



A Curse on Your Ancestors: Exploring the 'Mongrelization' of Mina Loy

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ABSTRACT

In the early twentieth century, traditional Europe fell apart. Out of the chaos and uncertainty fostered by World War I grew Modernism, a movement marked by drastic breaks from the traditions of Western art and culture (Abrams 202). Through this schism, Modernists found the freedom to forge their cultural future; for Modernist artist and poet Mina Loy, this freedom allowed her to forge a cultural purpose for her “mongrelized” ancestry. In *Anglo-Mongrels and the Rose*, Loy allegorizes her Hungarian-Jewish father, her English-Christian mother, and herself as Exodus, the English Rose, and Ova, respectively, to illustrate not only the chaos to be found in cross-cultural marriage, but also the artistic freedom and beauty to be found in its consummation and procreation. In my essay, I argue that Loy’s frequent use of discordant imagery, pauses and enjambment within her verse suggest the fragmentation of Exodus’s Hungarian-Jewish identity in his attempts to assimilate to English culture and identity through marriage to the English Rose. Out of the discord of their union grows Ova, an ungendered, dehumanized entity that represents the uniting of her parents’ cultures in “mongrelized” human form. Through my exploration of *Anglo-Mongrels and the Rose*, I demonstrate that Ova’s creation of a new poetry allegorizes Loy’s belief that the fragmentation of nationalism is a necessity for the birth of a new twentieth century culture.

A CURSE ON YOUR ANCESTORS: EXPLORING THE ‘MONGRELIZATION’ OF MINA LOY

While Modernism allowed for artistic growth through total separation from the confines of Western tradition, the experience of womanhood remained largely unexplored by the artists and innovators of the period. Thus, the cultural mores that subjugated the female experience to the male experience in traditional Western art and literature permeated the cultural throes of

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Modernism; art may advance, but women may not. Despite these perpetuated limitations, artist and poet Mina Loy saw an opportunity to use the experimental modes of Modernism to explore issues of womanhood, as well as European cultural history and prejudice as they have never been explored before. Throughout her early poetry from *The Lost Lunar Baedeker*, Mina Loy regularly mixes discordant images, improvises punctuation, and creates long pauses to challenge the notion that “woman . . . remains for many of the Moderns outside of and yet complementary to a universal modern subject position” which affected the literary and artistic communities that she worked within (Lyon 382). Loy contests the Futurist dichotomies of women in her early poetry and uses the negative space of her pauses to emphasize the plethora of meanings to be found in isolated phrases, as well as to mimic the isolation of women from their potential in the early twentieth century (Lyon 382). Loy’s perception of the “Modern” female experience as a stark, lonely perpetuation of the past is directly reflected in her syntax throughout the poems of *The Lost Lunar Baedeker*. Furthermore, this understanding of womanhood is expanded into reflections on nationalism and European culture in her autobiographical allegory, *Anglo-Mongrels and the Rose*.

Out of her disparate poetry on the positioning of women within a burgeoning Modernist culture, Mina Loy next turns to her Hungarian-Jewish and English-Christian ancestry in *Anglo-Mongrels and the Rose* to explore the Modernist possibilities within twentieth century cultural fragmentation through immigration and marriage. Mina Loy was born in 1882 to Sigmund Löwy and Julia Bryan, positioning herself as a physical link between their respective Hungarian-Jewish and English-Christian backgrounds (Perloff 131). While Loy explores the actual and ideal roles of women in her earlier works through occasionally irregular syntax, Loy’s later “*Anglo-Mongrels and the Rose* . . . represents a[n even greater] rupture with a lyrical tradition that parallels Gertrude Stein’s break with conventional narrative” (Perloff 145). Loy viewed her position between cultures as a unique opportunity for Modernist exploration, representing a cultural clash between English propriety and its disdain for otherness:

[It is] in this allegorical, parodic, often disjointed pseudo-narrative of the poet’s ancestry, birth, childhood, and coming of age, [that] we have Loy’s most compelling representation of her “mongrelization”—the “crossbreeding” of the English and Hungarian-Jewish strains that produced, so the author herself seems to feel, a form of mental and emotional gridlock that could be overcome, in life as in art, only by large doses of the transnational avant-gardism of the interwar period. (Perloff 133)

The modes of poetic exploration created by Loy through her earlier works now find meaning in the plight of immigrants and their children, or to borrow Loy’s term, “mongrels.” In the “interwar period” mentioned above, the memories of the violence, destruction, and death throughout most of Europe during World War I weighed heavily upon Loy’s perceptions of race and nationalism; amidst so much death and sociopolitical chaos, the trifling differences between people such as nationality and religion seemed a thing of the past. These differences must make way for the hybridized “mongrel” form to ease the tensions between traditional European boundaries. Loy explores the sordid history of her Hungarian-Jewish and English-Christian ancestry, but with highly irregular diction and syntax to exemplify the fragmentation of racial

identity and nationalism in tandem with the sociopolitical chaos of the aftermath of World War I. In the different sections of *Anglo-Mongrels and the Rose*, Loy uses pauses, disruptions, and discordant imagery to question the meaning of personal and national identity in her increasingly incomprehensible social reality.

In the first section of *Anglo-Mongrels and the Rose*, Loy allegorizes her father through the figure of Exodus, and portrays his emigration from Hungary as the fragmentation of his personal and national identities through her use of choice diction and pauses. Loy refashions her father, Sigmund Löwy, as Exodus, the Hungarian-Jewish descendant of a troubled family history (Burke 350). Loy condemns her own father through her stylistic choices:

Exodus lay under an oak tree
bordering on Buda Pest . . .
having leapt from the womb
eighteen years ago [sic] and grown
neglected [sic] along the shores of the Danube
on the Danube in the Danube. (Loy 111)

Through physically positioning Exodus “under an oak tree” and “along the shores of the Danube / on the Danube in the Danube,” Loy ties Exodus intrinsically to the land of Hungary, indicative of his national identity, which is broken later in the poem (Loy 111). Exodus is more than Hungarian; he is a fixture of the landscape, animalistically leaping out of his mother’s womb to exist naturally among the trees and in the Danube River. Furthermore, Exodus is near “Buda Pest;” Loy inserts a space within Budapest to create two separate words, which carry their own connotations (Loy 111). “Buda” connotes Buddhism, an Eastern religion and philosophy focusing upon balance, interdependence, and peace (Loy 111). In contrast, “Pest” is connotative of disease, invasive plants and animals, and persons who are “destructive, noxious, or troublesome” (Loy 111; *Oxford English Dictionary* 1-3). Exodus, representative of Hungarian-Jewish ancestry, borders between the competing connotations of Loy’s dichotomy, and thus “locates Jewish identity at the intersection of questions of racial ideology, empire, colonialism, Judaism, and the language and aesthetics of the avant-garde, a combination that can only be called Jewish modernism” (Feinstein 335). The national pride and racial wholeness of Jewish identity, suggested by “Buda,” competes with “Pest,” or the English perception of Jewish identity as “a racially distinct people, distinguished on the one hand by an immoral and obstinate refusal of Christianity and on the other by notable displays of intellectual production,” which threaten English purity and cultural dominance (Loy 111; Feinstein 337). In effect, Loy’s choice diction and syntactic gaps position Exodus within the beginning of personal fragmentation, which is expanded upon throughout the remainder of the poem.

As Exodus grows and eventually emigrates from Hungary, Loy describes Exodus’s transition into English culture using discordant imagery and frequent pauses to exemplify the

fragmentation of Exodus's personal and national signifiers of identity. After suffering the abuses of his foster parents, Exodus becomes disillusioned:

The arid gravid
 intellect [sic] of Jewish ancestors
 the senile juvenile
 calculating prodigies of Jehovah
 crushed by the Occident ox
 they scraped the gold gold golden
 muck from off its hoofs. (Loy 112)

In these lines, the dissonant meanings of Loy's adjectives fight in isolated pairings, and her syntax intentionally breaks away from traditional European poetic meters and formats, and even mocks such conventions through shallow, ungainly rhymes and alliteration. Loy's description of Exodus' disillusionment is "intentionally ungainly, syllable and stress count, line length, spacing, and stanza length being much more variable" than other Modernist works (Perloff 136). Rather than conforming to conventional poetic meters, Loy allows her attempts at structure to become fragmentary and ungainly, barely controlled by rhyming "'leashes' . . . as in 'arid gravid,' 'senile juvenile,' or 'Occident ox'" (Perloff 137). Even within the leashed lines of this stanza and surrounding lines, Loy creates discord through unlikely pairings; "intellect" is both "arid" and "gravid," or barren and pregnant at the same time; the young "juvenile" is also "senile," or deteriorating in old age; "prodigies of Jehovah" are not laudable for their reverence, but instead "calculating" or selfishly protecting their own interests; and lastly, the "ox" of idolatry on Mount Sinai from the Old Testament is instead relocated to the "Occident," where it crushes Jewish culture and leaves Exodus and other Jews to dream of "the gold gold golden / muck from off its hoofs" (Loy 112; OED). With such discord, Loy justifies her long pause in the "intellect [sic] of Jewish ancestors," suggesting that the violence and contradictions of Exodus's Hungarian-Jewish background cause the fragmentation of his national identity (Loy 112); Loy suggests a growing disconnect between Jewish intellect and Jewish reality through her use of a large gap in a single line, and necessitates Exodus's dreams of western migration in the following stanzas.

As Exodus emigrates, Loy continues to use frequent pauses within her descriptions of Exodus's journey to suggest the intensifying fragmentation of his personal and national identities as he strives to adopt English culture and identity. After he dreams of scraping "the gold gold golden / muck from off" the metaphorical hoofs of England:

moves Exodus [sic] to emigrate
 coveting the alien

asylum [sic] of voluntary military
 service [sic] paradise [sic] of the pound-sterling
 where the domestic Jew [sic] in lieu
 of knouts [sic] is lashed with tongues. (Loy 112)

The various long pauses, as well as the enjambment of Loy's poetic lines in this stanza, suggest the fragmentation of Exodus's identity as he attempts to adapt to England. Initially, it appears that "the gold gold golden / muck" only "moves Exodus" to think about his situation in Hungary; after a long pause, Loy reveals that the promise of success "moves Exodus [sic] to emigrate" (Loy 112). In the next few lines, Exodus's motivation to emigrate is his "coveting the alien / asylum [sic] of voluntary military / service [sic] paradise [sic] of the pound-sterling" (Loy 112). In this arrangement, enjambment and pauses divide and complicate Loy's syntax to draw attention to the meanings of individual lines as well as their separation from each other. In isolation, the second line of the stanza merely tells readers that Exodus covets "the alien," suggesting that he desires to join the unknown culture of England more than "the alien / asylum [sic] of voluntary military / service;" Loy uses enjambment to separate the discordant images of England's "alien" attributes and its "asylum" (Loy 112). Additionally, the long pause between "asylum" and "voluntary military" suggests that though Exodus seeks to join the English military for asylum, his active participation in the military, however "voluntary," is separate from the safety and protection implied by "asylum" (Loy 112; OED 1).

Similarly, the next lines separate "service" and the metonymic description of England as "the pound-sterling" from "paradise" using long pauses, again mediating Loy's syntactic arrangement to call attention to the individual meanings of words and their differences (Loy 112). Loy uses "voluntary military" as another discordant choice of adjectives, and separate from their noun, "service" (Loy 112). The use of enjambment in these lines calls attention to the inherent contradiction in the "voluntary military" asylum that Exodus seeks (Loy 112). Furthermore, "paradise" is only loosely connected to Exodus's service and "the pound-sterling" through Loy's use of long pauses within a single line (Loy 112). Through the implied separations between service, wealth, and paradise, Loy more easily characterizes Exodus's experience of England as "where the domestic Jew [sic] in lieu / of knouts [sic] is lashed with tongues" (Loy 113). The physical abuses of Exodus's foster parents, or their "knouts," are replaced with verbal abuses for "the domestic Jew" of England (Loy 113). Again, Loy employs pauses to isolate "the domestic Jew" from his possible abuses; in effect, the physical and verbal punishments for Exodus's heritage are emphasized through their isolation from their subject (Loy 113). Exodus is "not lashed with the whip as were [he and] his ancestors in Hungary, just lashed 'with tongues.' And the rhyme 'Jew' / 'lieu' suggests that the Jew can never be more than a substitute in English society, a kind of simulacrum, *in lieu* of the true blue Englishman" (Author's emphasis; Perloff 137). Exodus must live within supposed English civility, but all the while is tormented by the lashes of English tongues for his religious and cultural differences. His attempts at assimilation are met with English-Christian scorn, and only further marginalize him for his otherness. Thus,

Exodus becomes the perfect subject for Loy's "mongrelization," as his discordant attempts at assimilation clash in marriage and sex, and eventually produce mongrelized offspring. Cumulatively, Loy's frequent use of discordant imagery, pauses and enjambment within her verse suggest the fragmentation of Exodus's Hungarian-Jewish identity through his attempts to assimilate to English culture and identity. Throughout the "Exodus" section of *Anglo-Mongrels and the Rose*, Loy's fragmentation of poetic form mirrors the fragmentation and "mongrelization" of personal and national identities by pitting certain images against each other, and emphasizing others in isolation. In effect, the Hungarian-Jewish heritage of Exodus is lost to his pursuit of the English Rose, indicative of Loy's own uncertain identity between Hungarian-Judaism and English-Christian condescension and repression (Pozorski 46).

As Loy allegorizes her father through Exodus, her mother is represented by the English Rose, who is introduced in the second section of *Anglo-Mongrels and the Rose* using discordant diction and imagery to foreshadow the later fragmentation of identity in *Ova*. Loy's mother is an image of conflict:

Early English everlasting
 quadrate Rose
 paradox-Imperial
 trimmed with some travestied flesh
 tinted with bloodless duties [sic] dewed
 with Lipton's teas
 and grimed with crack-packed
 herd-housing (Loy 121)

The English Rose simultaneously embodies the purity and sophistication of English identity, as well as the filth and corruption of English industrialization and imperialism at the cusp of the twentieth century. The cleanliness of the alliterative "Early English [identity] everlasting" that passes from generation to generation through the English Rose's bloodline is dirtied by her "travestied flesh / tinted with bloodless duties [sic] dewed / with Lipton's teas" (Loy 121). While her Englishness is laudable, it is also corrupted by the "bloodless," or passionless and sexless, duties of Victorian Englishwomen as wives, mistresses, and mothers (Loy 121). Additionally, the English Rose's personal and national identities are also "dewed / with Lipton's teas" after another pause; Loy's syntactic construction allows the grime and corruption of the English Rose's identity to remain separated from the dew of Lipton's teas, suggesting that the benefits of English imperialism and culture cannot mask the adverse effects (Loy 121; Schaum 260). To emphasize the ineffectual masking of true Englishness with Lipton's teas, Loy flanks this line with her assertion that the English Rose is tainted:

grimed with crack-packed

herd-housing

petalling

the prim gilt

penetralia

of a luster-scioned

core-crown. (Loy 121)

In so doing, “Lipton’s teas” becomes a pun upon “tease,” as the perceived glamour of English identity cannot be sustained in light of the grime of English imperialism and war (Loy 121). Overall, the discordant imagery and pauses of the English Rose’s introduction suggest that “the paradox of the Rose goes beyond her symbol as woman having internalized cultural mores . . . Albion/England herself represses the unspeakable oppressions of imperialism, hiding the ‘subliminal infection’ . . . under a prim, ‘rosy’ exterior” that is ultimately fragmentary and ineffective (Schaum 260). The alliterative cleanliness of her “Early English everlasting” heritage is overpowered by greater amounts of alliterative grime and decay, thus making the English Rose an ideal subject for the propagation of Loy’s vision of a Modernist, “mongrelized” future.

In tandem with her early condemnations of the English Rose, Loy portrays the first meeting of Exodus and the English Rose as a discordant clash of national identities, with Ova as the eventual mongrelized product of their marital mismatch. Exodus, in keeping with Loy’s exploitation of Jewish stereotypes, is predatorily sexual as well as business-savvy:

through the fetish

of the island hedges—

Exodus

who on his holiday

(induced

by the insidious pink

of Albion’s ideal)

is looking for a rose. (Loy 122)

Loy deprives Exodus of any normative sexual attraction, and instead burdens him with an insatiable “fetish / of the island hedges” which contain the English Rose (Frost 159; Loy 122). Additionally, Exodus is “induced / by the insidious pink” appearance of the English Rose into

pursuing marriage in a lustful, uncontrollable fashion; Exodus is not a civilized lover, but a savage pursuer “looking for a rose” to alleviate his sexual yearning (Loy 122). In contrast, the English Rose is the helpless victim of Exodus’s predatory sexuality, initially scowling:

[The English Rose scowls] at the heathen [Exodus] . . .
 staring so hard—
 warms his nostalgia
 on her belligerent innocence
 The maidenhead
 drooping her lid
 and pouting her breast
 forewarns
 his amity. (Loy 123)

The English Rose is dehumanized, and reduced to corporeal suggestions of the “belligerent innocence” of her English purity and sexual repression (Loy 123). Through the objectification of the English Rose, the implications of her national and sexual purity clash with the animalistic pursuit of Exodus, suggesting that their “Amorphous meeting / in the month of May” initiates the fragmentation of personal and national identities through their sexuality and eventual procreation (Loy 123).

Following their introduction, Loy portrays Exodus and the English Rose’s courtship and marriage with discordant imagery and pauses to suggest that their union and procreation lead to the fragmentation of personal and national identities, in keeping with Loy’s vision of early twentieth century societal “mongrelization.” Following Exodus’s animalistic attraction:

after a few
 feverish tiffs
 and reparations
 chiefly conveyed in exclamations—
 a means of expression
 modified by lack of experience—
 [Exodus and the English Rose] unite their variance in marriage (Loy 126)

Here, Loy characterizes their courtship as “feverish tiffs / and reparations / chiefly conveyed in exclamations,” suggesting that the differences between Exodus and the English Rose, both personal and national, are sickly, temperamental, and ungainly (Loy 126). Furthermore, their discord as a couple is “modified [and exemplified] by their lack of experience” as lovers, foreshadowing their disastrous sexual encounters (Loy 126). In all, Loy utilizes the discord created in combining images of disease, struggle, and reparation with notions of courtship and marriage, using “skeltonic [rough and varied] rhymes [to invert] the value of [English] virginity . . . so as to make it an absurd value, a cash commodity whereby the British Empire plies its trade” (Perloff 140). The dissonance between Exodus’s Hungarian-Jewish lust and the English Rose’s compulsive prudery grows throughout this section, culminating in sex and procreation.

Following the unease of courtship and marriage, Loy portrays Exodus and the English Rose’s sexual consummation resulting in Ova’s conception as a disastrous clash of national ideologies, representative of Ova’s impending development as a mongrelized hybrid of Hungarian-Jewish and English-Christian fragments of identity. In keeping with previous stanzas:

Exodus
 Oriental
 mad to melt
 with something softer than himself
 clasps with soothing pledges
 his wild rose of the hedges. (Loy 126)

Exodus is still a bestial, “Oriental” creature, “mad to melt” with his new wife in sexual consummation, and clasping her desperately (Loy 126). Loy supersedes marital passion with madness, hyper sexualizing Exodus to an inhuman degree. In contrast, the English Rose is now “his wild rose of the hedges;” Loy pairs the discordant imagery of wildness, implying sexuality and rebellion, with the English orderliness implied by being “of the hedges” (Loy 126). Furthermore, Exodus and the English Rose’s sexual discord is exemplified by the English Rose:

expecting
 the presented knee
 of chivalry
 [who then] repels
 the sub-umbilical mystery
 of his husbandry
 hysterically. (Loy 126)

The English Rose expects from Exodus the desexualized chivalric romance of Western European literary tradition, and is shocked and appalled by Exodus's naked "sub-umbilical mystery" as well as the act of sex (Abrams 44; Loy 126). Thus, Exodus and the English Rose are defined by opposing sexual perspectives, as well as by their national identities.

The combination of Hungarian-Jewish lust with English-Christian prudery between Exodus and the English Rose culminates:

His passionate-anticipation
 of warming in his arms
 his rose [sic] to a maturer coloration . . .
 the grating upon civilization . . .
 splinters upon an adamsite
 opposition
 of nerves like stalactites. (Loy 127)

In this passage, Loy once again employs enjambment, pauses, and discordant imagery to further exemplify the disastrous sexuality of Exodus and the English Rose. Exodus's "passionate-anticipation" of sexual consummation is separated by enjambment from the act of sex, or "warming in his arms" the English Rose, in the following line (Loy 127). Similarly, the physical warmth of sexual contact is further separated by enjambment from "his rose," who remains coldly isolated within the third line of the stanza (Loy 127). The English Rose, in keeping with her prudish representation of English womanhood, is not only separated from sex by enjambment, but also a long pause after which she is brought "to a maturer coloration" through the loss of her virginity (Loy 127). Furthermore, the sexual union of Exodus and the English Rose is also "the grating upon civilization / . . . / splinters upon an adamsite / opposition / of nerves like stalactites" (Loy 127). Hungary and England metaphorically grate against each other during the physical act of sex, resulting in fragmented nerves and explosive consequences, as suggested by Loy's comparisons to stalactite formations and adamsite, "an arsenical compound for use in chemical warfare" (Loy 127; OED). Loy's discordant comparisons of sexual love with explosions and fragmentation due to opposing heritages suggest Ova's fragmented identity as a result of her parents' union.

The growing dissonance between Exodus and the English Rose, suggested throughout the first two sections of *Anglo-Mongrels and the Rose* by Loy's discordant imagery, pauses, and enjambment, culminate in the "Mongrel Rose" section with the introduction of Ova as a conglomeration of fragments of her parents' personal and national identities. After allegorizing her parents through Exodus and the English Rose, Loy allegorizes herself through Ova:

A clotty bulk of bifurcate fat

out of [the English Rose's] loins
 to lie
 for a period [sic] while [sic] performing hands
 pour lactoid liquids through
 and then mop up [sic] beneath it
 their golden residue. (Loy 130)

Loy conspicuously describes Ova as “it,” depriving her of gender and human identities as if to render her instead as a physical mass freshly cleaved from her mother (Loy 130). Furthermore, the bulk of Ova’s genderless infant body is “A clotty bulk of bifurcate fat,” suggesting that she is divided by her parents’ personal and national identities; while inhuman before her discovery of language, Ova is still a mongrelized conglomeration of Hungarian-Jewish and English-Christian identities, bifurcated for the discord between them as represented earlier by Exodus and the English Rose (Loy 130). In continuance of the depersonalization of Ova, Loy again employs pauses within her descriptions of feedings and urination to emphasize the coldness of individual words, as well as to further alienate Ova from other human actions. Ova is surrounded by “performing hands / pour[ing] lactoid liquids through / and then mop[ping] up [sic] beneath it / their golden residue” (Loy 130). In this passage, Ova remains ungendered, and separated by pauses and enjambment from the doctors who are feeding her milk and cleaning up her urine (Loy 130). Through the pauses, enjambment, and discordant imagery of Ova’s birth, Loy portrays Ova as a mongrel descendant of Hungarian-Jewish and English-Christian identities; her gender and connection to her doctors and parents are mediated by Loy’s diction and syntax to leave her as a vessel for her ancestry, or “A dim inheritor / of this undeniable flesh” to be fully utilized when Ova discovers the beauty and possibilities of language (Loy 131).

After introducing Ova within the shadow of her parents’ personal and national identities, Loy next describes Ova’s discovery of language as her discovery of poetry and artistry, and as transcending the cultural bounds of both her Hungarian-Jewish and English-Christian ancestries to exemplify mongrelization as the ideal twentieth century modern identity. Ova is:

A dim inheritor
 of this undeniable flesh
 [and] The destinies
 Genii
 of traditional
 Israel and of Albion

push on its ominous pillow

its racial birthrights. (Loy 131)

As a mongrelized hybrid of Hungarian-Jewish and English-Christian ancestries, Ova grows up with “Curses for baby / from its godmothers,” including her father’s “Jewish brain” and the pressures of her mother’s “insensitive maternity” (Loy 131; 132). In describing Ova, Loy also describes the implications of racial hybridization. While initially bearing negative associations with curses and parental repression, Ova’s discovery of language fragments the language around her to create new poetic possibilities, lauding “mongrelization” as transcending personal and national signifiers of identity (Loy 131; 132; Schaum 268).

In place of the discordant representations of nationality exhibited by her parents, Ova is a “child / whose wordless / thoughts / grow like visionary plants” (Loy 139). Before conforming to the words and associations of the spoken English that surrounds her, Ova discovers possibilities in language that disrupt and challenge conventional poetry, much like her mixed racial identity challenges the discord initially exhibited by her parents. As nearby adults whisper about her diarrhea, Ova mistakes the word as “iarrhea,” and immediately “she looks before her / and watches / for its materialization” (Loy 139). Mirroring the discordant and fragmented identities that she represents, Ova fragments standard language to construct meaning that suggests “partial, conflicting aspects of [Ova’s mongrelized] knowledge, confused understanding, and unhappy experience may lead to unexpected, extraordinary linking of language with perception” (Miller 86). The heretofore-uncorrupted mind of Ova associates “iarrhea” with the color green:

And instantly

this fragmentary

simultaneity of ideas

embodies

the word

A

lucent

iris

shifts

its

irradiate

interstice

glooms and relumes

on an orb of verdigris. (Loy 141)

After the fragmentation of personal and national identities, the mongrelized Ova reconstructs Loy's visions from the "fragmentary / simultaneity of ideas" to reveal "mongrelized" artistic possibilities transcending the bounds of traditional Western art and language. Thus, "the process of her [Ova's] creation, in short, is analogous to her self-formulation. Both are mongrel" (Miller 86). The possibilities in "mongrel" art, or the works of early twentieth century Europeans unattached to the sociopolitical and national boundaries of their ancestors, suggest the inherent possibilities of "mongrel" identity for escaping the chaos and uncertainty of Loy's social reality.

Mina Loy's Hungarian-Jewish father and English-Christian mother are allegorized in *Anglo-Mongrels and the Rose*, and are described in fragmented diction and syntax to parallel the fragmentation of their personal and national identities as they unite in marriage, sex, and procreation. Exodus and the English Rose are representatives of their native cultures and religions, and as such, clash on multiple levels of language and understanding throughout Loy's verse. Out of this discordant union grows Ova, initially an ungendered "bulk of bifurcate fat" who eventually finds artistic possibility in her fragmentary state (Loy 130). In effect, Loy utilizes Ova to demonstrate that she "distrusted all forms of inheritance—personal, cultural, and religious—except as she saw them supporting uniqueness and individual integrity. . . . the self-creating artist and outsider encumbered by relationships to community or place is forced into the free creation of a self" (Jaskoski 364). Through the uninhibited poetic discoveries of Ova, "Loy thus addresses gender and racial inheritance to demonstrate the paradoxes of her position as 'woman poet,' as well as a woman of mixed national, religious, and linguistic inheritance" (Frost 151). The synthesis of discordant racial identities, as well as languages, resides in embracing the possibilities inherent in "mongrelization."

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