will can act on identity. Such tensions and connections between mind and body, as well as personality and circumstance, play out particularly in Loy's *Auto-Facial Construction* and "An Aged Woman."

Loy's work with impersonality is likewise complex. In "Getting Impersonal: Mina Loy's Body Politics from 'Feminist Manifesto' to *Insel*," Walter acknowledges that previous scholarship has gendered the modernist concept of impersonality as masculine in its search for invisibility and universality. Consequently, modernist impersonality is often characterized as bolstering the liberal humanist subject, who is paradoxically also white, straight, and male—a figure that posthumanism often interrogates. Accordingly, she points out that in works such as "Feminist Manifesto" Loy worries at the erasure of women through "relative impersonality," which makes women impersonal and defines their worth only through their relation to men. Loy is thus wary, Walter argues, of how modernist impersonality invites the social erasure of women in particular through its interest in objectivity and invisibility.[44] However, Walter intervenes at this point to argue that although Loy was critical of social impersonality (to use Walter's term), she was very much interested in an aesthetic of impersonality that would allow her to explore subjectivity and embodiment. In particular, Walter argues that Loy—in the tradition of impersonality—"subsequently developed an aesthetic dedicated to the impersonal force of the embodied observer" (665), whereby "the image and observer proposed by a physiological optics could provide [Loy] with an adequate framework for capturing a modern subjectivity neither fully transparent nor fully opaque to itself" (669).[45] In the terms of Christian Science, this might translate into the way the will can act on the body and identity, but with limited power—

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[44] As Walter writes, "Loy's early anxiety about impersonality stems principally from her concern about the social subjugation of women—what she calls in 'Feminist Manifesto' the cultural constitution of woman as a 'relative impersonality,' as meaningful only relative to men, and as impersonal when compared to men's individuality [154]. In this formulation, impersonality marks women's subjection to a cultural model of universality that privileges men—or the individual as male" (665).

[45] Likewise, Ferfeli argues that "Loy's female bodies are experienced as lived and appear in the mode of subject-in-process, constantly changing and changeable" (9).

something still remains opaque. Perhaps more importantly, what Walter argues here is akin to Donna Haraway's posthumanist theory of situated knowledges; Loy's version of impersonality acknowledges embodied subjective positions without giving up the goal of a kind of objectivity, even as this leads to contradictory views of identity and its relation to the body. In this usage, impersonality is not linked to humanist assumptions about identity as both individual and universal, but rather to more nuanced posthumanist explorations of the self as shifting and embodied. Thus, Loy's work with shifting, excessive embodiment is a part of her larger conception of modernist impersonality.

Necropolitics, Posthumanism, and Mourning

Crucially, however, my work here focuses on the way Loy extends these anti-Cartesian principles and bodies not just for the living body but also for the dead. Loy's posthumanist interrogation of the boundary and binary between life and death relates, in surprising ways, to her engagement with modernist impersonality. As far apart as the two categories of thought may seem to be, they are both represented in T.S. Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1921). In the essay, Eliot famously argues that a poet must have a "historical consciousness," writing that "we shall often find that not only the best, but the most individual parts of his [a poet's] work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously" (2320). He continues, "No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead" (2320). Eliot sets up what feels like a rather spiritualist, mediumistic argument to establish the need for impersonality, the need for the artist to partially surrender himself or herself to the past as well as to emotions other than his own. Eliot's "impersonality" can be seen as a kind of communion with dead poets and is itself a blurring of the life/death boundary.

For Eliot, historical consciousness moves two ways, and he posits that "what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it" (2320). As Sanford Schwartz argues, "the implication that the present shapes our comprehension of the past as much as the past influences the present" (15) is, despite Eliot's long-held position in the canon, quite a radical idea. In Eliot's conception, the past and present are equally mutable and act upon each other. Accordingly, in *Ghosts of Modernity*, Jean Michel Rabaté responds to criticisms of modernism's ahistoricism, referring to "Tradition and the Individual Talent" to argue that modernism does not desire to make it ever new without recourse to the past, but rather is interested in that which keeps returning from the past into the present—an observation that indicates modernism's foundational, potentially posthumanist interest in the penetrable boundary between life and death. Loy's own modernist work with the life/death boundary reframes Eliot's famous conception of impersonality and its two-way vector to address embodied identity, as this facet of identity is not present in Eliot's comments. Loy's porous, non-binary view of life and death explores the malleability of bodily identity and the ways death can reshape this body and render it more complex, non-binary, and porous in itself. In so doing, Loy's poetic bodies also rethink death and interrogate normative, necropolitical systems of power that control and contain life and death; in poems such as "The Dead," Loy positions the past and its ghosts as acting upon, even changing the present and the bodies of the living. In addition to an exploration of non-essentialized, non-universal embodied identities, Eliot's work with impersonality also spurs Loy to explore the passable boundary between past and present, living and dead.[46]

Loy's thinking about non-binary and excessive bodily identities through Italian Futurism, eugenics, and Christian Science also informs what I call Loy's modernist posthumanist interrogation of necropolitics—that is, her work to rethink normative ideologies of death. At its core, necropolitics—defined as the discourse about who has, or what systems have, power over who lives and who dies—extends Michel Foucault's theorizations on biopolitics and biopower. As Foucault puts it, biopower "was without question an indispensable element in the development of capitalism; the latter would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena or population to economic processes" (140-1). If certain structures and systems of power control and signify the living body in particular ways, then the body in death, necropolitics argues, is vulnerable to these same systems.

In their study of Foucault, Michael Dillon and Andrew W. Neal make this explicit, arguing that

> Since Foucault teaches that biopower takes species life—*être biologique*—as its referent object of power, and is committed to the promotion of life understood in that way, and since not all life is helpful to the promotion of species existence, then biopolitics must also, however, determine which life can be promoted and

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[46] Interestingly, this two-way vector allows the life/death boundary to act as prosthesis, specifically prosthesis in the terms that I have discussed in Chapter One. As Hal Foster puts it, Marinetti conceives "technology not as a violation of the body and nature but as a means to reconfigure both as better than new, more than whole. Again, this is a fetishistic operation — to turn an agent of trauma into a shield against this same trauma" (124). Thus, as I argued, in practice this fetishistic, glorified use of the prosthetic is actually often coupled with a sense, if not an acknowledgement, of loss and mourning. Prosthesis, which is inextricably linked to war in the early twentieth century, is intimately connected to the boundary between life and death. Materially, moreover, prosthesis involves the bringing together of an organic (living) body with an inorganic (dead) tool. Prosthesis also builds two-way connections, ones that alter the identity of the human wearer and in turn alter the prosthesis itself.

> which cannot. Which life is productive for life, and which life is positively alien to the promotion of life. (7)

For Dillon and Neal, simply because these bodies have been allowed to live, death is already involved in living bodies, delimiting and defining existence through the power of the structures which deem them fit for life—eugenics, likewise, has much to do with biopower. Patricia Lopez and Kathryn Gillespie also note in their introduction to *Economies of Death* that "We have both … noticed the ways that grief and grievability function politically to designate whose lives matter and whose do not" (1). Biopolitics and necropolitics are concerned with the negotiation of bodies, living or dead, in these systems, and with the various ways these systems put pressure on or shape these bodies according to a norm. Necropolitics, like the liberal humanist subject, works through binary thinking, designating which bodies matter and which do not, which should live and which should die.

A posthumanist rereading of necropolitics, for its part, points out and attempts to negotiate within these same systems of power, particularly in the way the body in death is presented and mourned. Taking cues from biopolitics, Braidotti argues for seeing death not as the horizon of life but rather for seeing death as implicated in life from birth. In the modern age, Braidotti argues, "the body doubles up as the potential corpse it has always been, and is represented as a self-replicating system that is caught in a visual economy of endless circulation" (119), so that she finds "the over-emphasis on death as the basic term of reference inadequate to the vital politics of our era" (121). For Braidotti, "Death is the inhuman conceptual excess: the unpresentable, the unthinkable, and the unproductive black hole that we all fear. Yet, death is also a creative synthesis of flows, energies, and perpetual becoming" (131). In other words, death spills over into life: we spend our lives thinking about death, the various contours of its unknown shape. It is not the end of our lives, but connected intimately to life itself. This is then the beginning of a re-reading of death, which allows for posthumanist thought to reconstitute the structures of power that control bodily life and reconfigure the way we see existence, allowing existence to become embodied in alternative ways. Consequently, posthumanist examinations of necropolitics seek to undo the individual, liberal human subject in undoing these boundaries of life and death. In Braidotti's argument, death and life are not binary but intertwine, echoing the unbinding of the mind/body binary. Identity, bodily and otherwise, can no longer be bounded off from death, and—since death is a common experience—if it pervades life then the liberal human subject cannot be seen as individualized, becomes undone, and is instead placed in a narrative much larger than his (and I use "his" advisedly) own.

Likewise, Loy's posthumanism critiques the mind/body binary, the controlling power of necropolitics, and the liberal humanist subject, and her poems re-embody identity and make space for more fluid, feminine, and non-normative bodies and identities. Loy's later, mournful work explores the physicality of the afterlife: ghosts become not the residue of the soul trapped inside the body, but rather imprints or even extensions of the body itself—death is excess. Loy's blurring of the life/death boundary in her poems is a way to bring Cravan back to life, at least in her memory. Yet in my reading, such a reconception of death is also a feminist, posthumanist critique of Cartesian binaries, and it is a critique that was formed by the contexts of the spiritualist movement and Loy's involvement in Italian Futurism, eugenics, Christian Science, and impersonality. Accordingly, her poems playfully argue that identity and the self are not Cartesian ghosts in the machine of the body, but instead that the body—particularly the feminized body—also informs and structures bodily identity and the self, even after death. Even so, Loy never locates identity strictly in the body—identity is always in excess of both the body and mind. Accordingly, Loy's poems are full of paradoxes and slippages of identity within, between, and outside the body, giving more room to slip in and out of the boundaries of life and death, body and mind. In this, her work aligns with Altieri's argument in "Taking Lyrics Literally" that poetry makes one feel "one's body so intensely and so complexly that one has to reach out beyond it to imaginary extensions of those states" (278); her poetic bodies model this state of imaginary extension and encourage readers to reframe their notions of the body and of death.

Finally, I am particularly concerned in Loy's case with the way mourning enters into her posthumanist critique and examination of necropolitics, and I do not want to lose sight of the fact that the critiques within these poems emerge from grief. This grief even contributes to Loy's posthumanism, keeping the boundary between life and death permeable. In *Modernism and Mourning,* Patricia Rae traces the evolution in Freud's conception of mourning. At first for Freud, mourning depended "on severing all ties with the lost beloved" (16), or else suffering from melancholia. Although he eventually changed his position on this, "acknowledging instead that melancholia is an inevitable part of ego formation" (16), Rae notes that many texts on mourning, such as Jahan Ramazani's *Poetry of Mourning*, use the initial definition. As a result, successful, socially acceptable mourning is often seen as a delimited process: something to be gone through and gotten over. Clifton Spargo also notes this as one way to define ethical mourning, whereby

> To mourn ethically would be to mourn in such a way that the memory of the dead might serve the living, and in such a way that the survivor's grief, already beginning to be consoled by the practical, utilitarian function attaching to memory, would extend only to the point where grief does not prevent the resumption of normal relationships among the

> living or to the point where the work of mourning can be conceived as a useful act of commemoration, putting the memory of the other in service of the general good. (19)

Several critics—Rae and Spargo included—have argued, however, for the ethics of a resistant mourning. That is, a mourning that has no limit, and does not aim to sever ties with the departed in service of the living. As Rae notes, this resistant mourning allows social injustices to be given their due rather than quickly buried and moved on from. In resistant mourning, mourning the dead becomes not the process of letting go of this life, but of keeping it alive even in death. In many ways, Loy's poetry mourning Cravan is an example of continued, resistant mourning, both in Rae's definition of the term and in Butler's figuration of mourning as an undoing of each other, as Loy's resistant mourning undoes the boundary between life and death. Nonetheless, Loy also finds resistant mourning ultimately untenable: it is too painful to keep the life/death border continually open and undone, and her work eventually closes down this mourning and, in so doing, reestablishes normative limits of bodily identity and recreates the mind/body binary.[47]

Loy and Bodily Excess

Even though my argument begins with Loy's early work with excess and the female body, I start with a brief reading of a short passage from "The Dead" (1920), one of Loy's poems mourning Cravan, as a way of mapping out where Loy's modernist, posthumanist, and necropolitical work with the ghostly body leads her. "The Dead," which is also more generally a lament on World War I, does not just intermix life and death but utterly reverses the binary of life and death and Cartesian expectations, rendering living bodies as ephemeral and ghostly bodies as heavy and physical. The pressure the dead exert might again connect more generally to Eliot's modernism, as the poets of the past likewise exert pressure on the present. Carolyn Burke also notes that "Decades later, [The Dead's] caustic blend of grief and rage is still unsettling, particularly if one reads the poem as a draft of the epitaph that Mina could not write for Cravan" (273). "The Dead" is an open wound; unable to bury Cravan's body, Loy must continue to mourn him, but this is also tied up in her mourning of a culture greatly affected by a devastating war.

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[47] Rabaté also takes up resistant mourning, arguing that what returns from the past is that which is unmourned. As he writes, "What returns is, in a classically Freudian fashion, what has not been processed, accommodated, incorporated into the self through mourning: the shadow of the lost object is still being projected onto the subject" (viii). Rabaté himself comments on the potentially dangerous mixing of life and death in this version of resistant mourning, asking, "Can we speak of 'ghosts' without transforming the whole world and ourselves, too, into phantoms?" (xxi) and arguing for the "The transformation of the writer in a spectre" (3). For Rabaté, as for Braidotti, ghosts leave traces on our bodies, and death is within, not outside, of us.

The bodies in "The Dead" exhibit physical excess; death has not made them into ephemeral ghosts but bodily spirits. Moreover, their bodies seem to be in excess of the living. These ghosts are the voices of the poem, announcing how

> We have flowed out of ourselves
> Beginning on the outside
> That shrivable skin
> Where you leave off (1-4)

These bodies have exceeded themselves but, as Loy writes, this actually begins at the external level. In this description, death is only an extension of the body in life. Sarah Crangle has close read the use of "shrivable" beautifully, arguing "to shrive,"—which means, most traditionally, to hear penance from someone or bestow absolution—"contains many meanings and their opposites: contrition and forgiveness, revelation and questioning, obligation and relief. This verb perpetuates Loy's boundary-blurring, her musing on the indistinguishability of individual human beings, and of the dead from the living" (287)—it also brings in the ethical register of Loy's posthumanism.[48] Life and death are blurred, and moreover the *bodies* of both the living and the dead intertwine. The dead go beyond the shrivable skin where the living leave off, as if the dead themselves do not merely exit their bodies to become spirits, but experience an extension of this skin, as their flowing begins on the outside, rather than an imagined inside flowing out after death. The multiple valences of shrivable also indicate an excess of these bodies: an excess of flesh and an excess of meaning. I argue that for Loy, this boundary-blurring in “The Dead” is as much a critique of Cartesian thought and a lament for fallen soldiers as it is a way of keeping the memory of Cravan open, of inviting his physicality back into life.

Before her work with the ghostly body, however, Loy’s early poetry was already working to undo Cartesian binaries: “Human Cylinders” (1915) does not enact a mind/body split, but argues that each aspect needs the other—here, the excesses of the body outside of this binary form a kind of cylinder. Accordingly, the speaker describes

> When in the frenzied reaching-out of intellect to intellect
> Leaning brow to brow   communicative
> Over the abyss of the potential
> Concordance of respiration
> Shames
> Absence of corresponding between the verbal sensory
> And reciprocity
> Of conception
> And expression
> Where each extrudes beyond the tangible (18-27)

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[48] It can also mean to purify or make clean and comes from the Latin “to write” or “prescribe.” To be given “short shrift” originally meant to be given little time to confess or atone for ones sins.

The lineation here suggests contraction and then extension, a pushing past the boundaries of the body of the poem. The body, however, is never lost in this extension: in this passage, the reaching out of intellect to intellect is actually achieved physically, through leaning brow to brow. It is this physical contact that might allow for communication over the abyss, and the "concordance of respiration" also confirms this: minds can be in sync because bodies and breathing are in sync. The speaker also alludes to a "verbal sensory," a matching of the mind/verbal and the bodily/sensory. As a result, the body is not a hollow, mechanical, or animal vessel, but a space for the accrual of identity through its interaction with the mind.

Disposing of this binary allows Loy to experiment with the different triangulations and embodiments of identity. As Walter notes, however, personality and identity are always in excess of this embodiment; these experimentations do not fall within neat binaries and neat categorizations. Throughout Loy's poetry there is an interest in excess and in the non–essentialism of the body—that is, in viewing the body as a complex site of identity, rather than an over-determined physicality. The title "Human Cylinders" also emphasizes this, comparing these human bodies to geometry, embodying human physicality alternatively. Despite its constricted form, "Human Cylinders" describes how two people attempt to connect to one another and to each other's bodies, where each body and personality "extrudes beyond the tangible" (27), with

> Simplifications of men
> In the enervating dusk
> Your indistinctness
> Serves me the core kernel of you (14-17)

Here "indistinctness" serves "the core kernel of you"; something is left opaque even in this seemingly essential core, and vice versa.

Later in the poem, Loy muses on the different ways we can fail to connect to one another. At the end of the poem she posits that

> The impartiality of the absolute
> Routs   the polemic
> Or which of us
> Would not
> Receiving the holy-ghost
> Catch it   and caging
>   Lose it
> Or in the problematic
> Destroy the universe
> With a solution (36-45)

The "impartiality of the absolute" is in tension with—and triumphs over—subjective polemic, but although Loy acknowledges the impulse to whittle existence down to an essence, to have an absolute, universalizing view of the world, she does not ultimately value this. Instead, Loy's interest in spiritualism, the ephemeral, and the partial connections between body and mind, as evidenced in her involvement in Christian Science, comes through in her depiction of the "holy-ghost" as an entity that exceeds understanding and goes beyond physical existence. This is presented on the page in the gap, as if the "holy-ghost" could slip through, just as we "lose it." Likewise, "catch it" is followed by this same gap, indicating the inability to grasp or "cage" the "holy ghost." The excesses of this holy ghost run in tension with our need to reduce it to an essence, to catch it and cage it, even as it will only be lost in this process. This is the other side of the coin of Walter's argument about Loy's version of impersonality, which seeks objectivity without losing sight of subjectivity. Here, Loy seeks subjectivity while acknowledging the draw of objectivity: she cautions against reducing anything to an essence in order to find a solution, even as she acknowledges our desire to pin down what we see, for "which of us / would not"?

Again, although Loy is interested in the way identity can manifest in embodiment, we should reduce neither identity nor that body to an essence; personality and subjectivity are always in excess of the body. Perhaps because of this knowledge, when Loy does explore embodied identities, she presents bodies that actually produce excess. In the later poem "Idiot Child on a Fire Escape," (1942-1949) for example, Loy writes that

> having spilled,
> on your way to becoming,
> your skill in Being.
>
> Sunlight excessively
> Illuminates your deep eyelids (6-10)

Identity in "Idiot Child on a Fire Escape" is presented as a becoming, which is itself described as a kind of spilling out of the boundaries of being. The word "becoming" itself indicates a spilling, a continual process, progress, and potential. The poem references the body, by way of the deep eyelids, as something that excess can also penetrate; this body is a part of a fluid, permeable identity—an identity that is capable of spilling out. Perhaps most famously, Loy also ruminates in "Parturition" (1914) on the ways the body in childbirth continually exceeds itself, writing that

> Locate an irritation   without

It is within
Within
It is without (11-4)

The poem offers also another example of Loy's embodied poetics and takes on a physicality, mirroring the rhythms of childbirth in its gasping breaths of lines, the "within" and "without" repetitions, and the quick contractions; words such as "it is" sputter into empty space, pause, and then give way to more language. The maternal body extends its own limits, physically going beyond itself to create another being via childbirth; The female body exceeds its physical foundations, projecting itself into further generations.

Furthermore, Loy's "Feminist Manifesto" (1914) begins to present the excesses of the female body as a posthumanist strategy, responding to and breaking through the containment of normative female, embodied identity. Loy writes that

> 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** (154)

"Feminist Manifesto" involves many threads that contradict one another, much as Loy's work with eugenics paradoxically supports excess while also directing the body. The passage links female sexuality and motherhood, and when Loy discusses them here she somewhat paradoxically employs diction of completeness alongside diction of expansion and a freedom from restrictions. Instead of driving towards a particular point or end, Loy envisions evolution, despite this diction of completeness, as the constant pushing back of boundaries and the continual breaking free of restrictions. For Loy, to be complete is to be ever expanding and to grow is to exceed boundaries. This is again registered on a poetic level, as the very words on the page expand, taking up physical room and taking on the characteristics of the bodies she discusses within these words. Moreover, this is a vision that Loy addresses particularly to the female body, and part of this expansion involves exceeding patriarchal restrictions such as the cult of virginity. Nonetheless, this is not without tensions, as Loy's famous prescription to destroy virginity elsewhere in "Feminist Manifesto" (155) is also, as Walter points out, "a gesture of bodily control" (*Optical* 132**)**. The impulses between excess and control coexist, creating tension throughout "Feminist Manifesto" and throughout Loy's work with eugenics through to "Mexican Desert."

The excesses of the bodies in these passages, however, can at times obscure physicality and embodiment. After all, "Idiot Child on a Fire Escape," while describing eyelids, does so by prefacing it with ontological backflips: "having spilled / on your way to becoming, / your skill in being" moves existence playfully outward before curving back inward, but from and to what is unclear. Likewise, "Parturition," despite its title, does not read immediately as a description of childbearing, and the contractions and expansions of the cosmos are at first more prominent than those of the cervix, as the speaker is "the centre / Of a circle of pain / Exceeding its boundaries in every direction" (1-3). Yet the abstraction of Loy's language surrounding the body, I argue, helps to maintain the body as physical but non-essential and shifting in its definition and identity. In "Parturition," for one, the contractions of the cosmos are intimately related to the contractions of childbirth. Loy's lexicon works through and then beyond the body, connecting the physical to the transcendental and the spiritual—a move her later work will do on a larger scale, building on her work with the female body to comment on the ghostly body. Her abstractions of the physical aid in non-essentializing the body, making these bodies difficult to pin down even as they are surely bodies. In "Hot Cross Bum," again a later poem from 1950, Loy laments the "Divers failures / to fit personality / in envelopes of rigidity" (169-71); Loy is in dialogue with the modernist concept of impersonality, so that the body is not a mere container or envelope for personality and should be seen as a shifting, living, and progressing aspect of identity.[49]

Loy's work with this excess forms a posthumanist-influenced survival tactic for women and their bodies, and this strategy employs another facet of Loy's commitment to impersonality. In "Feminist Manifesto," Loy notes the patriarchal boundaries that systems of power place on women's bodies and identities, and urges these bodies to exceed their boundaries. In "One O'clock at Night" from "Three Moments in Paris" (1915), Loy archly criticizes Futurism's denigration of women, a denigration that relegates women only to physical existence, seeing them as animals or hollowed out Cartesian machines. The speaker wryly notes the

> Beautiful half-hour of being mere woman
> The animal woman
> Understanding nothing of man
> But mastery   and the security of imparted physical heat
> Indifferent to cerebral gymnastics (22-6)

Loy's irony here exposes and ridicules the notion that women are trapped in their bodies, reducible either to feral ignorance or, to quote her "Crab Angel," being "Automaton bare-back rider[s]" (34)—hollowed out and sexualized machines.[50] Yet the poem also values bodily existence and identity in this "beautiful half hour of being mere woman," demonstrating along the way that physicality is not hollowed out or unworthy, moving towards a modernist posthumanism that values the female body; this moment is not a mere concession to the lure of beauty or beauty's condition of being. Likewise, in her dry, scathing critique of the Italian Futurist Giovanni Papini in "The Effectual Marriage" (1917), Loy writes that "Some say that happy women are immaterial / So here we might dispense with her" (19-20). In this poem, materiality and physicality are desirable, lest women be ephemeral and disposable. Moreover, the poem's pun on **"**immaterial" suggests not only that women are ephemeral, but that happy women do not exist and/or that their happiness is unimportant, introducing a set of paradoxes that further complicates female identity. Comparing these two poems, moreover, exposes the double bind to which Cartesian binaries subject women for being at once too physical and yet too ephemeral. This becomes the double bind that Loy sets up to parody, complicate, and reply to in her paradoxical, posthumanist work with the body, as she plays with expectations about the alternating physicality and transient quality first of women's bodies and then of ghostly bodies, redefining the female body away from the Cartesian ideal of the liberal humanist subject.

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[49] It is under a similar investigation that Ferfeli compares Loy's work to Michel Foucault's, discussing how "a new conception of the human body" can be found in Loy's work, where the body is "now viewed as a historical and changeable entity, criticizing the traditional conception of the body as a fixed point of mundane carnality" (48).

[50] Composition date unknown, but Conover places its composition some time after Cravan's death.

As a result, Loy's early poems often position the female body in a state of constant striving for physical expansion away from these constricting ideologies and double binds—this is then a feminist strategy, like Moore's and H.D.'s own posthumanist strategies, that works through alternative embodiment. For example, in "Virgins Plus Curtains Minus Dots" (1915), Loy writes from the limited perspective of girls hemmed in by their need to maintain virginity, where "Men's eyes   look into things / Our eyes   look out" (12-3). These virgins are physically contained, hidden by curtains, and must look out at the world through a peephole, represented here in the gap between "our eyes" and "look out." Later in the poem, the virgins think of

> Fleshes like weeds
> Sprout in the light
> So much flesh in the world
>   Wanders at will
>
> Some   behind curtains
> Throbs into the night (49-54)

The virgins seek out a kind of abject, fleshy excess, and envy the male mobility they witness beyond their curtains and outside of their door. The poem's own body mirrors this, where "wanders at will" disrupts the strictly contained lines, as this male flesh can break through these constrictions. Loy valorizes a kind of female abject, celebrating the uncontrollable qualities of women's bodies for offering some modicum of this male mobility and freedom from patriarchal restrictions and rigid definitions of female identity and the body. This throbbing, bodily desire to exceed their physical boundaries results in an unruly fleshiness that unbinds body and identity.[51]

Death and the Body in Loy's Early Work

This survival tactic of excess connects these feminine bodies to the ghostly bodies in Loy's work, both before and after Cravan's death. This commitment to bodily excess in the female body flows into the ghostly body, which seeps back from death into life. Loy's posthumanist interrogation of normative feminine bodily identities and her work with alternative embodiment is then a model for, and continues in, her interrogation of the normative constructions of death under necropolitics and biopower. The "Café du Neant" section of "Three Moments in Paris" sets up this transition from the feminized body to the ghostly body, as Loy begins to play with the way death can undo Cartesian binaries of mind and body, particularly for female bodies. In "Café du Neant," Loy takes up and responds to the milieu of decadent, *fin-de-siècle* Paris. The speaker describes "Little tapers leaning lighted diagonally / Stuck in coffin tables of the Café du Neant / Leaning to the breath of baited bodies" (33-35). From its introduction, the atmosphere appears to be one of an eerie stasis of a corpse just parted from its soul. Throughout the poem Loy portrays the body along Cartesian lines. The speaker describes

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[51] In this sense, Loy's poetry accords more with *écriture feminine* than H.D.'s work with the body, as the body's excesses are celebrated with less suspicion.

> Eyes that are full of love
> And eyes that are full of kohl
> Projecting light across the fulsome ambiente
> Trailing the rest of the animal behind them (37-40)

In this imagery, the eyes are, as the saying goes, the windows to the soul, projecting out emotion and light from the depths of someone's inner identity. Likewise, the poem depicts the body not just as an animal—which Loy has already compared women to in "One O'clock at Night"—but as trailing behind these eyes like a useless appendage. The eyes, being both the windows to the soul and "full of love," become the only body part that matters. This is still a binary formula for identity, where the eyes, directly connected to the mind, are what provide the most direct route to the soul and to the emotional life of the subject. Yet the next line somewhat undercuts this formula, where these eyes are also full of kohl (a mineral used in cosmetics): they are not just barometers of internal emotions, but are themselves external body parts, and ones that can be put in service of superficial, physical ends.

"Café du Neant" also portrays the body as non-essential and capable of transformation. After describing "The young lovers hermetically buttoned up in black / To black cravat / To the blue powder edge dusting the yellow throat," the speaker then asks "What colour could have been your bodies / When you last put them away" (47-8). The poem describes the body somewhat ironically as something one can put away—it is an afterthought, something the mind drags along or tucks into a corner. Yet in positioning the body as this afterthought, Loy also creates the body as something that can possibly be changed out of—into something else, including a new body. In this sense, the body is neither so decadent nor so abject that it cannot renew itself. These young lovers in black, with the "blue powder edge dusting the yellow throat," seem to have put their current bodies away for too long, so that their bodies are now beginning to decompose. Once more, Loy plays in sophisticated ways with a Cartesian critique: against Cartesian thought, the body here is both non-essential and changeable. Yet in indicating that the body will turn simply to a decomposing corpse without an inhabitant or a soul, Loy toys with Cartesian thought just long enough to make it absurd and surreal.

In a move that links directly to her later poetry, Loy also connects feminine performance closely with death. At the end of "Café du Neant,"

> the brandy cherries
> Are decomposing
> Harmoniously
> With the flesh of spectators
> And at a given spot
> There is one
> Who

> Having concentric lighting focussed precisely on her
> Prophetically blossoms in perfect putrefaction (58-67)

Death and decomposition fully pervade the room, down to the brandy cherries in the glass, so that everything—the cherries, the spectators' flesh—is now disintegrating together. Moreover, these spectators are decomposing while focused on watching one woman entertain, the spotlight making sure their gazes all find her; their decomposition connects to her spectacle. The poem's body reflects this, narrowing down its width until it bursts out of its seams when this spectacle enters into the poem. Death, decomposition, and the abject are inherently suited to female and feminine performance. Moreover, the highly stylized and aesthetic quality to death here, with the powdered edges of throats and kohl-filled eyes, reads as a decomposing toilette. Loy leans on Cartesian thought; if the body is to be feminine, then its decomposition is too, and this ultimate feminine abject acts as a foil to the exploration of non-normative female identities and bodies that Loy implements elsewhere in "Café du Neant."

Andrew Michael Roberts's commentary on "Café du Neant" is pertinent to my discussion, and it historicizes some of the issues Loy deals with throughout the poem as well as indicates the ways in which Loy pushes for the reevaluation of non-normative feminine identity through an ideological reworking of the feminine body, particularly in the ways she connects this body to death. Roberts compares "Café du Neant" to the Baedeker *How to Be Happy in Paris*, a gentleman's guide to Paris. *How to Be Happy in Paris* attempts to recommend unsavoury entertainment—and the historical Cafe du Neant is listed among this entertainment—to respectable men without compromising their respectability, often at the expense of the very female entertainment they seek out. That is, while the men who frequent sites such as the café leave these sites with their reputations untarnished, the women whom they watch are denigrated, acting effectively as sin-eaters for the men engaged in these practices. For Roberts, this sets up not just a male, desiring gaze upon women, but a gaze that takes that “desiring…look and presents it as the all-powerful, anonymous gaze which constitutes subjectivity” (135). This perspective places the male gazer as the universal liberal humanist subject, and as capable of viewing morally ambiguous spectacles without becoming morally ambiguous themselves, even as these spectacles exist only for their viewership.

Loy’s embodied, fluid, and shifting identities push back against and escape this domineering yet apparently impartial male gaze and its attendant ideologies, which are often associated with the liberal humanist subject’s universal, impartial being. The female bodies in “Café du Neant” decompose and extend, denying any binary separation of subject and object, observer and observed—in short, Loy finds a way to valence this decomposition as positive. Roberts characterizes this response from Loy through Luce Irigaray’s “transvaluation of the discourse of misogyny,” where “‘one must assume the feminine role deliberately. Which means already to convert a form of subordination into an affirmation’” (Irigaray qtd in Roberts 140). What he describes is a version of the impersonality that Walter discusses in Loy, as it is an impersonality that involves investigating different and non-universal subject positions. As he explains it, “In Loy’s sequence this involves a revaluing of the body and an identification with other women, notably those in positions of subordination or sexual commodification: a participant in a sex-show, a shop girl, two prostitutes” (140).

This bears directly onto the spectacle of the woman, and Roberts connects the performer to the mistress in earlier lines, “smiling as bravely / As it is given to her to be brave” (56-7) while her pricked finger is held to a flame. For Roberts, “the comment on the bravery of the mistress leads on to the description of the performer, linking the two in a condition of subordination which the poem satirises, a composed, commodified role which the poem 'decomposes'" (145). Observer and observed collapse, and fluid female entanglement and shifting subjectivity replace dominant male spectatorship while the intralinear spaces of the quoted lines become spaces of escape from the body of the poem, spaces to reimagine the body away from normative discourses. Moreover, Roberts's comments introduce another level to this feminized death and decomposition, positioning this as a kind of female mediumship with a two-way connection between life and death. "Café du Neant" typifies Loy's interest in the non-normative, feminized, liminal, and decaying body and the potential for porous, two-way connections, giving an overture for her work with the ghostly body.

Loy's view of the body, however, shifts slightly when her poetry considers aging, as the aging body has different properties than the youthful body. To begin to understand Loy's orientation towards identity and the aging body, it is necessary to look to her short prose work from 1919,[52] *Auto-Facial-Construction*. Loy argues for a complex view of the self, the body, and the aging face, positing that facial contouring can restore identity—this is an excellent example of the way Loy's belief in Christian Science plays out in her work with identity. Indeed, aging might even be an illusory illness that can be healed. As she writes, "Different stems of beauty culture have compromised without inherent right, not only to 'be ourselves' but to 'look like ourselves', by producing a facial contour in middle age, which does duty as a 'well preserved appearance'. … For to what end is our experience of life, if deprived of a fitting aesthetic revelation in our faces?" (165), and she later puts forth that "Years of specialized interest in physiognomy as an artist, [sic] have brought me to an understanding of the human face, which has made it possible for me to find the basic principle of facial integrity, its conservation, and when necessary, reconstruction" (165). For Loy, physical appearance is a key component of identity—thus the reference to physiognomy—but as we age that identity slips away from or exceeds us, requiring conservation methods.

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[52] A year after Cravan's death. Although I will explore them as two separate categories for Loy, this may indicate a link in Loy's thoughts between aging and death.

In her article on *Auto-Facial-Construction*, Rochelle Rives takes up Loy's discussion of physiognomy, discussing it in depth primarily through Duchenne de Bolougne's nineteenth-century work and photography. Physiognomy was a way of essentializing the body and calculating personality through physicality, particularly through the physical qualities of the head and face. It was a way of "transforming facial features into readable 'signifying elements'," (140) in order to develop a system for "reading the exterior" (140) that would indicate interior emotions and selfhood. This work divided the body along rather Cartesian lines, where the exterior was merely a machine or a vehicle for the interior's emotions, as with the eyes in "One O'Clock at Night." Nonetheless, in *About Faces: Physiognomy in Nineteenth-Century Britain,* Sharrona Pearl argues that physiognomy brought about "the notion [that] the self was relevant only insofar as it represented deviation from the norm" (188). As with Christian Science, physiognomy was both a normalizing force that simultaneously acknowledged the tenuous nature of identity; in Pearl's conception, identity exists only vaguely as what it is not, and in what cannot be normalized.

Rives also points out the disharmonies and contradictions in Duchenne's studies of physiognomy. Although Duchenne's work purportedly inferred interior emotions from external features, electric simulation, rather than the subject's interior, actually produced these emotions. Accordingly, as she writes,

> Loy's program for the rejuvenation of the face both sustains and undermines the logic of Duchenne's experiments, particularly in her belief that the face can be

> manually stimulated against the distortion of aging. More specifically, the premise behind *Auto-Facial-Construction*, which suggests that we look most like ourselves when we are not ourselves, naturally underscores the major contradiction of Duchenne's experiments and the logic of a face that makes visible the invisible. That is, while Duchenne's photography appeared to consolidate a humanist subject whose interior could be read through exterior, signifying elements, his photographs were not predicated on the notion of a feeling subject. (140)

Loy's own take on physiognomy in *Auto-Facial-Construction* is complex and contradictory, as a second look at her quotations above evidences. In a move to seemingly establish her credentials, Loy refers to her study of the exterior human form and physiognomy as an attempt to get at the essence of physical identity, to "the basic principle of facial integrity," yet her argument that the self slips away with middle age and that only facial contouring can preserve this identity denies any integrity of selfhood.

This recalls the dissonant, complex chords of Loy's eugenics that Vetter brings to the fore and which are present in "Feminist Manifesto," as identity is necessarily bodily and yet can exceed the body, as well as the paradoxical teaching of Christian Science, where the mind or will might somehow bend the body to do its bidding, even as the mind intertwines with that body. Interestingly, where Loy, in her theories of eugenics, imagines the body and identity as progressing together towards the future, in *Auto-Facial-Construction* the body begins to progress too far beyond identity, and reconstructive measures must pull back and reconstruct the body from the past in order to harmonize it with a whole identity. Likewise, *Auto-Facial-Construction* contributes to Loy's impersonality, which again works to capture "a modern subjectivity neither fully transparent nor fully opaque to itself" (Walter *Optical* 669). For Loy, physiognomy presents a way into a more scientific, transparent understanding of the body and identity, but this understanding cannot lay that body bare, and instead ultimately reveals the complexities of identity in her work with (im)personality.

Before discussing the body in death, then, I jump forward in Loy's chronology to examine the aging body in "An Aged Woman," examining the ways it bears out some of Loy's concerns in *Auto-Facial-Construction*, and how the poem sets up Loy's view that death is not the result of age but a movement of the body beyond itself—another of the body's excesses.[53] In "An Aged Woman," the aged body is no longer as malleable, and contouring is seemingly no longer as reliable at restoring the body back to its youthful identity. In the poem, the aging process and the dislocation of identity that Loy wishes to prevent in *Auto-Facial-Construction* are on full display, with age having finally caught up with the speaker. In old age "The past has come apart / events are vagueing / the future is inexploitable" (1-3). Without a discernable future, bodily identity has nowhere to progress to, to evolve into, and to expand to; old age has robbed the body of progression. While at first this may seem to reinstate the life/death boundary, as the aged body pushes up, contorted, against the barrier of death, Loy's complex work with aging actually positions the elderly body as in excess of youth, and argues that death is a renewal of life; the same processes of excess and a reworking of the life/death boundary are at work in "An Aged Woman."

The further the aging body moves away from youth, the more the body obstructs identity. As Loy writes

> Does your mirror Bedevil you

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[53] The composition date for "An Aged Woman" is unknown, but Roger Conover dates it somewhere between 1942-1949 in *The Lost Lunar Baedeker*.

> or is the impossible
> possible to senility
> enabling the erstwhile agile
> narrow silhouette of self
> to hold in huge reserve
> this excessive incognito
> of a Bulbous stranger
> only to be exorcised by death (11-9)

The poem presents the external, aging body as an illusory, bedeviling entity. It is as a reflection in the mirror, a kind of perversion or reversal of Jacques Lacan's developmental mirror stage, here at the end of life rather than at the beginning. As in Lacan, this body is one of confusion and dislocation of identity. The body has become a "Bulbous stranger" to the speaker, a body that has exceeded youthful identity but not its own constraints. That is, a bulbous body is not one that can expand past itself, push forward and evolve—and again, the poem's lines are even and constrained. The image is one of residue with nowhere to go, slowly building up and then congealing in the aging body. Moreover, in another Cartesian reversal, this bulbous body—and its bedeviling nature—is what requires exorcism rather than a malignant spirit: the aging body has taken over the speaker and made her identity unrecognizable. If Christian Science teaches that the mind has power over the body if one exerts enough will, this is evidence that either the body is winning or that identity may not be housed in or central to the mind.

Death, however, completes the exorcism of this ill-fitting body, which seemingly reverts back to the Cartesian view that death frees the soul from the heavy weight of the body. Yet since this exorcism is already a reversal of the body/spirit dichotomy in being a physical exorcism, it stands to reason that the act of dying does not take on traditional associations either. “An Aged Woman,” I argue suggests that death restores the body and bodily identity to their full potential rather than death sweeping these bodies away to be taken over by the eternal spirit—it is this “Bulbous stranger,” not the former body, that death exorcises. This invokes Braidotti’s discussion of a posthumanist, necropolitical view of death as not a horizon but a renewal and continuation of potential—in Loy’s case, of a bodily potential. In this sense, “An Aged Woman” is a testament to the way death does not merely await us but is always a part of us, and our bodies continue on, much as the excesses of the female body continue on past the body. Loy’s confusion of mortal boundaries frustrates, as a posthumanist tactic, necropolitical divisions of life and death and thus implicitly critiques necropolitical judgments about which bodies are fit to live or die as well as how these bodies must live or die.

Mourning Cravan and the Ghostly Body

The female and aging bodies of Loy’s early work, which undo the Cartesian binaries of the liberal humanist subject, provide blueprints for the ghostly body in her poetry after Cravan’s death; as I will further explore in “The Dead,” this ghostly body also exceeds its own boundaries and challenges Cartesian binaries and structures of biopower. In returning to “The Dead,” however, I will focus not only on the boundary between life and death, but also the people who perform mediumistic work and make this boundary porous—these are other feminine, excessive bodies who also provide a link from death into life. Earlier, I noted the reversal of the dead with the living, whereby the dead spirits take on the physical qualities of the living. Later in the poem this blurring of boundaries of death continues, as the dead convey that

> Our tissue is of that which escapes you

> Birth-Breaths and orgasms
> The shattering tremor of the static
> The far-shore of an instant
> The unsurpassable openness of the circle
> Legerdemain of God (33-8)

The process of death, if determined by god, is a legerdemain—a magic trick that may seem to be without substance but in fact relies on the physical. Again, the imagery is of the dead exceeding their bodies without exceeding physicality, as with the female bodies of Loy's early poetry—their "tissue" is that which escapes the living's experience of births and orgasms, but it is no less tissue. "Tissue" also has paradoxical connotations of being both ephemeral and physical. This could be paper-thin decorative tissue or the sinews and tissues of a robust, muscular body; these phantoms seem to exist on both levels at once. Furthermore, the afterlife is described as "the far-shore of an instant" and "the unsurpassable openness of the circle," as if death were both far away, something needing to be crossed into, and yet immediately available to life. Just as the curve of a circle swings away from itself only to close back in, death appears at a remove from life, only to have the poem reveal it as an aspect of life's whole.

Although Crangle writes of "The flimsy distinction between the living and the dead" (288) when discussing this poem, I would argue that in this passage Loy is not just making the boundary between life and death pervious, she puts the weight of the dead upon the living, changing the shape of life with it—much in the way Eliot argues for the weight of dead poets upon the new. In this, the poem becomes acutely posthumanist and necropolitical. Not only is "The Dead" a monument to resistant mourning in this intermingling, but in keeping death within life, Loy's poetry further unbinds the normative humanist subject, loosening the hold of biopower on both life and death by pushing the dead into life and confronting the living, normative body. The dead here—both a physical, haunting manifestation of Cravan and the fallen masses of the war—refuse to be fully mourned and put away, and—as in "Tradition and the Individual Talent"—the presence of the dead changes the fabric of the living body, making this body ephemeral, excessive, and ghostly, just as the dead become physical, heavy, and life-like.

As the poem continues, the excess of these ghosts is both abject and physical, and it is this very haunting physicality that seems to undo the lives of the living. The spirits continue to narrate:

> We are turned inside out
> Your cities lie digesting in our stomachs
> Street lights footle in our ocular darkness
>
> Having swallowed your irate hungers
> Satisfied before bread-breaking
> To your dissolution
> We splinter into Wholes (19-25)

The poem upturns and overturns assumptions about life and death, including their separation. These lines portray death not as an absence or even as a spiritual state but rather as something physical, something that can swallow, ache, and hunger. Thanks to this heavy physicality, it is the living who are in danger of dissolution, while the dead splinter into wholes. Death is a loss, a splintering of the self past the boundary of life, yet through Loy's resistant mourning death is a continuation of becoming rather than the end of life—it becomes a whole. There is a subtle reversal of Cartesian thought in these lines, as the dead and their bodies are not in fact hollow, but rather swallow the hungers of the living; it is the living who are empty and ravenous, and the dead who fill themselves.

Death, meanwhile, also unbinds the survivors who can best see the porous nature of mortality:

> As the dead describe it
> Only in the segregated angles of Lunatic Asylums
> Do those who have strained to exceeding themselves
> Break on our edgeless contours
>
> The mouthed echoes of what
> Has exuded to our companionship
> Is horrible to the ear
> Of the half that is left inside them (39-46)

Perhaps unsurprisingly, those who can communicate with the dead are those who have "strained to exceeding themselves" and this has "exuded" to the companionship of the dead, suggesting the transcendental, expansive experience of a medium. These excesses, however, never lose a physical, sensory, and even tactile quality—they are "mouthed echoes," that are "horrible to the ear," while the dead themselves have "edgeless contours." These mediums are, like the feminine bodies of Loy's earlier work, capable of physical excess and even a transcendence that confronts and critiques the Cartesian subordination of the body. Moreover, they represent a non-normative ontology in their position in life, as they inhabit asylums on the margins of society.

Yet, arguably, these mediums are not without wounds or unworthy of being grieved themselves. Unlike the flowing, boundless dead, they are segregated in the angles of asylums, and the poem portrays this communion at best as unpleasant as well as indicative of a lack of wholeness (perhaps the wholeness attributed to the liberal humanist subject) in the mediums, as they only have a half left inside of them. They also seem to have given up their freedom and themselves in order to communicate with the dead. Or rather, this seems to be the price for communion with the dead. Opening oneself up to the dead and keeping mourning resistant is an arduous task. The deceased are not neatly separate from life, despite burial and cremation rituals, while the living go on. The mourners must continually live with their memory recurring as the dead, boundless, can enter into life unbidden, and this entrance renders life unbound and the survivors half-formed. These survivors cannot, to refer back to Rae's discussion of Freud, sever ties with the dead, and this, at least in part, undoes them. While this undoing reshapes their identities away from normative configurations, this taxing existence of the resistant mourner is, I argue, why Loy uses writing later in her career not to prolong mourning but to end it. This posthumanist response to necropolitics through the unbinding of the living world cannot be wholly positive throughout "The Dead," and the poem reads as desperate and pained rather than as joyously joining life and death.

Tensions also arise in "The Widow's Jazz," composed around 1930, between the unbinding aspects of posthumanist, resistant mourning, and the poem's need to control its bodies. Loy is interested in the way the deconstructive (in that they are improvisational) and alternative (in that they are non-conventional) rhythms of jazz music can blur life and death, deconstruct the liberal humanist subject, and offer alternative poetic embodiment—even so, she potentially essentializes black bodies throughout the poem. In many ways, jazz serves as an excellent mode for resistant mourning. As Tanya Dalziell writes, "the role of jazz as a modern elegiac mode during the decade or so following the end of the Great War cannot be overlooked. Among the multiple and often conflicting meanings attributed to jazz, the one that has the most significance here is that which sees it as a postwar panacea … [it] came to be viewed as a means of forgetting and of rejuvenation" (103). Although this might seem to position jazz as a mode of socially conscious, rather than resistant, mourning—that, is a resistant mourning which does not forget or rejuvenate—Dalziell also remarks "It is to jazz that Loy's poetry turns as a means by which to represent loss and the impossibility of representing such loss" (104). Jazz, with its winding passages, repetitions, and deconstructions of melody, closely mirrors resistant mourning's openness and haunting.[54] Moreover, these windings, repetitions, and deconstructions may also create space for a new kind of embodiment in a poem employing jazz sensibilities, both in the poem's rhythms and in its depictions of bodies, as the bodies of the poem and the poem's lineation may take on this openness and reconstruction.

"The Widow's Jazz" provides moments of boundary-blurring and alternative embodiment: many of Loy's descriptions in the poem rely, as per Vetter's arguments, on the permeability of the body that modernity—and this modern music—can bring about. Jazz flouted structural, classical traditions of music, focusing more on community and interaction than finished product; in "Modern Poetry," Loy described jazz as "the new music of unprecedented instruments" (157). There is a vibrant, revolutionary newness in jazz music that allows old, pruned boundaries of living, thinking, and embodiment to dissolve, and the short lines of the poem complement the short, improvised melodies of jazz music that continually interact and shift. These lines call up the rhythms of a dancing, jazz body, curving and jumping, shifting and shaking on the page. This boundary-breaking way of thinking and making music also allows jazz to communicate with the dead: Loy parallels the physical yet ephemeral jazz music with the physical ephemerality of the ghost, remarking that "the pruned contours / dissolve / in the brazen shallows of dissonance" (17-9). Maiden saplings are "Haunted by wind instruments," (9) while the jazz music itself brings Cravan to mind. "Husband," the speaker writes,

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[54] Indeed, critics such as Alfred Appel in *Jazz Modernism* also compare these features to modernist literature.

> how secretly you cuckold me with death
> while this cajoling jazz
> blows its tropic breath
>
> among the echoes of the flesh (39-43)

Loy plays with imagery that is at once physical and ephemeral; death is positioned as a cuckolding, a physical betrayal, and while breath denotes in one way an airiness, it also brings to mind the physical effort it takes to blow air through a trumpet and create this cajoling jazz. Finally, this breath produces "echoes of the flesh," that are again both physical and ephemeral. The physicality it takes to produce jazz music actually brings forth these echoes of flesh and the memory of Cravan, as if jazz's physicality works on the same wavelength as the ghostly body. Jazz produces an alternative embodiment, shaping a body that connects in Loy's work with the ghostly body.

Yet, as a historically black art form, jazz is also sensitive territory. As Charley Gerard notes, "Jazz has been and continues to be a music whose developments are closely linked to the ways in which African Americans have adopted different strategies of achieving sociopolitical goals" (xix), but "Musical idioms created by African Americans are considered to be in the public domain, while the musical idioms of other ethnic groups tend to retain their ethnic roots" (6). I do not want to condemn Loy's work with jazz immediately as negatively valenced appropriation, but the tendency that Gerard points to is worth being aware of in discussing "The Widow's Jazz." Nonetheless, there is a way that this racial aspect gives jazz and Loy even further potential for an unbinding of the liberal humanist subject; if in "The Dead" the best empaths were those in asylums, and here the empaths are black bodies, then the posthumanist mingling of life and death in Loy's mourning seems to focus on and privilege non-normative identities. "The Widow's Jazz," however, does not bear this out fully, and the poem is at once an example of the way Loy interrogates necropolitics to unbind the boundary between life and death and a testament to the paradoxical aims of eugenics to both extend and control the body.

Where in "The Dead" the presence of ghostly bodies unbound the bodies and identities of the living in somewhat liberating, if mournful, ways, the black bodies that produce this jazz in "The Widow's Jazz" do not share this unbinding, even as they, as mediums, call up the dead. The poem describes their bodies as brutish, and the music they make as coming down from divine grace rather than their own physicality. When describing the jazz players, the speaker writes of how "The black-brute angels / in their human gloves / bellow through a monstrous growth of metal trunks" (23-5). When the music starts playing there is "a synthesis / of racial caress" (44-5) as "The seraph and the ass / in this unerring Esperanto / of the earth" (46-8) converse. The black jazz players take on a split personality, both animal and angel, seraph and ass. These images depict jazz music as divinely inspired, but these black bodies remain animal-like, without the wry sarcasm these Cartesian discourses brought forth in earlier poems featuring women. There is a form of biopower—which Loy deploys uncritically—at play here, controlling the way the black body is constituted and defined in life, and reducing the identities available to this body in essentializing it. The physicality of these bodies can produce music, but it is the divine energy flowing through their mouths that calls up the dead; unlike the mediums housed in asylums in "The Dead," this capacity does not seem to be ultimately located in these bodies. If Futurism and eugenics allowed Loy to believe in the ever-changing nature of the body, it does not extend fully to the black body, which is used as a pathway into communication with the dead but which does not exhibit the same freedom from constraints or non-essentialism as the other bodies in Loy's mournful poetry.

Nonetheless, "Mexican Desert" (circa 1919) represents one of Loy's most acute critiques of Cartesian thought, even as her eugenicist beliefs about the roles and energies of genders are also in tension with this critique. Unlike sections of "The Widow's Jazz," "Mexican Desert" still imagines generative, although again mournful, identities. As Loy faces the world without Cravan, "Mexican Desert" imagines a barren landscape populated only by "The belching ghost-wail of the locomotive / trailing her rattling wooden tail" (1-2). Burke notes that "This shorthand travel diary lacks human actors, but in a striking reversal of the modernist aesthetic that saw humans as machines, a female locomotive grieves like an unquiet ghost" (285). Although I agree with Burke's assessment, I would argue that this is not necessarily a reversal of modernist aesthetics when one considers Vetter's and Sword's discussions of how mechanization brought on spirituality, or how this spiritualism was feminine and feminized in different ways; Loy is engaging with this history. Michelle Gunn furthers this analysis of the feminine train, arguing that even "before Loy introduces any personal pronoun to identify the locomotive's gender, she yokes the mournful 'ghost-wail' of the train's horn to the ominous figure of the banshee, a female spirit whose cry portends death," and noting the way the word "train" evokes the train of a garment (114). The feminine excesses of the living body become important to the spiritual, as this female spirit represents that which death leaves unmourned and undigested. The poem is another ironic Cartesian critique, and presents death again as a feminized and mechanized wasteland; the spirit is actually a female machine, everything Cartesian thought associates with the body, and thus becomes an ironic, posthumanist version of Cartesian thought—the poem takes this body so far beyond its terminus that it becomes absurd. Loy again plays with alternative embodiment through this figure, giving new bodily expressions and manifestations out of the intersections of the ghostly, feminine, and now mechanical body and in so doing responding to normative discourses—of which mind/body duality is a part—that would contain or control the feminine as well as the dead.

Gunn also connects "Mexican Desert" to Loy's eugenic project, arguing that as a lament for Cravan it is also a lament for the loss of masculine energy that Loy viewed as essential for a properly functioning society. Gunn quotes from "Feminist Manifesto" where Loy argues that "for the harmony of the race, each individual should be the expression of an easy and ample interpretation of the male & female temperaments" (155), positing that with Cravan's death Loy felt not only personally bereft, but that there was now an imbalance in the world that needed to be righted. Describing the train once more, Gunn argues that the train is "divested of its usual—and for Loy, quite contemporary—phallic resonance until, wholly feminized, it appears as a train in drag" (114). According to Gunn, this absence of masculinity not only perverts the usually masculine machinery of the train that Futurists valued, but puts the entire ecosystem at risk as the phallic cacti and palms wilt, rendering Mexico bereft, unfertile, and decaying as "Vegetable cripples of drought / Thrust up the parching appeal" (7-8) among "stump-fingered cacti / and hunch-back palm trees" (10-11). The feminized afterlife that the train's ghost-wail heralds is lamentable not just because of Loy's mourning, but because the lack of a masculine presence opens up the world to a sickness. The poem's form partly corresponds to this: it is short, and lacking, full only of ellipses, and may even model castration.

This presents perhaps the most conflicted situation for Loy's eugenicist beliefs, for where in her other poetry her belief in the non-essential and expansive qualities of the body helped to blur the lines between life and death and focused on identities that were non-normative and alternative to Cartesian thought, Gunn's interpretation of Loy's beliefs threatens to disable any Cartesian critique through the feminized, machinic afterlife, as Loy can only view this afterlife with disappointment in its lack of maleness. However, I would argue that both these interpretations work alongside each other. Although I think Gunn is right to note that part of Loy's bereavement comes from her eugenicist beliefs in the need to balance masculine and feminine energy, this lament does not necessarily change the way death and mourning alter life and the liberal humanist subject. Death still feminizes the Futurist dreams of the masculinity of machinery, as well as Cravan's memory. In fact, "Mexican Desert," unlike "The Widow's Jazz," does not introduce biopower into the landscape even with these eugenicist beliefs. In this case, the destabilizing presence of death actually frustrates any attempted control of the living body; the only living bodies in the desert, the plants, are wilting and dying and refuse to be masculine, controlled, or cultivated. Ultimately I would question whether Loy's speaker *welcomes* the stripping of these normative, masculine identities and this destabilizing presence of death, but this does not dismiss the fact that it is happening.

Yet who would fully welcome the mourning of a loved one, particularly via the demands of resistant mourning, which do not allow the mourner to relinquish the loved one even in death? Unsurprisingly then, when "Letters of the Unliving," written much later than the previous poetic laments, around 1942-1949, takes up the mourning of Cravan as its subject, it no longer presents a resistant mourning—Loy's strategy changes from an interrogation and opening up of normative discourses to a quest for closure. Loy positions her writing here not as a gateway into the afterlife but as evidence of the distance between life and death and, as a result, the mind and the body. Her poem portrays the struggle to close off the resistant mourning of these earlier poems, and the bodies of the poetry haunt her only as Cartesian nightmares: they are hollow and all too material, as are the words written on the page. In *Ghostwriting Modernism*, Sword has said that "modern spiritualism's central metaphysical conflict" is "its paradoxical proclivity to materialize the spirit world even while trying to spiritualize the material one" (18) and that "this demonstrate[s] the mediums' powerful awareness of the material, physical nature of language" (18), so that "the dead live on not only in our memories but also and especially in our words" (39). "Letters of the Unliving," however, in committing to a closed mourning, presents itself as the twisted double of this kind of spiritualism. In her early poetry, Loy does attempt to spiritualize the material world and vice versa, but here the material world and the spiritual world are all too material and hollowed out.

As with "Mexican Desert," in "Letters of the Unliving"—a title that nonetheless connects death to life—Loy ruminates on the absence created after Cravan's death, but this time this absence is juxtaposed against the presence of his letters. As she writes

> The present implies presence
> thus
> unauthorized by the present
> these letters left authorless --
> have lost all origin
> since the inscribing hand
> lost life --

> the hoarseness of the past
> creaks
> from creased leaves
> covered with unwritten writing
> since death's erasure
> of the writer --
> of the lover -- (1-14)

In contrast to what Loy's earlier poems suggest, here death is a force that erases rather than extends the body and identity of the departed. Moreover, these letters of the departed are "left authorless" and have "lost all origin" as "the inscribing hand / lost life." The dashes Loy employs only serve to emphasize this absence, standing in for a husband who is not there, and the long lines shudder into shorter words, again emphasizing absence. Although this writing stands as a testament to the departed, what it grants is more of a phantom limb—which the short, enjambed lines emphasize—than an extension of the ghostly body; his writing, divorced from its origin, stands now only as a haunting, painful absence of an object, save the inscribing hand that has been emptied of life. Later in the poem Loy writes once more of Cravan's letters, depicting how

> An uneasy mist
> rises from this calligraphy of recollection
>
> your documented terror of dementia
> due to some earthly absence
>
> This package of ago

creaks with the horror of echo
out of void (36-42)

Loy likens the past and this writing to creaking echoes: haunting, but ultimately empty. The recollection of this calligraphy must live in the speaker's own mind, and there is not a ghost to be found, only the dumbly material writing Cravan left behind. Although writing a poem herself when talking about Cravan's writing, Loy seems to look skeptically at the idea that writing affords any immortality. Instead, it only emphasizes Cravan's own all too evident mortality.

Cravan himself starts out as a hollow body in "Letters of the Unliving," but as the poem progresses even that hollowed state disintegrates into nothingness, so that all that is left is the empty materialism of the writing:

the bloom of beloving
decoyed
to decay, by the finger
of Hazard the swindler

The deathly handler
left no post-mortem mask --
only a callous earth made mouldy (43-9)

In this passage, the decay of a corpse is evidence at once of the Cartesian hollowness of the body and of its ultimate temporality. As Cravan's body decays, there is not even a post-mortem mask—another hollowed physicality—to remember him by, only the mouldy earth. Thus, Loy asks in a passage almost immediately following the above: "Can whom who has ceased to be / Ever have had existence" (53-4)? This is not a poem about the ways Cravan's ghostly body haunts her, it instead confronts how he has utterly left her, leaving only this writing behind. This depiction is painful and hollow, and no longer full of the satirical absurdity Loy once directed towards the Cartesian body.

The shift from Loy's earlier resistant mourning of Cravan to the empty materiality of "Letters of the Unliving" comes from the need, I argue, for Loy to close down this mourning at last and to reinstate the boundary between life and death even if it means reinstating Cartesian binaries. Her mourning seems to pain and unbind her unbearably, and she feels near death herself. "Can one who still has being / be inexistent?" she asks, continuing

I am become
dumb
in answer
to your dead language of amor (60-3)

Faced with the emptiness of his words, the dead language of his letters, and the overwhelming absence they announce, Loy's speaker becomes like these dumb, material objects, and thus closer to a corpse. She even seems to anticipate or welcome this, writing "By my so now-while self / of my cloud-corpse / Beshadowing your shroud (67-9) as if waiting for the moment she can follow Cravan into the grave. This pain, and this desire to share Cravan's fate, begins to close up resistant mourning. Loy does not want to continue to keep the wound or the border between life and death open and fluid, and faced with that open boundary, it seems easier and less painful to consider herself dead and already crossed over, or else to finally come to terms with Cravan's death.

This pain turns into an explicit desire to close off this mourning when Loy begs near the end of the poem: "O leave me / my final illiteracy / of memory's languor" (84-6). In begging to be illiterate of these letters and Cravan's memory, Loy asks to move on from this mourning and to fully digest Cravan's death. This also chimes with the way "Letters of the Unliving" portrays the body: if Loy can begin to see the body as hollowed out rather than haunting, she can begin to close off this haunting. This is, in a sense, a divergence from modernist posthumanism, but perhaps a more sympathetic one than in "The Widow's Jazz." When critics such as Rae and Spargo discuss resistant mourning, particularly on a larger social scale, they perhaps elide the difficulties inherent in continually personally mourning a beloved in order to focus more on larger scale ethical responsibilities. It is understandable if, after approximately thirty years, Loy desires reprieve, even if it delimits her posthumanism and has her reverting to a more Cartesian and normative view of the body. This is accordingly, to connect back to Loy's modernist impersonality, also a step back from engaging with multiple subject positions and alternative modes of being; although Eliot engages with impersonality as an escape from the self and from emotion, for Loy's work impersonality often means taking up the physical burden of other subjectivities, living and dead. This is not, however, a retreat: it is not that Loy's oeuvre becomes *less* posthumanist or less modernist in this last reprieve from her work with the life/death boundary, only that her work takes on new concerns and has different needs in poems such as "Letters of the Unliving" as her mourning process took on different needs.

Loy's modernist context, which encouraged spiritualism through the mechanical and Christian Science, her involvement in Futurism and eugenics, and her supple work with impersonality and multiple subject positions, brings modernist inflections to her posthumanist valuation of non-normative, excessive bodily identities. Loy's work explores identity and the body outside of a Cartesian binary, valuing alternative physicality without essentializing the body, doing so often through the example of female and feminized bodies, both in life and in death. The body thus undergoes changes on an ideological terrain, as Loy imaginatively undoes both mind/body dualities and necropolitical binaries. Her resistant mourning is a backdrop to these processes, and helps Loy to undo the boundary between life and death as well as Cartesian binaries. Loy's version of modernist impersonality—a version that embodies impersonality without losing sight of objectivity and extends Eliot's interest in the porous boundary between life and death to the body—is also involved in these processes. Loy's posthumanism responds to the binaries of the liberal humanist subject and to necropolitical power structures, and imagines alternative embodiments for her subjects that keep their identities supple, shifting, and unable to be pinned down by systems of power—these processes are often mirrored in the body and form of her poems. Even so, because of the paradoxes inherent in her work with excessive bodily identity, Loy's poetry is at times in tension with posthumanism, as with "The Widow's Jazz" and "Mexican Desert."

Moreover, although Loy's writing and resistant mourning facilitates her posthumanist work with the feminine and ghostly body, resistant mourning is ultimately untenable for Loy, who must bear her grief by herself and find a way to, eventually, move on from it. The ultimate closure of Loy's grief corresponds to the closing off of these bodily excesses and play with Cartesian duality: "Letters of the Unliving" re-separates mind and body, positioning Cravan not as ghostly body but as a hollowed corpse. In short, there are many advantages to a posthumanist rereading of necropolitics—a refiguring of the body, particularly the female body, away from stifling categories of the liberal humanist subject; a response and recalibration of Italian Futurism, eugenics, and Christian Science in light of Loy's posthumanist experiments; a general cultivation of non-normative identities and states—but these advantages take great effort and come at a price. Nonetheless, Loy's work with the feminine and ghostly body remains even after her mourning ends, and this work continues to present both the problems and possibilities for modernist posthumanism.

Coda: Coding the Madrigal Cycle

In a project pitched towards the future of human identity, what is the future of modernist posthumanism? Where to go from here? One way forward is to move from reading modernist-era technology as posthumanist towards reading modernism through a posthumanist methodology via the tools of the digital humanities. More specifically, this coda's work with topic modeling H.D.'s Madrigal Cycle explores the points of contact between distant, machine reading and close, human reading, investigating the ways each of the novels of the Cycle—that is, *Paint it Today*, *Asphodel*, *Bid Me to Live,* and (although it is sometimes considered an outlier) *HERmione*—construct a femininity that breaks away from domesticity and an equally domesticated nature. Instead, the novels conclude with the accrual of a femininity lexically linked to a harsh, rocky nature imbued with a druidic magic. Thus, the Madrigal Cycle engages in many of the same processes as the preceding chapters, as its texts seek ways to escape feminine containment. Moreover, in naming distant reading as machine reading, this coda emphasizes the technological aspects of topic modeling, particularly in comparison to the more traditional, human processes of close reading. This coda connects to the preceding chapters on two levels: first, it investigates the Madrigal Cycle's feminist, strategic desire to exceed containment and redefine normative femininity, often—although not always —through an alternative embodiment, and second, it explores the posthumanist negotiation of human and machine in the correspondence between my own human interpretive models and machine learning.

Throughout this work, I am interested in the way topic modeling can remodel the way we think about texts as close readers: the attentive work of human close reading can illuminate the lexical cues of machine topic modeling, while topic modeling can reframe, renew, and broaden close reading. Machine-produced topics do not have to be exemplary of what we would do as human scholars. Indeed, sometimes the topics machine reading produces are obscure and frustrating—although many times such obscurity presents interpretive openings for human readers. Instead, topic modeling can help us to reckon with how we group things, and spur us to make choices about the texts. To this end, topic modeling re-reads the Cycle not through psychological layers of repression and expression, but rather through word clouds, lexical cues, and pattern recognition, and models a new way of spatializing the Cycle and a new way of seeing these themes of domesticity, nature, and femininity, particularly in the novels' endings.

Topic modeling works from probabilistic models akin to Hayles's posthumanist pattern and randomness, where the algorithm sorts words based on frequency and the probability of words showing up alongside each other. The resulting topics, or string of words, the program produces are then not always transparent or easy to read, and do not always align with our own understandings of the text as human interpreters. Topic modeling acts as a kind of irritant that can reshape the way we think about texts, reconstituting the text through word clouds and lexical parts. This sets up a posthumanist dialogue, whereby machine thinking changes our own thinking, and where humans can likewise bring much-needed context and knowledge to topic modeling. Critics have begun to theorize about this negotiation between scholarly and machine interpretation: as Hoyt Long and Richard Jean So explain, "Each time we enter a search term into Google Books or some other digitized corpus, we are interacting with these algorithms" (236), although scholars "have tended to leave this interaction under-theorized, assuming that the search engine is merely a tool that helps us get to the real work of interpretation while often insisting that the science behind these tools is inhuman, rigid, and machinic" (236). This negotiation between human and machine has then been occurring in mundane ways since before the rise of the digital humanities, and topic modeling reveals these connections more fully.

In their continual retreading of the same experiences presented in different lights, the novels of the Madrigal Cycle are particularly well suited to topic modeling. Norman Kelvin posits that in "later years, [H.D.] continuously circled back to the period of the First World War, or more precisely the years 1912-1918, the period in which she first made her reputation as a poet" (170). *Paint It Today* was written first, in 1921, followed by *Asphodel* around 1921-2, then *Bid Me to Live* (also called *Madrigal*), and finally *HERmione*, which, although it fits as a prequel with *Asphodel*, was written in 1926-7.[55] Each of the novels follows a female protagonist (Midget, Hermione, Julia, and Hermione, going by publication date) through several biographically inspired moments from H.D.'s life. Except in *HERmione*, which details previous events, this protagonist travels to Europe, marries a character created after H.D.'s own husband Richard Aldington, and struggles with her husband's infidelities, her own previous engagement to the Ezra Pound character, and often her lesbian desires for the Frances Josepha Gregg character. After a brief affair with the Cecil Grey surrogate, which results in pregnancy, the protagonist often concludes by discovering her love for the Bryher stand-in. The cycle also repeats specific moments: the boat crossing to Europe in *Paint It Today* and *Asphodel* as well as the taxi where Ezra Pound advised H.D. not to go travelling with Frances Gregg and her new husband.

Despite these narrative similarities, each novel has its own set of concerns, focal points, and perspectives; as Stanford Friedman argues, "the three novels remain distinct, as their different titles and authorial signatures emphasize" ("Repressed" 236).[56] In her introduction to the text, Cassandra Laity notes the emphasis on lesbian desire in *Paint It Today* especially, but also in *HERmione*, while *Bid Me to Live* (also called *Madrigal*) focuses more on heterosexual desire (*Asphodel*, for its part, works from bisexual desire). There are also notable absences from one novel to the next: for example, *Bid Me to Live* represses the H.D. figure Julia's pregnancy with Perdita when it is an important turning point in both *Asphodel* and *Paint It Today*. Furthermore, as Stanford Friedman addresses, *Bid Me to Live* centers around heterosexual desire, which makes it fundamentally different than *Paint it Today* and *Asphodel*, which "[deal] with lesbian desire and illegitimate motherhood" (236). *Paint it Today* is not only shorter, but also works from a different narration style from the rest of the texts, with the older Midget narrating the life of the younger Midget. As a result of these various convergences and divergences, Stanford Friedman focuses on the palimpsestic, psychoanalytical aspects of the repetition throughout these novels, tracing moments of repression and expression.

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[55] Robert Spoo argues that H.D. also revised Asphodel around this time (xiii).

[56] In her introduction to *Bid Me to Live* (1984), Helen McNeil explores the various genre layers of the text, from *roman-a-clef*, to war novel, to autobiography, to memoir, to avant-garde experiment, to poetic mythologizing, to palimpsest.

Stanford Friedman also argues that these layered repressions and expressions make it so that critics cannot merely approach the Madrigal Cycle and see *Paint It Today* and *Asphodel* as drafts of *Bid Me to Live*. As she puts it, "instead of reading these texts as autonomous or as inadequate 'drafts' that teleologically lead up to the intended and fully realized 'final' text," we should "read them as distinct parts of a larger composite 'text' whose parts are like the imperfectly erased layers of a palimpsest" ("Repressed" 236). She finishes by arguing that, "Rather than searching for the 'authentic' or 'intended' version, I want to regard all versions as part of a larger composite text whose parts remain distinct" ("Repressed" 240). Stanford Friedman's work here, and more largely her study in *Penelope's Web* of the Freudian layers of H.D.'s texts, has helped to theorize H.D.'s nuanced and complex grappling with selfhood, identity, and desire through her prose novels, and this coda is greatly indebted to her work.

Moreover, Stanford Friedman's argument that the Madrigal Cycle is a collection of both overlapping and diverging texts to be parsed through, rather than partial drafts of a larger, more finalized work, lends itself well to topic modeling applications. This approach allows any topic modeling performed upon these texts to be given equal weight, and the texts compare against each other as interconnected layers and clusters of words rather than "drafts" or "versions." Nonetheless, my work here shifts away from this psychoanalytical lens and instead looks at the layers of the Cycle through lexical cues. Moreover, in looking at the endings of the novels, my emphasis lands more on the convergences of the texts rather than where they diverge, although such divergences and specific details of each text are still important to my work.

Methodology, Limitations, and Potential

As mentioned above, topic modeling has its own particular applications and limitations. Topic modeling was originally used in the harder sciences to parse through and categorize large amounts of scientific data, but has since been adapted for the humanities to scan through literary data, historical tracts, and other humanities materials. How topic modeling actually categorizes this data, particularly when working through a literary text, requires some explaining and expansion. Topic modeling platforms such as MALLET, which I am using for my work here, work through an algorithm that views all words as coming from different baskets. When you run a literary text through MALLET, the algorithm splits up the words into differently numbered topics based on what basket it believes the words come from, grouping words from the same basket into the same topic.[57] It does not label these sets (or topics) of words—this is left open to interpret, and my labels throughout this coda are my own interpretation of the ensuing "word clouds." Topic modeling might then spur scholars to think differently from ways that traditional close reading models encourage, as this interpretive move requires thinking through the words carefully; I had to shift into a mode of interpretation suited to parsing these word clouds and recognizing their patterns. Thus, one topic I will examine, from *Bid Me to Live*, appears as follows: "stones world left stone druid ivy path hill wall book pattern leaves rock circle sea track power stalk tin flat." This computer-generated topic has rather clearly grouped together what I interpret as nature and rock imagery, and MALLET has recognized these words as coming from the same "basket" (although since MALLET uses a probabilistic algorithm, these results are not definitive and are thus open to further interpretation). MALLET also assigns a weight to each topic to show the frequency with which these words appear; I note this weight denoting frequency throughout in parentheses. More importantly, the researcher can choose how many topics the algorithm constructs, constraining or expanding the set of different categories of words the program produces.

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[57] For a more in-depth discussion of these processes, see Ted Underwood's blog post on *The Stone and the Shell*, "Topic modeling made just simple enough," Apr. 2012, https://tedunderwood.com/2012/04/07/topic-modeling-made-just-simple-enough/.

Before I delve into my own findings with topic modeling the Madrigal Cycle, some of the parameters of my case study need to be established. There are many choices to make even before performing the topic modeling, among them how many topics to specify, how to organize the data set, and what stop words to exclude from the final topics. As I have mentioned, I have used MALLET to produce my topics, but I experimented with producing differing numbers of topics, from ten to thirty-five. If there are too few topics in the parameters, the categories produced may contain too many disparate words. Likewise, too many categories can also obscure the threads tying the individual words together. After examining the results of the range of topics and considering the length of H.D.'s individual novels, I chose twenty-five topics as my parameters; an appropriate middle ground. Nonetheless, some topics remain wide open for interpretation, and

I do not look here at all or even most of the topics that were produced. However, this openness for interpretation is precisely what makes topic modeling interesting and of use to literary studies and studies in the humanities, and if topics lead to questions that cannot be answered definitively, all the better for interpretation.

It is also important in topic modeling to take out common words such as "and," "but," and so on that would otherwise dilute the topics. These are called "stop words," and MALLET comes with a default list of stop words. You must also customize your stop word list, tailoring it to the texts at hand. To this end, I removed many of the character and place names throughout *Bid Me to Live*, *Paint It Today*, *HERmione*, and *Asphodel* in order to focus on larger themes between the novels outside of character and to read lexical, rather than character, relations. However, this is somewhat of a double-edged sword, particularly as the novels are *romans à clef*, and in another, or longer, study it would be fruitful to look at which of the characters (and their real-life counterparts) connect to which topics and word clusters.[58] In one case, I have left in names where they appeared illuminating to a particular topic, as I will discuss below. Choosing stop words, moreover, is a delicate—and interpretive—task. For example, I left in place names such as Pennsylvania and Paris throughout the modeling, but although these do bring interpretive weight, there is a case to be made for leaving them out, as each of the novels contains many travel locations that might otherwise obscure other points of entry into interpretation. Thus, although topic modeling appears to apply the same strict processes onto different data sets, in fact its application and outcomes vary depending on the aims of the interpreter and the parameters the interpreter places on these processes.[59]

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[58] In *Penelope's Web*, for example, Susan Stanford Friedman makes interpretive use of these names, arguing that "Like Yeats's masks, H.D.'s personae operate within a dualistic, ultimately dialectical schema. Like Pound's masks, H.D.'s personae emerge as the product rather than the producer of the writing" (35).

To do this work, I negotiate between "close reading," drawn from New Criticism, and machine reading, taking cues from Franco Moretti's work with distant reading, which deliberately turns away from close reading and reads literature through network graphs and topic modeling.[60] Close reading and the machine reading of the digital humanities then make an uneasy alliance, and although I have been grounding my work in close reading throughout this project it is useful to briefly lay bare some of its assumptions in comparison to machine reading. The macroscale patterns of the digital humanities can seem to swallow up the detailed analysis of close reading, with close reading's attention to the texture of literary texts *as* literary texts. Moreover, the formalism of New Critics such as John Crowe Ransom came to seem myopic after the theoretical turn in the 1980s and 1990s, as it was often rightly associated with a white, male canon. Nonetheless, this fall from favour has also led to a reduction of New Criticism: for example, although criticism often aligns New Criticism with scientific inquiry, as Gerald Graff points out, "The New Criticism stands squarely in the romantic tradition of the defense of the humanities as an antidote to science and positivism" (133)—what could be a potential hinge between New Criticism and the digital humanities, then, actually comes from a misreading of New Critical aims.

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[59] One more note on procedure: in performing the topic modeling I had the choice of cycling through the novels individually, creating topics for each work, or organizing the data set of the entire Madrigal Cycle into a whole, hypothetically allowing MALLET to do a chunk of the comparative work between the novels. Interestingly, when I compiled these comparative topics for the Madrigal Cycle as a whole, I found that the topic lists were extremely opaque when compared to the topics that emerged in individual analyses from each novel. For example, one topic in the compiled Madrigal Cycle topic model listed "latin bad pigeons perfect genoa commonplace oak hotel return hurler grapple treacherous scarcely acquaintances foothills fiance frenzy hecate froth," a topic that contains perhaps aspects of travel and geography, but which is broken up by many other diverse words. In contrast, another topic from *Bid Me to Live* individually reads as "paris france boy days mother didn't trent play captain people louvre cities river notes ballet entrances exits Italian," evoking a much more specific cluster of words dealing particularly with European travel that is still open enough for interpretation with words such as mother, boy and entrances, exits. Although compiling the Madrigal Cycle as a whole may be useful for other case studies, for my case study the interpretive work needed to be done individually and by looking at the novels from an individual perspective and then comparing them.

[60] Moretti writes that "In the last few years, literary studies have experienced what we could call the rise of quantitative evidence. This had happened before of course, without producing lasting effects, but this time it is probably going to be different, because this time we have digital databases and automated data retrieval" (212).

Yet there has been work to recuperate New Criticism, as in Miranda Hickman and John McIntyre's anthology *Rereading the New Criticism*. One aim of the anthology is to broaden and re-evaluate the benefits of New Critical close reading and in so doing to negotiate with the approach's white, male canonical heritage. Moreover, critics such as Jane Gallop have argued that the turn away from close reading and into theory and New Historicism has turned English Studies away from the text itself. Andrew Kopec agrees, linking this evolution to the digital humanities and arguing that "we might understand the digital humanities to take the founding assumptions of the new historicism to their logical conclusion: literary history, no longer mined for the luminous detail that, like a skeleton key, unlocks the shared logic of cultural discourses, becomes instead a field of pure information that should be managed by a computer" (330). Close reading can re-illuminate this detail and re-contextualize literary texts; as Barbara Herrnstein Smith writes, "the interest and utility of close reading do not vanish in the face of digital libraries or ubiquitous computation" (73). The benefits and difficulties of recuperating close readings then becomes, as Cecily Devereux puts it, "how to reaffirm the literary without undermining the crucial late-twentieth-century expansion of the literary (and the aesthetic) beyond a male-dominated, Anglocentric, white canon of specific texts and particular genres .… The question is how to integrate close reading with social and political critique" (226).

Correspondingly, my work here reapplies and re-invigorates close reading, broadening its myopic position through the tools of the digital humanities. Yet in so doing I also re-attune the digital humanities away from the field of pure information and towards this luminous detail. Topic modeling's lexical, word-cloud forms act as a foundation for close reading the Madrigal

Cycle, so that the digital humanities and a machine mentality are a basis for formalist critique. My work in this short case study uses topic modeling as scaffolding to build new interpretations and deepen existing interpretations, but also relies on my familiarity with close reading and the novels of the Madrigal Cycle in order to build the bricks and mortar of this interpretation, particularly concerning the endings of the novels. The topics are a mixture of different word valences and connections, and my interpretation of the topics shifts with the ways these words interact with one another. The spurs of the topics attune the human scholar to new patterns and lexical connections in the texts, and the scholar can then fold these patterns and connections back into the texts themselves, opening up new interpretations for close reading. Topic modeling and the digital humanities are not monolithic machine nightmares—or H.D.'s "devil of machinery" in her *Responsibilities* review (128). Instead, machine topic modeling, when allied with human close reading, reinvigorates close reading techniques and newly attunes us to the texts at hand.

Topic Modeling the Madrigal Cycle

First, I perform descriptive work with data on the themes of nature, the domestic, the body, and femininity in the texts. I have grouped the topics related to "nature" as follows:

Table 1

Novel	Topic Words
Bid Me to Live	1: jug sunflowers marriage birds sequence supreme zinnias miraculous heaven mood understood round phoenix hatched feelings summer daily aura cana effect (0.01675)

	2: stones world left stone druid ivy path hill wall book pattern leaves rock circle sea track power stalk tin flat (0.03801) 3: eyes grey wet tight green hair chest shoes cold looked silk butterfly buttons stuck white narrow settled dark insect suppressed (0.03786)
Paint It Today	1: heat night flowers cold blossoms fragrance crawling winter layer distinctly grape suddenly young leaves scent spring blight utmost peril (0.01696) 2: white trees small spring tree black wysteria garden low pear deep yellow rain light great wild purple grass lost branches (0.03797)
HERmione	1: red rock black man cherries hibiscus violets deep cellar makes gardener water virginia cruel dried fell stepped flower jerked (0.03544)

	3: tree forest love trees green water oak sea leaves arden great branch wood made word caught christmas live small branches (0.09801)
Asphodel	1: silver air images clear glass flowering louvre wings flower god sea empty crystal spring islands alike sword art rock moon (0.06308)

Both *Bid Me to Live* and *Paint It Today* are full of garden, flower, and animal imagery—*Asphodel* is too, but I will address it later as it is a particularly illuminating case. In *Bid Me to Live*, the word clouds give the impression of an abundance of fertility and springtime rebirth, with "sunflowers," "zinnias," "birds," and "summer" pairing with "marriage," "hatched," and the "phoenix," a symbol of rebirth. However, *Bid Me to Live* associates flowers heavily with marriage, and Rafe, the Richard Aldington stand-in, often gives flowers to Julia as a futile attempt to reconnect to each other in the midst of his affair with Bella (Dorothy Yorke). In this case, the topic fails to represent the way flowers begin to be actively disassociated from fertility and instead come to represent the barren soil of the marriage. The topic for *Paint It Today*, however, gives a more nuanced idea of the way nature and flowers are used in the text. The garden imagery is not sunkissed nor uncomplicatedly positive. Instead, "flowers" and "blossoms" correlate with the vagaries of weather—both "hot" and "cold," in "winter: and in "spring," while the words "suddenly" and "utmost" give a sense of urgency among "blight" and "peril." The topics, and the word clusters within them, are capable of taking on layers and nuance, pointing the scholar to different valences within a category. *HERmione's* garden imagery similarly takes on ambiguous, even ominous connotations, with "hibiscus" and "cherries" mingled with what is "cruel," "dried," and "stepped" on. Interestingly, moreover, this is also associated with "man," which gives an interpretive opening. *HERmione* associates the hibiscus imagery strongly with George, the Ezra Pound character, often depicts the hibiscus as suffocating Hermione (as noted in Chapter Two). Hermione relays that George "had had a mouth like a red hibiscus, had smudged her face with kisses. George like a sponge had smudged her smooth face with kisses, had somehow, now she recalled something, smudged out something. A mouth like a red hibiscus smudged out something" (118). These word clusters indicate that the feminine, domestic, and cultivated qualities of these garden images in the novels are more complicated and ominous than they first appear, and I will explore the ways the protagonists attempt to break from and re-code these images further on.

Furthermore, what I interpret as domestic spaces in topic modeling the Madrigal Cycle reveal different relationships to gender, some traditional and others non-traditional. The topics are below:

Table 3

Novels	Topic Words
Bid Me to Live	room house morgan upstairs wanted people cottage meant bed part quiet time waiting true petrograd mind days vanio hear found (0.09488)

Paint It Today	light gray floor feet sun room cut line paper stiff warm wall back foreign gave body small dark house marble (0.04927)
HERmione	mama can't room marry curtains you're won't upstairs child father peas dear sitting man terrible mad late house clock potpourri-coloured (0.08518)
Asphodel	man room person stairs narrow words smiled door heard paper shoulders pushed prayer waited khaki mirror lost strange shut morganlefay (0.06637)

In each case, the domestic is closely related to gender. In *HERmione*, the domestic accoutrements and details of "curtains," "peas," "sitting," "clocks," and "potpourri" interweave with "mama," "marry," and "man," yoking the inner sanctum of the home to the sacrament of marriage, to motherhood and husbands. Likewise, *Asphodel*'s world of "stairs," "doors," "paper" and "mirror" connects once more to "man," but also to "Morgan le Fay," the mythical, feminine, maternal persona Hermione imagines for herself when she is pregnant during the events of *Asphodel*. There is also connection between gender and domesticity in *Bid Me to Live*, although this connection is subtler than in *Asphodel*. The "Morgan le Fay" persona appears again, but in *Bid Me to Live* it represents the rampant feminine sexuality of the Brigit Patmore character, another of Rafe's mistresses. "Vanio," the Cecil Grey figure and the father of H.D.'s child, also appears. Moreover, these figures appear within “room,” “house,” “upstairs,” and “cottage.” These are then figures of extramarital affairs, and they loom over Julia’s heterosexual marriage and domestic life. These topics indicate the ways domesticity shapes, structures, and even hems in male and female heterosexual relationships, particularly in marriage.[61] *Paint It Today* again diverges slightly in this, as “house,” “room,” “floor,” and “wall” connect instead to “light” and “dark,” to “line” and “paper.” There is a geometric feel to this topic, and this recalls Fayne Rabb’s (Frances Gregg) first appearance in *HERmione*, an appearance the novel associates with a kind of geometric domestic, with “people bisected by long lines of blue curtain hanging from miles above one’s head” as “The floor was polished and showed diagonals of blue curtain in the space between chairs going down and down” (52). When Fayne and Hermione begin a relationship, moreover, the text links this geometric domestic to heretical same-sex desire, and thus the geometric might be seen as a way to break out of or reimagine the boundaries of the gender roles the domestic places on women such as Her and Fayne.[62]

In looking at the domestic, moreover, I also look in tandem at the ways each text positions the female and the feminine through the way body parts are embedded within topics. These machine-produced topics, which I have grouped under the category “body,” are as follows:

Table 4

Novels	Topic Words
Bid Me to Live	room table hand sat back bed chair head coat looked round put fingers cold strap shoulders

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[61] For Stanford Friedman in *Penelope’s Web*, this domesticity indicates “that what is wrong in the marriage bed permeates what is wrong in the ‘outside’ world to which the husband must return” (145).

[62] See Hickman, Miranda. *The Geometry of Modernism: The Vorticist Idiom in Lewis, Pound, H.D., and Yeats* (2005) for a further discussion of these concerns.

	hands screen small chairs (0.11208)
Paint It Today	friend young tall pine fall looked legs bodies long alive skirt rough garment canoe bare heavy forest fastened stood end (0.03011)
HERmione	beat hand thought heart white made hands part feet cold winter pulse forward caught beating run clear head space ice (0.11502)
Asphodel	eyes blue hands mouth room turned fingers thin perfect wide calling saved lips grey truth wicked carefully throat amber (0.04639)

The body in *Bid Me to Live* notably contains further accoutrements of domesticity, with a "room," "table," "bed," and "chairs" next to "fingers," "shoulders," "hands," and "heads." These body parts seem more gender neutral than they are in the other texts' topics, which may be surprising given *Bid Me to Live*'s association with heterosexual domesticity—until one remembers that the dominant often comes across as neutral. In contrast, the body parts of *Asphodel* take on a feminized, aestheticized quality, with "eyes," "hands," "mouths" becoming feminized with "lips," "perfect," "thin," and "wide," as if tracing the outline of a woman's face and body. Likewise, in *Paint It Today* these body parts are also associated with female clothing and form, as "legs" and "bodies" match with "long," "skirt," "fastened," and "garment." Nonetheless, this also matches not with the domestic, but rather with images of nature in "forest," "pine," and "canoe." *HERmione* is again a special case, which I will discuss shortly.

Here, the layered word clusters of the topics help to point to a tension within these body parts between the domesticated feminine and a wilder feminine energy.

Interpreting the Madrigal Cycle

As these word clusters indicate, nature and domesticity often contain the characters of the Madrigal Cycle. In *Bid Me to Live* Julia expresses relief that "she had got away from four walls about to crush her" (111); Cassandra Laity has noted the "confinement" of the lesbian desires of Midget and Josepha (Frances Gregg) in *Paint It Today* (xxxi)*;* George's hibiscus kisses and her family life confine Hermione in both *HERmione* and *Asphodel*. There is then a specific kind of nature, represented in the garden imagery I have pointed out, that corresponds to this confining domesticity, creating a category of the feminine that is, to use H.D.'s parlance, like a hothouse flower. While these are large, and thus somewhat unsurprising, themes in H.D.'s work, reading these themes as composed of word clouds and lexical cues, rather than as only tied to narrative, helps me as an attentive close reader to attune myself to lexical rather than biographical patterns in the texts. These lexical patterns actually spurred me to recognize the ways the narratives, specifically the endings, of each novel have each protagonist finding an escape from domestic confinement and into a rough and mythic nature, allowing them to achieve a mystical feminine empowerment, often through a kind of authorship—and this is a convergence that critics have not looked at in detail, and which I had not noticed before in such terms. Perhaps of equal interest, topic modeling only reflects this convergence in two of the texts, *Asphodel* and *Bid Me to Live*, but this aided me in identifying similar processes in *HERmione* and *Paint It Today*.

If we return to the images of nature in Table 1, *Asphodel* does not contain the same traditional garden imagery of its images of flowers. Instead of the domestic associations, flowers in *Asphodel* take on a crystalline, mystical quality in this topic, connecting to "god," the "moon," and "wings" as well as "glass," "crystal," and "silver"—these are descendants of the harsh roses and persevering flowers of *Sea Garden*. Moreover, unlike *HERmione* and *Paint It Today*, topic modeling *Asphodel* does not produce a word cluster of trees, the second category in the selection of topics. In this array, *Asphodel* can seem bereft of fertile vegetation, of blossoming, and of creativity. As I have discussed in Chapter Two, there *is* flower imagery in *Asphodel*, most particularly lilies, and the novel often puts this flower imagery into contact with masculinity; in *Asphodel* this manifests as the masculinity of war and war machines. This may, on the one hand, represent a shortcoming of topic modeling, indicating what topic modeling might miss. Yet this also pointed me towards a further area of inquiry. This crystalline nature in *Asphodel* is harder, harsher, and more mystical, and I argue it relates to the novel's Morgan le Fay episodes, where Hermione has taken up a mythic feminine identity as a strategy of escape from this masculinity. In this section, Hermione urges herself, as Morgan le Fay, to "build your pile of branches, blow high your smoke … breathe in your enchantments with the forest smoke" (170). The feminine, pregnant body here connects to a mystical, powerful nature that is unlike the garden flowers in the other topics, and which has none of the contained feminine domestic.[63] This nature topic in *Asphodel* indexes Hermione's escape at the end of the novel from the confines of the domestic, with its narrow stairs, and likewise her escape from the world of men and guns into her own identity, pregnant with her own creation.[64]

Likewise, *Bid Me to Live* contains the topic "stones world left stone druid ivy path hill wall book pattern leaves rock circle sea track power stalk tin flat." At first glance, this is surprising, as critics do not usually credit the heterosexual *Bid Me to Live* with the wild, natural femininity of novels such as *Asphodel*—in this instance, topic modeling points us to something we would not normally consider, causing us to re-assess our assumptions about a text. Nature in this topic is not a cultivated garden but rather a mythic, rocky crag, and at the end of *Bid Me to Live*, as in *Asphodel*, Julia communes with this rough, wild nature as an escape from domesticity, particularly in her letter to Rico (D.H. Lawrence). A specifically domestic atmosphere directly precedes this communion with nature, as Julia describes her memory of an "enclosed flight of steps" (179), "Vincent's bedroom," and "the room with Bella in it"(180). However, Julia then speaks of how "The story must have been there when I didn't go into your room" (181), and as she begins to describe to Rico the story and how "The story must write *me*, the story must create *me*" (181), the descriptions move to nature, to a wheatfield "showing the early green" and "stiff sprays" (181), to "the cypress tree" (181), and then to the "worship" of Druids with "their sun circle of stones" (182). In addressing Rico, Julia brings in the category of creation, particularly the female versus male creation about which Rico and Julia have argued. The moment she begins writing her own story, moreover, she breaks out of the domestic and into craggy, mythical nature. She talks back to the domesticated flower imagery and re-codes this imagery in order to escape domestication; she is no longer in the space of Rafe's flowers, but rather a Druidic space of her own creation.

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[63] This smoke, too, as transformed away from its association with machines, as explored in Chapter Two, and into the mystical.

[64] As per Chapter Two's argument, this relationship with pregnancy is still ambivalent.

These same processes are present in *HERrmione* and *Paint It Today*, and although this is not evident in the topic modeling for nature, it does show up, in part, in *HERmione*'s lexicon of body parts. Although many of the other texts connect the body to femininity, *HERmione* connects many of the same body parts not to femininity but rather to weather, with "hand," "feet," "heart," "beat," "pulse" and "head" grouped together with "cold," "winter," "white," and "ice." The body in *HERmione* is dynamic; a running, beating thing, yet one that is chilled. This word clustering renders it as a body made of weather, attuning us to, perhaps, another kind of alternative embodiment in H.D.'s work. Moreover, this topic brings the final section of *HERmione* to mind, where Her, who has just suffered a mental breakdown and a physical illness that has confined her to the house, voyages out into the wintery forests of Pennsylvania and, in her own way, takes up writing again in the snow. "Her feet," the passage goes, "were pencils tracing a path through a forest. The world has been razed, had been made clear for this thing. The whole world had been made clear like that blackboard last summer" (223). In this context, the body is something with agency and the ability to write and, in this writing, mark its existence. Moreover, nature, or the cold, forested winter, is also dangerous and rough here, if not mystical. All the body parts described are extremities and are vulnerable to this cold, yet Her persists in her bodily creation and writing because of, rather than despite, this harsh nature; it is the snow that gives her a blank slate. As with *Asphodel* and *Bid Me to Live*, *HERmione* also ends with an escape from domestic, feminine confinement and into a wildness that encourages a creative, flourishing femininity.

Likewise, in *Paint It Today*, although this has not been indicated throughout the topic modeling, the closing chapters focus on Midget's newly reinvigorated relationship to nature, particularly after she has met Althea. In the final two chapters, "Retrospect" and "Visible World," Midget communes with Althea in a garden dream world. "Here in the garden," Midget says, "you can grapple with the whole, make it conform to oneself or make oneself conform to it. The inner and the outer are at peace" (78). This works on two levels: first, this undomesticated nature helps Midget to feel a wholeness of self. The garden is a space with no domestic context: it exists in a mental dream world, and the passages involve Midget taking a canoe to various isolated islands. Second, H.D. again plays here with authorship and identity, as the older narrator continues to both comment on and identify with Midget throughout these chapters. Moreover, this section progresses so that the (inner) characters and (outer) narration are at peace in the end, and the narrator converges closer to Midget as the story itself becomes complete. The closing of *Paint It Today* rebirths the protagonist into a new relationship to nature, away from domesticity, and in so doing births the text itself.

There is still much to explore in the Madrigal Cycle as a whole, and in many of the points that I have raised. While topic modeling cannot announce or interpret the links between words, between topics, and between novels, topic modeling's machine-produced word clouds can help to attune scholars to pattern recognition, bringing into focus new areas of study, contributing to and re-invigorating the close reading of these and other texts. Although scholars have touched on nature in H.D.'s work, her work with gender and the feminine, and her relationship to domesticity, criticism has rarely mapped out these themes across the Madrigal Cycle as a whole and amongst its lexical patterns, with the individual texts acting as nodes of interpretation—another exercise might recognize what each novel does differently from the next, looking at the word clouds not for convergences but rather for distinctions between the texts. Nonetheless, these themes, which form a pattern particularly in the endings of each of the texts, have not been brought to bear on each other so as to recognize larger networks of thought among the texts. This adds nuance to scholarship on the Madrigal Cycle: although critics such as Cassandra Laity and Stanford Friedman have seen *Bid Me to Live* and *Paint It Today*, for example, as on opposite ends of the sexual identity spectrum, topic modeling helps us to see where they do converge: perhaps surprisingly, *Bid Me to Live* participates in the same lexicon of druidic nature as *Asphodel* and *Paint it Today*, and the novels' endings all move from confinement towards this nature. This is not to elide differences among the texts of the Cycle—and lexical patterns confirm the texts' differences as well as their resonances—but rather to acknowledge how these convergences illuminate aspects of the cycle as a whole. These convergences, for example, render the heterosexual desires in *Bid Me to Live* as complex and of a part with the lesbian desires of the other texts. Thus, although *Bid Me to Live* omits the pregnancy, the text still connects lexically, if not through narrative, to the other novels—likewise with *HERmione's* content, which precedes the material of the other texts, but which is made up of similar words and connections.

The technology of the twenty first century has helped me to navigate modernist texts in ways that do not foreclose but instead proliferate interpretations. At their best, the tools of the digital humanities can produce a posthumanist negotiation of human and machine, close and distant reading. These tools do not erase or denigrate traditional interpretive models—rather, they represent a way forward for the humanities and for this project. Moreover, this coda extends the exploration of Moore, H.D., and Loy's feminist and posthumanist responses to containment and normative ideologies. Like Moore's poetry, H.D.'s *Asphodel*, and Loy's work, the Madrigal Cycle facilitates an escape from patriarchal systems that define femininity for the Cycle's protagonists. Although the protagonists of the Madrigal Cycle escape into mythic identities rather than into the composite, technology-based, and potentially more directly posthumanist identities of earlier texts, it is a posthumanist methodology and a negotiation of human and machine readings that nonetheless clarifies these strategies. The interaction of close, human reading and distant, machine reading produces generative possibilities, integrating the posthumanist outlook of the preceding chapters with the methodologies of the digital humanities.

Conclusion

Moore, H.D., and Loy's diverse texts have drawn together various nodes of posthumanist thought. Despite the different approaches used in each chapter and the diversity of these texts' depictions of otherness, this is a work about connections, whether prosthetic, linguistic, or spiritual, and this drive for connection is the backbone of the kind of posthumanisms in this study. This project is also an exploration of the ways such connections can form shifting, excessive identities, via alternative embodiment, that reach beyond the boundaries normative systems of power place upon subjects. Each author combats restrictive, often humanist notions of femininity and identity more generally through an interest in technology as well as through the destabilizing effects of poetic thought and form. Moore's poetic, prosthetic animals are shifting, wondrous contact zones that respond to ideas of containment, including feminine containment, in her work; H.D.'s alternative embodiment via language and Morse code creates a space away from the gendered body while acknowledging the pain of that body, and Loy's involvement in Italian Futurism and Christian Science informs her poetic thinking about the feminine and ghostly body, aiding her rereading of the liberal humanist subject's mind/body split.

Thus, while there are other posthumanist explorations, such as Martha Nussbaum's *Frontiers of Justice*, that take up an explicitly ethical, often ecological, approach to the topics I have been discussing, I argue that these authors *do* put forward an ethical project, attempting to, as Levinas suggests, "approach the Other in conversation" and "receive from the Other beyond the capacity of the I" (51). Moore, H.D., and Loy's works stand as posthumanist strategies: their texts embody subjugated identities—particularly feminine identities—alternatively, lighting up pathways out of such binaries, and encourage multiple, partial, and shifting selfhoods. In so doing, these authors shape an ethics of identity and model responsible ways of interacting with alterity. Identity is more complex than normative systems allow, and coming into contact with the other and alterity and valuing non-normative identities outside of such systems—as Moore, H.D., and Loy's work does—breaks down humanist constructions of the self as well as interrogates and destabilizes these systems of power—specifically for this project the patriarchal systems of power that contain and control the feminine.

These posthumanist connections, and the identities that emerge therefrom, are thus complex and multivalent—all the better to undermine rigid, binary definitions of identity. Yet these connections, however multivalent, are not free-floating; they emerge from Moore, H.D., and Loy's modernist, historical contexts and stand in dialogue with these contexts. Moore's work with prosthetic animals contributes to contemporaneous discussions and anxieties about the wounded body, and questions about the ability and value of technology to ameliorate the human body. H.D.'s work emerges from Morse code and code breaking technologies, which allow Hermione (the protagonist anchored in H.D.'s biography) to imagine both her world and herself differently, reconfiguring her identity and her body with the aid of stream of consciousness. Likewise, Loy's work derives not only from her biography and personal trials, but also from her work with Italian Futurism, eugenics, and Christian Science. The connections between modernism and posthumanism are not just theoretical but real and concrete; the posthumanist phenomena I have been discussing arise from the specific conditions and experiences of these authors, working out of periods and conditions of possibility marked as "modernist."

In parallel to theories of the posthuman, our contemporary technology can also be brought to bear on modernism, and work with the digital humanities can give new avenues of thinking about modernism as well as reread posthumanism through the materials of modernism.

My work with H.D.'s Madrigal Cycle is one such application of this, and the coda works to showcase networks in the lexical convergences of the Cycle. Throughout this section, my work reconsiders close reading through the technologies of the digital humanities, and the coda explores these lexical cues and the way they work in specific contexts within the Cycle, paying attention to the ways topic modeling shifts our thinking about texts. In this, the theoretical and technological apparatuses of posthumanism do not overtake a nuanced and detailed approach to modernist texts. Instead, the scholarship herein negotiates modernism and posthumanism, close reading and machine reading, more traditional scholarship and new models emerging from the digital humanities, in much the same way that my posthumanist lenses negotiate between the human and non-human. Besides indicating how criticism might apply a posthumanist methodology to modernism, the coda also extends Moore's, Loy's, and H.D.'s interests in escaping and exceeding feminine containment; the coda stands as both an extension and recapitulation of these processes in the earlier chapters.

Throughout, this work has stressed that we cannot map posthumanism uncritically onto modernism, and my work here does not try to shape modernism into the image of posthumanism, but rather takes into account the ways the two at times converge, at other times pull apart, and at still other times where they do not meet at all. Yet, there is opportunity even in the stutters and the gaps between these connections, in the instances when the texts and authors do not wholly accord with posthumanism or work in tension with posthumanist thought. Such fissures help to keep both posthumanism and modernism supple; neither the theory nor the movement is monolithic. The dialectic of the two also redefines and reconfigures the boundaries and limits of both posthumanist discourse and modernist work. For example, if Hayles argues that modernist stream of consciousness does not foster a posthumanist proliferation of identity, then H.D.'s work in *Asphodel* responds otherwise, opening up the potential for a specifically modernist posthumanist form and a reimagining of posthumanism.

This shifts the boundary Hayles puts on posthumanist aesthetics, while also allowing me to reconsider stream-of-consciousness as not just as a modernist technique but also as a potentially posthumanist technique. My reading of the different modernisms of Moore, H.D., and Loy also responds to notions of modernism that would further position it as monolithic. There are gaps in connection even between modernist authors, who showcase posthumanist thought in different ways. Moore's work with prosthetic animals issues from a different line of thinking than H.D.'s semi-autobiographical connection to Morse code technology and Loy's mourning. As with my topic modeling of the Madrigal Cycle, both the divergences and convergences of modernist texts work in tandem to give a fuller picture of the historical contexts and artistic responses of the early twentieth century, allowing us to see modernism as a living, breathing entity open to new findings.

Even so, there are different possible configurations of the material within this dissertation. My discussion of *Asphodel*, although focusing on stream of consciousness narration, works with the text more as a poetic prose novel than a novel, positioning it amongst the poetry of Moore and Loy rather than defining it as a novel and focusing on narration in the text. This is in keeping with the perspective of the dissertation, which explores the ways poetic language can extend bodily experience and shift our conceptions of self, fomenting posthumanist explorations. Chapter Two aligns *Asphodel* with poetry and focuses on illuminated, poetic words and phrases in order to make this point, but approaching *Asphodel* from a more prose- and narrative-based perspective would yield different insights. Poetic reconfigurations and extensions of identity—those features of poetry that, as Altieri writes, cause us to "reach out beyond [the poetry] to imaginary extensions of those states" (278)—are integral to Moore, H.D., and Loy's posthumanist explorations of excess, but another study could emphasize how *Asphodel*'s character development and dénouements might work along posthumanist lines. Although each chapter discusses poetic form in relation to posthumanist thought, H.D.'s stream of consciousness constitutes more than just poetic form, and narrative allows for a different play with expectations and assumptions; the narratives of H.D.'s novels might undercut human identity and superiority as much as her poetic prose.

In short, there are alternative connections and potentialities to the networks I have laid out within these pages. Yet this creates a further drive for connection and for an exploration of alternative modernist posthumanist frameworks, from different authors whose works might represent different strains of posthumanist thought to readings dealing with different historical modernist contexts, such as just after World War II. Modernist authors exhibit a vast array of responses, statements, and concerns, each with their own potential connection to posthumanism. I have already mentioned D.H. Lawrence's work, which explicitly engages with the boundary between the human and the non-human, not only in his letter to Edward Garnett, but also in texts such as *Women in Love*, where humanity is a "dead letter" (65).[65] Lawrence thus shares an interest with Moore, H.D., and Loy in the non-human, yet the often strictly binary gendered qualities of his work and his interest in the superhuman might lead to different, perhaps more transhumanist pathways and triangulations of the human in the face of the non-normative and the other. There are also further authors to explore: in his dictum that a "poem is a machine made of words," (256), William Carlos Williams already has a point of entry into poetic, posthumanist technological relationships. Moreover, I have left late modernism, around and just after World

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[65] Deanna Wendel opens her article "Alternative Posthumanism in *Women in Love*" (2013) on Lawrence and posthumanism with this quotation.

War II, largely untouched. Late modernists faced even more mechanized warfare, an increasingly technological landscape, and a historical and cultural context that moved ever closer to late-twentieth-century and early twenty-first-century contexts—contexts that initially spurred posthumanist theory. Late modernist posthumanism might then look different from the early twentieth-century posthumanism I have been discussing.

This is not to say that the posthumanism of early modernism, despite its more remote position from our own contemporary age and posthumanist concerns, has nothing to say to our present or even to our future. Many of the technologies this dissertation discusses are now obsolete or at least so commonplace that they can hardly cause any further anxiety about how to confront or handle them. To that end, it may seem that modernist posthumanism, too, has nothing to tell us about our own negotiations of technology and the other, no guidance to offer about how to live in an exponentially more technological world—a world that modernism and modernist responses cannot see and cannot understand. Yet the preceding chapters, even as they deal with the historical contexts specific to the early twentieth century, also model the ways in which these negotiations of human and technology *are* still relevant to the twenty first century. The feminist concerns of Moore, H.D., and Loy's posthumanist strategies still have bearing today for our own negotiations of gender, identity, and alterity. Their poetic work to reevaluate femininity and re-imagine the possibilities, often through technology, for feminine, bodily identity in the face of binary, oppressive systems speaks to contemporary discussions on gender fluidity and transgender politics and the push for recognition within modern institutions. Moreover, Moore's encounters with animals still speak to our own ethics and awareness about our appropriating tendencies when dealing with the other; H.D.'s desire for a universal language remains the base code for our interactions with computers and the internet; death, and the way life organizes itself around and controls death through necropolitics, remains relevant to our contemporary modes of being and dying.

Human contact with the other may change in specifics, but we have been and still remain anxious about technology and the non-human, and when the other confronts us we still bolster the human through normative, often humanist concepts. This can be seen in the figure of the modern supercrip, the disabled body that can only be normalized through excellence, which still upholds an idealized, normative human figure. With newer war machinery, and ever-new ways of dehumanizing targets, we continue to need posthumanist wonder, connection, and proliferation of meaning. Going back to a point of first contact with these kinds of technologies in the early twentieth century gives posthumanist theories a renewed way forward, a way to continue to break down persistently re-accruing assumptions about the human and renegotiate our humanity in a way that credits and respects otherness. The digital humanities, conversely, show how newer technologies put us into contact with our past, bringing this past closer and allowing us to reimagine or re-interrogate it. These moments of contact, such as the one laid out in the coda, reach back again towards modernism and make it an active node of interpretation that can illuminate our current technologies. Modernist posthumanism, on the one hand, bleeds into the present and to our future relationships, but we also continually reach back to modernism. This two-way influence can produce many new discoveries, meanings, and this project is only an initial foray into a wide-ranging network of ways of thinking and feeling that posthumanist thought fosters; there are further networks to discover and create. Nonetheless, the networks within these pages credit modernism, and the particularly poetic strategies of Moore, H.D., and Loy, with the ability to grant space to non-normative, feminized identities, mentalities, and bodies, and in so doing credit modernism with ethical forms of posthumanism.

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