Moreover, the Moon Study Guide

Moreover, the Moon by Mina Loy

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Introduction

"Moreover, the Moon" was originally published in 1982, sixteen years after Mina Loy's death. The work first appeared in *The Last Lunar Baedeker*, a collection of Loy's work, edited by Roger Conover. Conover located the piece in Loy's papers, which were donated to the Collection of American Literature at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University by Loy's daughter, Joella Haweis Bayer, in 1974 and 1975. Conover's first collection of Loy's work is now out of print; however, in 1996, he published a second collection, *The Lost Lunar Baedeker: Poems of Mina Loy*, in which "Moreover, the Moon" also appears. This later collection includes all but ten poems that were published before 1966, which is about two-thirds of the poetry that Loy wrote during her lifetime.

Although the original manuscript of "Moreover, the Moon" was not dated, Conover includes the piece with Loy's other work from the years 1942—1949 in a chapter called "Compensations of Poverty." The chapter title was taken from a folder in Loy's papers that contained several poems written during these years.

Penned more than twenty years after the first publication of Loy's collected poems in *Lunar Baedeker*, "Moreover, the Moon" returns to the poet's earlier thematic interest in feminism and patriarchy as well as to her use of the moon as a poetic image. In "Moreover, the Moon," she employs lunar imagery to explore issues of oppression and self-knowledge. She concludes that patriarchy is a lasting social institution and that women will not likely overcome its influence in their lives until they realize this and seek to define themselves outside its shadow.

Author Biography

Mina Loy was born Mina Gertrude Lowy in London on December 27, 1882. She was the oldest of three sisters born to a second-generation Hungarian Jew, Sigmund Lowy, and an English Protestant mother, Julia Bryan. Contrary to her mother's staunch Victorian values, Loy's father initiated her foray into the artistic world by sending her to art school in Munich at seventeen. She continued her studies in London and Paris. An accomplished painter and poet, Loy also tried her hand at writing novels and dramas, acting, fashion and lampshade design, drawing, sculpting, and modeling.

Loy moved to Florence in 1906 with her first husband, Stephen Haweis. She endeared herself with the leading futurist thinkers of the time, including F. T. Marinetti and Giovanni Papini. Inspired by the futurist call for the rejection of the status quo in literary construction, Loy began to experiment with free verse poetry, abandoning conventional aesthetics and form.

In 1916, she traveled to the United States where her poetry had found its way into little magazines of the time. Having divorced Haweis, Loy again found herself ensconced in impressive intellectual circles, mingling with the who's who of the New York dada movement, including Marcel Duchamp, William Carlos Williams, and her second husband, Arthur Cravan. Loy was the epitome of a modern bohemian woman, and her poetry was both hailed and hated by her contemporaries. She was often admonished for its sexual subject matter; however, as an early feminist, she had much to say about the status of women. Some critics found her writing inaccessible and unnecessarily racy and dense, yet those who appreciated her work found her brave and brilliant.

Following her celebrity, and infamy, in the United States, Loy's life became marked by tragedy and economic strife. Cravan disappeared, and her son died. She returned to Paris, and while she still frequented the salons du jour, she struggled to support herself and her two daughters. She opened a lampshade design shop and tried her hand at commercial inventions. In 1936, fearing Hitler's encroachment, Loy returned to New York. She became a naturalized citizen in 1946. In her later years, she became reclusive but continued artistic endeavors as a resident of the Bowery, Manhattan's skid row. Loy wrote poetry about street people and created artistic assemblages and collages made of trash. Some of these pieces were shown at a 1959 Bodley Gallery show curated by Marcel Duchamp. That same year, she received the Copley Foundation Award for Outstanding Achievement in Art.

Ironically, Loy never considered herself a poet and spent little time trying to publish or develop a body of work. In her lifetime, she published two collections: *Lunar Baedecker*, in 1923, and *Lunar Baedeker & Time-Tables*, in 1958. Not until sixteen years after her death was "Moreover, the Moon" posthumously published in *The Last Lunar Baedeker*.

Loy died in Aspen, Colorado, on September 25, 1966.

Plot Summary

Stanzas 1—2

"Moreover, the Moon," is a short poem consisting of fifty-one words that are crafted into five brief stanzas. The first stanza reads like a request: "Face of the skies / preside / over our wonder," and the second follows in similar fashion: "Fluorescent / truant of heaven / draw us under." In addition to being written as a request might be, these first two stanzas are linked by the end rhyme found in their last lines: "wonder" and "under." Both stanzas invoke the image of the moon, which is initially alluded to in the poem's title. The first stanza takes the lunar reference a step further by addressing a "face" in the sky, which most likely refers to the man in the moon. Whereas the moon is a symbol that is often associated with the feminine in art and literature, Loy's specific attention to the face suggests that she is using the image as a masculine one instead. In the second stanza, the man in the moon is called a "truant of heaven," suggesting that there is something negative or sinful about him. Indeed, in popular myth, the man in the moon is said to be nailed there to atone for his sins. In these first two stanzas, Loy identifies the moon as a masculine symbol and one that has a certain amount of power. He "preside[s]" over the writer's "wonder" and has the ability to "draw [her] under," as if to possibly hypnotize, or in the case of the riptide that is controlled by the moon, to carry her out to sea.

Stanza 3

In the third stanza, Loy again addresses the moon, this time as a "Silver, circular corpse." Instead of posing a request in this stanza, Loy uses it to make a declarative statement, indicating that the moon's "decease / infects us with unendurable ease." If one considers that the man in the moon is a symbol for patriarchy, this stanza suggests that patriarchy's demise leaves women in a state of calm that is riddled with some sort of anxiety. The comfort women feel is unendurable, perhaps because, like the moon, patriarchy never really ceases to exist. The moon is a permanent fixture in the earth's universe, and Loy metaphorically suggests here that so is patriarchy's control over women's lives.

Stanza 4

As indicated by the comma that follows "ease," the fourth stanza is a continuation of the sentence begun in the third stanza. "Touching nerve-terminals / to thermal icicles" refers back to the "decease" mentioned in the second line of stanza 3. On a first read, "thermal" and "icicles" seem like an unlikely, if not completely counterintuitive, match; however, Loy's use of this image coming in contact with nerve-terminals is an important metaphor for conveying her thoughts about the impact that patriarchy has on women's lives. By definition, an icicle is a liquid that is freezing or forming. When an icicle comes

in contact with a thermal element, or something related to heat, it naturally begins to melt, or be destroyed. Nerve terminals are the physical pathways that enable people to think, move, and feel. By exposing these to thermal icicles, Loy suggests that in the face of patriarchy, women's lives are being simultaneously made and torn apart.

Stanza 5

Loy omits the period at the end of the fourth stanza, suggesting that the first line in stanza 5 continues the thoughts in the previous two sections. Read in this way, "Coercive as coma / frail as bloom" can mean that patriarchy's presence in women's lives is as compelling as a coma is at relieving someone of consciousness. At the same time, this control is described as "frail," meaning that the power men exert may not be as strong as some might think. Loy continues with "innuendos of your inverse dawn / suffuse the self." In this line, Loy literally says that even a hint of the moon setting illuminates the self. Metaphorically, she means that a hint of patriarchy's control loosening allows women to know themselves better. This line is ironic, however, because in the previous sections, she has alluded to the idea that the moon never sets or that patriarchy never wholly disappears. Thus, this line suggests that women will never fully know themselves in the presence of patriarchy. She finishes the poem with "our every corpuscle become an elf." By stating that every living cell becomes an elf, Loy concludes that women become elves, or more pointedly, that women who believe they truly know themselves are only something of folklore.

Themes

Patriarchy and the Oppression of Women

Loy uses lunar imagery in "Moreover, the Moon" as an extended metaphor about patriarchy's presence in women's lives. She establishes the metaphor by addressing the moon as the "Face in the skies," calling attention to the man in the moon rather than to the moon as a female presence. In the first two stanzas, she speaks for all women when she requests that the man in the moon "preside / over our wonder" and "draw us under." Later in the poem, she talks about the moon's "decease" and its "inverse dawn." In both instances, the fading of the moon's light symbolizes patriarchy's demise as a social institution. Interestingly, when the moon sets, it never truly disappears from the universe. Further, its light is temporarily replaced with that of the sun, another predominantly masculine symbol. Loy's mention of the moon's "decease" and an "inverse dawn" exposes her belief that although patriarchy, as represented by the light of the moon, may wane, it will reappear, just as the moon will become full or rise again. By evoking the image of the sun's brighter light replacing that of the moon, Loy further suggests that the face of patriarchy may change and potentially its influence will become greater.

Consciousness

Loy initially invokes the theme of consciousness in the second stanza when she asks the "truant of heaven" to "draw us under." In addition to bringing to mind the moon's role in changing the ocean tides and their power to sweep one out to sea, this stanza makes one think of sleeping, being hypnotized, or of being lulled into a state of mental passivity. Later in the poem, she uses the phrase "Coercive as coma," which again foregrounds the idea of consciousness, or in this case unconsciousness. Loy's careful joining of the consciousness theme with that of patriarchy suggests her concern about men's power to influence women's minds. Further, it underscores her potential criticism of women who let themselves be drawn under and mentally controlled by men.

Death

Another theme that Loy develops to support her argument about patriarchy's influence in women's lives is death. She evokes this theme through the use of the words "decease," "infects," and "corpse." She uses "corpse" and "decease" in reference to the moon or the man in the moon, suggesting that patriarchy is a dying institution. Interestingly, however, she says that it is the moon's "decease" that "infects us with unendurable ease." Loy selects the word "decease" instead of "death" and joins it in the same stanza with the word "ease." Visually, these words seem to rhyme, making one wonder if Loy meant for readers to associate "decease" with the similar word "disease." Her choice of the word "infects" confirms this supposition. Loy establishes a metaphor

of infection and dying that begins with the moon's apparent "decease" and ends with women's "unendurable ease." As previously discussed, Loy believes that patriarchy will persist and that women's lives will continue to be haunted by its presence. Just as the moon will never really disappear, or die, women will never know an "ease," or state of mental calm and relaxation, that is not tainted by the specter of patriarchy. For Loy, the lasting presence of patriarchy is "unendurable," and the ease is a false comfort. In fact, such ease is like a slow death brought on by an infectious illness.

Freedom from Patriarchy

At the same time that Loy calls attention to the fact that patriarchy is seemingly a permanent social institution, she also suggests that freedom from its influence is not impossible. In the final stanza, she offers a glimmer of hope when she says that the moon or the man in the moon is "Coercive as coma / frail as bloom." Although he, or patriarchy, is as powerful as something that can completely rob someone of consciousness, there is also a fragility associated with him, or with patriarchy. Loy hints that women can become powerful and overcome patriarchy when she states in the final line of the poem that "our every corpuscle become an elf." Elves are mischievous and sometimes malicious, and they are known for their dislike of men. Further, in physics, corpuscular theory states that light is made up of corpuscles or particles that are given off by luminous bodies. If light in this poem is understood to be a metaphor for patriarchy and its power over women, then Loy's mention of corpuscles suggests that perhaps women can beat men at their own game by harnessing this light, as well as their own mischievousness, to work within the patriarchal systems and superstructures to disrupt and thus destabilize them.

Style

Modernism and Free Verse

Loy is considered a modernist poet. In *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism*, which is edited by Michael Groden and Martin Kreiswirth, Vicki Mahaffey defines modernist as

> a term most often used in literary studies to refer to an experimental, avant-garde style of writing prevalent between World War I and World War II, although it is sometimes applied more generally to the entire range of divergent tendencies within a longer period, from the 1890s to the present.

As someone who often diverged from using standard poetic forms and approaches, Loy's work clearly fits into this category. One element that is often associated with poetic modernism that Loy uses in "Moreover, the Moon" is free verse, which means it does not conform to a traditional poem form with a consistent metrical scheme or predictable rhyme.

Rhyme

Unlike some of Loy's other poetry, "Moreover, the Moon" employs a rhyme scheme. Despite its existence, it is sparse and inconsistent. In the first two stanzas, the last words in the third lines�"wonder" and "under"�rhyme, whereas in the third stanza, the last word in the second line, "decease," and the last word in the third line, "ease," only visually appear to rhyme. The fourth stanza brings back an end rhyme with "terminals" and "icicles," and the final stanza "self" and "elf" likewise finish the poem. Though scant, the presence of a rhyme scheme serves to unify the piece. One reading of this poem is that women need to work within the confines of patriarchy's accepted norms in order to destabilize it and to free themselves of its control. Loy's use of a rhyme scheme supports this reading in that she uses a traditional poetic element, or a form usually employed by male poets, to make a statement of protest about patriarchy.

Historical Context

Futurism

Loy moved to Italy in the early 1900s when Italian futurism was in its infancy. She was active in the movement prior to World War I and had love affairs with two of its leading members: founder and poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti and Florentine writer Giovanni Papini. Loy became disenchanted with futurism because of its strong association with fascism and its antifeminist perspectives.

Futurism was an artistic movement with strong political underpinnings. The movement officially began with Marinetti's publication of the "Founding and Manifesto of Futurism" in 1909 and found its motivation in his desire to make Italy a more modern European nation. On the artistic front, the futurists sought to challenge traditional art and culture in order to advance the merits of the mechanical age and modern age. Futurism's impact was wide reaching, and in addition to finding supporters among the literati of the day, the movement's tenets were also embraced and experimented with by painters, sculptors, typographers, product designers, architects, photographers, performing artists, and graphic artists. Loyal to the concepts of change and innovation, futurists embraced dynamism, speed, and mechanical power. Marinetti himself was a proponent of war, violence, and conflict, and he even called for the destruction of institutions such as libraries and museums. As leading futurist painter and sculptor Umberto Boccioni states in *Artists on Art: From the XIV to the XX Century*, the futurists intended "to destroy the cult of the past. . . . To despise utterly every form of imitation. . . . To extol every form of originality, however audacious. . . . To rebel against the tyranny of the words 'harmony' and 'good taste.' . . . [and] To sweep from the field of art all motifs and subjects that have already been exploited."

In poetry, this innovation extended to poetry. Futurist poets employed new techniques intended to engage both the eyes and the ears. In the extreme, futurist poetry lacked punctuation and relied exclusively on the use of nouns. Futurist poets used onomatopoeia and consciously discarded standard forms and conventions in an effort to shock and incite a reaction in their audiences.

Feminism

Loy wrote her "Feminist Manifesto" in November 1914 in response to what she perceived as the futurist's misogynistic attitudes. In Roger Conover's publication of the manifesto in *The Lost Lunar Baedeker: Poems of Mina Loy*, Loy dramatically states that "The feminist movement as at present instituted is inadequate," and she positions men and women as enemies. She does not call for reform or for equality; instead she asks that women look at themselves to see what they are instead of what they are not. Loy's focus on women and their sexuality is a theme found in much of her poetry.

The feminist movement called for equality between the sexes. Feminists believed that patriarchal culture, traditions, and norms oppressed women, leaving them marginalized and therefore absent from or powerless to participate in important social, cultural, political, and economic activity. One of the earliest feminist treatises was *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, by Londoner Mary Wollstonecraft, which was published in 1792. Wollstonecraft believed in education, empowerment, and equality for women. During the latter half of the 1800s and early 1900s, feminist activity centered on women gaining the right to vote. In 1929, Virginia Woolf published *A Room of One's Own*, in which she wrote about a woman's need to be financially independent and to have a place of her own in which to write.

Dadaism

During the war years, Loy befriended William Carlos Williams and other New York dada writers. She also had close ties to Marcel Duchamp, the leading member of the New York Dada movement, throughout her life. In 1959, he curated her final collage show at New York's Bodley Gallery.

The artistic and literary movement known as dadaism began during World War I with independent efforts spawning in New York and Zurich. The movement spread across Europe and was relatively short-lived, dying out in the early 1920s.

Like the futurists, the dadaists sought to challenge and overturn traditional thought and artistic aesthetics. They were anti-artists who were disillusioned by Western culture and appalled by the Great War. In the ninth edition of *Art through the Ages*, editors Horst de la Croix, Richard G. Tansey, and Diane Kirkpatrick note that "The Dadaists undertook the project of reform by way of protest, turning the conventions of art upside down. . . . [They] intended to shock viewers by . . . outrageous lack of conventional meaning." Marcel Duchamp's famous "Bicycle Wheel," which was a bicycle wheel mounted on top of a stool, exemplifies the movement's attempts to use something familiar in unexpected ways as a means of encouraging new thought.

Surrealism

During the 1920s and the beginnings of the surrealist movement, Loy enmeshed herself in Paris's literary and intellectual circles. Later, during World War II, she was back in New York and, through her previous son-in-law's art gallery, found herself in the company of leading surrealist poet and critic Andre Breton.

By 1924, the dada movement had fizzled out, and many of its followers now considered themselves surrealists. While still employing some dadaist techniques, the surrealists became interested in the unconscious and the world of dreams. They were inspired by the thinking of leading psychoanalysts Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung and wanted to use art as a way to unite the unconscious with reality, thus creating the surreal. Well-known surrealists include Salvador Dalí and Joan Miró.

Critical Overview

"Moreover, the Moon" is considered to be one of Loy's works from the 1940s, although the piece has no known composition date. It was originally published in 1982 by Roger Conover in *The Last Lunar Baedeker*. Whereas some of Loy's poems, including "Love Songs,""Lunar Baedeker,""Anglo-Mongrels and the Rose," and "Parturition," have received some (albeit limited) critical attention, "Moreover, the Moon" has been critically ignored.

This lack of attention is perhaps a result of Loy's general absence from the accepted canon of Western poetry. Conover notes in his second collection of her work, *The Lost Lunar Baedeker: Poems of Mina Loy*:

Mina Loy is not for everyone. It is not by accident that her work has been misplaced. 'Difficult' is the word that has been most often used to describe her. . . . Her work has never attracted casual readers. It is easiest simply to ignore her. . . . But her readers, if small in number, have also been large in commitment. Once discovered, if her poems do not immediately repel, they possess. Her work is far more likely to be a toxic or a tonic□quickly sworn off or gradually acquired as a lifelong habit□than a passing interest.

Conover's sentiments precisely describe Loy's historical critical reception. As far back as the early 1900s, her writing was either lauded or deeply disliked. Loy's supporters admired her intellect and daring, but her detractors detested her for what they perceived as often inaccessible, morally offensive, and technically weak writing.

Despite such controversy, Loy was embraced by or likened to many of the important and recognized American poets. Ezra Pound, one of her strongest early proponents, admired Loy and in the March 1918 volume of *The Little Review* paid her a high complement by classifying her poetry as "logopoeia," or "poetry that is akin to nothing but language, which is a dance of the intelligence among words and ideas and modification of ideas and characters." Like Pound, Yvor Winters found Loy's writing incredibly compelling, stating in the June 1926 volume of *The Dial* that she was "intensely cerebral" and that some of her poetry was "the most brilliant and unshakably solid satirical" work of the time. Loy was often compared to Marianne Moore, William Carlos Williams, and Wallace Stevens, and Winters considered her innovative work to be preceded only by that of Emily Dickinson.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1

Critical Essay #1

Robeson is a freelance writer with a master's degree in English. In this essay, Robeson presents a feminist reading of "Moreover, the Moon" that outlines Loy's disappointment in women's ability to rid themselves of patriarchal influence and control.

For many, the joy of reading poetry and other literature is found in the process of deciphering the text. Ferreting out the author's hidden (or not so hidden) meanings is solving a puzzle that rewards the reader with a deeper understanding of the work and its author. But what happens when a text seems to challenge those attempts at every turn? Enter Mina Loy.

In the introduction to *The Lost Lunar Baedeker: Poems of Mina Loy*, editor Roger Conover states

'Difficult' is the word that has been most often used to describe her. . . . She is not an academic poet, but her poems are of the intellect. In order to read her with profit, you need at least four things: patience, intelligence, experience, and a dictionary.

Nothing could be closer to the truth. Loy's poems often lack punctuation, disregard grammatical norms, and are peppered with arcane or invented words. On a first read, they leave many readers with more questions than answers. What does "glumes" or "scholiums" mean? Where does one thought stop and the next begin? What could Loy possibly be trying to communicate?

Loy was equally challenging to her contemporaries as she is to readers in the early 2000s. Even Alfred Kreymborg, who published her poetry in the literary magazine *Others* during the early 1900s found her perplexing. In "Originals and Eccentrics," which can be found in his *Our Singing Strength: An Outline of American Poetry, 1620—1930*, Kreymborg states that "Though I printed the work she gave me almost in toto, much of it puzzled me at the time. I felt she might have made a greater effort to communicate herself more clearly." Clear communication, however, seems not to have been Loy's chief motivating force.

Like other art created during the first half of the twentieth century, Loy's poetry challenged mainstream aesthetics and thought and was written with a certain amount of shock value in mind. She goaded, provoked, infuriated, and even horrified with purpose. Through abstract and dense imagery and language, Loy explored, shaped, and solidified her own thoughts, perspectives, and opinions.

In "Moreover, the Moon," she invites readers to examine the issue of patriarchy and its impact on women's lives. As the title of the work suggests, "Moreover, the Moon" returns to Loy's earlier exploration of lunar imagery. In the title, she selects the word "Moreover," indicating that she has more to say about the themes she previously presented using this imagery. In "'Intermittent□Unfinishing': Mina Loy and the Elusive Text as Resistance," which appeared in *HOW2*, Hilda Bronstein states that Loy "called

into question the sexual ideologies of her time" and experienced "anxiety . . . with regard to the oppressive constraints of patriarchy upon her own subjectivity." Bronstein continues by noting that Loy's "Apology of Genius" and "Lunar Baedeker," which both employ moon imagery, offer "a gendered critique of Futurism and an assertion of the female poet's artistry and selfhood." She continues to note that Loy's writing

is the assertion of her own status as a woman experimentalist in the predominately male communities of avant-garde artists and writers. . . . Although her work is inextricably linked to the subversive and iconoclastic activities of the Italian Futurists, New York Dada and French Surrealists, her poetry also constitutes a challenge to them, one which was specifically grounded in gender.

Bronstein's assessment of Loy's earlier works is valuable in that it indicates Loy's clear concerns about gender roles twenty-plus years before "Moreover, the Moon" was written. But how does one get from discussing a silver corpse and corpuscles becoming an elf to the concept of female identity and the role of patriarchy in women's lives? Perhaps it is best to start from the beginning.

In the first stanza, Loy invokes the image of the moon by addressing the "Face of the skies." A Westerner reading this work may think of God or the man in the moon. Though either direction makes for an interesting reading, the poem's title suggests that the latter may be a more obvious first approach. Although the moon is often associated with the feminine in art and literature, another popular myth is that a man was nailed to the moon to repent for his sins. In "Moreover, the Moon," Loy foregrounds this nameless male figure, calling him not by a name but just simply a "Face." The face belongs to an unidentifiable man, and thus, figuratively, it could belong to any man or, taken a step further, to all men, or patriarchy at large. The male figure she calls attention to is not of this world, and she further imbues him with power by using the word "preside," which connotes authority and control. With Loy's strong feminist beliefs in mind, one can read her tone in this poem as almost sarcastic or disdainful as she continues with the request for the "Face of the skies" to "preside over our wonder," or our curiosity and inquisitiveness. Her use of the plural possessive pronoun "our" suggests that Loy speaks not just for herself, but for other women as well. In these opening lines, which consist of eight short words, Loy sets up an image of a male figure who controls and inscribes women's ability to question and be curious. Figuratively, she suggests that patriarchy limits the ways in which women participate in and experience the world.

It was likely not lost on Loy that the man in the moon was a sinner. In the next stanza, she calls the moon a "Fluorescent / truant of heaven," suggesting that there may indeed be something deviant or sinful about him or, more pointedly, that the nature of patriarchy is tainted by immorality. As a truant, he shirks his heavenly duties and is implicitly not doing as God would have intended.

While Loy may be coyly aligning herself and her opinions about the status of women with those of God, it is also possible to read this stanza with the more etymologically distant definition of "truant" in mind. The Middle English and Old French roots of "truant" are "vagabond" and "vagrant" respectively. The moon that traverses the night sky is

indeed a heavenly wanderer. As Loy chides the man in the moon to "draw us under," she expresses her disdain by calling him a truant, which, like vagabond and vagrant, carries a negative connotation. Taken most literally, this line refers to the idea that as the moon begins to wander in the sky, or to rise each night, women's consciousness is affected as they are "drawn under" or put into a sleep state. Read in another way, this line evokes the image of the riptide or undertow current and its ability to carry people out to sea to both their death. Metaphorically, Loy uses these images to outline the power that the man in the moon, or patriarchy, has over women's minds and bodies.

As she begins the third stanza, one would expect her sardonic plea to continue. Instead, this stanza marks a shift in the poem. Signaling the change, she breaks the end rhyme found in the previous two stanzas and uses brief alliteration ("Silver, circular") in the first line to distinguish it from the preceding sections. As the third of five stanzas, this section is central to the piece both in placement and in thought. Loy's choice of the word "decease" instead of "death" implies that the moon's waning is in process rather than complete. Figuratively, patriarchy has not disappeared, but is rather in the process of dying out. Interestingly, the waning of patriarchal control "infects" women "with unendurable ease," or leaves them in a state of freedom and comfort that is marred by something infectious and "unendurable." For Loy, freedom from patriarchy means that women must decide who they are without having anything to which they can compare themselves. In her "Feminist Manifesto," which can be found in Conover's *The Lost Lunar Baedeker: Poems of Mina Loy*, she wrote, "Leave off looking to men to find out what you are not□seek within yourselves to find out what you are." This stanza suggests that while the absence of patriarchy is desirable, the burden of self-determination may be less so for women unaccustomed to such freedom. Alternatively, Loy may be employing moon imagery here to suggest that although patriarchy may appear to be fading, it is not actually doing so. The waning of the moon is only a matter of one's perspective. From one vantage point, the full moon may be visible; yet from another, just a sliver may be seen. Similarly, although the moon seems to come and go with each new night and day, it is a constant entity in the universe. By coupling the word "decease" with lunar imagery, Loy introduces the concept that something can be both present and absent, appearing and disappearing, at the same time. Although appearances may change, patriarchy, like the moon, remains ever-present. It is this ever-presence then that infects the ease that women feel in the face of new freedoms. Instead of truly dying, patriarchy simply morphs and reemerges to challenge women's self-determination in new areas of their lives. Although women can feel good about their achievements and sense of independence in some respects, patriarchal control continues to define their existence by the eternal contradiction of its presence and absence in their lives.

Whereas the third stanza outlines this contradiction, the fourth marks its result on women. Nerve terminals govern all that women are. They are the receptors and transmitters that make it possible to feel, think, touch, listen, see, taste, understand, breathe, and more. Using the image of "nerve-terminals" touching "thermal icicles," Loy points out that the pretense of patriarchy's demise continues to expose the very core of women's beings to that eternal contradiction. In that an icicle is made from melting water that freezes and the word "thermal" is inherently associated with heat, Loy suggests that

women's lives, like a "thermal icicle," are both being formed and unformed at the same time. In the face of changing patriarchal challenges, women may take two steps forward to find themselves only one step ahead.

Modern readers might hope for an ending in which women prevail; however, in a final flourish, Loy ends with "Coercive as coma, frail as bloom / innuendoes of your inverse dawn suffuse the self; / Our every corpuscle become an elf." The lack of a period after "icicles" suggests that "Coercive as coma" links back to patriarchy's decease in stanza 3, yet the use of a capital *C* here ties the phrase to "innuendoes" in the following line. Not mistakenly, both readings seem to point to the same conclusion. The moon's decease, or even a hint of it beginning to set, represents only a pretense that patriarchy is disappearing as a force in women's lives. The moon will rise again, as will patriarchy. This pretense is convincing yet fragile. It is as compelling as the loss of consciousness, yet its delicateness suggests its tenuousness as a façade. Loy chooses "Coercive" and "frail" to describe the façade; however, these words can also function as judgments about the women who are seemingly coerced into unconsciousness by their own moral weakness or frailty. It is in a deceived and unwitting state that they become enlightened and find their true selves. The light of the moon's "inverse dawn suffuse[s] the self." Ironically, their self-realization is an illusion that is tainted by their own inability to see through the guise of patriarchy's demise. In a mocking final statement, Loy concludes, "Our every corpuscle become an elf." In the end, women are only the diminutive of man and enlightened women freed from the specter of patriarchy are only something of folklore.

Or are they? By mentioning an elf, Loy leaves the door open for an alternate reading that points to hope instead of hopelessness. If women become elf-like, they may, despite the challenges posed to them, rise up and be empowered by a new sense of mischief and even maliciousness, and locate and take their deserved place in society. Women need only to see through the façade in order to pierce its fragility and truly access their magical individuality.

Loy believed in the power of women, yet she was also critical of their role in their own subordination. In her poem, Loy ironically exposes patriarchy at the same time that she faults women for their seemingly mindless inability to create identities for themselves that are not inscribed by the rubric of patriarchal institutions and norms. By the end of the work, the first two stanzas become even more effective. In them, Loy mocks women for their complicity. By being blinded by an illusion of self-knowledge and independence, women are responsible for patriarchy's continuous ability to "preside over [their] wonder" and to "draw [them] under." They may as well simply request the oppression as Loy does in the opening lines. "Moreover, the Moon" provides a pessimistic critique of women's progress; however, as one of Loy's final feminist polemics, it also serves as a call to action. By pointing out the nature of women's deception, Loy prompts change and encourages women to progress from disillusionment to true enlightenment.

Source: Dustie Robeson, Critical Essay on "Moreover, the Moon," in *Poetry for Students*, Gale, 2004.

Topics for Further Study

Read Loy's "Feminist Manifesto" and discuss whether the ideas presented there can be found in "Moreover, the Moon." How does Loy's perspective on feminism compare and contrast to what you think a feminist is today? How does Loy's thinking compare and contrast to that of other leading feminists like Mary Wollstonecraft, Virginia Woolf, and Kate Millet?

Research the cubist movement in art and literature and discuss whether cubist techniques and approaches can be found in "Moreover, the Moon." Two cubist techniques that you may want to initially consider are fragmentation and the use of collage. If you find that such elements are lacking, try to rewrite "Moreover, the Moon" to include them, or write your own poem using these techniques.

Read Loy's poems "Apology of Genius" and "Lunar Baedeker" and compare and contrast her use of moon imagery in these works with that found in "Moreover, the Moon." How does Loy's use of the moon differ from that of other poets, such as Edgar Allen Poe, Charles Baudelaire, and Gabriele d'Annunzio?

After reading and analyzing "Moreover, the Moon," write down two points that you think Loy is trying to get across to her readers. Then, spend twenty minutes trying to write a poem that conveys these ideas. You may want to use the sun or the stars as a central image. Gather in groups of three to share your poems and discuss whether this process was difficult or easy.

Compare and Contrast

1940s: Women constitute approximately 24 percent of the total labor force in the United States.

Today: Women constitute approximately 47 percent of the total labor force in the United States.

1940s: Life expectancy for women in the United States is 68.2.

Today: Life expectancy for women in the United States nears 80.

1940s: Approximately 77,000 bachelor's degrees and 429 doctorate degrees are conferred to women in the United States.

Today: Approximately 712,000 bachelor's degrees and 20,000 doctorate degrees are conferred to women in the United States.

1940s: Claire Giannini Hoffman becomes the first female president of Bank of America, the world's largest bank.

Today: Carly Fiorina leads Hewlett Packard as its first female CEO and chairman.

1940s: Congress amends the Fair Labor Standards Act and raises the minimum wage from 40 cents to 75 cents per hour.

Today: Minimum wage is $5.15 per hour.

1940s: Elizabeth Kidd coins the phrase "Never underestimate the power of a woman" for use in advertisements in the *Ladies' Home Journal*.

Today: Harnessing the image of female power, athletic gear manufacturer Nike couples images of athletic women with the phrase "Do it" in their television ads.

What Do I Read Next?

"Apology of Genius" and "Lunar Baedeker" (1920) both include lunar imagery and can be found in Roger Conover's *The Lost Lunar Baedeker: Poems of Mina Loy*.

Becoming Marianne Moore: Early Poems 1907—1924 (2002) provides readers with a look at the evolution of Moore's work. Using facsimile copies of revisions of Moore's poetry, editor Robin G. Schulze shows the modernist writer in process. Moore's and Loy's works were often compared to one another.

Marianne Moore: Complete Poems (1994) provides readers with sixty years of Moore's writing, complete with detailed notes about the inspiration for her poems as well as individual lines.

Loy is also often compared to poet William Carlos Williams. In *The Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams: 1909—1939* and *The Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams: 1939—1962*, which were reproduced in 1991, editors A. Walton Litz and Christoph MacGowan present an impressive grouping of Williams's work.

Another contemporary often mentioned in the same breath as Loy is Wallace Stevens. *Wallace Stevens: Collected Poetry and Prose* (1997) provides readers with all of Stevens's books of poetry as well as a generous collection of his prose writing.

Shadow-Box (2000) is a fictionalized account of Loy's life constructed through imaginary letters written between her and Jack Johnson, the first black heavyweight champion of the world. In this first novel by Antonia Logue, Loy's second husband, Arthur Cravan, resurfaces after close to thirty years and works with Johnson to figure out the best way to reunite with his wife.

Albert J. Guerard's *The Hotel in the Jungle* (1996) is about Americans venturing to Santa Rosalia, Mexico, and takes place during three different time periods: 1870, 1922, and 1982. In the middle section, Guerard includes a character based on Loy.

In *The Moon: Myth and Legend* (2003), author Jules Cashford surveys the myths, symbols, and poetic images of the moon from Paleolithic times to the present.

Further Study

Burke, Carolyn, *Becoming Modern: The Life of Mina Loy*, University of California Press, 1996.

In this comprehensive biography of Loy's life, Carolyn Burke traces the artist's life from her birth in 1882 in London to her death in Aspen, Colorado, in 1966.

Kouidis, Virginia, *Mina Loy: American Modernist Poet*, Louisiana State University Press, 1980.

Another biographical resource, Koudis's work is the first book to be published about Loy's life and poetry.

Loy, Mina, Mina Loy Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library in the Yale Collection of American Literature, Yale University.

Loy's original papers include her published and unpublished writing, drawings, designs, copyright inventions, and correspondence spanning from 1914 to 1960. The papers include six unpublished autobiographical novels.

Schreiber, Maeera, and Keith Tuma, *Mina Loy: Woman and Poet*, National Poetry Foundation, 1998.

In addition to offering a collection of critical essays about Loy's work, this resource includes a previously unpublished interview with Loy, biographical information, as well as an annotated bibliography of other works about Loy.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Poetry for Students (PfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's�For Students� Literature line, PfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on �classic� novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of PfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of PfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in PfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by PfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

PfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Poetry for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the PfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the PfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Poetry for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Poetry for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from PfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

Night. Poetry for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from PfS (usually the first piece under the Criticism subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on Winesburg, Ohio. Poetry for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of PfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition, Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Poetry for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

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Adams, Timothy Dow. Richard Wright: Wearing the Mask, in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Poetry for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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