AKDENIZ UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Yağmur GÜNEY

SOFT MACHINES: EARLY TRACES OF INNER TRANSHUMANISM IN MINA LOY'S *THE CHILD AND THE PARENT* AND *INSEL*

Department of English Language and Literature

Master's Thesis

Antalya, 2026

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İmza

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ÖZET

Bu tez, Mina Loy'un *The Child and the Parent* ve *Insel* adlı eserlerini inceleyerek insanın gelecek insana dönüşümü kavramını ele almaktadır. Erken dönem transhümanist düşünce ile bilinç ve oluşa dair felsefi yaklaşımlardan yararlanarak, dönüşümü yalnızca teknolojik değil aynı zamanda içsel bir süreç olarak kavramsallaştıran içsel transhümanizm (inner transhumanism) kavramı ilk defa kuramlaştırarak edebi incelemeler için kullanılmıştır. İçsel transhumanizm, bir edebiyat kuramı çerçevesi olarak, algı, biliş ve öznellik biçimlerindeki alternatiflerin insanın sınırlarını nasıl yeniden şekillendirdiğini incelemeyi mümkün kılmıştır. Bu doğrultuda tez, Loy'un eserlerinde gelecek insana dair farklı oluş biçimlerini analiz eder. *The Child and the Parent*, çocuk ve kadın bilinçlerini açıklık, akışkanlık, yaratıcılık alanı olarak öne çıkararak sabit yetişkin rasyonalitesini sorgular. *Insel* isimli romanında ise Loy, karakterleri ile iki farklı gelecek insan kurgulayarak, günümüz posthumanist ve transhumanist düşüncelerin parçalanmış ve istikrarsız süreçlerini eleştirerek, eksik ya da dışa bağımlı kalan aşkınlık arayışlarının sınırlarını ve risklerini açığa çıkarırken, dışsal gelişmelerin içsel bir evrim ile desteklenerek gerçekleşir ise tüm insanlığın geleceğinin kurulmasında daha faydalı olacağını gösterir. Tez, insanın gelecek insana dönüşümünün sadece doğrusal, rasyonel, ya da ilerlemeci olmadığını; aksine yaratıcı, döngüsel ve çoğu zaman sanat ve mitoloji ile iç içe geçtiğini göstermektedir. Loy'un metinlerini transhümanist ve posthümanist tartışmalarla birlikte ve onlara karşı konumlandıran bu çalışma, onun yazınının bilinç, imgelem ve ilişkisel varoluş üzerinden şekillenen alternatif bir "posthüman özne" modelini önceden düşündüğünü ileri sürer. Bu bağlamda içsel transhümanizm, insanın evrimine dair mevcut teorileri hem genişleten hem de sorgulayan eleştirel bir çerçeve olarak ortaya çıkar. Sonuç olarak tez, Loy'un eserlerinde dönüşümün yalnızca dışsal bir gelişim değil, içsel gelişim ile de desteklenmek zorunda olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İçsel Transhumanizm; Mina Loy; *Insel*; *The Child and the Parent*

ABSTRACT

SOFT MACHINES: EARLY TRACES OF INNER TRANSHUMANISM IN MINA LOY'S THE CHILD AND THE PARENT AND INSEL

This thesis examines the concept of human transformation through an analysis of Mina Loy's *The Child and the Parent* and *Insel*. Drawing on early transhumanist thought as well as philosophical approaches to consciousness and becoming, it theorizes the concept of inner transhumanism, which conceptualizes transformation not only as a technological but also as an internal process, and presents literary analyses accordingly. As a conceptual framework, inner transhumanism enables examination of how alternatives in perception, cognition, and forms of subjectivity reshape the boundaries of the human. In this direction, the thesis analyzes different modes of becoming related to the future human in Loy's works. *The Child and the Parent* foregrounds child and female consciousness as a space of openness, fluidity, and creativity, thereby questioning fixed adult rationality. In the novel *Insel*, Loy constructs two different models of the future human through her characters and, by criticizing the fragmented and unstable processes of contemporary posthumanist and transhumanist thought, reveals the limits and risks of transcendence that remain incomplete or externally dependent, while also demonstrating that if an internal evolution supports external developments, they would be more beneficial in establishing the future of humanity. The thesis demonstrates that the transformation of the human into the future human is not linear, rational, or progressive; rather, it is creative, cyclical, and often intertwined with art and mythology. Positioning Loy's texts both within and against transhumanist and posthumanist debates, this study argues that her writing anticipates an alternative model of the "posthuman subject" shaped through consciousness, imagination, and relational being. In this respect, inner transhumanism emerges as a critical framework that both expands and questions existing theories of human evolution. In conclusion, the thesis reveals that transformation in Loy's works is not only an external development but also requires internal development.

Keywords: Inner Transhumanism; Mina Loy; *Insel*; *The Child and the Parent*

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INTRODUCTION

Gnōthi seautón. “Know thyself.” These two ancient Greek words, inscribed above the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, once urged human beings toward self-knowledge, since the one who does not know themselves cannot be wise. However, this famous inscription, which has shaped human thought for centuries, has now reached a threshold, just as human beings themselves have. As Szasz (1973), a Hungarian American academic and psychiatrist, indicated, “The self is not something one finds; it is something one creates” (p. 49). According to Harari (2015), humans differ from other animals because we can cooperate in large numbers and with great flexibility. While cooperation is not unique to humankind, and many species also cooperate, what sets humans apart is the flexibility of their cooperation. Some animals demonstrate astonishingly complex forms of social organization, yet their cooperation is rigid and genetically predetermined. Although certain species engage in more flexible collaboration, they do so only with kin or familiar individuals. Homo sapiens alone can cooperate fluidly with countless strangers, united not by biological bonds but by shared belief in imagined realities. This flexibility stems from the intersubjective realm, which exists not within a single consciousness or the physical world but between minds.

According to Harari (2015), the main difference between human beings and other animals is that humans can communicate and build trust beyond kinship through shared fictions, and such narratives are the most important talent of humans that allow large-scale societies to function, making possible religions, nations, science, and economic systems that exist only through collective imagination. Over time, these imagined orders dissolve and give rise to new ones, reflecting the adaptive plasticity of human cognition. Whereas other animals remain bound to objective reality and use communication merely to describe it, humans use language, art, and technology to create entirely new realities, a cognitive elasticity, a flexibility that ultimately explains humanity’s dominion over the planet. How do we do this? Through our imagination. Human beings are storytellers. They include the fictional as well as the objective, and have the unique ability to imagine an alternate reality. Harari (2015) explains that what distinguishes human beings from other species is their ability to construct narratives and collectively shape realities. However, when it comes to imagining an immortal, powerful, god-like human, from ancient myths and first stories in history to Hollywood, the narrative serves as a warning that the attempt to wield such power often ends in failure, punishment, disappointment, or destruction. This idea too already existed in Ancient Greek thought. The Golden Age, ruled by Kronos, was a time when humans lived in harmony with the gods, within

a natural order guided by divine consciousness. Nature provided effortlessly; there was no labor, war, or aging (March, 2008).

However, as time passed, humanity descended from gold to silver and other less precious metals, symbolizing a fall from divine unity to individual consciousness, from purity to ego, from the spiritual to the material. In this sense, the myth of decline represents the loss of sacred harmony and the rise of self-awareness. Many modern interpretations, including alchemical and transhumanist ones, view this process as reversible: the task is to turn lead back into gold, restoring an elevated state of consciousness akin to the Golden Age. It is precisely for this reason that the emergence of transhumanism is an important step: as a movement that seeks to redirect humanity's old desire to transcend itself into new, transformative, and potentially pleasant futures, where there is no destruction but hope. Manzocco (2019) links transhumanism to the idea of a future Golden Age, framing technological enhancement as the pathway to a new phase of human flourishing. As he states, "the engineering of the mind offers us the opportunity to bring humanity into a new golden age." (p.126). In this view, developments such as brain–machine integration, artificial intelligence, and cognitive enhancement transform the Golden Age from a lost, mythic past into a realizable future condition. Transhumanism thus reconfigures the classical notion of the Golden Age into a forward-looking, technologically produced utopia grounded in progress.

Although transhumanism can be considered a relatively new movement, the main arguments of its philosophy, including the human desire to be more than they are, the pursuit of immortality, eternal youth, unlimited knowledge, and the aspiration to become god-like, have existed since humanity's earliest records. The history of human thought is filled with an ancient dream: the desire to reshape the world according to human wishes, to find a magic word or tool that could transform the ordinary into gold and common people into immortal gods. These concerns have occupied human minds since the earliest times. To trace the origins of these ideas, it is helpful to begin with the oldest written epic, *the Epic of Gilgamesh* (ca. 2600 BC). Gilgamesh, the semi-divine king of Uruk, embarks on a quest to defeat death after the loss of his friend Enkidu. His journey toward immortality through magical plants and divine wisdom mirrors the earliest transhumanist impulse: to resist human finitude and expand the boundaries of existence. Although Gilgamesh ultimately fails to secure eternal life, his story crystallizes one of the central questions of transhumanism: whether death is an unalterable destiny or a problem to be solved. Another quest to alter the human condition was Prometheus' from Hesiod (ca. 8th century BC), who defied the gods by stealing fire and giving it to humanity. According to Hassan (1977), the human mind represents a point of convergence where imagination meets

science, myth encounters technology, and language interacts with number, symbolically suggesting through the figure of “Prometheus the prophetic union of Earth and Sky” (p. 835). However, this myth is still flawed and symbolizes the pursuit of forbidden knowledge and technological power, where the quest to transcend human limits can be seen as perilous. As Hassan (1977) also accepts, “Prometheus is himself the figure of a flawed consciousness struggling to transcend such divisions as the One and the Many, Cosmos and Culture, the Universal and the Concrete” (s. 838). Ancient history is filled with such examples across cultures, Hinduism and Buddhism in India, Taoist traditions in China, and many others.

Fast-forwarding to the Middle Ages, similar longings reappear in alchemical traditions. Davis (2015) argues that:

> Of all hermetic arts, it is alchemy that most directly anticipates modern science and its passion for material transformation. This should not be too surprising, for the fiery hieroglyphic dramas of alchemy originally drew their lore from metallurgy, one of the most powerful and mysterious technologies of the ancient world. (p. 58)

Manzocco (2019) also identifies medieval European alchemists, with their pursuit of the Philosopher’s Stone and the Elixir of Life, as early precursors to transhumanist thought. Similarly, More (2013), a prominent figure in contemporary transhumanism, views these alchemists as proto-transhumanists whose quest for transformation and immortality anticipated modern technological aspirations. According to More (2013), “Their search for the Philosopher’s Stone or the Elixir of Life looks like the search for a magical form of technology capable of transmuting elements, curing all disease, and granting immortality.” (p. 9). Alchemy, in this sense, foreshadowed a technological approach to human transformation, and it was an attempt to harness hidden natural forces - sometimes real, sometimes imagined - anticipating modern science’s efforts to manipulate matter and life itself. The resemblance between alchemy and transhumanism lies in this conviction: that nature conceals energies which, once mastered, could radically alter the human condition. However, alchemy was not limited to working with external elements. Alongside the pursuit of transmuting base metals into gold or achieving the so-called magnum opus of immortality through the Philosopher’s Stone, alchemists also sought inner transformation. According to Marrs (2013), although some alchemists tried to turn lead into gold literally, many used alchemy as a symbolic language to express deeper, hidden meanings. Through the “Great Work,” they aimed at a kind of inner or spiritual transformation, linking their ideas to mythology, religion, and spirituality, and seeking goals like perfection, immortality, and freedom. Over time, however, this inner aspect was mostly abandoned, and alchemy became more focused on rational and scientific thinking.

Building on the proto-transhumanist aspirations of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance shifted its focus toward humanism, placing the human being at the center of intellectual pursuits and the arts. This period fostered the belief in human potential, creativity, and, most importantly, reason, providing a bridge from the inner dimensions of mystical and spiritual explorations to more secular and rational frameworks. It is the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, according to Kepes (1956), "to which our present culture owes so much of good and ill." (p. 13). Further developed these ideas, emphasizing science, progress, and rational inquiry as the only means of understanding and reshaping the human condition, grounded in a belief in the supremacy of human reason and identity. This humanist ideology perpetuates these hierarchies through binary constructs such as corporeal versus incorporeal, culture versus nature, and mind versus imagination. It cultivated belief in progress, science, and reason, all of which would become indispensable for transhumanist philosophy. More (2013) indicates that for many years, some thinkers such as postmodernists and poststructuralists have criticized Enlightenment ideas, calling them outdated or too focused on humans. However, transhumanism still supports the main values of the Enlightenment, such as reason, science, individual rights, and progress. At the same time, it updates and improves these ideas based on new knowledge.

Simultaneously, Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) provided an evolutionary lens, dissolving the notion of humanity as fixed and opening the possibility of intentional self-modification. Philosophy also soon took up these implications. German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) proclaimed the death of God and called for the creation of the Übermensch, the figure who would surpass humanity as it exists. Although it might be thought that Nietzsche is an essential scholar for pre-transhumanism, contemporary transhumanists do not share this view. The scholar at the University of Oxford and one of the most prominent contemporary transhumanist philosophers, Nick Bostrom (2005), states:

> Despite some surface-level similarities with the Nietzschean vision, transhumanism with its Enlightenment roots, its emphasis on individual liberties, and its humanistic concern for the welfare of all humans (and other sentient beings) probably has as much or more in common with Nietzsche's contemporary J.S. Mill, the English liberal thinker and utilitarian. (p. 4)

It is not surprising, as Friedrich Nietzsche has historically functioned as an important bridge connecting occult traditions with mainstream culture since the late nineteenth century (Surette, 1993, p. 10). At the same time, it is worth noting Kepes's (1956) argument that industrial development has largely ignored humanity's fundamental need to reconnect with

what Walt Whitman described as the “primal sanities of nature.” Instead of offering a coherent sense of harmony and order, technological progress has expanded in an unstructured way, transforming the material achievements of the mechanical age into a fragmented and overwhelming visual environment that unsettles and dulls human perception. Thus, while industry and rationality came to the forefront on one side, movements such as Occultism, Romanticism, and Cosmism began to manifest themselves on the other. In Russia, Cosmism promoted a more scientific and religious vision. According to More (2013), cosmists such as Nikolai Fedorov argued that the central problem of humanity was death, and that only by solving it could other social or political issues be resolved. Their vision of universal resurrection and eternal youth strongly anticipates transhumanist projects. Russian Cosmism, blending science, metaphysics, and occultism, directly influenced later esoteric thinkers such as Blavatsky and Crowley, and postivist and rational thinking began to be stretched. Here, it will be beneficial to note that while ‘exoteric’ means outer, ‘esoteric’ means inner, or hidden knowledge.

Following the 19th century, the 20th century opened new horizons for human potential and technology, paving the way for modern transhumanism. As industrialization accelerated, new aesthetic movements embraced technology not merely as a tool but as a destiny. Modernism emerged as an aesthetic and intellectual response to modernity in art, literature, architecture, and thought. It both embraced and critiqued modernity, celebrating its progress, science, and rationality while simultaneously addressing the crises it produced, such as social upheaval and alienation, through innovative artistic and intellectual expression. It reflected a broader cultural effort to navigate rapid technological and social change while seeking new ways to understand and express human experience. Futurism, launched in 1909 by Marinetti, glorified speed, machines, airplanes, and the metropolis. Their slogans, “challenge the stars,” “Rebuild the universe,” and “Create the mechanical man with interchangeable parts”, explicitly foreshadow transhumanist ambitions (Manzocco, 2019, p.11). Manzocco (2019) also explains that Futurists felt a kind of “ecstasy” from technology. Historians call this the “technological sublime,” meaning that technology created both awe and fear in them, similar to how nature affected Romantic writers. Parallel to Futurism, Surrealism, under the leadership of André Breton, emphasized imagination as a transformative force and drew on esoteric and occult traditions. Both movements, though differing in method, embodied a rejection of fixed human limits and an embrace of transformation, whether through technology or imagination.

Around the same time, according to Vetter (2010), “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, overturning the 19th century mechanistic, deterministic 'old' physics and inviting religious interpretations of science'' (p. 1). Here, using the terms "spiritual" or "occult" rather than "religious" may better capture the period's context. Although modernism is often associated with positivist thought, a closer examination of modernism in artistic and, particularly, literary contexts reveals a different landscape. As Surette (1993) suggests, being "modern" in the modernist sense goes beyond simply belonging to a postclassical or contemporary period; rather, it implies moving beyond history itself and entering a direct, unmediated realm of knowledge, thereby bringing history to its completion.This Ouroboros-like, though not in a negative sense, but rather in the sense of completeness and cultural movement, while certainly open to some critiques that will not be addressed here, has in fact achieved a highly effective methodological synthesis by its artists. In literature, for instance, this is evident in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. According to Surette (1993), "To borrow from Joyce's symbolism, Scylla is the rock of scientific materialism, and Charybdis is the whirlpool of mysticism and occultism." (p. 5).

Hence, one may conclude that modernist artists employed mythology, mysticism, and occultism to impose order on the chaos of the modern world. While Modernism, Futurism, and Surrealism did not seek a literal return to medieval beliefs, they reintroduced elements of the irrational, the mystical, and the imaginative as a cultural response to the century's over-rationalization, expanding the boundaries of human perception and creativity. Although etymologically the term "transhuman" first appeared in Dante's *Divina Commedia* (1312) as "transumanar," meaning "to transcend the human condition" in a religious or spiritual context, it was not until the mid 20th century that transhumanism finally entered formal discourse in the Anglo-American context. T.S. Eliot used "transhumanized" in The Cocktail Party (1949) to describe spiritual illumination, a concept similar to that found in Dante. However, it was Julian Huxley (1887–1975) who, in *New Bottles for New Wine* (1957), gave transhumanism its modern definition. "One of the founders of the neo-Darwinian synthesis in evolutionary biology, Julian Huxley, coined the term "transhumanism" in the 1950s to capture the moment within life's natural history that might correspond to the Abrahamic idea of humanity's species uniqueness." (Mercer & Maher, 2014, p. 4) For Huxley, humanity could, through science and reason, "transcend itself, not just sporadically, but in its entirety." He envisioned a collective project in which humanity would consciously fulfill its evolutionary destiny. According to Huxley (1957):

> Once there are enough people who can truly say that the human species will be on the threshold of a new kind of existence, as different from ours as ours is from that of Pekin man. It will, at last, be consciously fulfilling its true destiny. (p.17)

From Huxley onward, transhumanism gradually developed into a more defined philosophical and cultural movement. A key early figure in shaping its modern form is Robert Ettinger, whose book Man into Superman outlines a transhumanist vision. Ettinger (1989) explores the idea of human self-transcendence through a series of rhetorical questions, arguing that many abilities once thought impossible such as seeing beyond natural limits, expanding memory, or penetrating solid objects, have already been achieved indirectly through technological means. In this sense, he suggests that even the study and realization of the "superhuman" may become possible step by step. Later in the book, Ettinger (1989) also proposes that this transformation could involve examining children's modes of perception as well as alternative practices like yoga or hypnosis. He argues that children possess heightened sensory capacities that tend to diminish with age, and that certain systems may help recover or extend these latent perceptual and cognitive abilities, potentially making them more widely accessible in the future.

In addition to Ettinger, transhumanism has another founding father, Fereidoun M. Esfandiary, also known as FM-2030. According to Monzacco (2019) FM-2030 "who has a deep nostalgia for the future," published a book called *Are You a Transhuman? Monitoring and Stimulating Your Personal Rate of Growth in a Rapidly Changing World*, in which he "deals with the nascent anthropological type of transhumans, who are the first manifestation of a new evolutionary stage." (p. 62). In 1988, More came to the scene and summarized his vision in his "Principles of Extropy", which are characterized by perpetual progress, self-transformation, practical optimism, intelligent technology, an open society, self-direction, and rational thinking (More, 1990). He also suggests that, to understand what transhumanism is, the term should be considered in two ways: trans-humanism and transhuman-ism. "While trans-humanism emphasizes continuity with Enlightenment humanism through reason, progress, and responsibility, transhuman-ism highlights the technological transcendence of biological limits, ultimately aiming toward posthuman existence." (More, 2019, p. 4) It is important to emphasize here that transhumanism, like posthumanism, aims to move beyond the current human toward a posthuman, just like posthumanism does. However, while posthumanism challenges and destabilizes the concept of the human, transhumanism focuses on enhancing and extending human capacities through technological means (Braidotti, 2013). Concerned that dethroning humans from their privileged position and leaving "what comes next" to chance would yield

chaotic outcomes, transhumanists do not discard the past but look to the future. As More (2019) notes, “transhumanism does not throw out the entirety of the past because of a few mistaken ideas.” (p. 11).

Right after More (1988), in the same year, two British philosophers, Nick Bostrom and David Pearce, institutionalized the movement by founding the World Transhumanist Association (later Humanity+). At the same time, figures such as Ray Kurzweil and Aubrey de Grey popularized visions of technological immortality. What once belonged to science fiction began to move into Silicon Valley boardrooms, supported by high-tech entrepreneurs. Humanity+, which aims to spread transhumanist ideas, provides on its website the current definition of transhumanism as an intellectual and cultural movement that promotes the use of applied reason and advanced technologies to radically improve the human condition by eliminating aging and enhancing mental, physical, and psychological abilities. It also involves exploring the consequences, potential benefits, and risks of such technologies, along with the ethical questions that arise from their development and use. In this case, “transhuman refers to an intermediate stage between the human and a potential future form of humanity (Human 2.0) or the posthuman.” (Humanity+, n.d.)

Today, the “transhuman” is no longer a speculative figure of myth or literature but already embodied in practices that extend human limits: prosthetics, organ transplants, gender-transition surgeries, cosmetic enhancements, dietary and medical regimens, even wearable technologies. In this sense, we are already in transition from the human to the posthuman, realizing, step by step, the ancient dream of transcending our given condition. Technology and science have advanced to an unprecedented degree, perhaps for the first time in history, allowing human beings to wield real power to intervene in and control human development and, eventually, human death, according to their desires. In line with this pursuit of immortality, projects such as “life extension, cryonics, the enhancement of human physical, psychological, and mental abilities through every possible technological means from genetic manipulation to neural implants, nanotechnologies, or more specifically, nano-machines, mind-uploading are called the pillars of transhumanism (Manzocco, 2019, p. 16). As this suggests, the movement that brings these pillars together, along with the technological and scientific work on them, is known today as transhumanism.

However, even though with a positivist stance toward “memento mori” (remember your mortality), and even though transhumanists show that technology and science are not terrifying bogeymen, and that without dogma -guided by science and rational knowledge- there is also reason to hope for enhancement in every dimension of the human and eventually a remedy for

death, transhumanism still gets many critics. Criticisms have come steadily from all sides, including accusations of insanity, immaturity, ignorance, hubris, danger, and impracticality (Manzocco, 2019). Beyond these, there are three essential critiques for this thesis.

First, examining a few key texts mentioned here shows that the transhumanistic imagining of alternative versions of humanity is not holistic. Apart from one figure, there are almost no women visibly writing on the topic. Even that figure, Natasha Vita-More suggests in an interview that women have long been involved in transhumanism, often in less visible ways, and the observable reality remains that transhumanism is a playground of technophiles dominated by the male principle (Vita-More, 2023). This makes it easy to identify its content and language as over-masculine. For justified reasons, Natasha Vita-More was not mentioned until this point. As she herself states, Vita-More (2013) was the "only visible woman" in the movement. She not only introduced a feminine perspective into transhumanism but also argued that the transhumanist future should be more artistic, even writing two manifestos on this matter. Vita-More suggests that transhumanism should be considered not only from scientific and technological perspectives but also from cultural, philosophical, and artistic standpoints, as reported in an interview (Chace, 2023). The article highlights that women remain under-represented in futurism and technology, although Vita-More believes many women participate in transhumanist circles, even if they tend not to promote themselves as vigorously as men do (Chace, 2023). For this reason, transhumanism should incorporate more aesthetic and artistic ideas that transcend human cognitive and subjective limits. However, unfortunately, even her husband, Max More, limits himself to science fiction when discussing art (More, 2013). This hierarchical positioning of one side as superior to the other appears not only in the use of masculine and feminine language but also in many aspects of transhumanist discourse. For instance, while imagining the posthuman future, transhumanism often privileges cognition over embodiment. As Hayles (1999) points out, transhumanist subjects tend to "regard their bodies as fashion accessories rather than the ground of being." (p. 5). In response, Hayles (1999) envisions an alternative posthuman and offers a different idea. She supports using information technologies, but without believing in fantasies of unlimited power or living forever without a body. Instead, she accepts human limits and emphasizes that human life is always connected to and dependent on the material World. She may be right in the sense that balancing and connecting the material and immaterial worlds, taking them out of their hierarchical positions. However, it can also be argued that her perspective risks closing off imagination to many of the possibilities offered by new scientific and technological advancements, leaning instead toward an overly realist position.

Second, although transhumanists claim to be free of faith and dogma, they appear to be troubled by a particular kind of asceticism: the asceticism of science. This can be observed in the discourses of leading transhumanists. As mentioned above, Nick Bostrom often avoids linking Nietzsche to transhumanism. This may be because "Nietzsche criticized many modern developments, including science, as continuations of the ascetic ideal," and "transhumanism can be seen as the latest manifestation of the ascetic ideal, a new 'Platonism for the people'" (Woodward, 2017, p. 231). This reflects what More (2013) describes as one of the mistaken ideas from the Enlightenment. While placing the secular and the human at the center, the Enlightenment, at the same time sought to free the world from magic. As Horkheimer and Adorno (2002) explains, "Enlightenment's program was the disenchantment of the world; the dissolution of myths and the substitution of knowledge for fancy." (p. 1). Francis Bacon, who is considered "a precursor of Transhumanism" (More, 2013, p. 9), also stated that "Magic kills industry." (Federici, 2004, p. 142). Delpech-Ramey's suggestion to this dilemma can offer some insights. He mentions that if enlightenment reduced reason to a technique to kill magic, perhaps today we need to allow the possibility of a magical relation with the world again. As third critique, Kepes (1956) argues that the fast growth of knowledge and technology has pushed humanity into a world it can no longer fully understand. Nature now feels unfamiliar again, much like in medieval times. Our new environment is filled with unseen and potentially threatening forces, such as viruses, atomic particles, and cosmic energies. As a result, people have lost the sense of comfort and control they once had in a smaller, more understandable world. Now, we struggle to deal with this much larger and more complex reality, without having clear standards to make sense of it.

In response to this possible future shock, the answer may lie in an "inner transhumanism". In contrast to current visions, such a posthuman figure would embody stronger artistic values, embracing dualities and uniting desire with creativity. It would seek to resolve future posthuman existential crises by cultivating both inner development and external transformation. This could mean integrating the inner dimension of the human with technological and scientific advancements, such as the possibility of living to 200 years old. Thus, a more feminine and artistic approach—one that emphasizes mythology and imagination, uses spiritual and magical modes of thought, even for artistic purposes, and values inner growth as much as outer progress—would transform transhumanism into a more holistic philosophy and movement, thereby increasing its appeal. The integral inner development of human beings is also the key to a more ethical and happier future. At the same time, it would help us internalize technological advances more easily and overcome the existential crises that many in the 20th

century could not manage, allowing us to navigate the challenges of this century with greater resilience.

Inner transhumanism, a term coined by Andrew Pilsch in 2017, is "a kind of hybridization of spiritual/cognitive enhancement coupled to a technological reconfiguration of evolution from biological to machinic, combining both the more common outer transhumanism and a hugely important inner transhumanism." (p. 26). In his book *Transhumanism: Evolutionary Futurism*, he traces "an early thread of transhuman rhetoric chiefly concerned with topoi of cosmic consciousness and cognitive evolution." and seeks "to establish a dialectical relationship between the mind and the body," (p. 30) to turn to a more feminine lexicon by examining 20th century transhuman poetics instead of sci-fi. Moreover, he traces the modernist avant-garde to find "experimentations with cosmic transhumanization and the machinic trappings of a rejected hyper-masculine futurist art" (p. 41) and connects the idea of developing and enriching with scholars such as Nietzsche and Henri Bergson in terms of creative evolution, and the artist such as Mina Loy, P. D. Ouspensky in terms of cosmic consciousness (Pilsch, 2017).

One should keep in mind that inner transhumanism is a critical concept not only of transhumanism but also of posthumanism. Yes, it criticizes transhumanism for its overly masculine and overly rationalized point of view, its hyper-technical language, its dogmatic and imposing one-sided rhetoric, its lack of artistic aesthetics, and its flat Cartesian subjectivity. However, inner transhumanism retains transhuman values while also criticizing posthumanism for its "unreasonable expansion of the anthropological space", since "it is still possible that there is a fundamental difference between humans and other objects in the world," and "therefore, posthumanism cannot be considered a scientific doctrine; it is exclusively an ethical or political concept." (Merzlyako, 2022, p. 476). Inner transhumanism basically argues that humans cannot be reduced to the mechanical subject of modernity, nor dissolved into the fragmented, rootless subject of posthumanism. Posthumanism directly critiques transhumanism. It argues that transhumanism remains trapped in Western rationalist and dualist ontologies, including the mind-body, subject-object, and nature-culture dichotomies. To resist this, posthumanism disperses the human subject, multiplies agencies, and imagines posthuman forms of existence. Inner transhumanism, on the other hand, also rejects Western dualism but does not seek dissolution or disintegration. Instead, it seeks integration of mind, body, and spirit through art, imagination, consciousness, and inner experience. It challenges the same dichotomies yet proposes not fragmentation but inner evolution that leads to a cosmic consciousness as the solution. Posthumanism denies them altogether, seeking to dissolve

distinctions. Inner transhumanism affirms difference but seeks to integrate it—bringing together dualities without erasing them. This can be better understood through two key Deleuzian concepts: the Body without Organs (BwO) and the affirmation of difference. While BwO dismantles fixed hierarchies in the body and subjectivity, the affirmation of difference resists reducing differences to binary oppositions or negative relations. Instead, difference itself becomes productive and generative. These two concepts dismantle fixed hierarchies and centers, allowing energy and desire to flow. There is no rigid organization, yet it is not chaotically dispersed, since plateaus serve as temporary anchors. Dissolution here is not absolute chaos but a tool for new connections, creativity, and productive subjectivity, thanks to the anchor points. While posthumanist dissolution tends toward dispersal, inner transhumanism uses anchor points to open a space for regeneration. Difference, imagination, and body-mind unity must be celebrated, but a shared human ground and some anchor points must also be preserved. Another key divergence lies in optimism versus pessimism. Posthumanism is critical, skeptical, and often destructive of inherited structures. At the same time, inner transhumanism is more experimental and constructive, valuing the past but turning its face to future evolution oriented toward inner evolution. Inner transhumanism retains the techno-optimistic imagination of transhumanism, while critiquing its determinism and proposing alternative paths, such as art, mythology, spirituality, and emotions, as part of the process. Posthumanism, by contrast, tends to techno-pessimism, especially in its ethical, ecological, and political reflections.

Inner transhumanism focuses on imaginings that lie outside the “domain of the master-subject” while seeking ways to avoid dissolving into a posthumanist world without a center. It looks for other ways of being and knowing. While technology and science now advance exponentially and become self-augmenting, and while everything outside changes so quickly, is not humanity’s most urgent need to prepare itself to adapt? Perhaps this needs clarification: inner and outer are two aspects of the same thing: two sides of the same coin. They are not opposites but complements. Thus, inner transhumanism is not opposed to external development; yet, it also opposes the hierarchy inherent in all dualisms. Mind and body are among these. It holds that perceiving very large (spatial) or very small (quantum, nanoscale) worlds yields different understandings of the world. It values feminine elements as much as masculine, art as much as science, magic as much as technology, imagination as much as rational thought, and myth as much as the future. Inner transhumanism may play a vital role in shaping a new transhuman sensibility that will help create a more holistic future human and relieve the collective anxiety of what Asimov calls the Frankenstein Complex (Asimov, 1978)

-the fear of mechanical men- or what Alvin Toffler called Future Shock (Toffler, 1970), which is what happens when people are overwhelmed by change while trying, or failing, to adapt.

Up to this point, the emergence of inner transhumanism from transhumanism has been traced, its meaning defined, and its divergence from both transhumanism and posthumanism explained, thereby establishing the concept theoretically within interdisciplinary thought. The following section turns to its literary function and develops inner transhumanism into a framework applicable to literary analysis. Inner transhumanism can be conceptualized as both a critical intervention in the discourses of transhumanism and posthumanism and as a literary framework that renders these debates visible within aesthetic practices. Its ontological ground lies in the integration of mind, body, and spirit through imagination, art, and inner experience, rejecting the Cartesian dualisms inherited from Western rationalism. Unlike posthumanism, which disperses the human subject into an unknown multiplicity, and unlike transhumanism, which overemphasizes machinic rationality, inner transhumanism seeks inner evolution toward a cosmic consciousness that preserves anchor points while opening new spaces of becoming. Inner transhumanism critiques transhumanism's hyper-masculine, techno-determinist rhetoric and posthumanism's inclination toward unlimited dissolution, while valuing what both discard: artistic aesthetics, mythic language, spiritual experience, and affective knowledge. It retains the future-oriented optimism of transhumanism while rejecting its determinism, offering instead constructive, experimental paths of inner evolution to balance the outer one. In literary texts, it can be traced through several categories of literary representation:

1. Inner Evolution: Inner transformations of characters that parallel technological enhancement. Reimagining the transcendent paradigm of the human, not erasing but redefining what it means to be human, attending to becoming as much as being.

2. Ways of Being: Ways of being that exist prior to posthuman as a discourse, as well as in futures studies, involve developing cosmic consciousness while recognizing that responsibility remains with humanity, encompassing body, mind, and spirit. This foregrounding of the refusal to separate imagination from bodily experience is also emphasized.

3. Ways of Knowing: Recognizing that there are virtual worlds as well as the actual. Where alternative cognitions challenge rationalist epistemologies. Alternative Cognitions, such as representations of child perception, mystical visions, or altered states of consciousness, are included.

4. Myth-tech Hybridity - Imaginary Technologies: Mythological and technological metaphors intertwined in poetic language. Narratives that merge ancient myth with futuristic imagery.

As Hayles (1999) indicates, “Literary texts are not, of course, merely passive conduits. They actively shape what the technologies mean and what the scientific theories signify in cultural contexts.’’ (p. 21). 20th century modernists sought balance against an over-rationalized society and rapid scientific progress. Many, including Joyce and Pound, as well as Yeats and Eliot, were associated with occultism, although scholarship had long shied away from the topic. Since occult thought cannot be erased from modernism, it must be studied as part of its intellectual fabric. At its core, occult thought emphasizes mystical illumination, believed to permanently transform the individual, elevating them above ordinary mortals in wisdom and spiritualism. All of this resonates with what mainstream transhumanism aims to achieve through science: superhuman abilities, immortality, and even forms of metempsychosis. However, in modern occultism, these are envisioned as the result of an inner transformation. To be secular, then, is not to deny one of these modes of transcendence, but to distinguish between them: while scientists pursue such goals through technological means, artists, such as painters and writers, explore them through inward development. This is why I chose to study a 20th century modernist artist to trace the outlines of inner transhumanism.

This thesis examines Mina Loy’s two posthumous novels*, The Child and the Parent* and *Insel*, through the lens of inner transhumanism. The focus on a 20th century woman poet underscores the aim of bringing transhumanist discourse out of the overscientific, over-rationalized, male-dominated sci-fi dimension and giving it a more artistic, inner, and feminine perspective. It is important to note that inner transhumanism -and even transhumanism in its then-current form during the years Loy was writing- was nascent; however, tracing early signs of inner transhumanism in the 20th century may be a starting point for seeing how science and technology affected humans a hundred years ago, so that we can learn and anticipate what to expect from the future. Moreover, there could hardly be anyone more suitable than Mina Loy for this study, because she was a futurist woman who also “increasingly regards futurism as the boys-with–toys club that it (mostly) was and begins to actualize her own evolutionary futurism, marking her as an early transhumanist” (Pilsch, 2017, p. 37), and a woman who tries to understand and build future human, while recognizing the danger of posthumanist dissolution.

Pilsch (2017) introduces the concept of inner transhumanism in the book’s first chapter, “An Inner Transhumanism: Modernism and Cognitive Evolution,” where he examines Mina Loy’s poem “Parturition” and Ouspensky’s ideas on the evolutionary consciousness of the human. He concludes that “both insist on the evolution of emotion and cognition as the primary vehicles for actualizing a different consciousness.” To expand humanity’s capacity to comprehend the future envisioned by transhumanists, “the answer is not more data or more

gadgets but a more mystic transhumanism. Otherwise, we are left to conclude that contemporary transhumanism attempts to build a mysticism without the mystical." Pilsch underlines the rhetorical power and world-building drive in transhumanism and argues that, by returning to magic in modernism, "we can start to see the shape of transhumanism as a magical discourse." (Pilsch, 2017, p. 49)

It is no accident that Pilsch uses the word magic. As Campagna (2018) argues in his thought-provoking book *Technic and Magic: The Reconstruction of Reality*, magic has always disturbed the hegemonic groups of its time. Magic can be thought of as a remedy in the face of the harsh regime of the world built by technic in its own image. He also suggests that "To paraphrase Heidegger, if we can understand Technic as the essence of technology, so that we can understand Magic as the essence of poetry." (Campagna, 2018, p. 161). This helps us understand not only Pilsch's preference for the word "magic" but also his choice to study Mina Loy's poetry and my selection of two of Mina Loy's prose works, both written in a poetic idiom and newly gathered and published, thus relatively understudied, just like inner transhumanism. This thesis outlines a roadmap for reading literary texts through inner-transhumanist themes, utilizing inner transhumanism as a conceptual framework for analyzing literary texts. Therefore, after clarifying the concepts in detail, this study formulates inner transhumanism as a conceptual framework applicable across genres, not just science fiction. To achieve this, the themes of inner transhumanism are drawn from ancient and posthuman myths, as well as from 20th and 21st century philosophical reflections on alternative ways of knowing and being. After theorizing inner transhumanism by establishing its main themes, the study introduces Mina Loy and her perspective on the future, and then proceeds to a detailed analysis of her novels *The Child and the Parent* and *Insel*.

Mina Gertrude Lowy, later shortened by herself to Mina Loy, was born in London on December 27, 1882, into a middle-class family with a Hungarian-Jewish father and an English Protestant mother. Being the child of two people from such different worlds laid the foundation for the dualities she struggled to reconcile throughout her life, as well as the juxtapositions she frequently employed in her poetry. As Crangle (2011) puts it, this shaped her "oxymoronic self" from the very beginning. (p. 6) Although women in her cultural context had limited access to formal education, Mina Loy's father, Sigmund Lowy, recognized her artistic talent and supported her by sending her to Munich at the age of seventeen to study art (Koidis, 1980). Despite her mother's strong objections, this decision initiated a transnational artistic trajectory that took her across major cultural centers, including Paris, Florence, New York, Mexico, and postwar Europe, before she eventually settled in the United States (Burke, 1996). As Burke

(1996) suggests, Loy's movements should not be understood as a linear progression but rather as a series of cyclical and exploratory journeys, resembling elliptical paths of artistic and intellectual pursuit.

Mina Loy was born British, however, spent over three decades in the United States, particularly in New York, where she engaged with modernist and avant-garde circles, drawn by the cultural openness and experimental artistic environment, and died also in United States, in 1966. (Burke, 1996). Critics often place her within American modernism and treat her as part of its development. Her emphasis on linguistic innovation and modern poetic form aligns her with American literary culture, especially as she herself links modern poetry to the U.S. as a site of renewal. As she suggests, the revival of poetry emerged from America, where language becomes a very living language shaped by many influences. (Scuriatti, 2019). Loy is a very important figüre for American poetics since she had "simply transferred futuristic theories to America, and in her subject-matter had gone about expressing herself freely." (Burke, 1996, p.5)

Through both the risks she took in her life and the experiments she pursued in her art, Loy transformed her discoveries about herself and the world into a model of the modern woman. Bozhkova (2022) explains that Loy transformed herself as follows:

> Loy's case underscores the fact that modernism should be understood as a multitude of proliferating 'isms,' rather than as a monolith. Her eclectic and intermittent occupations -painter, poet, playwright, novelist, bohemian, artist's and photographer's model, actress, designer of clothes, hats, and lampshades, gallery agent, assemblage artist- also point to a quintessential plurality of the arts. (p. 4)

Although Loy was the new woman of her era and modern in every imaginable way, she also distanced herself from the era's mechanical rationalism. According to Burke (1996), "Mina, who imagined God, for the creative, as the ultimate function of the mind, regretted the modernists' refusal to entertain things of the spirit." (p. 244) Loy was thinking that all this modern movement is keeping entirely on the surface and gets no further psychologically.

In 1910, along with her first husband, Stephen Haweis, and their children, she relocated from London to Florence, where she met Mabel Dodge, a meeting that would prove decisive for her life and work. Burke (1996) explains that Mina Loy's close friendship with the wealthy American Mabel Dodge introduced her to a circle of American artists and intellectuals whose interest in innovative modes of expression influenced Loy's orientation toward the New World and encouraged her writing; together, they also engaged with the works of thinkers such as Freud and Bergson (p. 119). Mina found Freud unsatisfactory and instead proposed a

superconscious to expand on his theory of the subconscious. She argued that such a concept was essential for explaining imagination. She wrote to Mabel that Freud left little room for genuine creative growth. For her, the subconscious felt like a “dumping ground for discarded impressions,”whereas the superconscious opened endless possibilities Burke, 1996, p.144) . Together, she and Mabel sought access to a higher realm, one that transcended ordinary reality. For spiritual seekers like them, F. W. H. Myers provided a more uplifting alternative than Freud. Myers believed that the subliminal self-existed below awareness but could emerge in sudden “uprushes” of artistic genius. Artists, he argued, were predominantly permeable to this process; their creativity arose from moments when hidden streams of thought entered conscious life. Moreover, Myers saw artistic genius as a driving force in human evolution. His imagery of the subliminal helped unite poetry and science, supporting both Mabel’s aspiration for a higher stage of consciousness and Mina’s ambition to reconcile seemingly opposing domains (Burke, 1996).

An important influence on Loy’s poetic philosophy came through Mabel’s introduction of Bergson’s thought, which shaped her intellectual development. As expressed in “the continuous flux of Being” (Burke, 1996, p. 122), reality is seen as fluid rather than fixed. This suggests that introspection could help Loy move beyond inner conflicts. In Bergson’s idea of duration, contradictions within identity may dissolve, allowing the self to be understood as a process of ongoing becoming and transformation (Burke, 1996, 122). The Bergson-Mina connection embraced fragmentation and flux yet insisted on an underlying continuity and the self’s capacity for renewal, which resonates with the philosophy of inner transhumanism rather than posthumanism.

The most decisive “-ism” that shaped Loy and her art was undoubtedly Futurism. Many of Mina Loy's poetry can be interpreted as reactions to the views of the Futurists regarding women, which led her to become self-conscious (Burke, 1996). In her early thirties, she entered a triangular relationship with the two founders of Futurism, Marinetti and Papini, who themselves were not on good terms (Burke, 1996). Marinetti’s relentless optimism served as a tonic for Loy, and under his influence, she wrote the Futurist manifesto, “Aphorisms on Futurism.” She continued to align her “masculine” side with the Futurists’ aggressive, action-driven rhetoric, while associating her “feminine” side with unconscious impulses (Burke, 1996). Yet, her relationship with Papini, whom she loved, was painful and largely grounded in lust, which left her disillusioned. This ambivalence is reflected in poems like “Human Cylinders,” written during her affair with Papini, where Loy portrays lovers’ mechanical isolation while using an early transhuman language:

The human cylinders
Revolving in the enervating dusk
That wraps each closer in the mystery
Of singularity
(…)
And at least two of us
Loved a very little
Without seeking
To know if our two miseries
In the lucid rush-together of automatons
Could form one opulent well-being

Here, Loy juxtaposes the sublime with the mechanical, exposing the tension at the heart of Futurist love. Although she spent much time with the Futurists and was often treated as their muse, "she also mocked her own illusions of being "the exception" to their misogyny:

These amusing men
discover in their mail
duplicate petitions
to be the lurid mother of 'their' flabbergast child
from Nima Lyo, alias Anim Yol, alias Imna Oly." (Kouidis, 1980, p. 9)

Over time, Loy grew disenchanted with Futurism, especially with its glorification of war and contempt for women. Thus, her relationship with the movement was also a sex war. In the same year as her Futurist Manifesto, she wrote her provocative Feminist Manifesto, filled with radical advice, even including recommendations for women to surgically remove their own hymens. However, despite such strikingly feminist rhetoric, Loy's Futurism was experienced through a female lens, thereby feminizing Futurism itself. She was not, strictly speaking, a feminist in the organized political sense; instead, she infused male-dominated avant-garde movements with a distinctly feminine sensibility. This can also be seen in her letters to her patron, Mrs. Dodge, where she distanced herself from practical feminist debates: "Do tell me what you are making of Feminism. … Have you any idea in what direction the sex must be shoved -psychological, I mean- bread and butter bores me rather." Similarly, she wrote to Van Vechten in 1915: "What I feel now are feminine politics - but in a cosmic way that may not fit in anywhere." (Kouidis, 1980, p. 28). In the 1920s, Loy was in New York, spending time among the Dadaists. Her work was praised by modernist figures such as T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, who recognized her as an avant-garde poet (Burke, 1996). She died in 1966, having published

only two books in her lifetime: Lunar Baedeker (1923) and Lunar Baedeker and Time Tables (1958). The rest of her writings, including her novels *The Child and the Parent* and *Insel*, were also rediscovered and published after her death.

Mina Loy was a woman ahead of her time, envisioning futures beyond her era's norms while challenging Futurism's hypermasculinity. She advocated a fusion of body and mind, science and art, and the masculine and feminine. Her vision anticipates a future in which multiple modes of being, knowing, and perceiving coexist. Her work resists the cold rationality of mainstream science and technology, offering a creative and feminist counterpoint. In her *Aphorisms on Futurism* (1914), Loy already articulated a transhuman rhetoric: "BUT in the Future, by inspiring the people to expand to their fullest capacity, the great man proportionately must be tremendous-a God" (Loy, 1914, p. 2). These aphorisms also suggest posthumanist concerns such as the deformation of matter, the expansion of identity, and the disintegration of feelings. However, Loy's vision emphasizes an inner transhumanism: the evolution of the human through expanded consciousness, both individual and cosmic, while preserving the human essence. This is visible in her claim: "The straight line and the circle are the parents of design, form the basis of art; there is no limit to their coherent variability." (Loy, 1914, p. 1). This idea recalls the alchemical symbol of the squared circle, which represents the union of earthly perfection (the line) with cosmic consciousness (the circle). As Eliade (1978) explains, alchemy seeks not only the transmutation of metals but also the perfection and transformation of humans. Likewise, Loy's poetic vision suggests that human evolution is both material and spiritual. In this way, Loy diverges from both an early posthumanism and Marinetti's masculine, positivist Futurism. Her work consistently responds to the hubris of over-masculine transhumanist discourses. It is argued that Loy sought to synthesize the two domains of poetry and science, and while most scholarship has focused on her poetry, this study turns to her prose works, The Child and the Parent and Insel, which remain understudied. These texts preserve her poetic style while offering more sustained narratives, making them ideal for exploring her contributions to early inner transhumanist thought.

Both *The Child and the Parent* and *Insel* are semi-autobiographical works that reflect traces of Mina Loy's own life. The first book explores how human consciousness begins, develops, and becomes shaped by the world, while the second depicts the brief encounters of an adult female artist in Paris with a painter. *The Child and the Parent* begins with the child's separateness from the cosmic, undifferentiated awareness and enters language, social norms, and adult rationality, and later continues with the woman and, finally, with all the people and their future. It is no surprise that Loy devotes half the book to child consciousness. As Parmar

(2013) emphasized, “her primary subject is the effect of various impressions on the child’s intellect” (p. 4). Loy turns her own remembered experience into a universal frame in order to convey the child’s imagination to the reader, who -much like the artist- engages creatively with the surrounding world. (Parmar, 2013) In this way, the novel proposes a vision of a future human by looking at how a child, whose creativity and perception are not yet constrained by the rules of the external world, knows and exists. Thus, a connection can be drawn between childhood and cosmic consciousness.

Loy’s second novel, *Insel*, is set in 1930s Paris. On the surface, it fictionalizes Loy’s friendship with the German Surrealist painter Richard Oelze. Beneath this surface, however, the novel portrays placeless and rootless meetings between Insel, the painter, and Mrs. Jones, a Loy-like narrator, who has been assigned to write Insel’s biography. As Mrs. Jones continues to interact with Insel, readers also come to know the painter. As Gaedtke (2008) notes, “Initial descriptions fixate on his uncanny physiology, locating him somewhere between human and machine, but a machine that seems to be in an entropic state of decay and dissolution” (p. 145). As the narrative unfolds, both Insel and Mrs. Jones begin to display posthuman qualities. Insel embodies a hybrid posthuman figure that merges elements of posthumanism and transhumanism, while Mrs. Jones represents a vision of a future human in whom inner and outer forces align – an early inner transhumanist prototype. From a critical inner-transhumanist perspective, the novel reflects on the role of spiritual imagination and how it mutates in response to changing technologies.

These two novels can therefore be analyzed not only through their characters’ ways of being and knowing, but also through their references to imagination, mythology, science, and technology. Such an interdisciplinary perspective allows for deeper engagement with Loy’s literary project, which situates humanity's future at the intersection of creativity, spirituality, and modernity. This broader framework is consistent with Loy’s artistic identity. She was always halfway through the door into Tomorrow, mapping the modern woman’s psyche with an imagination that is both fantastic and realistic, combining past and present, ancient and modern, all together. Juxtaposed without transitions, her images presented a variety of experiences simultaneously. In this sense, both *The Child and the Parent* and *Insel* can be read not only as semi-autobiographical novels but also as extensions of Loy’s broader aesthetic and philosophical project, which moves between art and literature, reality and imagination, and modernity and myth. Ultimately, these works demonstrate how Loy’s vision anticipates possible futures for the human, and why her exploration of inner imagination is central to creating a future human shaped by inner transhumanism.

Among Mina Loy's unpublished works, *The Child and the Parent* stands out as a philosophical experiment that envisions the evolution of consciousness itself. Written in the interwar years, it captures Loy's effort to imagine what the human might become once freed from the boundaries of reason, gender, and conventional embodiment. Although Loy did not date her manuscripts, *The Child and the Parent* was most likely composed in the 1920s or 1930s during her years in Paris (Parmar, 2013). The manuscript was edited and presented as a novel by Karla Kelsey in 2024 and published among Loy's *Lost Writings: Two Novels by Mina Loy*. *The Child and the Parent*, described as Loy's "most philosophical and intensely imagined meditation on the sources of her unhappiness," consists of two main parts titled "The Child" and "The Parent" (Burke, 1996, p. 356).

In the first part, "The Child," the nameless protagonist, who can be considered Loy's semi-autobiographical alter ego, establishes a bridge between cosmic and individual consciousness through early-childhood perception and awareness, thereby articulating child cognition as a mediating form. In the second part of the book "The Parent", Loy turns to self-invention and creation through women, while also stating the kinship between child and woman consciousness: "but woman has to some extent the same volant consciousness, the same dilatoriness of the ego, to settle up itself as we found in the budding intelligence." (Loy, 2024, p. 38). This "budding intelligence" can be described as the future human Loy imagines, yet to come, which anticipates but is not identical to contemporary notions of the posthuman.

Although the term posthuman did not exist in Mina Loy's time, her prose anticipates many of the questions that contemporary posthuman theories raise. The phrase' future human' designates the figure that emerges from Loy's representations of inner evolution, imaginative expansion, and new forms of subjectivity. Even though future humans do not appear as a fixed technical term, Loy's work repeatedly presents them as beings whose consciousness, body, and environment are reconfigured. Crucially, this figure is not defined in relation to technological or scientific modernity. Loy is neither anti-futurist nor nostalgic; for Loy, aviation, industrial modernity, psychoanalysis, and new media are integral components of the transformative field in which human evolution unfolds. Accordingly, future human refers to Loy's imaginative construction within her own time, whereas posthuman is used to situate her thought within contemporary theoretical discourse. The distinction between the two is one of emphasis rather than opposition. Within posthuman theory, the posthuman often materializes through external networks such as information systems, machines, cybernetics, or biotechnological modification.

In contrast, Loy's future human foregrounds an inner transhumanism, in which psychic, affective, and mythic capacities are intensified from within. However, these two trajectories are not mutually exclusive. Loy's writing suggests that any technological or external reconfiguration of the human remains incomplete unless accompanied by an internal reorganization of sex, perception, and embodiment. Her early 20th century vision, therefore, does not reject the technological posthuman but insists that its most meaningful form must be grounded in an inner, alchemical transformation of consciousness. Consequently, as with the child and woman consciousness explored in the book, which functions as a map for a more feminine, intuitive, and creative future for humanity, Loy eventually moves beyond distinctions such as child or woman and begins to address all of humanity. The work concludes with a hymn to genius, a medium through which the world may attain a more advanced state of consciousness that today can be called an inner transhuman.

Since the central concern of the text is the effect of impressions on the intellect of the child and the woman, an inner transhumanist reading examines both as alternative modes of being and knowing for the future human. As stated by Parmar (2013), "Loy's universalizing of her own remembered experience is meant to express the child's imagination for the reader who, like the artist, responds creatively to the world around it" (p. 4). Thus, child and woman cognition and being provide the missing inner creative mythology necessary to build the future human, much as an artist's work does. Furthermore, in tracing the collisions between imaginative, mythic, and artistic consciousness, the body, and modern reason, the text combines mythological and modern elements. It reveals the narrative fusions that bind them.

Mina Loy's *The Child and the Parent* is not a celebration of childhood innocence, nor a feminist manifesto. It is an intervention, a roadmap that should be consulted in constructing the human of the future. Loy proposes that the human being begins life not as a primitive organism that will gradually become intelligent, but as an already complex consciousness whose capacities are later reduced by socialization, rationality, and patriarchal domestication. The infant is not unfinished humanity but overflowing humanity, temporarily attached to a fragile biological structure that humanity should also understand in order to move forward. In this sense, *The Child and the Parent* offers an early literary cartography of what we may call inner transhumanism, a more feminine, artistic, and mythic theory of human evolution grounded in the body's intuitive intelligence. Rather than imagining the human future solely through external enhancements such as AI, robotics, and prosthetics, Loy emphasizes internal augmentation.

CHAPTER 1
EARLY TRACES OF INNER TRANSHUMANISM IN MINA LOY'S THE CHILD AND THE PARENT

1.1. Child as the Prototype of the Posthuman

Loy opens the text with an image of diffuse existence: "a sheer existence, when matter scarcely perceptible and the ether not entirely invisible together formed a cosmic vapor that dispersed so soon" (Loy, 2024, p. 5). Here, the child is not a finished or inadequate subject but a transitional form of being, a vaporous fusion of the physical and the ethereal. The phrase "cosmic vapor" situates human life at the threshold where matter becomes conscious, and the child becomes a hero prototype, showing future architects how to cross that threshold.

1.1.1. The Child as Embodied Micro-cosmos

Throughout the first part of the book, Loy (2024) turns to aerial and spiritual metaphors such as the dove, the Holy Ghost, and "a bird in flight" that "showers down from the arches" to depict consciousness descending into form (Loy, 2024, p. 6). The image suggests that human embodiment is not the fall of spirit but its condensation. The Holy Ghost becomes a figure of incarnating awareness: a cosmic current entering the human frame. The child thus embodies the very moment in which consciousness becomes flesh. Later, the child's description of its arms "like antennae" reaching toward shining bottles (Loy, 2024, p. 11) continues this theme of vibrational embodiment. The infant's body is porous and electromagnetic, a transmitter between the visible and the invisible, extending beyond its skin and sensing energy as continuity rather than a boundary. This stage prefigures the posthuman body: not a mechanical extension, but an energetic organism, receptive to the environment through resonance. The child's form demonstrates how consciousness materializes without losing fluidity. When Loy calls this early awareness "the natal mind" (Loy, 2024, p. 12), she identifies a mode of existence where the world is still undivided: matter is alive, perception is participatory, and life is continuous. The child's being is, therefore, a microcosmic body, an embodied fragment of the universe, carrying within itself the same pulse that animates the cosmos.

Loy (2024) refers to the child's first encounter with material existence as an accident, a word that, significantly, is the only one in the entire text written in capital letters. The section begins: "But in the ACCIDENT even symmetry has been seriously injured." (p. 21) This single line already announces a literal and a metaphysical fracture through which unity gives way to

duality. In this scene, the accident is both physical and cosmic. The child smashes a window, an external accident that simultaneously reveals an inner shattering of consciousness. Loy writes: “It was a strange accident in which the intellect colliding with the Absolute split apart into good and evil, and I could just catch a hint of what caused it to occur when the voice summed up original sin and puffed my future equilibrium to the devil” (Loy, 2024, p. 23). Here, the accident is also the moment of the fall, when intellect strikes against the Absolute and fractures into the oppositions that define human experience: good and evil, masculine and feminine, mind and matter. The original sin Loy refers to is not a moral fault but an ontological division; the instant when pure, pre-linguistic being becomes self-conscious and therefore split. Through this fracture, consciousness enters the body. The collision with the Absolute produces not only duality but embodiment: the awareness of pain, sensation, and nerve. The ACCIDENT thus becomes both the fall and the arrival, the paradoxical birth of consciousness through injury, or pain. Where posthuman theory, as Hayles (1999) notes, tends to treat embodiment as “an accident of history” (p. 2), Loy employs the same term ‘accident’ much earlier, but she reverses its meaning. For her, the body is not a deviation from consciousness; it is a necessary field of discovery. To transcend the body, one must first understand its shaping power over awareness. The child’s consciousness mirrors this reverse movement: while humanity strives to move beyond the body, the child begins by entering it, by discovering the nervous and material foundations of being. In this sense, the child’s accident prefigures the path of an inner transhumanism. It teaches that any genuine evolution beyond the human must begin with the reconciliation of body and consciousness, a return to the point before the opposites, before good and evil, before masculine and feminine divided the unity of being.

Inner Transhumanism, or “evolutionary futurism, the idea that an evolution in consciousness yields an expanded awareness of the all” (Pilsch, 2017, p. 40), defines human evolution as the fusion of embodied and cognitive intelligence and argues that this fusion is a necessary step before any sustainable posthuman transformation can occur. The aim of transhumanist discourse, such as mind transfer or technological immortality, requires more than technological progress: it demands a prior inner evolution in consciousness, and inner transhumanism insists on the evolution of emotion and cognition as the primary vehicles for actualizing this different consciousness”. This progression unfolds in three stages. It begins with the dualistic, mind-centered notion of consciousness that positions the subject as the observer of the body. Famously defining the human as principally a rational being, Descartes’s “I think, therefore I am” represents the first stage of this awareness. However, development begins with the realization that the human is not confined to being a rational being alone. This

recognition leads to the second stage: a state of embodied awareness dispersed throughout the entire body. Finally, in the third stage, consciousness expands toward the cosmic, and a new model of the human emerges, open and receptive to all forms of transformation. When formulating the concept of inner transhumanism, Pilsch (2017) refers to Richard Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind* (1901), which presents "an evolutionary model of consciousness in which various stages are dynamically and evolutionarily explored by life in its various configurations." (p. 34). According to Bucke (1901), consciousness consists of three stages: first, animal consciousness; second, self-consciousness specific to humans; and third, cosmic consciousness, or higher orders of contemplation that can be reached through conscious effort. Bucke cites figures such as Buddha and Jesus as examples of this final stage. Bucke (1969) describes cosmic consciousness as a higher mode of awareness that surpasses the ordinary human's self-conscious state, just as self-consciousness itself transcends the simple consciousness of animals. Simple consciousness, shared by much of the animal world, allows perception of the environment. In contrast, self-consciousness introduces the awareness of the self as a distinct being separate from the rest of the universe. Building upon these layers, cosmic consciousness adds another dimension: an expansive awareness of the cosmos, the living order, and the unity of the universe. This state is accompanied by a profound intellectual illumination that elevates the individual to a new plane of existence, "almost a member of a new species." Along with this illumination arises what Bucke (1969) calls "a sense of immortality", not a belief in future eternal life, but the direct realization of possessing it already, means an immediate consciousness of eternity within one's being (pp. 1-3).

In this sense, Loy's child, "a bit of cosmic consciousness in process of isolation within a dimensional fence," (Loy, 2024, p.23) resonates with the inner transhuman process that proposes that the quest for any transhuman desire and the project to achieve it, such as cognitive uploading, must be preceded by a transformation in awareness itself. For instance, before leaving the body for immortality, one must understand the body's consciousness, that is, not the mind that notices the body, but the body that senses itself as conscious. The former is a dualistic, Cartesian mode of being where "locus of the liberal humanist subject lies in the mind, not the body" (Hayles, 1999, p. 5), while the latter is an embodied one. Inner Transhumanism unites the mind and the body without dissolving their essences. It argues that humanity can approach cosmic consciousness only by shifting from mind-centered to body-centered awareness. At this stage, consciousness begins to include the body's energy, chemistry, and rhythm as integral to its own field. When this embodied awareness becomes internalized, the

mind can remain stable even without the body, and it can remember bodily presence even after material form dissolves. This allows consciousness to move toward cosmic continuity without losing its anchor point. Such transformation is not only philosophical but experiential: a lived, physiological evolution. For this reason, despite its name, Inner Transhumanism involves both inner and outer transmutation and should start with bodily awareness. As Hayles (1999) underscores:

What embodiment secures is not the distinction between male and female or between humans who can think and machines that cannot. Rather, embodiment makes clear that thought is a much broader cognitive function, whose specificities depend on the embodied form that enacts it. This realization, with all its exfoliating implications, is so broad in its effects and so deep in its consequences that it is transforming the liberal subject, regarded as the model of the human since the Enlightenment, into the posthuman. (Prologue, p. 14)

It should also be noted that this is only a transitional stage toward cosmic consciousness, not the final form of the posthuman being, but rather an inner state within the evolutionary process that leads to it. This state is one in which awareness no longer stands above the body as a thinking mind that observes, but arises within it, making the body itself the center of awareness. This embodied awareness forms the bridge to cosmic consciousness, a state in which the human being expands beyond biological limits while remaining grounded. This process is mirrored in Mina Loy's *The Child and the Parent*, where the child represents the first form of embodied consciousness, a being that is half matter and half mind. As Loy (2024) writes,

> The child reincarnates not only the biological stages, but also among the litter of ideas peculiar to its race those sparks emitted from the depth of being to illustrate reactions, of which the first were the physiological myths of rise and fall. (p. 24)

Through this metaphor, Loy suggests that the child's existence repeats the descent of consciousness from the cosmic to the embodied. In other words, the child is not merely developing upward into humanity, but falling downward from a prior, luminous awareness into material form. When read through the lens of inner transhumanism, this passage implies a reversal of evolution: the human being must rediscover within the body the same cosmic awareness that was once lost during incarnation. Loy's child becomes a prototype for this recovery, a living trace of consciousness that remembers its inclusive, cosmic origin even as it learns to inhabit matter.

By the final pages of the first part, the child crosses "a little door," an image of threshold passage. It moves freely between the worlds of the material and the immaterial, the mundane and the luminous. In doing so, Loy envisions the future human not as a being who escapes

embodiment but as one who completes it. The child exists in an intermediate layer of matter, between the tangible and the intangible; precisely where human evolution must occur if it is to unify the physical and the cosmic. For Loy, this hybrid embodiment is not the loss of humanity but its renewal. In this regard, the child may be read as a skeuomorph, as Hayles (1999) calls it: "a threshold device, smoothing the transition between one conceptual constellation and another" (p. 17). However, unlike the technological skeuomorph that carries traces of the past into the future, Loy's child carries a cosmic consciousness that precedes embodiment itself. Through the process of incarnation, this consciousness becomes balanced within matter, achieving a temporary harmony between body and mind. It is only in adulthood that the mind overextends its rational control, and the balance collapses, leaving both the body and the cosmos forgotten. In this sense, the child functions as an inner skeuomorph, a threshold between pre-embodied cosmic awareness and the over-rationalized adult human condition and construction. As Huxley (1957) foresaw, the next stage of human evolution will require more than mere technological advancement; it will depend on recovering a balance that reunites material progress with inner and spiritual development, in other words, a return to the original harmony of embodied cosmic consciousness. Thus, it can be said that what will carry humanity across its evolutionary threshold may not only be technological transcendence, but also a return to that initial equilibrium of embodied cosmic consciousness.

1.1.2. The Child as Sensorial Intelligence

Loy's child figure represents the overcoming of the distance between concept and life. In The Child and the Parent's first episode, Loy (2024) describes the child's awareness as "so far unbounded," a sensibility "loose as the air" that "magically exceeds its surroundings or shrinks to minute concentrations," establishing "that intimacy between subjective and objective on which the intellect must later rely" (p. 7). This description presents a mode of knowing that diverges from scientific knowledge, which isolates the intellect from its affective and embodied origins. While modern science translates reality into an abstract idiom - a quantification through which the world becomes legible only insofar as it can be measured or manipulated - Loy's child consciousness restores the lost reciprocity between matter and mind by emphasizing the qualification. As Storck (2016) observes, when scientific investigation limits nature to what can be controlled, "whatever of nature cannot be controlled by these techniques is ignored and hence banished from the only world that science considers real" (p. 55).

In contrast, Loy envisions a future human consciousness grounded not in control but in participation, one that moves like "a bird in flight," tracing a roving passage between the known

and the unknown. Her image of consciousness, which "showers down from the arches," evokes the descent of a cosmic intelligence through the body, suggesting a non-linear, intuitive epistemology rooted in the body's affective intelligence rather than in detached rationality. Through this inner transhuman vision, Loy replaces the mechanistic idiom of scientific knowing with an embodied cognition that perceives through sensation, symbol, and etheric correspondence.

On page 11, Loy (2024) presents the image of "a strong man carrying a small child downstairs". The man, a doctor and family friend, stands for rational-scientific consciousness, the kind that knows through structure, observation, and control. His physical strength and medical authority mark the modern faith in the intellect's capacity to manage the body. Yet the child he carries embodies a different order of knowing, one that does not oppose the body but moves through it, expanding awareness beyond the measurable. When Loy writes about this sensible intelligence, she gestures not toward an escape from matter but toward a subtler interpenetration between matter and mind. The doctor "must carry its load downstairs" and while he bears the physical weight of the child, the child's airy consciousness flows outward, suggesting that consciousness is not contained in the body but communicates through it (p. 11). This movement establishes the very intimacy between the subjective and the objective, rejects neither the flesh nor the body, and acknowledges them as the necessary vessels of awakening. The descent downstairs becomes both literal and symbolic: a movement from ether to earth, from potential to embodiment. Yet even in descent, the luminous current of perception remains active. Loy implies that true knowing requires both the grounded strength of the body and the diffused awareness of the spirit. Inner transhumanism, in this sense, does not transcend matter but transforms it into a living medium of consciousness. Ultimately, Loy invites the reader to abandon habitual perceptual patterns and rational assumptions, allowing intuitive and sensorial awareness to come forward. Loy's protagonist says that rational knowledge is "stored in an embryonic state to mature" and opens later when the child accepts rational standards (p. 11). Thus, to recover the first, unmediated encounters with phenomena, one should reverse the process, and the intellect must momentarily recede so that knowing can once again emerge as an intuitive and participatory experience before it is embodied and affective.

The child's mode of knowing has represented a form of cognition distinct from scientific knowledge. As the Loy's narrator later remarks, "By the time I was four years old, I knew how to read, and my life as a scholar came to an end at that age" (Loy, 2024, p. 28). The child's intuitive cognition thus stands outside the domain of institutional or rational learning. Where modern science, speaking in a mathematical idiom, measures and manipulates the world, it

reduces reality to what can be quantified and controlled. What lies beyond such frameworks is excluded from what is considered real. As Kepes (1956) observes, "We need more than a rational grasp of nature… The sensed, the emotional, are of vital importance in transforming its chaos into order" (p. 19). This insight echoes Loy's view that rational knowledge alone cannot orient human consciousness. The "Child" in her narrative dissolves the boundaries presupposed by reason, merging the self and the cosmos, and transforming chaos into order. This results in a fluid, permeable, and mystical form of subjectivity that anticipates posthuman ways of knowing. In this early state, consciousness is not separate from matter but identified with it. The adult "utilitarian mind," by contrast, reduces sensory experience to function and suppresses inner intuition. The infant's consciousness thus marks a prelapsarian state in which perception, mind, and matter remain unified. This early form of awareness exemplifies Loy's vision of inner transhumanism as a re-expansion of cognition and a recovery of intuition. Hayakawa (1957) observes that while philosophers of science attempt to integrate the discoveries of modern science into coherent intellectual frameworks, the deeper task lies in translating this new knowledge into the dimensions of daily life, our ways of feeling, thinking, and valuing. True adaptation to the realities uncovered by science, he suggests, requires not only rational understanding but also emotional and imaginative engagement. As Kepes proposes, humanity must create new "images and symbols" capable of domesticating these invisible forces of nature, forms of expression that emerge not from science or art alone, but from a synthesis of the "scientist's brain, the poet's heart, and the painter's eye" (Hayakawa, 1957, p. 64). This synthesis is exemplified by Mina Loy, who, as both a poet and a painter deeply engaged with the scientific imagination of her time, sought to unite spiritual intuition with modern discoveries. As Vetter (2010) explains, with annotations drawn from Loy's unpublished papers in the Yale Archive, Loy perceived a profound correspondence between modern science and religion and even regarded her own mystical experiences as part of that synthesis:

"There is a growing expectation that science will eventually confirm the intuitions of the founders of religion, I feel that in this event, my momentary experience of extended consciousness will prove to be accurate" (Mina Loy Papers, f. 187). Another note records a conversation with a mathematics professor who confessed that the complexity of numbers had "forc[ed] him to believe in God" (Mina Loy Papers, f. 183) (Vetter, 2010, p. 21).

In Technic and Magic, Campagna (2018) returns to "the very ground on which an entire reality-system is built." Reading the Upanishads, he recalls Prajapati's teaching that the atman is the true self that exists before all language or reason. This ineffable self, he writes, "stands before all possibilities of objectification," a living awareness that cannot be reduced to words.

Loy's "infantile sensation of having come under a spell" reflects this same kind of knowing. To be "under a spell" is to understand through feeling and resonance rather than through logic. Her narrator does not analyze the world; she moves in harmony with it, responding to its vibrations. The "bewitched being" in *The Child and the Parent* recalls Campagna's vision of the ineffable self: both describe a form of awareness that listens rather than commands, that feels rather than measures. Loy's image of the Holy Ghost as a "bird in flight," light and fluid, also echoes Campagna's idea of the ineffable as a force "still capable of acting productively" beyond language. In both, knowledge becomes a creative act and a way of touching the world rather than explaining it.

For Campagna (2018), the human being's truest part is not the describable self but a dimension that "resists any form of description and classification," appearing at first like "a nothing" yet revealing itself as "the creative nothing... the nothing out of which I myself as creator create everything" (p. 113). This "creative nothing" mirrors the infant's undivided consciousness in Loy's prose: both emerge before language and definition, and both hold within them the generative power of perception unmediated by rational systems. Where Campagna (2018) reclaims the ineffable as the hidden source of creation, Loy translates it into the sensorial intelligence of the child, a form of knowing that restores the unity of feeling, matter, and imagination.

On page 21, Loy (2024) carries the child's sensorial intelligence into the very structure of time. The child moves within what she calls "elastic ogre time," a living temporality that recalls Bergson's durée, time not as a sequence of measurable units but as a continuous pulse of sensation. Here, once again, the difference between sensibility and sensuality and measurable, reasonable, scientific common knowledge becomes evident. Moments do not follow one another mechanically. They dilate, blur, overlap according to the rhythm of feeling. As Deleuze (1991) explains in Bergsonism, Bergson treats intuition as a genuine method of knowing, one that depends on detaching oneself from spatialized time to enter one's own duration. For Deleuze, subjective time, or durée, is the virtual that which consists of memory, consciousness, and freedom. Bergson (1934) himself writes that intuition "allows us to go beyond both idealism and realism, to affirm the existence of things that are below or above us, yet in a certain sense within us, and to let them coexist without difficulty" (p. 209). Through the child, Loy envisions a future mode of consciousness that is both expanded and integrated. A mind that thinks through the body, feels through time, and learns through the rhythmic pulse of life itself.

1.1.3. The Child Who Knows Not Death

In Loy's vision, the child's unawareness of death is not ignorance but a cognitive condition that precedes the conceptualization of mortality and is charged with the potential to develop an immortality mentality. Within the framework of inner transhumanism, this innocence exemplifies a psychology capable of internalizing immortality without collapse. Technology, in this sense, must follow an inward experience of continuity and liberation from instinctual fears. The child's grasp of death fundamentally differs from that of the adult. For adults, death is inevitable, terminal, and definable; for the child, it is optional, almost irrelevant; life appears as an unbroken flow. This implies that death may represent a limit of cognition rather than an ultimate truth. Adult consciousness, confined by linear time, interprets death as an ending, whereas the child intuits continuity. Still united with existence, the child has not yet been divided by the conceptual binaries and death. As Loy (2024) writes "For is there not something less than conviction in the pang of paradox that wrings us when we discover that we can only present our world to our child as rational when gauged by death which robs it of all rational value?" (p. 17). Here, Loy reveals that what adults call "rational" understanding is conditioned by death-consciousness itself. The child, by contrast, embodies a form of knowing untouched by this paradigm, one that perceives continuity as the natural state of being.

Rational education introduces death by teaching the world in terms of limits, causes, and ends. Thus, a reasonable order presupposes finitude. Yet the child's view of matter challenges this mortality-centered logic: objects and subjects are connected, responsive, and relational. This accords with New Materialism: matter is active, affective, entangled with consciousness. From a posthuman perspective, the human is networked with environments, objects, and technologies. Child consciousness anticipates this condition, a proto-posthuman awareness in which mind and matter co-constitute one another and in which no exact boundaries exist; consequently, even the most absolute boundary, death itself, ceases to hold. In the framework of Loy's early inner transhumanism, the evolution of consciousness is not directed outward toward mechanical transcendence but inward toward the recovery of a latent cosmic sensibility already embedded within the human being. This vision resonates with David Abram's reflections on our enchantment with digital technologies. Abram (2019) suggests that our deep fascination with screens arises from their awakening of something ancient within us, a primordial impulse to connect with life and to engage in animated exchange with bodies radically different from our own. The digital realm, in this sense, rekindles the archaic animistic awareness of a world that is entirely alive, awake, and aware, evoking in us a subtle sense of

wonder or the expectation of a hidden possibility just beyond reach, which resonates with new materialism. Yet, as Abram (2019) observes, the encounters we seek through these technologies are but reflections of genuine contact with other forms of consciousness. What draws people is not merely information but the longing to encounter a radically different sensibility and sensuality, a consciousness that exceeds the individual human being. In this light, the promise of a "superhuman" world through technology echoes Loy's reminder that transcendence cannot be manufactured only from without. Every device we invent mirrors a faculty that already exists internally. True evolution lies not only in the perfection of machines but in the reawakening of those embodied capacities that bind us to the living cosmos.

To summarize the child's approach to being, knowing, and death, Loy locates human evolutionary potential in re-accessing the child's mode of consciousness. Unmediated by restrictive logic, the child experiences the world directly and holistically. This signifies the inner capacity needed to absorb and integrate scientific and technological advances. The child's mind thus metaphorizes the flexibility and receptivity that inner transhumanism seeks. The child materializes images and perceptions, revealing the creative, transformative potential of consciousness. This foreshadows a posthuman mindset in which technology and consciousness operate in harmony through imaginative resonance. Infancy becomes the origin point of inner transhumanism: the future of humanity is not beyond us, but within our earliest state.

1.2. The Parent as the Prototype of Post-human

In the second part of *The Child and the Parent*, Loy turns her focus to the mother, the "parent" of the child, but later expands her reflection to include women as a collective force. She examines how the repression of feminine awareness by dominant cultural norms affects not only women but the evolution of humanity itself. The control of female desire, she suggests, parallels the suppression of human creativity and the future. The solution Loy proposes is not rebellion but recognition: if a woman acknowledges her own desire as both bodily and spiritual, she can overcome the inherited division within female consciousness.

1.2.1. Woman as Nature's Future Technology

Loy anticipates a critique of modern mechanization and its gendered consequences. She warns the reader that if modernization and technology rely solely on a masculinized vision of external mechanization, humanity will drift toward a mythless and desacralized future. The female body becomes the early signal of this danger: domestic labor mechanizes woman, transforming her from goddess to servant, from cosmic amphora to economic motor. In this symbolic process, women undergo a form of spiritual death marked by the loss of myth and

soul: “woman has been transformed from the goddess of the universe into the silent machine of the kitchen.” For Loy, the future therefore demands both technological and mythopoetic renewal. Inner transhumanism, as she envisions it, extends humanity not only beyond the machine but also beyond the divine, imagining a synthesis in which spiritual and material evolution coexist (Loy, 2024, p. 41).

In this regard, Loy’s vision resonates with what Natasha Vita-More (2002) later articulates as the distinction between the cyborg and the transhuman. The cyborg -a cybernetic organism- emerged in the 1950s from Norbert Wiener’s theory of cybernetics to describe the interaction between human biology and machines, originally designed to help the body adapt to hostile environments such as outer space (Vita-More, 2002). The transhuman, however, surpasses this mechanical integration. It represents an evolutionary transformation of the human being through technology - artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, gene therapy, and prosthetics - not as mere additions to biology but as instruments of conscious metamorphosis (Vita-More, 2002). Where the cyborg adds, the transhuman transforms. Loy’s call for a new union of myth and mechanism anticipates precisely this shift from augmentation to evolution. Consequently, while Haraway’s (1985) statement, “I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess,” fractures the wholeness of the future human by privileging the mechanical over the sacred, Vita-More’s (2002) counterclaim, “I would rather be a transhuman than a cyborg,” risks overlooking the inner dimension of that evolution. It is precisely here that Loy’s notion of an early inner transhumanism proposes a reconciliation that unites the technological, the mythic, and the spiritual into a single continuum of *becoming*. The true task, seen from an inner-transhuman perspective, is the integration of sacred and profane rather than choosing one while denying the other.

Loy implies that this potential transformation already resides in women. The female body, she writes, is “equipped with a complex organism that allows a long incubation of the inner qualities needed for the future” (Loy, 2024, p. 42). In this sense, woman is nature’s earliest form of future technology, a living laboratory for the incubation of consciousness. She functions as a carrier of intertemporal memory; not merely biological but also ontological, an interior portal between past and future. Whereas masculine forms of transhumanism aim toward the future, the feminine form Loy mentioned awakens the future from the body and within, and what is oldest in us carries us farthest. Real evolution, therefore, proceeds from within; if the human lifespan expands without a corresponding growth in consciousness, human evolution may proceed quantitatively but not qualitatively. The same critic reappears in Loy’s reflections on constructing the future:

We are featured forwardly; we look, sound, toe, and finger forwardly, and the time we take to make use of our senses moves forward with Life, as if we would flee from our blind back, because life began as an impulse to issue from nothingness. (Loy, 2024, p.46)

Loy evokes the image of the “blind back,” the dark, mythic, and feminine side of being that future consciousness tries to escape. This shadowed dimension represents the body’s unconscious memory, the site of instincts, archetypes, and forgotten wisdom. This model is also strongly associated with early 20th century occultism and the psychologization of magic. According to Hine (1992), “During this phase, the Otherworlds became the Inner- worlds, demons were rehoused into the Unconscious Mind, and Hidden Masters revealed as manifestations of the 'Higher Self' (p. 20). To heal this displacement, the “dark feminine”, the shadowed unconscious of the species, must be reintegrated. Without re-embodying our internal technologies, any extension of life risks psychological collapse. Hence, the sequence must be consciousness first, lifespan second. For Loy, women’s embodied knowledge stands at the center of any sustainable future. Loy’s women, then, model a horizon for the posthuman that restores myth and affirms the body. They point toward three necessary renewals: re-mythologize value, meaning recovering the goddess rather than the cyborgs in the technological and scientific era; re-embody knowledge, uniting sensation and intellect; and re-temporalize desire, incubating the future instead of merely projecting toward it. In Loy’s vision, the feminine posthuman is not anti-technological. It balances the over-masculine future, conditions technology through inner evolution, ensuring that longer life, stronger bodies, and faster cognition do not merely extend alienation but unfold as expressions of an integrated and sacred humanity.

Thus, Loy suggests that female bodily intelligence can serve as a bridge toward such forms of inner authority. Yet, she argues, modern progress, with its forward-facing bias, restricts feminine share in universal consciousness. Because the over-masculine orientation is always toward the future, people lose contact with the regenerative depth behind them. For Loy, a truly sustainable human future requires a return to the feminine, starting with the female body and exploring its unseen dimensions of awareness as the foundation for enduring transformation. However, Loy also critiques the way the female body has been framed as a spectacle of sexual promise. She insists that genuine transformation does not arise from the body’s external form but from its inner sensorial intelligence. Loy affirms that the female body carries an instinctive consciousness, a reservoir of wisdom that exceeds both the ego and rational control. In this view, the feminine body becomes an ontological foundation for human transformation and an early articulation of what this study calls inner transhumanism, in which

evolution advances not only through external scientific and technological intervention but also through the awakening of the body's intuitive intelligence to achieve inner adaptation. Even when this inner power remains hidden, Loy (2024) writes:

> Some consciousness in Instinct knows what woman wants, while she, herself, so often fails to find out. Moreover, we may be mistaken in supposing that the intuition of rapture is the product of organs and hormones through which rapture is ultimately conveyed. It may be a treasure which, even when irretrievable from the darkness it lies buried in, enriches that darkness, nevertheless. (p. 57)

1.2.2. Hieros Gamos: Mina Loy's "Future Human"

At a certain point in *The Child and the Parent*, Loy shifts her focus beyond the specifically female subject and turns toward all humanity. She begins to describe the inner transformation of the human being through three key experiential states: love, intoxication, and religion. These states mark moments when ordinary perception loosens and the self moves beyond habitual boundaries. Rather than serving as mere escapes from reality, they reorganize reality at a different register: the world may lose some of its familiar solidity, but it gains a heightened luminosity and intensity of meaning. In Loy's poetics, love, drunkenness, and religious experience are concrete phenomena through which human consciousness temporarily transcends its ordinary limitations. They demonstrate that the human being is not confined to biological function or rational self-control. These altered states reveal an inner surplus of capacity that anticipates the "future human" as a being open to the miraculous. As Loy (2024) writes, "Three avenues of escape -love, intoxication, and religion- give on to a universe which, for losing some of its concretion, is compensatory in brightness" (p. 57).

At this point, it is useful to recall Aldous Huxley's *The Doors of Perception*, written by the brother of Julian Huxley, who would later introduce the modern concept of transhumanism. In this work, Huxley (1954) examines how consciousness can be expanded using mescaline, a substance regarded as sacred in certain indigenous rituals, and how this expansion alters one's perception of reality. He notes that the artist's gift is the ability to see always what most of us glimpse only under the influence of mescaline, suggesting that artistic perception is itself a form of expanded awareness. Huxley further argues that humanity's enduring urge toward transcendence has often been displaced into temporary escapes such as intoxication, religious ecstasy, or sensual indulgence, but that closing off these routes does not extinguish the desire itself. Instead, he envisions more integrated forms of expansion: some social and technological, others religious, psychological, or physical, and, in certain cases, even through safe and

deliberate chemical exploration (pp. 27–55). From the perspective of inner transhumanism, these external social, technological, or behavioral developments are the outward projection of forces already present within the human being. Loy makes this argument explicit when she turns to social institutions such as the church, the brothel, and the bar. She writes, “So if the church holds out its cross, the brothel its blush, and the bar its sign... is it not in simulation of those avenues that open up in the human mind and escape from actuality?” (Loy, 2024, p. 57). Loy suggests that these thresholds function as exits for people in the streets, yet such “doors” merely mimic the pathways already present in the human psyche. These institutional portals act as external vents for “spent human essence,” enabling the social order to regulate and release the excess energies of desire and fatigue. In this way, the church, the bar, and the brothel operate as socially sanctioned escape valves, structures that reproduce and domesticate the spontaneous inner routes of liberation and transformation. In Loy’s vision, love, intoxication, and religious ecstasy appear twice: first as authentic openings within individual consciousness, and second as their institutionalized and commodified counterparts within modern society.

Loy later sets aside intoxication and religion, turning instead to love, and thus to Eros, as the primary force through which the early inner transhuman vision can be realized. To achieve the necessary truce between dualities and opposites, she brings together intellect and Eros in a scene of symbolic union; a kind of *hieros gamos*. Sensory intelligence must partner with the mind so that instinct and intellect co-create the future human. A posthuman worthy of the name requires evolved sensation, not mind alone. In ancient thought, the concept of hieros gamos (Greek term for “sacred marriage”) symbolized the union of opposites of the masculine and feminine, light and darkness, mind and matter into a state of cosmic equilibrium. Enacted through myth, ritual, and art, it expressed the idea that wholeness arises from the balance between complementary forces rather than their separation (Labouvie-Vief, 1994, p. 253). In the framework of inner transhumanism, this archetype can be reinterpreted as the synthesis of material and spiritual evolution, a reconciliation between technological progress and inner transformation, where human consciousness becomes the site of its sacred convergence.

Loy draws a provocative analogy between masculine intellect and erotic creation. She writes, “As the genii of the organs associate with the intellect, the wand of Eros invades the cavern of anticipation with the same incisiveness with which the masculine brain invades the world” (Loy, 2024, p.64). Here, the “wand of Eros” is unmistakably a phallic image, yet it does not merely reproduce masculine dominance. Instead, Loy parallels two modes of creation: the first one is the penetration of the world by the male intellect, and the second one is the penetration of the womb by erotic energy. Both acts express the same generative principle: the

urge to create, shape, and transform the future. While the masculine principle transforms and departs, the feminine body that is guided by the "genii of the organs" preserves continuity. The womb becomes the enduring site of renewal, the ontological center of evolution. In this sense, Loy marks not male or female supremacy but a universal creative impulse that binds intellect and flesh, a symbolic hieros gamos of mind and matter. From this culture, itself may evolve toward its hidden counterpart, *occulture*. "Occulture, as a sociological term, refers to the environment within which, and the social processes by which particular meanings relating, typically, to spiritual, esoteric, paranormal and conspiratorial ideas emerge, are disseminated, and become influential in societies and in the lives of individuals" (Asprem, 2013, p.116). It is, in another words, a "contemporary reenchantment." According to Asprem (2013), "The winds that ushered in this more temperate climate within which esotericism has flourished have been guided by the broad contours of modernization and related cultural influences, from Romanticism to Easternization" (p. 114). In this sense, Loy's hieros gamos aims to reconcile the creative interiority of Eros with the rational clarity of Logos, producing a higher synthesis that also includes Mythos; a mode of cosmic consciousness in which myth and technology, mind and body, intellect and instinct finally converge for a future occultural society.

Loy's use of mythological references throughout *The Child and the Parent* also reinforces her exploration of inner transformation. Drawing on both Eastern and Western traditions, she merges mythological and technological metaphors to envision a synthesis of the material and the spiritual. For instance, on page 27, the motif of "the Dragon" and "the Threshold" represents an archetypal encounter between the will and the shadow (Loy, 2024). Transformation here is not achieved through conquest but through coexistence, recalling Joseph Campbell's notion of "threshold crossing," in which the hero's journey into the unknown becomes an inner descent into layered consciousness. Desire, in this framework, "puts its own construction on emptiness," suggesting that imagination creates form from the void. Inner transhumanism privileges this act of inner creation over external domination: it is not about killing the dragon but learning to live with it. Through these mythic figures, Loy imagines a future human being who integrates rather than abolishes dualities. One of her most striking metaphors from the Western canon is that of the "semi-paralyzed Hercules": "Being alive gives us the sensation of using an infinitesimal amount of an infinite potentiality, of having an incalculable force driving through us into blocked-up channels, of being a semi-paralyzed Hercules" (Loy, 2024, p. 72). Traditionally a figure of divine strength, Hercules is reimagined as a symbol of human limitation and the partial activation of cosmic energy. This image captures the modern human condition: endowed with infinite potential yet confined within

blocked psychic and bodily channels. The “semi-paralyzed Hercules” thus embodies the tension between evolutionary possibility and the “restricted and utilitarian consciousness” of human beings. (Loy, 2024, p. 74). Loy also turns to Eastern imagery, contrasting the jewel and the mud to evoke the Buddhist symbol of the diamond in the lotus. On page 74, she writes that “Time and space are only different modes of separation,” and portrays two figures: one “living in a diamond,” representing time and crystallized intellect, and another clutching “a handful of mud,” embodying space and material existence (Loy, 2024, pp. 73-74). The juxtaposition of these two suggests that both are forms of the same cosmic division. The diamond in the lotus, therefore, becomes a synthesis of these states: enlightenment (the diamond) arising from the material world (the mud). Loy envisions evolution as both an inward and an outward unification, a transmutation of matter and consciousness.

She later extends this framework through alchemical and psychoanalytic metaphors. Revisiting the “window accident” and “blind back” introduced earlier, Loy imagines human existence as an architecture of perception: “Being alive is a ‘walling in’ by our blind back, a convenient housing of our biological perceptions, for otherwise who can tell but that we might be looking out of front and back windows at once” (Loy, 2024, p. 72). The “window” and the “blind back” mark the boundaries of perception: what is seen and what remains sealed off. Loy then shifts into an explicitly alchemical process, describing how psychic “refuse” can be turned into gold: “Most people are choked with a visible refuse, from which no man ever emerges except for an occasional Jew, who turns it into transient gold” (Loy, 2024, p. 75). The image reflects the transformation of base matter into spirit. The “occasional Jew” may refer to Freud, who, in Loy’s view, functions as both analyst and alchemist, descending into the unconscious and turning psychic matter into knowledge. Yet her tone remains ambivalent as Freud reveals the depths of the psyche but mechanizes them, constructing models that risk reducing mystery to system.

Mechanistic imagery also shapes Loy’s philosophy of the future human. To be alive, she writes, is “loneliness in multiplicity” (Loy, 2024, p. 72). The self exists as both singular and relational, perceivable only through others' recognition. Within this perspective, Loy famously calls the human a “soft machine” (Loy, 2024, p. 73). From a distance, this machine appears as a “pale creature against a green wall,” but at close range, it becomes “a covered entrance to infinity.” The human, then, is both organism and mechanism, again, a threshold through which consciousness can rechannel its own energy. In an inner transhumanist reading, this “soft machine” names the body’s dynamic systems: nervous, affective, and imaginal systems, through which awareness transforms itself. The body is not inert matter but a channel for an

“infinite potentiality” (Loy, p. 75). Hayles (1999) similarly defines the posthuman project as “putting back together parts that have lost touch with one another and reaching out toward a complexity too unruly to fit into disembodied ones and zeros” (p. 288). From an inner transhumanist perspective, this reassembly must include the body’s own intelligence. Once embodied awareness enters the digital field, the “soft machine,” like any evolving organism, will discard the heavy parts that limit ascent, retaining only what enables greater continuity.

Ultimately, Loy reconciles two seemingly opposing claims and predicts an early inner transhumanism for her future human. She rejects both the Cartesian split between mind and body and the reductive materialism that confines consciousness to the physical brain. For Loy, awareness begins in the body, in nerves, tissues, and organs, but it also surpasses them, expanding toward a cosmic field of being. This dual stance defines her concept of an early form of inner transhumanism: transformation occurs not only through external technology but also through the intensification of inner perception and creative energy. Evolution, in this sense, is an inward alchemy through which consciousness refines matter from within until body and spirit, inner and outer, dissolve into a unified mode of existence.

CHAPTER 2
EARLY TRACES OF INNER TRANSHUMANISM IN MINA LOY'S INSEL

2.1. Constructing the Future Human

Although *Insel* was published posthumously in 1991, Mina Loy wrote the novel between 1933 and 1936 while living in Paris. Paris in the 1930's was shaped by the exiled artists, material deprivation, political instability, and fragmented forms of consciousness. Within this context, *Insel* occupies a distinctive position in Loy's oeuvre. According to Miller (1999), the novel should be understood as Loy's singular attempt to adapt a specific literary genre, the artist-novel or Künstler(in)roman, to the conditions of late modernism in the 1930s. Loy's encounter with the German painter Richard Oelze, who remained on the margins of the Surrealist circle, played a crucial role in the formation of both the plot of the novel and the character of Insel. This encounter, however, does not function as a conventional biographical source. Rather than recording Oelze's life, Loy transforms the encounter into a psychic and intellectual investigation. Living in conditions of poverty, linguistic and ontological isolation and withdrawal, Oelze appeared to Loy as a figure suggesting a distorted or incomplete form of the creative future human as an artist. While the character of Insel is loosely based on Oelze, the novel resists historical or biographical reconstruction. Significantly, in the novel, the narrator, Mrs. Jones, who is a figure closely aligned with Loy herself, repeatedly fails in her attempt to write Insel's biography. Instead of a linear life narrative, the novel unfolds through encounters between Insel and Mrs. Jones in cafés and on walks through the streets of Paris. The emphasis shifts from factual representation to how Insel's unstable being and consciousness impact Mrs. Jones and himself, to how exposure to another mind destabilizes the observing subject, and to how Mrs. Jones finally frees herself from this destabilizing entanglement. Through this structure, Insel explores dissolution not as an isolated pathology, but as a shared experiential field. In this sense, although *Insel* may be read as a Künstler(in)roman, it is less concerned with representing artists than with examining the conditions under which creative consciousness emerges, fractures, or fails within artistic and technological modernity, while building a future human.

The novel asks how expanded modes of perception arise and what is lost or gained when internal, affective, and traditionally feminized dimensions of experience are either incorporated or denied. Similarly, DeMaagd (2022) notes that *Insel* is all about juxtaposing the two artists, and through this juxtaposition, Loy explores "integrations that combine the body, senses and

technology" (p. 25). Moreover, tracing this view, this kind of characterization of Loy can also be read as a critique: "where women and men were positioned as 'paired opposites' with man aligned with reason and woman with the senses" (DeMaagd, 2022, p. 4). The text first establishes this division, foregrounding a clear separation between gender and perception. It then revalues the feminine as a source of power, raising sensory knowledge to the level of rational authority. In its later pages, the opposition itself dissolves, as reason and sensation merge into a shared field of perception articulated through techno-scientific, mythological, occult, and futuristic metaphors. Re (2009) argues that one of the elements that makes Futurism's rich yet contradictory complexity visible is the substantial participation of women in the movement: "As futurist writers and artists they contributed significantly to alter and enrich the movement and its language, countering its misogyny, and taking futurism in different creative directions." (p. 800). In other words, according to Re (2009), by foregrounding intuition, sensation, and sexuality, Futurist women reclaimed a domain traditionally coded as "feminine" and neutralized its negative associations in a "masculine" field. Similarly, in *Insel*, Loy suggests that men, no less than women, are constrained by traits conventionally coded as masculine. The pressures placed on the future human may, in fact, weigh even more heavily on men, particularly when creative power is imagined as disembodied and technical only. According to DeMaagd (2018), "*Insel* is also a dissensual text within which Loy outlines and critiques the fraught relationship among the senses, gender, technology, and power - power which men seek to deny women, but for which Loy ardently fights" (p. 61).

The novel's closing passages explicitly situate *Insel* as a text oriented toward future generations. Near the end, Mrs. Jones reflects: "How far my mind had travelled; never to come to the beginning of any route" (Loy, 1991, p. 175). She continues: "I have existed before my time… Whatever I have found out belongs to a future generation," to which Insel responds, "How true" (Loy, 1991, p. 175). The narrator concludes with the striking aphorism, "The sentiment of one generation is the neurosis of the next" (Loy, 1991, p. 175). These statements retrospectively frame *Insel* as a guide rather than a diagnosis: a text that records modernity while signalling future modes of inner evolution. Rather than offering solutions grounded in technological mastery or posthuman dissolution, *Insel* addresses future readers by mapping the dangers of premature transcendence and proposing the necessity of an inner, affective, and integrated transformation, thereby making it a novel that examines early traces of inner transhumanism toward a future human. As Conover (1991) informs, "Mina Loy said it best in describing how she felt upon finishing Insel: 'I feel there's something wrong - & at the same time something right - I can't see it yet from the other side." (p. 15).

2.1.1. Insel as a Failed Future Human

From its opening pages, Loy constructs *Insel*'s central male figure as a being suspended between human and machine, incapable of sustaining a coherent process of becoming. Insel is introduced not as a heroic futurist subject but as a failed prototype of the future human whose transformation proceeds through dissolution rather than integration. Loy's narrator, Mrs. Jones, situates Insel at the threshold of future humanity, describing him as "a primordial soft-machine" and as "an embryonic mind locked in a dilapidated structure" (Loy, 1991, p. 19). As Gaedtke (2008) notes for the character of Insel, "Initial descriptions fixate on his uncanny physiology, locating him somewhere between human and machine, but a machine that seems to be in an entropic state of decay and dissolution" (Loy, 1991, p. 145).

Throughout the novel, Insel insists on his own development, even as what he was experiencing was an entropic masculinity, declaring, "Ich habe mich entwickelt - I was developing" (Loy, p. 24), even as his physical and mental coherence visibly suffers from a development that lacks something. It is important to note that Loy translates "Ich habe mich entwickelt" as "I was developing," a rendering that softens the reflexive and self-assertive force of the original German. More precisely, the phrase originally suggests "I have developed myself" indicating an active claim of self-transformation rather than an ongoing, passive process. This slippage, whether known or unknowingly, is significant, as it highlights the tension between Insel's assertion of development and the novel's broader depiction of his disintegration. Development here is detached from embodiment and maturation, functioning as a top-down, abstract claim rather than a step-by-step evolutionary process. Pilsch (2017) frames transhuman transformation not as a final technological achievement but as a continuous mode of practice that must be sustained in everyday life (p. 145). To clarify this point, he draws on examples from outside transhumanism itself, invoking Thoreau's ideal of deliberate living and Foucault's concept of subjectivity as something formed through repeated practices. Through these references, Pilsch (2017) emphasizes that evolutionary change requires discipline, attentiveness, and bodily engagement; without such practices, transhumanism risks remaining abstract, aestheticized, or purely speculative.

This framework is productive for understanding Insel's situation. Insel imagines bodily and mental transformation, yet he cannot maintain it as a lived practice; in other words, he cannot internalize it as inner transhumanism suggests. His body does not function as a site of disciplined self-formation; instead, it undergoes fragmentation and exhaustion. In this sense, Insel can be read as a failed future human prototype, exposing the limits of evolutionary transformation when it is severed from sustained practices of embodiment, the evolution, inside

and out. Loy underscores this contradiction through grotesque bodily imagery that renders Insel increasingly fragmented and mechanical. His body appears as “a wound-up automaton running down” (Loy, 1991, p. 31) and “his visible person as a mannequin” (p. 50). These descriptions frame Insel as a mechanical organism whose vitality is expended without renewal. Loy repeatedly sharpens this outer instability through inner mechanisms, using metaphors of magnetism, electricity, and energetic leakage. Insel is figured as a “magnet picking up a pin” (Loy, 1991, p. 20), an “economically nude soft machine” (Loy, 1991, p. 23), and a body emitting unstable rays and magnetic currents (Loy, 1991, pp. 66–68). The phrase “economically nude” exposes him not only as materially stripped but also as vulnerable within an economy of selfhood. Furthermore, Mrs. Jones names Insel as a creature, asking, “In what unheard of parasitism had I drawn this vitality out of a creature half-disintegrated?” (Loy, 1991, p. 75). By this point, Insel is also identified as an “animate cadaver” (Loy, 1991, p. 68), reinforcing his status as a figure caught between life and decay. Physiological descriptions continue this in-between condition. His head appears enormous and faintly gleaming (Loy, 1991, p. 82), while his body seems to fade from material presence, as “the rag and the bone did a fade-out” (Loy, p. 83).

Techno-scientific imagery further reinforces Insel’s unstable status. He appears “a gray man and an electrified organism at the same time” (Loy, 1991, p. 96), emitting invisible rays that transfer directly onto others’ neural currents (Loy, 1991, p. 96). His gaze itself becomes technological, as he is described as “x-raying” others (Loy, 1991, p. 160), scanning bodies rather than encountering them relationally. Insel thus appears less as an embodied subject than as a transmitter through which forces pass. This condition culminates in Insel’s illness, explicitly named as “dissolution” (Loy, 1991, p. 107). Even moments of apparent normalization remain temporary. When Mrs. Jones describes Insel, she says, “a kind of consciousness unconscious of its own potency” (p. 170), and he is unable to move forward into the future and “had not been able to pursue anything that carried him into the future” (Loy, 1991, p. 76). While his subjectivity lacks continuity, his appearance is shifting, as “the same Germanic wag would shuffle up to our table, each time wearing a different face” (Loy, 1991, p. 78). Loy makes this failure explicit when she states that in Insel “the intangible and tangible components of a human being had come apart” (Loy, 1991, p. 101). He collapses into what she calls “a mess of profane dross” (Loy, 1991, p. 102), and his body becomes “the living remains of a dead man and the dead remains of a man once alive” (Loy, 1991, p. 99).

Thus, Insel presents a critique of a future human prototype without inner integration. Loy, through her alter-person Jones, continuously mentions Insel’s unstable status and suggests

that he is forever in danger of dissolving into nothingness." All these show that "Although Insel is surrounded by images of energy, light and technical brilliance, his condition is marked by instability, depletion and loss of agency" (Gaedtke, 2008, p.146). Insel's visible person appears artificial and discontinuous, recalling Loy's artwork *Christ on a Clothesline*, in which the human body is similarly rendered suspended and stripped of organic coherence. Drawing on Karabulut (2020), the disintegrating male figure in the imagery has some parallels with Insel, whose body and agency likewise appear hollowed out and sustained only by symbolic, performative, and entropic authority rather than a sustainable substance.

In her essay "Gate Crashers of Olympus", Loy (1925) makes a clear distinction between creative freedom grounded in inner development and other forms of freedom that remain superficial. She observes that emancipatory gestures, when adopted by those who lack one's own creative initiation, do not lead to genuine transformation but a collapse, noting that "emancipation being contagious, if caught by the noncreative finds only the sexual un-confines in which or wherein to flower." This distinction may align with the logic of inner transhumanism, which holds that transformation cannot be achieved solely through external transgression or acceleration. In this sense, "sexual unconfines" marks a failed or limited form of emancipation, in which freedom is reduced to sexual, or one can say bodily, release. Without inner orientation and conscious integration, attempts to exceed human limits result not in evolution but in repetition or even entropy. Loy's critique thus reinforces inner transhumanism's central claim: meaningful transformation requires internal maturation before any movement beyond the human can occur. This distinction clarifies why Insel's artistic production, despite its apparent intensity and innovation, remains mechanical and infertile rather than transformative.

For the aforementioned reasons, Insel's failure to transform into a future human extends directly into his artistic practice. "Insel conceives of the masculine brain as the site of growth and rejects the feminine body's role in creation" (DeMaagd, 2018, p. 62). Although others repeatedly celebrate him as technically exceptional, his work does not emerge from intentional creation or reflective agency. Mlle Alpha, a secondary figure from Insel's social circle, describes his paintings as "technical miracles" and claims that he can hypnotically "infuse dead paint" (Loy, 1991, p. 72). Yet this apparent praise carries an implicit critique. Insel's technique appears detached from material process, labour, intention, and his over-masculine orientation made his alive paintings -just like himself- a Frankenstein-like creature. His paintings do not develop through conscious composition but grow involuntarily, spreading from his "digital substance" through "inter-atomic spaces" and "roots into plane surfaces" (Loy, p. 103).

Creation here resembles a parasitic mechanic being rather than an act of becoming. This mode of production mirrors Insel's condition. Just as his vitality leaks through rays and emanations, his creativity operates without containment or direction, lacking feminine fertility. His art appears productive but is empty of inner meaning, sustained form, or continuity. Loy presents this as a form of automatism rather than creativity. Insel's work repeats itself mechanically instead of evolving.

The creative failure of Insel becomes explicit in his repeated paralysis in the face of the future. Although Insel insists on limitless capacity, declaring "I can create everything" (Loy, 1991, p. 174), this excess immediately collapses into indecision. "Which one?" he asks, admitting that "a thousand directions are open to me" while remaining unable to decide. (Loy, 1991, p. 174). The problem is not only a lack of artistic imagination but also a lack of inner orientation. Possibilities without art and anchoring become infertile and immobilizing rather than fertile and generative. Loy sharpens this critique by linking excess stimulation to malfunction. When drinking, Insel produces "much the same effect as the perspective confusion of traffic lights among electric signs" (Loy, 1991, p. 76) —his perception overloads and fragments, resembling a machine flooded with input beyond its capacity to process. Enhancement without readiness does not expand consciousness but breaks it down. From a contemporary perspective, one can say that Insel embodies a premature posthuman condition. His agency is distributed, his body electrified, and his perception technologically augmented, yet none of these qualities lead to integration or transformation. Instead, they produce dissipation. Loy thus exposes a core weakness in both transhumanist fantasies of unlimited capacity and posthumanist celebrations of decentralization long before their existence.

In response to this failure, the novel implicitly offers an alternative model. Transformation, Loy suggests, cannot begin with dispersion or technological excess. It must begin with inner orientation. Insel's condition demonstrates what happens when expansion precedes integration. His future remains inaccessible not because he lacks power, but because he lacks a grounded center from which power can unfold. Loy, therefore, distinguishes dissolution from becoming. Insel's trajectory illustrates a form of enhancement without evolution, dispersion without coherence, and creativity without meaning. His failure marks the absence of an inner anchor capable of sustaining transformation. From this absence, an early vision of inner transhumanism emerges. Rather than rejecting technology or embracing limitless dissolution, inner transhumanism insists on centered dispersion, on expansion guided by embodied awareness, and on evolution grounded in inner integration before any movement toward the future.

2.1.2. Mrs. Jones as an Early Inner Transhuman Prototype

In *Insel*, "Loy juxtaposes two artists, Insel, a character loosely based on the German painter Richard Oelze, and Mrs. Jones, a character loosely based on Loy herself'' (DeMaagd, 2018, p.19). While Insel embodies a mechanical, masculine mode of dissolution without inner orientation, Mrs. Jones serves as the novel's balancing consciousness, mediating between feminine and masculine energies, mythic imagination and techno-scientific materialism, and artistic intuition and rational control. Rather than rejecting any of these domains, she holds them in productive tension, maintaining an observing consciousness that remains centered, reflective, and capable of integration even when exposed to dispersive forces. Loy imagines Mrs. Jones as the missing piece of the future human and examines "the female body itself as a sensory technology, one that registers sensations that machines cannot'' (DeMaagd, 2018, p. 19).

In her short story "Incident", Loy presents her body poetics by rejecting the idea of the body as the "whole circumscribed self" and instead describing it as "merely an instrument with which to contact one's universe" (2011, p. 43). Accordingly, throughout Loy's poetics, any movement toward a future humanity, or even toward transcending the body, first requires a full connection with the body. The mind-body dualism must be overcome through embodied consciousness, or conscious embodiment. The story narrates a momentary accident in which the speaker, through a sudden movement while walking, briefly loses bodily cohesion and enters a state of pure consciousness. Detached from the body, she experiences consciousness without an object, driven by an irrepressible urge for contact yet deprived of any means of contact, producing a terror bound to the certainty of eternal existence. This state gradually gives way to a calm, empty, and secure awareness, before a vast universal force reanimates the body and returns her to ordinary time. Rather than suggesting a permanent separation from the body, the story implies that disembodied consciousness can be experienced as secure or inhabitable only after a prior and full engagement with the body. This formulation is crucial for understanding Mrs. Jones's position in *Insel*. The experience recounted in Incident serves as a conceptual prefiguration of Jones's capacity to undergo dematerialization without collapsing. Unlike Insel, whose encounters with dissolution result in entropic fragmentation, Jones's consciousness eventually remains anchored in embodiment. Her ability to move across states of dispersal and return intact is grounded in the same bodily understanding articulated in *Incident*; transformation is not achieved through disembodiment, but through a conscious relation to the body as a mediating interface. Read in this light, *Incident* provides the theoretical groundwork for Jones's role in *Insel* as an early inner transhuman counter-model, capable of

integration where mechanized masculinity fails because of trying to achieve the transformation alone.

In *Insel*, Loy connects the idea of creation directly to a more feminine future by imagining the possibility of beginning a universe again. She writes, “I felt, if I were to go back, begin a universe all over again, forget all form I am familiar with, evoking a chaos from which I could draw forth incipient form, that at last the female brain might achieve an act of creation.” (Loy, 1991, p. 37) Here, creation is described as the ability to bring a new form out of chaos, and this capacity is explicitly linked to the female brain. A similar idea appears in Loy’s short story “Pazarella”, where Loy (2011) states, “The secret of woman is that she does not yet exist. Being a creator, I realized I can create woman” (p. 12). In this passage, “woman” is not presented as a fixed biological identity, but as something that has not yet fully come into being and must be created. Read together, these two texts suggest that Loy associates women with the conditions necessary for genuine creation and renewal. Rather than locating the future human only in technological progress or bodily transcendence, Loy emphasizes creativity and the capacity to generate new forms aligned with the feminine.

At the beginning of the novel, Mrs. Jones is not immune to Insel’s influence. “Jones experiences a magnetic pull toward Insel, a strange attraction that is coded in the discourses of modern mechanization and new media” (Gaedtke, 2008, p. 145). Sitting close to him, Mrs. Loy feels the pull of his magnetic field, describing how the filaments of her astral body are drawn toward him “like a terrific magnet” even as she remains physically repelled by his decaying flesh (Loy, 1991, p. 7). Insel appears to her as a being who has achieved an “impossible confusion of positive and negative polarity,” producing a powerful yet destabilizing attraction (Loy, 1991, p. 7). This early scene establishes that Jones is exposed to the same forces that consume Insel, but this exposure also marks the beginning of her resistance. The crucial difference between Insel and Mrs. Jones emerges later, when Jones undergoes a similar experience of dematerialization. She explicitly recognizes it as like Insel’s condition, stating, “I cognized this situation as Insel’s” (Loy, 1991, p. 151). However, the outcome differs fundamentally. Rather than dissolving, she actively reassembles herself, describing the situation as “it took me hours to weave myself together - but at last, exhausted yet once more intact, I fell upon my bed and slept” (Loy, 1991, p. 151). It is so clear that the distinction between these two future human prototypes lies not in the absence of risk, but in the presence of an inner anchor that allows Mrs. Jones to experience dissolution and return. This capacity becomes clearer in Jones’s encounter with Fifi, a minor character of the novel. When Jones’ consciousness becomes trapped in Fifi’s mind, she experiences the event as constriction rather

than expansion, describing herself as “imprisoned in Fifi’s mind” (Loy, 1991, p. 154). Unlike Insel, she is aware of the experience and can exit it. This ability to withdraw has parallels with a central principle of today’s inner transhumanist approach. Expansion without a place to return may lead to shock and paralysis, while expansion guided by an inner center enables growth.

Following this moment, Jones’s understanding of Insel becomes clear. She recognizes that he can “only mature in the imagination of another” (Loy, 1991, p. 155), relying on others to sustain his illusion of becoming. She concludes that she can go no further with him “than dissolution” (Loy, 1991, pp. 155–157). “I could scarcely go further with him than dissolution. I decided it would be useless to see him again.” (Loy, 1991, p.156) Her withdrawal is therefore not abandonment but discernment. To remain with Insel would require her to sacrifice her own integrity. Mrs. Jones thus emerges as a counter-figure to Insel’s failed posthuman trajectory. Where Insel’s development proceeds through loss, dissociation, and mechanization, Jones embodies a mode of becoming grounded in integration, embodiment, and reflective awareness. She does not rescue Insel; rather, she reveals the conditions under which transformation can occur without collapse. This difference is further articulated through the opposition between death and ripeness. Insel repeatedly affirms annihilation as a form of transcendence, declaring “Sterben - man muss” (Loy, 1991, p. 55). Jones counters this logic with her own formulation, “Man muss reif sein - one must be ripe.” Ripeness signifies readiness, fertility, and embodied maturation. It affirms transformation through fullness rather than erasure and resists fantasies of forcing people to escape from their bodies by death or as a solution by immortality. Rather, Loy emphasizes that, through an evolution backed by inner and outer developments, it may ultimately lead humanity toward its own ripeness; it may one day lead humanity, on its own, toward a state in which the body is no longer necessary.

The novel’s most explicit critique of mechanized masculinity appears in the scene in which Jones is “choked by a robot,” an experience felt as automatic pressure (Loy, 1991, p. 134). This violence is not merely individual. Jones senses that “myriads upon myriads of distraught women were being strangled” (Loy, 1991, p. 158), transforming the moment from individual experience into a collective complaint of hyper-rationalized, masculinized technological domination that suppresses sensation, affect, and feminine consciousness. Crucially, at the end of the novel, Mrs. Jones survives. Her escape also marks another early inner transhumanist approach: transformation requires the capacity to refuse premature fusion and to recognize when evolution becomes destructive.

This ethical clarity also shapes the novel’s conclusion. When Insel asks, “How goes the book?” Mrs. Jones recognizes that her creative process has reached maturity. (Loy, 1991, p.

177) She briefly considers claiming Insel's remaining energy, imagining saying, "I have absorbed all your Strahlen. Now what are you going to do?" (Loy, 1991, p. 178). Yet she deliberately withholds the statement, recognizing that such a claim would risk provoking a final collapse in Insel. Instead, she only replies "Good-bye" (Loy, 1991, p. 178). This restraint marks the novel's horizon. Transformation cannot be extracted from another, nor can it be forced through acceleration or consumption. Through Mrs. Jones, Loy articulates the inner evolution as an integrated mode of becoming that balances body and mind, sensation and reflection, and feminine and masculine forces. Unlike Transhumanism's emphasis on external enhancement or Posthumanism's fascination with agency dissolution, inner transhumanism insists on readiness, integration, and the ethical timing of everybody's own - without forcing them to implement the schedule of a worldview.

2.1.3 Dissolution vs. Becoming in *Insel:* A Philosophical Approach

"Loy's gesture of being a new woman is not only inspired by Futurism but also by Henri Bergson", according to Tan (2016, p. 47). This quotation situates Mina Loy's work also within a philosophical framework that understands subjectivity not as a fixed identity but as a process of becoming. As is well known, Henri Bergson treats intuition as a cognitive means that rejects rational analysis (Tan, 2016, p. 50). For Bergson (1911), reality is not composed of stable entities but unfolds through duration (durée), a continuous flow in which existence is understood as creative evolution rather than linear development. As he writes, "for a conscious being, to exist is to change, to change is to mature, to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly" (p. 252). This Bergsonian understanding of life and creativity is crucial for Mina Loy. Her writing repeatedly resists fixed forms and instead privileges processes of creativity of being with inner evolution. From this perspective, creativity is inseparable from lived experience and relationality, and Loy sees the body as a site of becoming rather than a static object. This philosophical lineage is further developed by Gilles Deleuze, who explicitly reworks Bergson's ideas and extends them into a theory of thought, subjectivity, and creativity.

For Deleuze, becoming is not an evolutionary progression from and toward a stable form but an open-ended process that produces only itself. As they state, "Becoming is not an evolution, at least not an evolution by descent and filiation. Becoming produces nothing other than itself" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 238). Within this framework, identity, subjectivity, and meaning are no longer organized around fixed centers or hierarchical origins, but they emerge through movement, transition, and temporary configurations. This logic directly informs Deleuze and Guattari's concept of nomadology, which opposes fixed identities, stable

centers, and vertical hierarchies. A subjectivity, in this sense, is not a point of origin but a passage through forces, relations, and events. Accordingly, "the subject is no longer a point of origin, but a point of passage" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 458). This makes the subject not a fixed origin but an anchoring point that may function within processes of becoming. This Deleuzian reconfiguration of subjectivity allows a direct conceptual link to be drawn between nomadology, inner transhumanism, and Loy's *Insel*. Opposed to fixed identities and representational models of consciousness, nomadic thought foregrounds becoming over being. However, the nomad is not the same as the migrant. The migrant moves from one point to another, while the nomad moves while staying in the same place (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 380). The characters in Insel can also be interpreted through this distinction. Insel functions as a migrant figure who moves toward a future human while remaining bound to migratory anxieties such as linear progress, fixation on destination, and unresolved dependence on external validation, leaving his origins behind and dissolving. Mrs. Jones, by contrast, gradually learns to act as a nomad. Rather than merely moving toward the future, she transforms her mode of being and embodies a nomadic relation to becoming, allowing her to approach the future human otherwise. Mrs. Jones's nomadism does not entail a complete loss of orientation; rather, she begins to function herself as an anchor within becoming, sustaining a continuity that is not fixed but dynamically reconstituted. This is evident in moments where Mrs. Jones observes Insel's instability without collapsing into it, maintaining a perceptual and narrative distance that allows her to register his dissolution while preserving her own coherence.

In this way, the text emphasizes that the construction of the future human requires, first and foremost, the cultivation of a nomadic and embodied consciousness as an essential stage of inner preparation. On page 107, Insel articulates a striking but ultimately flawed understanding of creation. He claims that "to make things grow, you would have to begin with the invisible dynamo of growth; it has the dimension of naught and the Power of Nature" (Loy, 1991, p. 107), correctly identifying creation as originating from an invisible and primordial source rather than from material technique alone. He also admits that this force "as a rule… will only grow if planted in a woman" (Loy, 1991, p. 107), acknowledging that real growth requires embodiment, relationality, and a living medium, especially at the beginning. However, Insel immediately displaces this insight by asserting, "my brain is a more exquisite manure" (Loy, 1991, p. 107), replacing bodily and relational creation with a purely mental process. Insel thus comes close to recognizing the true source of creative power, yet he diverts it into a technical, masculinized fantasy. As a result, creation remains in motion but never develops into something that sustains genuine growth for him.

Read through Bergson and Deleuze together, *Insel* stages not a celebration of posthuman acceleration but a critique of transformation without inner readiness. Insel's failure demonstrates that becoming cannot be forced through speed, abstraction, or mechanical intensity alone. As Deleuze reminds us, "There is no becoming without an encounter" (Deleuze, 1994, p. 139). Loy's text thus distinguishes between dissolution and becoming, encountering Jones and Insel as dissolution and becoming, presenting Insel as a blockage in creative evolution, while preparing the ground for an alternative, embodied, and nomadic model of the future human. A defining feature of Insel's condition is his lack of agency. The forces that pass through his body and mind are not experienced as growth but as loss. He senses transformation as "a sort of bodily loss," a depletion that can only be temporarily offset through "rare encounters with one able to tune in" (Loy, 1991, p. 144).

Insel repeatedly appears to act as if he had "submitted to an unknown law enforcing itself through him" (Loy, 1991, p. 142). Transformation happens to him rather than through him. From a Bergsonian perspective, Insel's condition represents a distortion of élan vital, the creative and unpredictable life force that sustains duration, intuition, and qualitative growth. Rather than unfolding as creative evolution, Insel's vitality disperses mechanically. Movement no longer produces duration or development but depletion. Change occurs, yet it does not accumulate into growth. Insel thus figures not an alternative future human but a blockage in becoming, a form of transformation without integration. This failure becomes especially visible in Insel's relation to openness and multiplicity. His claim that "a thousand directions are open" does not signal creative possibility but paralysis. Without an internal point of orientation, openness collapses into inertia. Possibility proliferates while agency dissolves.

Where Insel's transformation is externally enforced, Jones's evolution emerges through receptivity, consciousness, and imaginative integration. The movement from Insel to Mrs. Jones marks the shift from posthuman failure to inner transhumanist becoming, from dissolution toward an integrated and inhabitable future. This alternative vision subtly aligns transformation with care, perception, and ethical orientation rather than mechanical speed. Evolution, here, is not limitless computation but qualitative change grounded in awareness and embodiment. Loy's short story, "Gloria Gammage," crystallizes this logic. As she writes: "She had the divine female quality of lending to every latest science or philosophy, no matter how mathematical or how austere, a brazen flavour of lubriciousness; with her insidious interest she was at this time passing round 'Bergson' to her friends… that seemed to assure them that being was indeed, as they had long suspected, an infinite orgy" (Loy, 2011, p.36). Here, Bergson's philosophy

becomes not abstraction but lived experience. Being unfolds not through acceleration but through duration, integration, and creative participation.

2.2. From Maladaptive Behaviour to Inner Evolution

2.2.1. Inner Transhumanism and Modern Technological Anxiety

In Insel, modern anxiety is presented not as an individual psychological failure but as a structural condition produced by technological modernity. This resonates with Gaedtke's (2008) observation that the rapid spread of early media technologies blurred the boundaries between technology, psychology, and paranormal communication. While these media generated excitement by promising access to invisible forms of connection, they simultaneously produced anxiety by raising fears about the loss of bodily and mental autonomy. In the novel, this condition is clearly evident in the figure of Insel, who is represented as a broadcasting body rather than a bounded subject, as captured in the exclamation. On page 159, Mrs. Jones explains how she sees Insel after kicking him: "As if he were anesthetized, the kick seemed not to hurt him." This reaction suggests that his connection to his body is suspended. At the same time, Mrs. Jones' phrase "The pet! The lamb! —it does television, too" positions Insel as domesticated and sacrificial, while also presenting him as a mechanized product of modern culture (Loy, 1991, p. 159). Technology is no longer external to the human. However, it enters him directly, creating the fear that the subject may become more accessible to external systems than to itself, as a sacrifice.

Loy repeatedly links anxiety to fragmentation and exhaustion. Subjective coherence cannot be sustained under pressure. As the narrator - Mrs. Jones- observes, "Trouble… burst, had no further existence except in fragments" (Loy, 1991, p. 66). Anxiety does not resolve or transform; it explodes and disperses, and remaining consciousness becomes mechanized and unable to metabolize intensity. This condition is closely tied to temporal paralysis. Insel's mind is described as "besieged the barred outlet of today-into-tomorrow" (Loy, 1991, p. 67). Although technological modernity promises constant progress, Insel is unable to move forward. Acceleration overwhelms agency rather than enabling it. Mrs. Jones, by contrast, restores continuity not through speed but through inner reorientation. Loy frames this anxiety through metaphors of energy depletion. Insel appears to be subjected to "a ruthless extraction of Supreme Good," leaving behind "a mess of profane dross" (Loy, 1991, p. 101-102). Psychic energy is consumed faster than it can be renewed. Inner transhumanism emerges here as an ethical response to renewable energy. Instead of extracting ever more energy from the subject, it emphasizes preservation, integration, and conscious pace. Importantly, Loy does not reject

technology itself. Insel is acknowledged as technically extraordinary: “I know his work is a technical miracle… he has the power to infuse dead paint” (Loy, 1991, p. 124). Yet technical brilliance alone accelerates depletion when it is not supported by inner coherence. Inner transhumanism, therefore, does not oppose technology but insists that technical capacity must be accompanied by embodied consciousness and inner evolution to achieve a successful posthuman condition.

In Hayles’s (1999) analysis of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?,* the condition experienced by androids is also evident in Mina Loy’s characters, most notably Insel and, for a period, Mrs. Jones, whom he deeply influences. Hayles (1999) argues that “androids are associated with unstable boundaries between self and world” and concludes that this instability produces entropy, schizophrenic delusions, and “a broad range of concerns” (p. 160). Similarly to Dick’s androids, Insel is not presented as a “fixed symbol” but rather as “a signifier that enacts as well as connotes the schizoid, splitting into two opposed and mutually exclusive subject positions of the human and the not-human” (Hayles, 1999, p. 163). Hayles (1999) identifies this situation as the “ultimate horror for the individual” (p. 162). At this point, when horror is mentioned, it is not surprising that Insel is repeatedly described as a grotesque future human, a Frankenstein-like figure. As critics of *Frankenstein* have noted, “*Frankenstein* perfectly illustrates the human anxieties of becoming posthuman” (Heise-von der Lippe, 2017, p. 9). Moreover, Karmakar & Parui (2018) underscore that Frankenstein’s ending invites readers to consider “how a restricted notion of personhood has led to the denial of rights to a bioengineered being” (p. 351). In this sense, Insel’s representation echoes the Frankensteinian tradition, in which the posthuman becomes a site of anxieties about identity, agency, and moral responsibility. Insel’s grotesque embodiment thus functions as a symptom of unstable boundaries of personhood in a technologically mediated future.

According to Diebold (1962), “the effects of the technological revolution we are now living through will be deeper than any social change we have experienced before” (p. 19). Toffler (1970) similarly argues that technological innovation does not simply recombine machines and techniques. New machines alter humanity’s overall intellectual environment, reshape how people think and perceive the world, and suggest or compel changes in other machines, social structures, and even personal and philosophical problems. Drawing on a Canadian study, Toffler (1970) examines the psychological pressure that rapid social change exerts on personality and behavior. In contexts shaped by accelerated transformation, such as migration, modernization, and cultural dislocation, individual identity, habitual patterns, and psychological stability are placed under intense strain. Toffler (1970) argues that individuals

do not adapt instantly to such conditions. Instead, they move through identifiable stages of adjustment. While some eventually achieve a degree of integration within the new environment, others fail to adapt, resulting in prolonged psychological disturbance or breakdown. “The striking signs of confusional breakdown we see around us—the spreading use of drugs, the rise of mysticism, the recurrent outbreaks of vandalism and undirected violence, the politics of nihilism and nostalgia, the sick apathy of millions—can all be understood better by recognizing their relationship to future shock” (Toffler, 1970, p. 177). These forms of social irrationality, he suggests, reflect the deterioration of individual decision-making under conditions of environmental overstimulation.

It is important to note that within Toffler’s framework, mysticism is interpreted as a symptom of cognitive overload and social irrationality produced by accelerated change. However, this reading can be productively challenged. Rather than treating all forms of mysticism or occult orientation as irrational regression, this thesis understands mythological and occult re-enchantment as deliberate ontological and epistemological alternatives to hyper-rationalized, technocratic modes of existence. From this perspective, re-enchantment does not necessarily signal a breakdown of decision-making but may function as a meaning-making strategy that resists the reductive logic of acceleration. What Toffler (1970) frames as irrationality can therefore be reinterpreted as an attempt to reconfigure subjectivity through symbolic, imaginal, and affective modes of being and knowing.

Returning to Insel’s own complaint, “I can create everything” (Loy, 1991, p. 174), this excess immediately collapses into indecision. “Which one?” Insel asks, admitting that “a thousand directions are open to me” while remaining unable to decide (Loy, 1991, p. 174). Here, what Toffler identifies as decision stress in the future human becomes visible. Toffler explains that while individuals in slow or monotonous environments long for situations that require faster, more complex decisions, the problem is reversed for those living under accelerated conditions. Faced with constant novelty and diversity, individuals experience contradictory demands that place them in an exhausting double bind. This insight helps clarify the psychological suffering experienced by Insel and by future humans more broadly. Toffler (1970) underscores that anxiety generated by such collisions is intensified by expanding diversity. As the number of available choices increases, so does the amount of information that must be processed, resulting in slower reaction times and greater cognitive strain. Insel, Mrs. Jones, and even Loy herself can thus be understood, like her contemporaries, as possible victims - sacrificial lambs - of future shock. For Toffler, the level and speed of change have reached an unprecedented intensity. Humanity is no longer adapting to stable conditions but to a continuous

flow of short-lived, rapidly shifting situations. This may be pushing human adaptability to its limits, especially in technologically advanced societies. Loy echoes this concern when she writes that modern man, unable to create "soft-machines," produces "heavy plagiarisms that sometimes crush him" (Loy, 1991, p. 54). Progress without adaptability turns against its creator.

What, then, is the solution? According to Toffler (1970), equilibrium during the super-industrial revolution can only be maintained by meeting invention with invention. Rather than blind acceptance or blind resistance, he proposes creative strategies for selectively shaping, deflecting, accelerating, or decelerating change. He identifies six such strategies, not only to help individuals survive, but also to enable them "to crest the waves of change, to grow, and to gain a new sense of mastery over their own destinies" (Toffler, 1970, p. 191). This notion of mastery resonates strongly with transhumanist discourse, which seeks to respond to accelerating change with new cognitive and existential tools. Yet Toffler's strategies also possess an inner dimension, situating them within the field of inner transhumanism. Of these six strategies, three are particularly relevant to an analysis of Insel. The remaining three function primarily as institutional or organizational mechanisms and are therefore less central to this discussion.

The first strategy, direct coping, involves actively managing internal stimulation rather than allowing change to overwhelm the mind and body unconsciously. Toffler suggests reducing sensory input, limiting new information, simplifying thought processes, and easing decision pressure. Inner coping thus emphasizes self-monitoring, internal balance, and conscious control of attention, energy, and tempo, so that change does not exceed human adaptive limits. In Insel, the male figure fails at this task. He cannot create zones of stability and is unable to regulate mental overload. As a result, his adaptive limits are exceeded, leading to a breakdown. Mrs. Jones, by contrast, demonstrates partial coping. She observes what is happening, withdraws when necessary, and chooses silence and distance. Although she does not maintain this stance consistently throughout the novel, she nonetheless embodies a form of inner regulation aligned with Toffler's model.

The second strategy, situational grouping, emphasizes social rather than purely individual adaptation. Toffler argues that societies must create "future shock absorbers" by understanding people not as fixed identities, but as beings in transition. Individuals should be defined not by what they are, but by what they are undergoing or moving toward. Temporary groupings among those experiencing similar transitions, such as relocation or role change, help ease adaptation. In this sense, the brief, temporary intimacy between Insel and Mrs. Jones serves

as a form of situational grouping. Their connection is based on a shared transitional moment rather than a stable or lasting bond.

The final strategy considered here is the use of global space pageants. Toffler argues that when adaptive limits are considered, continuity should not be dismissed as conservative, just as radical change should not be automatically seen as progressive. In fast-changing societies, the psychological need may shift from novelty to continuity. Toffler notes that rituals historically served to buffer change, and that modern secular societies have not lost their need for them. Rituals continue to stabilize meaning through repetition. This insight helps explain the frequent coexistence of ancient occult and mythological references alongside technological imagery in Insel. While Loy seeks to imagine and create the future, she simultaneously anchors it in older systems, attempting to construct the future human in a way that feels psychologically survivable. In *Insel*, however, the past does not function as productive continuity but as enclosure. The past becomes a psychic mechanism that blocks access to the present and the future. Insel is described as repeating his stories "as a prayer, repeated over and over, becoming autohypnotic" until memory itself expands unnaturally (Loy, 1991, p.67). Because "some unimaginable impediment withheld the present and the future from him," his mind retreats into memory, dilating it until "the story of the universe was blotted out by the gigantism of his meager individual experience" (Loy, 1991, p. 23-68).

2.2.2. Technological Modernity and New Modes of Perception

On the other side of the anxiety, Insel explores how technological modernity may produce new modes of perception. As Caughie (2010) argues, new media reorganized human perception by altering how and what people could see and hear, and they brought new ways of feeling and perceiving, leading to different ideas about identity and new ways of seeing the world. According to Gaethke (2008), "curiously technological or somatic form of transference that Jones achieves with Insel, which bypasses the linguistic exchange" is framed by Loy as a threshold through which consciousness may expand (p. 144). These perceptual shifts mark a movement from breakdown toward creativity and toward what can be described as cosmic consciousness. Moments of temporal transcendence introduce this expanded field when Mrs. Jones encounters "the eternal Thing… looking at us with the fullness of the future" (Loy, 1991, p. 85).

This reorganization of perception also directly affects Insel's body. On page 141, Loy (1991) describes how, "out of this atavistic base his fingers grew into the new sensibility of a younger generation, in his case excessive," noting that his fingers "clung together like a kind

of pulpoid antennae" and were "aquiver with such minuscule vibrations they scarcely needed to move." Their ability to "more and more microscopically focus his infinitesimal touch" suggests a perceptual mode attuned to micro-sensations rather than stable forms. Yet Loy emphasizes that this heightened sensitivity remains unresolved, observing that "there was something unpleasantly embryonic about them," and likening this condition to the disturbing image of an undeveloped twin in Barnum's circus (Loy, 1991, p.141). Technological perception thus appears not as a completed evolution, but as an intensified yet developmentally incomplete sensory state for Insel. These bodily shifts parallel moments in the novel where perception bypasses language altogether: "We had no longer need of larynxes to converse. Insel thought at me. More precisely - vaguely conceived before me" (Loy, 1991, p. 106). Insel later articulates this expanded sensory field explicitly when he claims, "I see through the wall," describing how he can lie for hours, watching his neighbors' lives. At the same time, even distant music "has become miraculous" (Loy, 1991, p. 139). Loy presents technological modernity as enabling new perceptual capacities that approach cosmic consciousness, while simultaneously revealing their fragility, excess, and incomplete integration into the human subject.

Perception in Insel is also relational between both Insel and Mrs. Jones, and their sexes. "I could see this, because he was seeing this" (Loy, 1991, p. 93). Consciousness emerges between subjects, not within isolated minds. This intersubjective awareness forms a key feature of inner transhumanism, where expansion occurs through resonance rather than control and where there is a balanced relationship between masculine and feminine energies. Loy situates these perceptual shifts within a cosmic and evolutionary register. Insel is described as a "man-of-light" (Loy, 1991, p. 96), while perception stretches from "the first jelly quivering under the sun" to "some final unimaginable form of aerial substance" (Loy, 1991, p. 96). Evolution is no longer purely biological but also becomes a transformation of consciousness.

While Insel represents an unsuccessful alignment with new perceptions of future humans, multiplicity appears without dissolution through Mrs. Jones. She experiences "a sort of doubling of space where different selves lived different ways in different dimensions at once" accompanied by "the sense of timeless peace - of perfect happiness" (Loy, 1991, p. 117). Inner transhumanism allows plurality while preserving coherence. These perceptual expansions also resonate with some views in transhumanist discourses that frame art as a catalyst for new modes of perception and becoming. In a popular articulation of this view, Istvan (2014) explicitly positions transhumanist art as a force capable of guiding human transformation:

"On the surface, transhumanist art seems like an oxymoron to some. Is it possible to combine the scientific nature of transhumanism with creative works for admiration and

improvement of the self? The simple answer is yes. Art is not bound by preset rules, which is perhaps why it holds a special place in society and has the power to advance new movements. Transhumanism is also not bound by rules. It is, after all, a movement that seeks to improve upon and move beyond what we know and experience as humans. The creation of transhumanist beings—which we are slowly becoming—is perhaps the most artistic endeavour humanity has ever dared to pursue. Transhumanist art will help guide us to becoming masterpieces.'' (Istvan, 2014, p. 2)

While Istvan (2014) presents this convergence of art and transhumanism as an affirmative and inspirational project, Insel complicates this vision through what may be described as an oxymoronic self. Loy's protagonist Insel repeatedly articulates expansive creative and perceptual claims, declaring limitless potential and artistic capacity, yet embodies them in a subjectivity marked by inner fragmentation, exhaustion, and a lack of integration. In this sense, Loy does not reject what can be called an early transhumanist aspiration toward artistic becoming, but paradoxically stages it: transformation is imagined at the level of perception, while the self remains unable to sustain it as a coherent mode of being. A more theoretically grounded articulation of art's role within transhumanism appears in Natasha Vita-More's transhuman art manifestos, where art is understood not as an accessory to technological progress but as a necessary component of it. Vita-More (2013) emphasizes that art contributes specifically to the aesthetic and emotional dimensions of transhumanism, arguing that transhumanism needs art because it can teach people how to live as transhumans. Her call for a "more humane transhumanity" does not imply the erasure of myth, imagination, or symbolic meaning, but rather their continued activation within evolutionary transformation. (p. 18)

What makes Loy's novel different is that the perceptual shift is not psychological but a technologically inflected alteration of consciousness. When the idea of Insel appears, the narrator, Mrs. Jones, stresses that it is "quite different to thinking about someone", indicating that this is not memory or intention but an intrusive, automatic mental event (Loy, 1991, p. 152). This state produces a bodily and affective response disconnected from intellect, described as "had nothing to do with any humor known to the intellect," functioning instead as "a sort of blank camouflage for all intellection" (Loy, 1991, p. 152). Mrs. Jones realizes that she is no longer where she should be, "by all the laws of possibility, I should still have been" (Loy, 1991, p. 153). Loy thus presents a modern perceptual condition in which technological systems preserve objective order, while subjective experience moves beyond linear thought, ordinary space, and the ordinary limits of existence. Mrs Jones, on page 155, explains these new perceptions as:

"This gratuitous experience was as nothing to that of disintegration when, on the contrary, one became aware of forces inherent to phenomena, which, being beyond the range of registration by the normal instrument—the conscious organism as it exists in our present stage of evolution—resulted in a super-sensibility so acute it shattered itself to splinters. The intuitional self is incapable of surprise, but my everyday self was amazed. I felt that for dabbling in the profane mysteries I had got more than was coming to me." (Loy, 1991, p. 155)

These perceptual expansions also resonate with early strands of inner transhumanist thought that did not frame human evolution solely in terms of rational optimization or technological control. As Pilsch (2017) notes, early transhumanism emerged from psychedelic and cybernetic futurism rather than from a purely technocratic logic. Influenced by speculative experimentation and altered states of consciousness, this early phase emphasized imagination, creativity and non-rational exploration alongside technology. Such a lineage provides important context for reading Insel, in which perceptual transformation precedes mythic or occult articulation. Loy's exploration of expanded perception thus aligns with an alternative inner transhumanist trajectory in which consciousness evolves through experiential intensification rather than solely mechanical enhancement.

2.2.3. Return to Myth and the Re-Enchantment of the World

As noted earlier, while attempting to grasp and create the new and the future, Loy also anchors herself in the old and the traditional. In doing so, she seeks to construct the future human in a way that remains secure and grounded. This approach also aligns with Toffler's (1970) strategy of "global space pageants" (p. 200), proposed as a means of coping with future shock. Particularly in Insel, Loy situates human figures within a rational, mechanized, modern world dominated by masculine forms of technological and scientific power, while simultaneously employing a mythological, affective, magical, and occult language. Through this dual movement through the past and the future, Loy establishes a careful, balanced fusion between modernity and myth. In the novel, Loy's use of mythic and occult language should not be understood as a methodological commitment to esotericism or as an endorsement of occult belief systems. Rather, this language functions as a strategic narrative and conceptual resource through which Loy articulates alternative models of human development. Mythic and occult imagery provide her with a vocabulary capable of expressing modes of consciousness, perception, and transformation that exceed the limits of mechanized rationality and overly positivist discourses. In this sense, the mythic and occult operate as an imaginative strategy that

balances the reductive logic of technological modernity. To better understand Loy's views on this issue, it is useful to turn to her essay, "History of Religion and Eros."

In her essay "History of Religion and Eros," Loy (2011) critiques modern progress by questioning the dominance of rationality, technology, and external control in narratives of human evolution. Loy (2011) argues that genuine transformation cannot be achieved solely through mechanical or scientific force. Instead, what evolution requires is both outer and inner development, as well as the conscious integration of body and mind. Drawing on both Eastern mysticism and Western scientific language, she presents the human mind-body as an "ego-laboratory," a site where creative and spiritual energy can be cultivated internally rather than extracted or imposed from the outside (p. 181). Central to this argument is Loy's redefinition of Eros. She rejects the reduction of Eros to sexuality or bodily pleasure. Instead, she understands it as a form of creative energy circulating through the nervous system, in other words, the body. When this energy is consciously directed, it supports transformation. When inner initiation is absent, however, Eros collapses into excess, repression, or distortion. Loy thus criticizes both moral systems that suppress the body and modern cultures that commodify desire, showing that each reflects a failure to recognize Eros as a transformative force rather than a problem to be controlled. Within this framework, Loy implicitly stages a tension between Eros and Logos. Logos governs rationality, structure, calculation, and technological progress, but when isolated from Eros, it becomes mechanized and dissociative. Loy does not reject Logos but rather insists that Logos alone cannot generate meaningful evolution. Transformation requires Eros as a complementary force that reconnects consciousness with embodiment and restores creative continuity. A future human shaped solely by Logos risks fragmentation and loss of agency, while a future human shaped through the integration of Eros and Logos remains capable of renewal. (Loy, 2011, pp. 180-190)

Loy's ideas directly illuminate the function of myth and occult knowledge in Insel. Insel's failure as a future figure can be read as the consequence of a Logos-dominated trajectory driven by force rather than inner power. His repeated "dissolution" exemplifies what happens when expansion precedes integration: creative energy disperses rather than renews, and transcendence becomes dissociation. By contrast, the mythic and occult language that Loy never stops using, especially when associated with Mrs. Jones, serves as an alternative to mechanized futurity. They support Loy's early formulation of the future human, in which the future human can emerge only through the integration of Eros and Logos, East and West, Technology and mythology, rather than through rational force alone.

By combining the modern and the ancient, Insel presents mythic and eros-based language as an alternative to mechanized notions of progress. As Crangle (2011) notes in her introduction to *Stories and Essays of Mina Loy*, "Loy retrieves archaic or foreign phrasing and layers it with playful, modern meanings" (p. 14). From the novel's opening pages, the reader encounters phrases such as "motor tires" (Loy, 1991, p. 19) and "black magic" (Loy, 1991, p. 21), expressions that seem to belong to entirely different worlds. References to Styx (Loy, 1991, p. 89), gnomes (Loy, 1991, p. 90), elves (Loy, 1991, p. 69), Buddha (Loy, 1991, p. 143), nirvana (Loy, 1991, p. 173), astral Venus (Loy, 1991, p. 52, p. 91), and Colossus (Loy, 1991, p. 160), as well as allusions such as "He who looks back returns to the maze." (Loy, 1991, p. 68) appear alongside technological and scientific references. This juxtaposition creates a deliberate fusion between mythological and technological registers. Moreover, Loy's simultaneous use of Eastern and Western mythologies reinforces this emphasis on fusion, which lies at the core of inner transhumanism. In this sense, Insel can be read as an early example of an inner transhumanist narrative.

Another significant mythological reference appears in the following passage: "His body swept and garnished like the house in the Bible—devilishly invaded—was no longer human as it lay before me in the form of Insel" (Loy, 1991, p. 101). This sentence alludes to the biblical parable in Matthew 12:43–45, in which a house is cleansed and put in order after an evil spirit departs, yet remains empty. Because it is empty, the spirit returns with others more destructive than itself, leaving the house in a worse condition than before. Loy employs this image to describe Insel's bodily and existential condition. Although his body has been purified, disciplined, and ordered, it lacks inner life, imagination, and spiritual substance. In the absence of this inner core, the body becomes vulnerable to invasion and ultimately loses its humanity. Loy thus suggests that purification or rational control without inner transformation does not lead to human advancement but rather to dehumanization. Pilsch (2017) gives an example of a joke from comedian Louis C. K. about air travel: "You're sitting in a chair in the sky. You're like a Greek myth right now." (p. 157). According to Pilsch (2017), "Just as Louis C. K.'s joke works to defamiliarize 'banal' contemporary technologies, Bridle's argument in constituting the New Aesthetic is to highlight this newness, the magical nature of our own world. He wants to remind us that we are already living in a science-fictional world, even if, because of our closeness, we do not recognize it as such" (p. 157-158). Furthermore, on page 103, Loy (1991) uses mythological language to explain why Insel's inner transformation has failed. She writes that when he sleeps, he is "vilely void as an incubus" comparing him to a demonic figure that exists in a living body but lacks an inner human core.

Beyond myth, Loy's figurative language and lexical choices suggest that she seeks to construct an occultural alternative to technological modern culture. By mobilizing mythic figures, symbolic structures, and esoteric metaphors, Loy opens a space for re-enchantment that is critical rather than regressive. This strategy allows her to explore inner evolution, embodied consciousness, and an ethical becoming without rejecting scientific or technological modernity outright. Instead, mythic and occult language functions as a mediating framework through which inner transhumanism can be imagined as an integrated process of transformation; one that balances rational structure with imaginative and affective depth.

This approach closely corresponds to Christopher Partridge's definition of the term occulture in *The Re-Enchantment of the West*. Partridge (2024) argues that occulture should not be limited to narrowly defined occult traditions, but understood as a broad cultural field encompassing diverse belief systems and practices:

When thinking of 'occulture', the above narrow, foundational understanding of the occult should be broadened to include a vast spectrum of beliefs and practices sourced by Eastern spirituality, Paganism, Spiritualism, Theosophy, alternative science and medicine, popular psychology (usually Jungian), and a range of beliefs emanating out of the general cultural interest in the paranormal (p.69–70).

When read through this definition, Insel can be understood as operating within an occultural register. Loy's highly esoteric vocabulary draws on a wide range of occult and para-scientific references dispersed throughout the text. For example, she invokes figures and concepts such as "Astral Venus" (Loy, 1991, p.52), pagan Paris (Loy, 1991, p. 52), telepathy, will-o'-the-wisps (Loy, 1991, p. 118), aural suits, aura and radiations, William Seabrook (Loy, 1991, 51), astral bodies, a "network of vibrational force" (Loy, 1991, p. 56), sympathetic magic (Loy, 1991, p. 57), supernormal acumen (Loy, 1991, p. 65), clairvoyance (Loy, 1991, p. 65), the mental double (Loy, 1991, p. 65), and incantations (Loy, 1991, p. 67). The density and recurrence of such references indicate that occult language is not incidental but structurally embedded in the novel. Through this occultural vocabulary, Loy articulates modes of perception and transformation that exceed the limits of mechanized rationality, reinforcing her vision of inner transhumanism as a re-enchanted yet critically modern form of human becoming.

Moreover, in esoteric and occult traditions, transformation requires integration of physical, astral, and mental layers. Insel's failure demonstrates what happens when these layers separate too quickly. Transformation becomes dissociation. Mrs. Jones functions as a counterforce. Her reliance on myth, occult knowledge, and symbolic thinking offers re-enchantment rather than escape. Against Insel's machine-like metaphors, Jones introduces

balance and integration. Her inner discipline allows permeability without collapse. Through her, Loy proposes inner transhumanism as a mythic, feminine, and ethical alternative to mechanized futurity.

Another example of Loy's occult language is that the creatures in Insel's paintings are described as "elementals," figures that "any student of ancient occultism would recognize," indicating that they are not products of higher imagination but rather low-level, semi-conscious forms (Loy, 1991, p. 103). Loy (1991) further notes that these figures are "millenary monsters of a disreputable metaphysic," meaning that they belong to outdated and discredited belief systems that return unchanged in Insel's modern subconscious (p. 103). When his inner energy fails, Insel is reduced to "a mess of profane dross," an alchemical term denoting the residue left after an unsuccessful transformation. Through these references, Loy explains that Insel resembles these figures because his inner life has collapsed: instead of inner evolution, he produces archaic and parasitic forms. In relation to this thesis, Insel represents a failed form of inner transhumanism, in which the absence of internal integration leads not to development but to regression. Loy then raises the central question via Mrs. Jones: why "millenary monsters of a disreputable metaphysic should re-arise intact in a modern subconscious?" The implied answer is that Insel's unconscious has not transformed. Although he possesses a modern mind, inner evolution has not occurred, and as a result, repressed primitive images return in the same raw, distorted forms.

Loy's (1991) solution comes in the form of a line Jones says on page 106: ‘'Over and over again I find a solution so simple it constantly slips my mind. I have only to make some little people about five inches high and tell them what to dance." Loy draws on the occult idea of the homunculus, a concept from Renaissance alchemy referring to an artificially created miniature human, produced not through natural birth but through esoteric knowledge and controlled creation. Jones soon admits the impossibility of this fantasy, noting that "it takes me hours… to remember it cannot be done" (Loy, 1991, p. 106). However, she then adds that "at the back of that memory stands another memory of having had the power to create whatever I pleased" (Loy, 1991, p. 106). This remembered power recalls Loy's earlier reflections in *The Child and the Parent*, where the child represents a pre-rational state of imaginative unity and creative freedom. Importantly, Loy does not present this memory as mere regression or illusion. Instead, Jones's recollection functions as a positive clue: it points toward a lost but recoverable mode of creation grounded in inner imaginative authority rather than technical control, which one can call "magic."

Campagna (2018) argues that, in recent times, magic is nothing more than technical skills reducible to technological developments yet to be realized. This modern understanding of magic functions as the phantasmatic counterpart of dominant technoscientific forms. As he states, "Magic has always been something that disturbs the hegemonic groups of an age (…), and magic can be conceived as a form of remedy against the cruel regime of the world constructed by technique in its own image" (p. 156). Campagna (2018) thus suggests that magic enables the continuation of collective, active, and imagination-based forms of relation. According to de Martino (1972), through such cultural formations, the individual ceases to be hopelessly isolated by the existential tragedy that befalls them and instead becomes capable of using the experience of tradition for their own interests and future (p. 165).

Finally, as noted above, Natasha Vita-More also argues that a more humane form of transhumanism requires greater inclusion of art and the feminine within transhumanist thought. In *Insel*, alongside modern technological developments, Loy repeatedly mobilizes artistic and literary references, including literary and musical ones. Among these references are Titania, William Shakespeare, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and the Brontë sisters, particularly *Wuthering Heights*. *Wuthering Heights* and Goethe belong to the Romantic tradition, while Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* exemplifies a mode in which reason is suspended, and imagination comes into power. As Partridge (2004) notes, "Opposed to the idea that reality can be known simply by the application of human reason, Romanticism argued that there needed to be a complementary emphasis on human intuition and imagination" (p. 72). From this perspective, the parallels between Romanticism and inner transhumanism become visible. Romanticism, while maintaining a focus on individual autonomy, emphasizes feeling, intuition, and imagination. Similarly, in New Age and inner transhumanist frameworks, reason is not entirely rejected but distrusted, while intuition, feeling, and imagination are foregrounded. The crucial difference, however, is that inner transhumanism is not opposed to technology, science, or rationality themselves, but rather to their total domination. It aims to transform the language of the techno-scientific age, its authoritative figures, and its visions of the future by re-enchanting them through art, femininity, intuition, myth, and the magical, allowing outer technological development to proceed alongside an inner transformation.

Finally, among Loy's artistic allusions, one reference deserves particular attention: the Cheshire Cat from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (Loy, 1991, p. 115). This figure is especially significant because of its loss of the body. By referring to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), Loy's novel reanimates art and imagination within the modern world. Mrs. Jones explicitly compares Insel to the Cheshire Cat and describes his head as follows: "Der

Totenkopf hung in my tract of vision like the last of Alice in Wonderland's Cheshire Cat" (p. 115). The Cheshire Cat destabilizes fixed notions of identity and embodiment. Known for its ability to appear and disappear at will, often leaving only its head behind, the cat exemplifies the fragmentation of the self and the separation of body and consciousness, as well as an over-rationalized form of consciousness reduced to the "head" alone. Rather than offering conventional guidance, the Cheshire Cat exposes the instability of reality and undermines linear logic through paradox. When Alice asks the Cat which path to take, it replies that the direction depends on where she wants to go. This exchange can be read as a parallel to Insel's uncertainty at the end of the novel, when he admits that he does not know what to choose.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has argued that Mina Loy's *The Child and the Parent* and *Insel* develop a distinctive vision of a future human that is most productively understood within the framework of inner transhumanism. While the desire to transform the human condition is ancient and evident in early narratives and traditions, such as alchemy, contemporary transhumanism has largely reduced this impulse to a purely technological and scientific project. Often operating within an over-rationalized, overscientific, and male-dominated framework, it privileges cognition over embodiment and neglects imagination, mythology, and artistic modes of being-knowledge. In contrast, inner transhumanism, conceptual foundation of the thesis first coined by Pilsch (2017), reintroduces this neglected dimension by offering a more holistic, artistic, and "feminine" perspective on transformation, one that integrates inner development with external advancement, and also differs from posthumanism in the ways of protecting the center subject of the human as an anchor point while expanding and evolving.

Loy's work becomes especially significant within this framework, as it anticipates a mode of transformation grounded not only in external enhancement but in an inward reconfiguration of consciousness, perception, relation, and being. Her writing opens a space in which the human may be exceeded not only by technological interventions of the modern era but also by shifts in awareness, imagination, myth, and magic. In this sense, Loy not only engages with inner transhumanist questions avant la lettre, but also resists the rationalist, linear, and Cartesian assumptions that structure both classical humanism and contemporary transhumanism. By emphasizing embodied consciousness and intuitive intelligence, her work moves beyond rigid binaries such as mind versus body or culture versus nature, proposing a more integrated model of being and becoming. Within this argument, *The Child and the Parent* articulate with alternative forms of cognition, becoming, and human development. The child, and significantly, the feminine dimension of consciousness, emerges as a site of openness, fluidity, and creative potential. Rather than idealizing childhood, Loy mobilizes it as a critical position from which to challenge fixed adult rationality and its claims to epistemological authority. The child becomes central not as a figure of innocence but as a model of unfinalized being, one that remains receptive to transformation and is closer to what might be described as an expanded, or even cosmic, consciousness. In doing so, Loy implicitly suggests that the path toward a future human may require a return, not as a regression, but as a shift to alternative modes of perception that precede rigid subject formation. Loy shifts her focus in the second

part of *The Child and the Parent* from the child to her individual mother and from individual mother to women as a collective, arguing that the repression of feminine awareness by dominant norms limits not only women but human evolution itself. By linking the control of female desire to the suppression of creativity and futurity, she suggests that transformation lies not in rebellion but in recognition, and that when women acknowledge their desires, both bodily and spiritual, they can overcome internal divisions within their consciousness and help create a future humanity.

Insel, in turn, complicates and tests this possibility by presenting a far more fractured and unstable field of becoming. If *The Child and the Parent* offer the clearest version of inner transformation as a potential, Insel reveals the failure that may accompany it. Insel appears as a machine-like figure who strains toward transcendence yet remains trapped within forms of dependency, fragmentation, and disorientation. His condition reflects not a successful evolution but the risks of a transformation that remains incomplete or externally oriented, with some parallels to the posthumanist view of the future human. Through this figure, Loy critiques not only romanticized posthumanist transcendence but also contemporary transhumanist fantasies of progress that ignore the necessity of inner development. At the same time, the novel suggests that external advancements, if not supported by inner evolution, remain insufficient in shaping a sustainable future for humanity.

Taken together, these texts demonstrate that Loy's understanding of a future human is best understood within the framework of inner transhumanism. Inner transhumanism, as a conceptual framework, shows that Loy's future-oriented thought does not depend solely on technological futurity or on decentralized humans, but on the mutable, not-yet-completed dimensions of consciousness itself. Her writing repeatedly returns to states of suspension between child and adult, reason and imagination, dissolution and reconfiguration, to envision forms of knowing and being that exceed the bounds of the liberal subject. In this sense, evolution is not a smooth ascent but a recursive and creative process, often intertwined with art, mythology, and symbolic thought.

At the same time, it is important to recognize the potential limitations of inner transhumanism as a conceptual framework. As a relatively new and interpretive construct, it risks remaining conceptually diffuse, lacking the methodological precision and established critical vocabulary of more institutionalized theories. One might argue that its emphasis on interiority, perception, and consciousness can lead to overgeneralization, subsuming diverse textual phenomena under a single interpretive lens without sufficient differentiation. Moreover, as a framework not yet widely theorized in literary studies, inner transhumanism may face

challenges in critical applicability, reproducibility, and scholarly validation. In this sense, it could be seen less as a fully developed conceptual framework and more as a provisional approach that requires further refinement. However, rather than weakening the argument, this openness can also be understood as a productive condition. Inner transhumanism not only critiques the reductionism of transhumanism, with its hyper-rational, overly technical, and masculinist discourse, but also responds to the limitations of posthumanism, particularly its tendency toward excessive dissolution of the human, offering a third, middle way for a posthuman future. By retaining a sense of human distinctiveness while expanding its boundaries, inner transhumanism proposes a balanced, integrative model of transformation. Its conceptual flexibility enables it to engage with modern experimental texts such as Loy's that resist stable categorization and exceed the limits of existing theoretical models.

Beyond its relevance to Mina Loy studies, inner transhumanism may also open a space for reconsidering the relationship between literary modernism and future-oriented thought more broadly. Modernist texts are often discussed in relation to fragmentation, alienation, and crisis; however, Loy's work suggests that they may also contain speculative models of transformation that move beyond technological narratives of progress. Such perspectives invite a reconsideration of modernism not only as a response to modernity's ruptures but also as an experimental field for imagining alternative futures of consciousness and being. Furthermore, Loy's emphasis on imagination, embodiment, and non-linear becoming suggests that the future human cannot be understood solely through material or technological enhancement. Her work repeatedly indicates that transformation is inseparable from questions of meaning, perception, and subjective experience. In this respect, the human future emerges not as a project of mastery over limitations but as an ongoing process of negotiating new relationships between self, body, and world.

By reading *The Child and the Parent* and *Insel* through the lens of inner transhumanism, this study has highlighted Loy's unique contribution to literary modernism and to broader debates about the future of the human. Loy's future human is not a perfected technological non-subject but a radically reoriented one, a more open, more intuitive, more imaginative, and less constrained one by the rigid structures of rationality and identity. Future research may further develop the concept of inner transhumanism by testing its applicability across a wider range of modernist and contemporary texts, particularly those that engage with posthuman consciousness, perception, and alternative modes of being. Additionally, placing Loy's work in dialogue with posthuman discourse could help better understand the understudied modern woman, Mina Loy. Such studies would not only strengthen the conceptual grounding of inner

transhumanism as a literary approach but also contribute to broader interdisciplinary conversations on what it means to transform, and potentially exceed, the human in a more humane way.

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