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*Enter Audience: Forms of Theatrical Spectatorship in Modernist Writing*

By

Alexander Michael Jeziorek

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In

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University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

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## Abstract

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The early twentieth century saw rapid changes in the technologies and concepts of perception, from the development of phenomenology and the emergence of film to the fracture of Renaissance perspective in painting and the avant-garde's vitalization of simultaneity, *durée* and multimedia. At the center of all these innovations stood the spectator. For modernists like Marcel Proust, Wyndham Lewis, Gertrude Stein, James Joyce, and Samuel Beckett, I argue, the theater offered the paradigmatic space to articulate systems of perception, where the spectator could participate in a virtual network of formal and social relations embedded in the collective audience. My project demonstrates that the proliferation of quasi-theatrical narrative prose in the twentieth century intended to script this network of spectators into a spectacle for the reader's gaze. Embedding theatrical forms into literary text, these authors preserved the capacity of the spectator to synthesize diverse elements into virtual systems, while they attempted to ground those systems in an audience that stood as a concrete figure for collective experience. The audience becomes a unique perceptual body and system. Indeed this emergent collective sensorium synthesizes the interaction between drama, narrative, and painting into a "virtual theater," imagining a theatrical practice not restricted to the theater's physical space. My dissertation, *Enter Audience: Forms of Theatrical Spectatorship in Modernist Writing*, argues that these perceptual systems, articulated by the modernist quasi-theatrical text, conceptualize not only the variegated ways that audience perceptions constructively and destructively interfere like propagating waves, but also how they construct the operations of social forces and proffer them to the analysis of the reader.

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## Introduction

The young Marcel Proust famously found the theater disappointing. Before his parents even allowed him to attend, Proust fantasized in *Swann's Way* about a theater divorced from any actual experience or reality. In it, the spectator enjoys an individualized theatrical experience in the environment of public spectatorship that is nonetheless alien to the idea of an integrated audience. The scene that he conjures requires no real stretch of the imagination for a reader familiar with *The Society of the Spectacle*:

At this date I was a lover of the theatre: a Platonic lover, since my parents had not yet allowed me to enter one, and so inaccurate was the picture I had formed in my mind's eye of the pleasures to be enjoyed there that I almost believed that each of the spectators looked, as through a stereoscope, at a scene that existed for himself alone, though similar to the thousand other scenes presented to the rest of the audience individually.<sup>1</sup>

This picture of the theatre is not as “childish” as Proust claims it to be in *Within a Budding Grove*, for it marks a concern about not only the social alienation experienced among the individual members of the audience, but also the perceptual alienation imposed by the technology of spectatorship that reinforces the former.<sup>2</sup> The partitioning of the collective audience into individual spectators cleaves closely to the technology behind Proust's metaphor. The stereoscope takes two different images of a single scene captured from slightly different positions and superposes them together, already imposing a technological fragmentation onto the organic unity of binocular vision. Jonathan Crary claims that the stereoscope eradicated the point of view or perspective associated with an actual position in space and replaced it with the superposition of “two non-identical models” that precede any unified experience.<sup>3</sup> Like the unity of our body's binocular vision under the impress of the stereoscope, the collective audience fragments into hundreds of non-identical individuals, rather than a unified audience. This is not, however, a simple case of fragmentation. Proust fancies that each theatrical spectator imagines a scene as particular as each spectator, and, yet, he couples this form of spectatorship with the presence of the collective audience.

This first scene about the theater in Proust sets up a fantasy that will occupy the authors in this dissertation, for it encapsulates the allure of unique perceptual experience at the same time that it longs for the social integration of a community greater than the individual. By placing it first in a series of the young Proust's ideas about the theater, I hope to populate the reader's imagination with various exemplary ways that the theater presented different models of phenomenological and perceptual experience. But I want to emphasize that this sequence of theatrical images is no mere series. Indeed it is my hope to convince the reader that this sequence of states implies a whole, albeit virtual, system of perception beginning to be articulated in the works by Proust, Wyndham Lewis, James Joyce, Gertrude Stein, and Samuel Beckett. This series of images will also signal the way that these modernist authors begin to scrutinize the theater in highly formalized ways by experimenting with quasi-theatrical texts that consistently script audience perception. By proffering the theater to the reader's observation, these modernists crucially develop a systems approach to perception and its collective instantiations. The following images in Proust conceptualize not only the variegated ways that audience perceptions constructively and destructively interfere like propagating waves, but also how they signal the operations of social forces.

These systems of perception actually manage several feats at once. First, they arrange people and objects in imaginary, though literal, space—a kind of virtual space, yet on that is capaciously synchronic. This manages to make Cubism's experiments with space and perspective a minimum requirement for these quasi-theatrical modernist texts. Second, this systems approach to perception,

complemented by the architectural space of the theater, links this minimum requirement to social space and relation. These systems actually lend the power of form to the social forces beyond the scope of perspective and perception. By extension, these texts finally present rigorously formalized networks that actually reveal something about the totality of the perceptual system's operations. My task for the rest of this introduction will be to contextualize further why apparently anti-theatrical modernism remains fascinated by the theater and its audience, and to describe how these experimental texts transform the classic obsession with [theatrical] appearance and reality into a relation of part to whole.

Despite the disappointment in the actual theater that Proust experiences in *Within a Budding Grove* and the “greedily imbibed [...] rough wine of [the theater’s] popular enthusiasm,” he directly pairs the above image of the theater with his first actual encounter:

I was happy, too, in the theatre itself; since I had made the discovery that—contrary to the notion so long entertained by my childish imagination—there was but one stage for everybody, I had supposed that I should be prevented from seeing it properly by the presence of the other spectators, as one is when in the thick of a crowd; now I registered the fact that, on the contrary, thanks to an arrangement which is, as it were, symbolical of all spectatorship, everyone feels himself to be the centre of the theatre.<sup>4</sup>

If in Proust’s younger imagination the public does not threaten to disrupt the spectator’s engagement, here Proust worries about being coincident with the rest of the audience who might impede his view. Here, rather than being strictly divided, the theater space integrates the audience, arranges each person as the center of their phenomenal experience. Proust, here, explicitly states an axiom of spectatorship: every spectator perceives as if they were the center of experience, and can therefore only offer a point of view that competes or conjoins with the others around it. According to this axiom, there is no external point of view because each spectator is the innermost point in the space, and this occludes the bodily presence of the audience that threatens to disrupt the theater experience. Put another way, the spectator’s only perceptual blind spot includes the audience around him or her. Rather than being a network of onlookers, Proust’s structural logic is that of center and periphery. Despite this arrangement, Proust’s theater experience is constantly thwarted. He laments the ephemerality of the actions, speeches, and tableaux not because their theatricality disrupts his spectatorial absorption, but because he, like Gertrude Stein, cannot keep up with the flux of data or the erroneously timed approbation of the theater audience, which is asynchronous with time of experience: “One discovers the touch of genius in Berma’s acting either a week after one has heard her, from a review, or else on the spot, from the thundering acclamation of the stalls.” After this, Proust’s first experience of the theater, we see another picture: under the threat of public disturbance, each spectator nevertheless enjoys the single stage from the center of their phenomenal experience, even if the production disappoints him or her compared to that of his or her imagination. Rather than imposing a technological separation among the audience, the theater separates the audience and, importantly, pits them against each other by transforming them into a field of competing phenomenological centers.

The final metamorphosis of the theater in Proust’s imagination becomes an apt metaphor for the potential unity of mind and its ability to connect seemingly separate elements of experience through the synthesis of a single organizing intelligence or spectacle. The young Proust, so porous to aesthetic experience, reflects on this possibility after considering his own aesthetic tastes. Given his complete sympathy with the novel’s of Bergotte, a character modeled after Anatole France, and his disappointment with the theater, Proust writes that these sentiments “must be obedient to the same laws”: “For my intelligence must be one—perhaps indeed there exists but a single intelligence of which everyone is a co-tenant, an intelligence towards which each of us from out of his own

separate body turns his eyes, as in a theatre where, if everyone has his own separate seat, there is on the other hand but a single stage” (195). This demonstrates the extent to which the theater is exemplary of systemic form, where we all have admission to a system of perception in which we are co-tenants of the world’s spectacle. At stake in this hypothesis is the possibility that the mind—despite its diverse thoughts, judgments, or other elemental units—integrates into a single system, which, although it cannot be seen all at once, establishes relationships between its elements that are concrete enough to form an integrated whole. For Proust, the theater becomes the best metaphor for the unity of this system. This dissertation studies the varying ways that the theater becomes the metaphor and formal structure for the virtual unity among people and points of view that dwell in seemingly fragmented systems. If Proust’s actual experience of the theater highlights potential interference, then the theater, taken as a system of spectators and spectacle, becomes the best way for these authors to articulate the virtual unity within a totality that cannot be perceived by those phenomenological centers within it.

Systems theory provides us with two helpful theses for understanding the modernist quasi-theatrical text as a perceptual system. First, it claims that a system cannot be a totality if an observer can view it from a point external to it, and, second, that observation always implies a blind spot.<sup>5</sup> From this theoretical perspective, then, we could understand the emergence of the modernist quasi-theatrical form in twentieth century, for the reader is yoked into a new totality that exceeds the traditional theater. Since the observer’s blind spot necessarily defers a final totality, we can also see how the spectatorial systems of these modernist texts extend beyond both the theater and written page. Eventually they lead into the virtual networks of which readers are only a part. By making the reader the provisionally final figure of the audience, who “sees” (i.e. reads) the scripts for both spectacle and spectator, these authors triangulate the reader into a position capable of imagining the integration the three system layers described above—that is, the spatial, social, and operational layers. By observing the narrative figure of the audience, the reader sees what is imperceptible to the individual spectator within the textual scene, and integrates that spectator’s blind spot with those of the remaining audience. Although these networks of blind spots, imperceptible in the narrative point of view by definition, can only be inferred by the text presented, they are bound together by the spatial, social and operational forces that animate these blind spots. Examples abound. Lewis, who assumes mind/body dualism as a fact, observes the world as a *theatrum mundi* with the aim of critiquing the way others observe. Stein abstracts her written plays into a “disposition of relations and positions” in order to adequately represent the relations within environments rather than individuals. Joyce, in “Circe,” links the perceptible and imperceptible through the continuity implied by optical metaphor. All these examples ultimately include the reader in a series of nested perceptual systems. Like a Beckettian subject, oscillating between clairvoyant images and limited reason, the reader, too, must imagine herself to be the object of a gaze that recognizes her blind spot and integrates her and each of us into a system beyond the frame of our point of view.

*Enter Audience* understands Proust’s theatrical metaphor for everyone’s co-tenancy to a single intelligence, with its irreducible tension between individual observation and virtual unity, as a site where the paradox of collective aesthetic experience might be resolved. Embedded in the mechanism of the stereoscope and the phenomenal experience of the spectator is the threat of disarticulating the integrated collective experience that is beyond the individual’s ken. No twentieth-century writer expresses the threat of decomposition between individual and organic community as acutely as Georg Lukàcs. The fragmentation of community is, for Lukàcs, a symptom of alienated labor and, similar to Henri Bergson, the abstraction of time into quantifiable space. Specialization—that is, the ever narrower focus on a part of a total field—only serves to dissect the portion on which it focuses into further fragments, while it fosters the illusion of a growing mastery, which only pushes the awareness of the total system further into the background:

time sheds its qualitative, variable, flowing nature; it freezes into an exactly delimited, quantifiable continuum filled with quantifiable ‘things’ (the reified, mechanically objectified ‘performance’ of the worker, wholly separated from his total human personality): in short, it becomes space. In this environment where time is transformed into abstract, exactly measurable, physical space, an environment at once the cause and effect of the scientifically and mechanically fragmented and specialized production of the object of labor, the subjects of labor must likewise be rationally fragmented [...] the mechanical disintegration of the process of production into its components also destroys those bonds that had bound individuals to a community in the days when production was still ‘organic’. In this respect, too, mechanization makes of them isolated abstract atoms whose work no longer brings them together directly and organically; it becomes mediated to an increasing extent exclusively by the abstract laws of the mechanism which imprisons them.<sup>6</sup>

Lukàcs shares his concern for the spatialization of time with Bergson, who famously disagreed with the conception of time as a measurable quantity.<sup>7</sup> The Eleatic philosopher, Zeno, was one of Bergson’s interlocutors, and his paradoxes, described in Aristotle’s *Physics*, argue against the possibility of motion.<sup>8</sup> Given that Zeno is a pre-Socratic philosopher, one wonders, of course, whether the “organic” production sought by Lukàcs and, therefore, the organic bond between individual and community ever existed at all. Regardless, the threat of individuals being “isolated abstract atoms” nicely indicates the stakes in the range of Proust’s theatrical figures, from Platonic ideal to actual experience and, finally, the metaphor for a unified intelligence. In his own way, Lukàcs, like Proust, hopes for a world system, like the theater, ordered by “a single intelligence of which everyone is a co-tenant.”

Given the hope for unified co-tenancy, the audience comes to play two roles for the authors studied here. On one hand, they treat audiences as isolated viewers, whose sensory experience might be directed as though, in reading, they viewed the imagined world through a stereoscope. On the other, when conceived as a collective, this audience constitutes an ideal form of perception, irreducible to individuated perception, whether omniscient or limited, but founded instead on the aggregate perceptual experience of a collectivity, comprised of diverse points of view. Like the origin of Michael Fried’s “theatricality,” which depended on the sheer size of literalist art, these modernists anticipate theater as a situation in which the only way to conceive the whole object is to walk around the object and see it from different points of view.<sup>9</sup> This ideal form of perception is best described as a perceptual system determined by the relationship between part and whole. There are two precedents here: Bergson’s theory of pure perception in *Matter and Memory*, and Leibniz’s “monadology.”

Bergson’s theory of pure perception, though not obviously related to theatricality, is important because he redefines phenomenality not in terms of the classic opposition between [theatrical] appearance and reality, but as a relation between part and whole. For Bergson, the present is “that which is acting” and the past “that which acts no longer.”<sup>10</sup> The body, being our vessel in the present, is the center of action and “an ever advancing boundary between the future and the past, as a pointed end, which our past is continually driving forward into the future” (*MM* 88). Bergson’s pure perception is a hypothetical perception free of memory. It stems from the idea that all matter is an “aggregate of images,” which exists whether we perceive it or not. It is the totality of images. The perception of matter is “these same images referred to the eventual of one particular image, my body” (*MM* 8). Bergson uses an optical metaphor to describe the mechanism of perception. Perception, he argues, is the body’s reflection of matter in the form of possible actions the body might take. The body receives images depending on its distance from them and the relevance of the images to the body’s action. Rather than absorb these perceptions as affections of

the body, the body reflects these images back, changing nothing in the object and, yet, tracing the contours of the body's perception of it. This tracing recognizes the potential actions—the virtual actions—which the body might take in the present. Effectively, then, Bergson revises perception into a model very different from an idealism that posits a reality (*noumenon*) and an appearance (*phenomenon*). Bergson instead understands perception's relation to matter—the sum total of images in the world—as part to whole: “But suppose my that my conscious perception has an entirely practical destination, that it simply indicates, in the aggregate of things, that which interests my possible action upon them: I can then understand that all the rest escapes me, and that, nevertheless, all the rest is of the same nature as what I perceive [...] It is not subjective, for it is in things rather than in me. It is not relative, because the relation between the ‘phenomenon’ and the ‘thing’ is not that of appearance to reality, but merely that of the part to the whole” (*MM* 306). Rejecting the endless and shifting play of perspectives, Bergson's theory of perception establishes continuity between the perceptible and the imperceptible, between part and whole, unified within a totality of images.

In order to posit continuity between the perceptible and the imperceptible through the reflection of matter in the body, Bergson literalizes Leibniz's “perpetual living mirror of the universe,” using optical metaphor to describe how perception, like rays of light, can be transmitted, reflected or refracted through a body and imply the existence of both real and virtual, perceptible and imperceptible objects:

When a ray of light passes from one medium into another, it usually traverses it with a change of direction. But the respective densities of the two media may be such that, for a given angle of incidence, refraction is no longer possible. Then we have total reflexion. The luminous point gives rise to a *virtual* image which symbolizes, so to speak, the fact that the luminous rays cannot pursue their way. Perception is just a phenomenon of the same kind. That which is given is the totality of the images of the material world, with the totality of their internal elements. But if we suppose centres of real, that is to say, of spontaneous, activity, the rays which reach it, and which interest that activity, instead of passing through those centres, will appear to be reflected and thus to indicate the outlines of the object which emits them. There is nothing positive here, nothing added to the image, nothing new. The objects merely abandon something of their real action in order to manifest their virtual action—that is to say, in the main, the eventual influence of the living being upon them. Perception therefore resembles those phenomena of reflexion which result from an impeded refraction; it is like an effect of mirage.

This is as much as to say that there is for images merely a difference of degree, and not of kind, between *being* and *being consciously perceived*. The reality of matter consists in the totality of its elements and of their actions of every kind. Our representation of matter is the measure of our possible action upon bodies: it results from the discarding of what has no interest for our needs, or more generally for our functions (*MM* 29-30).

Although Bergson describes perception in general, his optical metaphor depends entirely on vision and the properties of light. The authors in this dissertation will share a preference for this visual metaphor, for the optical ray ensures continuity and therefore links part and whole of a system, the perceptible and imperceptible through a “difference of degree.” As the preoccupation with audience signals, these authors make an exception for audition, which serves to cohere perceptual systems along different lines. We will put this aside for the moment.

The optical metaphor proves fruitful because it suggests an effect produced in the spectator by the coordination of several synchronic elements of the optical system. Although in actual optics,

contrary to Bergson above, there need not be total reflection to imply the existence of a virtual image or space, the total reflection in perception occurs, according to Bergson, because certain objects do not immediately interest the subject in its current action. The objects that do not interest our immediate action still exist, of course, but, according to Bergson's theory, we register them negatively only by the impress of the potential action we *might* take on them. Our position with respect to objects, then, matters to our perception and the system as a whole, especially insofar as we can actualize the objects through our bodies, but we can imagine how quickly the system becomes complex if we account for other perceivers within the system or, as does Bergson, for the complex virtual system of memory within the perceiver. I'll leave these added complexities to the side in order to appreciate the importance of optics and spectatorship to the conception of perceptual systems.

But I would like to turn briefly to Leibniz's *Monadology* because, although it rests on an optical metaphor, it incorporates an auditory metaphor important to many of the authors in this dissertation. The two metaphors are the "mirror of the universe" and "pre-established harmony." While Leibniz and Proust give us a sketch of the theater as a system of spectatorship, and even an indication of the whole audience as a virtual entity outside the scope of the individual viewer, Bergson gives us a more thorough idea of the virtual system. Yet, Bergson and Leibniz both use the metaphor of reflection, like Leibniz's "perpetual living mirror of the universe," to explain the continuity—what Bergson will call a "difference of degree"—between the perception a particular thing and the consciousness of perceiving that thing, the particular perspective and the perspective of the unified system (*MM* 30).

No philosopher equals Leibniz in systematizing perception. And it is through Leibniz that I would like to demonstrate the importance of the theater as a perceptual system because Leibniz accounts for a point of view that can take the perceptual system in as a totality. The authors in this dissertation, by presenting the theater as a system to the reader, approximate this position for the reader, except in the fourth chapter, where Beckett will make the reader only one in a series of omnipresent perceivers. Proust's final metaphor for the theater resembles Leibniz's "monadology," where each monad is only an aspect of God's all-perceiving being. Like Leibniz's pre-established harmony, by which efficient and final causes relate to each other, Proust suggests that theatrical spectatorship expresses the idea of a system in harmony. Leibniz, however, uses both an auditory and visual metaphor to express this idea in *Monadology*:

Now, this interconnection, or this adapting of all created things to each one, and of each one to all the others, brings it about that each simple substance has relational properties that express all the others, so that each monad is a perpetual living mirror of the universe.

And just as the same town when seen from different sides will seem quite different—as though it were multiplied perspectively—the same thing happens here: because of the infinite multitude of simple substances it's as though there were that many different universes; but they are all perspectives on the same one, differing according to the different points of view of the monads.<sup>11</sup>

The monad expresses all other monads and the whole as if it were a perpetual living mirror of the universe. This image, especially as it is stated in the second paragraph above, concisely summarizes Proust's final metaphor of the theater. Leibniz's "town" expresses modernism's ambivalence about theatrical, where each spectator is at once a monad and yet all spectators are perspectives on the one stage as a unified audience.

Leibniz's harmony emphasizes, of course, a more basic element of audience, taken more classically as all the people within audible range of a speaker. If vision requires complex mediation

for the spectator to discern the perceptual system produced thereby, audition is more simply inclusive like Big Ben's "leaden circles" in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*.<sup>12</sup> Beckett's narrator in *The Unnameable* points, too, to the the simplicity of being one's own audience, an idea he shares with Stein, which ultimately circumscribes the speaker/hearer more easily in a closed system akin to Leibniz: "I'll never stir, never speak, they'll never go silent, never depart, they'll never catch me, never stop trying, that's that, I'm listening. Well I prefer that, I must say I prefer that, that what, oh you know, who you, oh I suppose the audience, well well, so there's an audience, it's a public show (*T* 381). We must therefore acknowledge the different register that audition accesses in these works that are so often about theatrical audience and spectatorship.

The chapters that follow, then, articulate perceptual systems differently, depending on how they construct seeing and hearing as functions, but also depending on what else they put these registers into relation. Lewis' stories almost exclusively enact the exchange of gazes.<sup>13</sup> By assuming the mind/body dualism as a fact, Lewis locks himself into a conception of *theatrum mundi*, where the mind is the exclusive observing function. This generates complex systems of spectatorial exchange because, if mind is equivalent to observing, then *how* one observes can be abstracted into highly exchangeable commodities to be traded according to capitalist economy. Turning to the second chapter onwards, Joyce, Stein and Beckett coordinate sight with the audience's more literal function of *hearing*. Joyce makes the ability to hear the basic assumption of the audience's existence and cohesion. If the audience hears properly, then it remains inconspicuous, or imperceptible to the reader's attention. Hearing minimally binds the audience together as a group, whereas the failure to hear, in Joyce, precipitates from the group the individual spectator, who is made legible precisely by what he or she cannot hear and, yet, *can see*. My second chapter therefore focuses on moments where Joyce scripts the audience's *failure* to hear because it simplifies the audience into a purely optical function. Like Bergson, then, Joyce implies the existence of a "virtual theater" that is imperceptible to the reader and, yet, legible through its effects on the script of "Circe." In my third chapter, I show how Stein imagines that "listening" and "looking" present potentially contradictory effects. Stein's portraits relied on simultaneous "talking and listening" to bind them to the ephemerality of the present. At the same time, this phenomenological orientation—simultaneous talking and listening—produced continuity between utterances through difference and repetition. "Looking," on the other hand, introduces "resemblances" and, eventually, memory. This third chapter studies how Stein turned to the theater to couple these seemingly opposite modes of perception, and how it became the best experimental site for understanding how difference and resemblance, present and past, experience and memory, listening and looking coordinate in real time. "Could I see and hear," Stein asks, "at the same time and did I." In the final chapter, I show how Beckett's narrative prose expresses the apotheosis of perceptual systems. I argue that Beckett decomposes narrative into a system of dramatized perception, composed of individual perceivers, who retain the sense of belonging to a unified whole that could see as if it were vision *sub specie aeternitatis*. Ultimately, Beckett wavers between this Leibnizian system and a system seen from the subject's more imperfect vision. Using Geulincx as a philosophical model for the latter, Beckett articulates the impossibility of imagining a Leibnizian perceptual system, if our perception is continually bankrupted in experience.

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With the completion of my dissertation, “I seem” with Emerson, “to have lost a beautiful estate... some thing which I fancied was a part of me, which could not be torn away without tearing me, nor enlarged without enriching me, falls off from me, and leaves no scar.” I can nevertheless look back on my graduate work, and see it as accomplished. For this satisfaction, I have many people to thank.

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## Chapter 1 Narrative “Showman”: Wyndham Lewis and the Construction of Modernist Spectatorship



### *Introduction: The Theater Manager*

...the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure...O, there be players that I have seen play...that...have so strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

—William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act III Scene II

Wyndham Lewis's proto-cubist painting, *The Theatre Manager* (1909), depicts twelve costumed actors in the wings of a theater, viewing a performance left outside the frame of the painting. Lewis'

theater manager appears absorbed in thought, gazing in the other direction, as if to visualize the blank text that actually lies open, but disregarded, before him. In the center of the painting, an actor holds a mirror up to the manager that reflects an image of Shakespeare. Unable to be the real reflection of the manager, whose right hand obscures his face from the mirror, the image of Shakespeare could only be virtual, actually an effect of the spectator viewing the painting and the imaginary authorial figure prescribing the play visualized by the manager. The painting constructs from the gazes of the actors present an imaginary theater, one reflected in the synthesis of the theater manager and, yet, disregarded by the frame imposed by the painter. If theatricality is an effect of being seen, then Lewis paints not a reproduction of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, nor any other play for that matter, but, instead, he paints a theater of spectators. Critics describe this painting as a reflection of artist's ability to synthesize various "types of humanity" by reproducing and assembling allusions to the matter and styles of other painting traditions.<sup>14</sup> But it is not at all clear what "types" these spectators are, because, as Hamlet says in this section's epigraph, "they imitate humanity so abominably." The painting is instead a reflection of the virtual theater created, like the virtual image of Shakespeare, by the spectator viewing the painting. It is a theater in which looking becomes acting by dint of being seen.

The scene that Lewis' painting depicts is emblematic. This chapter traces a short arc from the beginning of Lewis' career—his earliest published stories in *The English Review* (1908) and his painting, *The Theatre Manager* (1909), to his most explicitly dramatic work, *Enemy of the Stars*, written and published by Lewis in the first issue of *BLAST* (1914). In 1909, at the end of his travels in France, Lewis mentions in a letter to Thomas Sturge Moore that Ford Madox Ford (then Hueffer) had considered taking Lewis on as a staff writer for *The English Review*, started by Ford in 1908.<sup>15</sup> Although Lewis never became a staff writer, he published his first stories about his travels in Brittany in *The English Review*: "The 'Pole'" (May 1909), "Some Innkeepers and Bestre" (June 1909), and "*Les Saltimbanques*" (August 1909). Each of these stories was later revised and collected for *The Wild Body* (1927).<sup>16</sup> Since Lewis's fascist politics in the 1920s and 30s justifiably inflects critical evaluation of *The Wild Body*, there has been little attention paid to the first stories that he revised and published in 1927 in the atmosphere of European Fascism.<sup>17</sup> This chapter asks that we direct attention to the stories published in small magazines within the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Throughout these stories, he writes in an idiom saturated with the language of performance and, as we have seen in *The Theatre Manager*, makes spectatorship his centermost concern. Bestre, for example, is a "theatrical sportsman." "I took a room in this house immediately," the Lewis writes, "the stage-box in fact, just above the kitchen." Bestre is a "staring eye that lost itself in reveries that suddenly took on flesh and acted some obstinate little part or other, the phases of whose dramatic life I would follow stealthily from window to window." "But [Bestre's campaigns] consisted almost entirely of dumb show" (*WB* 75-88). In these examples, Lewis's observations assume an intense interest in theatrical spectacle and spectatorship. The earlier texts begin and perpetuate this interest. The *raconteur* of "The 'Pole'" has a habit of "imitating his own imitations" (*P* 260). The Wildean dialogue that begins "Some Innkeepers and Bestre" is carried on when the Frenchman becomes "worked up into rather an exalted frame of mind by some of the Ring music." Finally, in "*Les Saltimbanques*," Lewis thematizes circus and theatrical spectatorship by demonstrating to the reader the condition of the Breton circus and spectator. In an essay accompanying the later revision of these early stories in *The Wild Body*, he describes how the Cartesian separation between mind and body informs the narration of his stories, calling the mind an "observer" and the body a "Wild Body" (*WB* 156). In a series of readings, this chapter demonstrates that Lewis structures this specialized mind-body dualism on the division in the theater between stage and spectator. This strange assumption—that the mind is a kind of theatrical spectator—characterizes, in turn, the mind and absent body of the narrator travelling through Brittany in Lewis's stories.

Each story adds a new dimension to Lewis' characterization of spectatorship, and suggests the possibility that Lewis synthesizes the dimensions in his overtly dramatic *Enemy of the Stars*. In "The 'Pole,'" Lewis develops a narrative impersonality that assembles the caricatures of Poles into the narrator's absent, yet composite body. By linking mind to theatrical spectatorship, and spectatorship to narration, Lewis generates an invisible body of diverse narrative traits that does not have any necessary connection to mind and, yet, turns narration into the performance of observation. "Some Innkeepers and Bestre" elaborates on the theory of spectatorship as a mode of social exchange made possible by the body's estrangement from the mind. Since observation need not depend on the particular qualities of body, it serves, according to a Frenchman in the dialogue that begins the story, as an abstraction that renders two particular bodies equivalent in a manner reminiscent of Marx's analysis of the money-form. Like money's exchange between two different commodities, abstraction creates a medium of social and emotional exchange between observers. Bestre, in particular, exemplifies this equivalence—that seeing is being seen. And, like a mirror, Bestre reflects the affect sent through the observer's gaze back to the observer. "*Les Saltimbanques*," develops, on the other hand, the differences between the primitive vision of the rural Breton audience and the capitalist vision of the bourgeois spectator. In the latter vision, the urban bourgeoisie treat the exchange involved in spectatorship in a dangerously literal way. Since all objects are exchangeable through spectatorship, according to the spectator enmeshed in a Capitalist system, all objects are equivalent to other objects, despite their meaningful differences. This similarity to abstract exchange allows theater to permeate the bourgeois life as if it were life's unconscious reality. The opposite extreme happens in primitive vision: the theater is so absolutely separate from life that it becomes nothing other than a dream state which seems to originate in the collective unconscious of the theatrical audience, and, yet, cannot contribute to its life.

In "The Meaning of the Wild Body," written as a companion essay to the heavily revised stories for *The Wild Body*, Lewis describes the Cartesian mind-body dualism that underwrites his theory of comedy and structures his early stories:

First, to assume the dichotomy of mind and body is necessary here, without arguing it; for it is upon that essential separation that the theory of laughter here proposed is based. The essential us, that is the laugher, is as distinct from the Wild Body as in the Upanisadic account of the souls returned from the paradise of the Moon, which, entering into plants, are yet distinct from them. Or to take the symbolic vedic figure of the two birds, the one watching and passive, the other enjoying its activity, we similarly have to postulate *two* creatures, one that never enters into life, but travels about in a vessel to whose destiny it is momentarily attached. That is, of course, the laughing observer, and the other is the Wild Body (*WB* 156).

Essentially a series of travel vignettes, Lewis' early stories all depend on a narrator in the position of the "laughing observer" travelling through Brittany and presenting Breton characters as if they were bodies controlled by a wild mechanical nature. While in 1927 Lewis deploys this Cartesian dualism in the service of comedy, in these earlier stories, it is transposed into a structure theatrical of spectatorship. Rather than simply equating theatrical spectatorship with one aspect of Cartesian dualism, Lewis constructs this emerging spectatorial, or observing, function by throwing "primitive" Breton spectatorship into relief against modern social practices.

In these early stories, Lewis constructs his narrator to be both an impersonal observer to the phenomenological point of view of each presented character and a co-participant in their mode of spectatorship. Of all the early stories, "*Les Saltimbanques*" most directly addresses the relationship between audience and spectacle and, thus, presents the narrator looking at others in the act of looking. Lewis later describes this narrative position, toggling between observer and participant, as a

“showman.” He presents the narrator, who travels through Brittany collecting observations about the characters of *The Wild Body*, as a “fanciful wandering figure to be the showman to whom the antics and solemn gambols of these wild children are to be a source of strange delight” (*CWB* 149). The showman is essential to Lewis’s narrative method because he orchestrates an audience’s spectatorship, identifies now and again with their point of view, and participates in performance. Rather than narrate stories, Lewis’s narrator presents characters and spectacles as if he were part of a travelling circus or cabaret.<sup>18</sup> This narrative prototype repeats throughout Lewis’s stories and allows him to present a comical theater of Wild Bodies, imitating the image produced by the Breton point of view. Thus, the content of Lewis’s early stories involves the narrator observing another’s spectatorship. Yet, since Lewis views, however impersonally, the exchange of gazes between the Bretons and the other Wild Bodies, part of the speculative exchange returns in his direction. This suggests that the triangulation of gazes, like the triangulation in M-C-M’, produces the composite body shaped by the theater of gazes seeing different aspects of body. Lewis’ narrator therefore vacillates between assembling a composite body collected from the various characters he presents and remaining an impersonal observer to them. His presence signals to us a difference between the impersonal spectator and the captive audience, for he is always in danger of being corralled into the passive spectatorship of the audience. Lewis’s composite body, concretized in the showman, demands that it be individuated among the “brute” thinking of the “mob”: “the brute in us always awakens at the contact of a mob of people (*CWB* 237). Yet, at the same time, Lewis’s narrative position must participate with the mob in order to speculate about how it sees.

### *Type, Personality, and Narrative Irony in “The Pole”*

“The ‘Pole’” is Lewis’ first published picaresque that dramatizes his travels through Brittany. Lewis writes in a footnote, “‘Polonais’ or ‘Pole,’ means to a Breton peasant the member of no particular nation, but merely the kind of being leading the life that I am here introducing cursorily to the reader” (*P*, 256). Kept in quotations, the “Pole” does not accurately represent immigrants to Brittany, but reflects instead the Breton misrecognition of foreigners as Poles.<sup>19</sup> Since “Pole” is actually a misnomer, Lewis more aptly dissects this Breton category into aesthetic functions: the *raconteur*, Isoblitzky, presents his person as the accumulation of narratives about the events and attributes his friends’ lives; the *farceur* allows others to narrate his ludicrous exploits for him; and the *séducteur* maintains his financial buoyancy by absorbing the attention of the *pension* owner, Mademoiselle Batz, and manipulating her. Although the narrator maintains his position as a “laughing observer,” he implies that he forms a “composite body” comprised of the three character types. He accomplishes this by being the observer whose “wild body” is conspicuously absent, allowing impersonality to assemble an identity that contains and exceeds the three personalities caricatured in “The ‘Pole’.”

Lewis derives this “‘Pole’ in a Breton sense” from Paul Gauguin and what Lewis saw as the commodification of sentiment in Gauguin’s Primitivist art. The reason for the profusion of “Poles” throughout Brittany, we are told by the narrator, is Paul Gauguin’s posthumous fame and the “discovery” of his sketches and paintings in the French countryside by Parisian collectors. In a brief anecdote, the narrator describes Ambroise Vollard, the art dealer, who organized exhibitions for Manet, Gauguin, and Van Gogh among others, paying handsomely for sketches that Breton owners of the *pensions* confiscated from Gauguin in lieu of delinquent rent payment (*P* 257). The result is a complicated system of local economy that originates with the art-commodity and depends upon it. In this economy, the owners of *pensions* coddle the Poles, who hope to ride the coattails of Gauguin’s success and who, from the Breton point of view, appear to be artists. Essentially investing in futures, the owners of the *pension* allow the Poles to accrue debt in hopes that, one day, the owners might

collect the Poles's paintings as recompense for rent past-due. The art collected by the proprietors might be sold to Parisian art collectors at comparatively low prices and then sold at a premium in Paris. A parody of the contemporary art market, modeled by Vollard's acquisition of Gauguin's "primitive" art in Brittany and elsewhere, this system of patronage becomes the efficient cause of the Pole. "Gauguin," the narrator admits, "might also have claimed to be the founder of this charming and whimsical order" (P, 257).

According to Lewis' caricature of the Breton, this economic phenomenon appears as a fact divorced from the larger economic system that drives it. Once Gauguin's paintings are exchanged for money, the Bretons assume this exchange to be typical of all art. Travellers who wish to avoid paying rent play the role of the Pole and therefore encourage the speculation about the future economic value of their aesthetic labor:

However, many of them did at last part with the pictures, receiving very considerable sums. The money once in their pockets they forgot all about Gauguin. This new *fact* engrossed them profoundly and exclusively for a time—they pondering over it, and turning it about in their minds in every direction. At last, with their saving fatalism, they accepted it all.

If Lewis assumes Descartes' concept of the body for the "wild body" and he similarly adopts Descartes mechanistic explanation for material bodies, then here the "wild body" meets one force behind its mechanical reproduction as the "Pole."<sup>20</sup> Pure exchange value replaces the memory of Gauguin and his actual painting, and the exchange provides a reproducible model for future economic gain. The collector, too, seemingly disappears from the exchange. The exploitation of the Bretons by the Poles actually cuts both ways because the Bretons commit the Poles to debt in order to obtain what amounts to interest on the loan. This exchange appears to the Bretons without cause as a fact of the world. To the Breton's *naïveté* about art, every new visiting artist, then, become a sound investment and a similar economic fact. The Bretons' expectations derive from their blind wager that the Poles will produce fashionable art, but misrecognize their role as objects of a greater economic system, which the "Poles" clearly and consciously exploit. What the Bretons view as a profitable investment in art, Lewis' narrator exposes as a double exploitation that produces personalities so refined, so divorced from their economic conditions—*raconteur, farceur, séducteur*—that they obtain the heights of a kind of aestheticism. The personalities seem to perform for the sake of performing. So does economic exploitation pave the way for the emergence of the Pole in Brittany and their subsequent exploitation of Breton *naïveté*.

Lewis takes this *naïveté* seriously as a category, and he explicitly uses it in *The Caliph's Design* to describe Gauguin's primitivism. Lewis alludes, then, to the difference between "naïve" and "sentimental" in Friedrich Schiller's "On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry."<sup>21</sup> Schiller characterizes *naïveté* as a point of view that accepts appearances as natural, rather than otherwise constructed. "We ascribe a naïve conviction to a man," Schiller writes, "if, in his judgment of things, he overlooks their artificial and affected relations and keeps merely to simple nature."<sup>22</sup> This conviction, being a judgment, is an aesthetic point of view, a judgment reached by the observation of the object by the subject. The naïve genius, Schiller continues, always works within nature to expand its boundaries without ever critiquing its domain: "Every true genius must be naïve or it is not genius... It is only given to the genius, to be always at home outside the known and to *enlarge* nature, without *going beyond* it."<sup>23</sup> The sentimental differs from the naïve, according to Schiller, because it recognizes that the world is comprised of both natural and artificial material and, nevertheless, it values nature as a part of its past to which it ought to return. The dictum of the sentimentalist with respect to the objects of nature is, "They *are* what we *were*; they are what we *ought to become* once more."<sup>24</sup> The sentimentalist, then, recognizes himself in nature by projecting onto it his more essential being. He

therefore produces an absolute value from an ontological state that is neither historically nor geographically conditioned. Given the anachronism of sentimentality, Lewis finds resonances between Schiller's "sentimental" category and the modern interest in the "primitive."

Lewis theorizes Gauguin's primitive art in *The Caliph's Design*, calling him a "Primitive Naif," who assumed primitive cultures to be more truly natural and who painted them with a naïve sense of belonging. "Gauguin was not an artist-type," Lewis writes, "He was a savage type addicted to painting. He was in reality very like his sunny friends in the Marquesas Islands." Lewis depicts Gauguin as a modern man at home in primitive culture, unconscious of his primitive relation to nature and naïve for this uncritical acceptance. This equates him with the so-called "savages" of his paintings. Against this "Primitive Naif," Lewis develops the term, "Primitive *voulu*," for the type of artist, who, rather than develop new forms appropriate to his historical and social situation, self-consciously appropriates primitive content by travelling to less industrial regions, such as the Marquesas Islands, either as a "sentimentalist" or a "rogue":

There is no such thing as the *born Primitive*. There is the *Primitive* in point of view of historical date, the product of a period. And there is the *Primitive voulu*, who is simply a pasticheur and stylist, and invariably a sentimentalist, when not a rogue...he is on the same errand and has the same physiognomy as the Period-taster, or any other form of dilettante or of pasticheur. The Primitive voulu acrobatically adapts himself to a mentality of a different stage of social development: the pasticheur merely, en touriste, visits different times and places, without necessarily so much a readjustment of his mind as of his hand (*CD*, 53).

The "Primitive *voulu*" appropriates the conditions of life from a "different stage of social development" and uses it to expand the content of his art rather than its theory or form (*CD*, 53). Although the "Primitive *voulu*" is clearly the object of Lewis' scorn, he nevertheless preserves the performative qualities of the "Primitive *voulu*" in the characters presented by his narrator. His adaptation is, after all, acrobatic in its contortions not unlike the performance of the Poles caricatured by Lewis. Lewis clearly modifies Schiller's distinction between the naïve and sentimental. For Lewis, the naïve still views "artificial" and "affected" relationships to be natural, whereas the sentimental becomes the appropriation of the naïve as a sales strategy. With this view, Lewis understands the roguish actors within capitalist markets, like Vollard and, later, the Poles, to appropriate Gauguin as a commodity or as a type of personality to "adapt" and modify "acrobatically." Personality in the age of its mechanical reproduction allows the impersonal spectator to adopt personalities without them being necessary aspects of mind.

The difference between the naïve and the sentimental, and the difference between the "Primitive naïf" and the "Primitive *voulu*" map on to the "real" Pole and the Poles that draw Lewis' attention in the story. After Vollard sets the precedent for an art market in Brittany, then the Pole, a kind of "Primitive *voulu*," enters the scene as a canny manipulator of modern market forces, even while they shape him behind his back. The Pole (as a variety of aesthetic functions) is an imitator of style, a *pasticheur* and a performer of acrobatic heights. And it is only through the *raconteur*, *farceur*, and *séducteur*'s inability to be identified as "real" Poles that they can manipulate the category to their advantage. The *farceur* of Lewis' text projects identity through other people's narration of his original and absurd exploits: "All his exploits, *as recounted by his friends*, were well-known *stories*" (P 262, emphasis mine). The *raconteur*, on the other hand, projects identity by narrating other people's actions and habits as if they were his own. He is always "imitating his own imitations" (P 260). Both aesthetic types shape their identity with narrative. In both cases, however, impersonality rules the roost; both types shape their personality by narrating it from a point of view estranged from their bodies. The *séducteur* comports his outward facial and bodily expressions as if he were seeing himself

through a camera. Lewis renders the *séducteur's* impersonal visual perspective as a photographic one: “In his rigid and absorbed manner, with his smiling mask, he looked as though a camera’s recording and unlicked eye were in front of him, and if he stirred or his expression took another tone, the spell would be broken, the plate blurred, his chance lost” (P 264). The *séducteur* modifies the third-person narrative perspectives of the *farceur* or *raconteur* into a third-person visual perspective—the photographic plate—which betrays the *séducteur's* vulnerability to rote mechanical reproduction.

Lewis categorizes these personalities by aesthetic functions, which then become excellent models of behavior for the impersonal narrator. Through impersonality, Lewis yokes together multiple aspects of these characters’ performances into the implied composite body of the observing narrator’s mind, which the reader can only observe indirectly. Lewis posits therefore a mode of narration predicated on observation, where the mind of the observer could perform a multiplicity of aesthetic functions contained in a body that holds no necessary connection to those functions of mind. Consider Lewis’ description of himself as an artist in *Blasting and Bombardiering* (1937):

I will go over my credentials. I am an artist—if that is a credential. I am a novelist, painter, sculptor, philosopher, draughtsman, critic, politician, journalist, essayist, pamphleteer, all rolled into one, like on of those portmanteau-men of the Italian Renaissance. I am a portmanteau-man (like ‘portmanteau-word’). I have been a soldier, a yachtsman, a baby, a *massier*, a hospital patient, a traveller, a total abstainer, a lecturer, an alcoholic, an editor, and a lot more.<sup>25</sup>

Since Lewis assumes the separation of mind and body, and he characterizes the mind as an observer, Lewis’s narration functions like a *theatrum mundi*, where the mind observes the body express one or more of the mind’s aspects. A portmanteau word is a composite word. A recent example—one that is relevant to immigrants, often Polish in this case—is Brexit, which combines ‘Britain’ and ‘exit’. Like a portmanteau word, the body, according to Lewis, does not unify these functions, and yet the body expresses traces of them. Being an impersonal observer allows Lewis to perform as a “portmanteau-man” in body and therefore to be many roles without being unitary. Lewis expresses a kind of paradox: bodily performance is only an effect of being observed. This axiom becomes the foundation for Lewis’s claim that narration is inextricably linked to spectatorship and performance, and “The ‘Pole’,” “Some Innkeepers and Bestre,” “*Les Saltimbanques*” and the closet drama, “Enemy of the Stars,” exemplify this best.

In the revision of these stories in *The Wild Body*, Lewis calls these corporeal performers “wild bodies.” Five years later, he calls this body “the composite body.” The concept originates from the *Symposium*, in which Socrates speculates that the same author could write both comedy and tragedy. In his 1932 commentary on the revision of *Enemy of the Stars*, “Physics of the Not-self,” Lewis quotes Socrates: “the same person is able to compose both tragedy and comedy, and [...] the foundations of the tragic and the comic arts are essentially the same.”<sup>26</sup> Lewis then concludes, “Since there is a unique point of common emotion from which these two activities arise, to which both can be traced back (and on account of which common source the same poet enabled to excel at both), so no doubt the different categories of forms, and their archetypes, would be fused, for such a mind, somewhere or other, into one *composite body*” (PNS 199-200). Lewis’s argument here depends similarly on the mind-body dualism, and suggests that, because a single mind can contain multiple emotional aspects, there must exist a body that expresses all these aspects. Narration requires this composite body. Later in “Physics of the Not-Self” Lewis describes Socrates as “this supreme market-place performer (properties ironically chosen, ironically handled and ironically displayed)” (PNS 204). Lewis suggests that Socratic irony is a mode of performance that resists typological categorization by making aesthetic practices and typological categories the materials of identity without actually identifying with any one practice or category. According to Lewis, however, modern

narration is a performance only insofar as it can observe Wild Bodies from a distance without necessarily becoming them. Observation therefore makes narrative performance possible.

The *raconteur*, Isoblitzky, clearly evokes the narrator of “The ‘Pole.’” Isoblitzky manipulates the Breton microcosm of an art market by performing a pastiche of personality through narrative construction. He constructs his projected mask of personality by assuming the attributes of the characters in his stories:

He had the strangest habit of imitating his own imitations. In telling a story in which he figured (his stories were all designed to prove his independence) he had a conventional type of imitation for the voice and manner of his interlocutor, and a gruff, half-blustering tone to imitate his own voice in these dramatic moments. And gradually these two tones, mixed into each other, had become his ordinary tone in conversation (*P*, 260).

Already imitating in his normal habit, Isoblitzky, as a *raconteur*, figures as a second-order imitator—an imitator of an imitation. The source of his “ordinary tone” springs from the mixture of a “conventional type of imitation” for his interlocutor and his own “half-blustering tone.”

Lewis’s narrator observes Isoblitzky’s narrative non-synthesis as the communion of the man and penumbral aura of his story’s characters, which directly links the *raconteur* to a description of dramatic performance. The presentation of his narratives actually produces a “visionary” result: “He looked upon this person’s qualities as his own, and used them as such. This shadowy figure of the friend seemed indeed superimposed on Isoblitzky’s own form and spirit. One divined an eighth of an inch on all sides of the contour of his biceps and pectorals, another contour—the visionary contour—of this friend’s even larger muscles” (*P*, 260-1). The narrator continues to describe Isoblitzky’s performance: “When it came to his friend’s turn to speak, he would puff his chest out, and draw himself up, until the penumbra of visionary and supernatural flesh that always accompanied him was almost filled by his own dilated person” (*P* 261). The result of his narrative imitation produces the “penumbra of visionary and supernatural flesh” superimposed on the physical body and “spirit” of an already elusive character. Lewis’s narrator describes Isoblitzky in the reverie of an acting performance, which places him in communion with the character of his friend. The *function* of the *raconteur*—the narrative mode—results directly in the description of a dramatic performance, for which the narrator is the audience. No longer interested in what one is, *how* the *raconteur* portrays himself results in the creation of a *visible result*, which is not simply the contours of the physical body, but also the play of light and darkness beyond the body—a non-real extension of the *raconteur*’s physical body. It is the narrative process rendered *visually* as a composite body and the costume of “spirit,” visible only because we “divine” it. Isoblitzky’s narrative performance reveals Lewis’ drive toward drama: the externalization of personality allows us to stage dramas of its myriad aspects, while it always renders visible the incongruity between dramatization and the actual nature of any given consciousness.

By the same logic, the *raconteur* signals an aspect of the text’s actual narrator. He reveals his literary style as a construction of the *raconteur*, *farceur*, and *séducteur*, and subsequently as the mastery and negation of their individual functions through irony. Narrative irony transforms Isoblitzky into an allegory for the narrative style that is in gestation here: Lewis renders narrative as a form of theater, or play acting, where impersonality maintains the structural tensions among character types without creating an identity between them and the narrator. This transposes narration into surface effects, and it suggests that ontological claims for essences, or “the real” of character type, are naïve.

If the *raconteur* exemplifies a mode of narrative construction for Lewis, then the *farceur* constructs his type by selecting and arranging stories of his absurd exploits as others narrate them. This represents another level of estrangement from his own actions; he relates to himself in the third

person, but he listens to stories about himself instead of narrating them. He accretes the particularly ludicrous narratives of his friends into the image of his *farceur* mask. When describing the *farceur* Pole, the narrator takes pains to show that there are only witnesses to the spectacle of the *farceur*'s physical comedy and never the spectacle itself. There are only the narrator's present observations of the *farceur* or other witnesses who report his past exploits. All reports of his actions come from third-person sources, or figure him as the object of some agency other than himself:

One among the "Poles" *they* pointed out to me especially as a great *farceur*. For instance, he once *found himself* in a railway carriage immediately in front of a sleeping man—a French officer—with his mouth open. He at once introduced his forefinger between the sleeper's lips...And the *narrator* added that they became fast friends...*All his exploits, as recounted by his friends, were well-known stories.* He was a simple, expansive, hysterical little man; and although I could imagine him excitedly putting his finger into somebody else's mouth by mistake, I did not credit his doing it in the way narrated. *It seemed much more likely that somebody else would put their finger in his.* At the same time I could hardly believe in his mendacity. I finally concluded that he was a lunatic, and that from having *allowed his mind to dwell too much on his friends' anecdotes*, he had at length come to believe himself the hero of those that appealed to him most (P, 262, emphasis mine).

The event that establishes the *farceur*—sticking his forefinger in a sleeping man's open mouth—never actually occurs with any narrator or friend as witness. The motley crew of narrators and friends displace the actual physical comedy through their continuous narrative reproduction of the event. The agency of the *farceur* already appears as other, when "he *found himself* in a railway carriage" as if some ingenious narrator had already placed him there. The "himself" becomes the object of discovery for the "he." The agency of the farce belongs in the narration of another; thus, the *farceur* seems more likely to the victim of some prank rather than its perpetrator. As the narrator of "The Pole" points out, "It seemed much more likely that somebody else would put their finger in *his*." So distant is the *farceur* from the spectacle of actual comedy that Lewis's narrator supposes him to be the object of the joke for which he was formerly supposed to be the actor. The *farceur* has heard so many stories of his exploits that the reality of the original situation becomes completely obscured by the narrative reproductions. The *farceur* replaces reality with a constructed pastiche of his favorite narrative fragments. As a result, the *farceur* appears to be so removed from reality that fact becomes fiction and truth a mere matter of belief. Indeed, having the *farceur* present as a direct referent to the stories about him, the narrator begins to disbelieve the stories. The narrator "[could] not credit his doing it in the way narrated" and he "could hardly believe in his mendacity." The shift from the *raconteur* to the *farceur* transposes narration of oneself into the narration of events by others and, in the process, transposes the verifiability of referring to real situations into the affective capacity of narration to make one believe in the veracity of a situation.

The *farceur* resembles the "man of words" described by Lewis in "Physics of the Not-Self" (1932).<sup>27</sup> In this essay, he distinguishes between the "man of his word," who "securely possesses, as a lightly-held property, the tame word, which obediently represents the man and his interests" and the "man of words" (PNS 197). The "man of his word" represents the "will's truth," whereas the "man of words" represents the truth of the intellect (PNS 196). The "man of his word" is "the man you will instinctively trust" (PNS 197). The *farceur* aligns more closely to the spirit of the "man of words," whose 'word' might be anybody's!" (PNS 197). When Lewis's narrator describes how other narrators construct the *farceur*, he cannot believe the *farceur*'s "mendacity" because the *farceur* does not represent his actions himself as a deliberate act of will. The *farceur*, then, resembles the "man of words" in a literal sense without actually representing the intellect. He is literally constructed by

other people's narratives about him. As the object of narration, the *farceur* appears mendacious because he does not own the means of self-expression. Lewis' narrator, on the other hand, performs the role of the "man of his word," actively shaping the story to suit his interests. But the narrative irony that links the narrator to the *raconteur* and *farceur* suggests that the narrator does not actually express his will. Rather, he accumulates aspects of himself through the link of irony's negations as if the narrator were the absent observer whose body we could never locate, except through how he relates to the objects of his observation. Nevertheless, Lewis stages this agon between the will and the intellect repeatedly in his early stories, and, again, in *The Enemy of the Stars*.

As a result, Lewis also aligns the *farceur* with the figure of the philosopher and, by Lewis' own extension, with the "not-self," who, by the denial of the ego's will (the self), acquires truth by considering it from a perspective bereft of selfish interest. Lewis describes the not-self as a man who is not himself, who continuously puts on the guise of others, and who participates in the lives of others:

The man who has formed the habit of consulting and adhering to the principle of the *not-self* participates, it is true, in the life of others outside himself far more than does the contrary type of man, he who *refrains* from making any use at all of this speculative organ. But he is not, for that reason, *more like* other people. He is *less like* them. For is he not one in a great many thousand? And to be like other people he certainly should be less them and more himself. Hence his altruism only results in differentiating him, and in leaving him without as it were a 'class,' even without a 'kind.' For this ultra-human activity is really inhuman: even it frustrates its own purpose by awakening suspicion instead of trust (*PNS* 198).

The not-self recalls the construction of the narrator's absent composite body that matches the multiple aspects of mind that the observing narrator yokes together through ironic identification. In 1908, Lewis' narrator does not quite reach this ideal altruism of Lewis's 1932 formulation of Platonic "goodness." But he becomes a new type by what his performative resistance to type implies. He adduces Socrates as the paradigmatic not-self of the Western culture and quotes Alcibiades' description of him in *The Symposium*: "He esteems these [external possessions], and us who honour them, as nothing, and lives among men, making all the objects of their admiration the playthings of his irony."<sup>28</sup> Lewis calls Socrates, then, "this supreme market-place performer (properties ironically chosen, ironically handled and ironically displayed)" (*PNS* 204). Thus, the philosopher, ironist and performer fuse together to form a single "composite body."<sup>29</sup>

The final character of "The 'Pole'," the *séducteur*, figures Lewis' Cartesian separation of "observer" and "wild body" as a *pas de deux*. In the end, the spectacle operates on its audience by seductive absorption. Although he originates from Germany and bears an Italian name, the final "Pole" of the text plays a rather unskillful seducer to the Breton proprietress, Mademoiselle Batz. He vacillates between beating her and pretending an engagement to her in order to borrow money or enjoy the best of the *pension*. Eventually, Mlle. Batz's patience begins to wane, but not before another quarrel, the end of which they celebrate with a dance that prefigures Kreisler's in *Tarr*.<sup>30</sup> In a final effort to communicate the intensity of mood to Mlle. Batz, he concentrates an expression into his face as if he were a photographer viewing himself from the outside:

After one of their quarrels, they organized a dance to celebrate its completion; their two gaunt and violent forms whirling round the narrow room, quite indifferent to the other dancers, giving them terrible blows with their driving elbows, their hair sweeping on the ceiling. His blazing drunkard's eyes were fixed on hers, striving in the intoxication of the dance, as his German nature taught him, to win her imagination, then malleable as a child's—to seal it with his seal, at a height where no

succeeding excitement of every day could reach, with its melting heat, and dethrone him, or efface this image to which he could always appeal. He felt that she was in an extremely sensitive and impressionable state. He seemed to be holding fast and immobilizing in his set intensity of expression some forceful mood. In his rigid and absorbed manner, with his smiling mask, he looked as though a camera's recording and unlidged eye were in front of him, and if he stirred or his expression took another tone, the spell would be broken, the plate blurred, his chance lost (*P*, 264).

The narrator figures the German Pole's seduction as desperately dependent on the final expression he projects to Mlle Batz, which he hopes will transcend their daily emotional vacillations. Although the German Pole seeks to seduce Mlle Batz, he only manages to absorb the spectator in this larger spectacle. Lewis signals this with the only use of free-indirect discourse in the story: "He felt that she was in an extremely sensitive and impressionable state." The free indirect discourse gives the narrator an impossible access to the *séducteur* that implies both narrative distance and identification. The metaphor of the "unlidged" eye of the camera signifies his estranged third-person relationship to himself and it emphasizes the necessity for a sustained concentration of the facial expression. The spell at risk of being broken is not merely the effect of his expression, but its presentation as the truth of his feelings for Mlle. Batz. The camera reinforces this claim to the real; the camera asserts a certain claim to represent things as they appear, but, at the same time, reveals the inauthenticity of an expression that must be held for the length of a camera's exposure. It also signals the mechanical reproducibility of the "smiling mask" as a commodifiable object that could be reproduced or imitated. The *séducteur* represents Lewis's anxiety about the possible reproducibility of embodied expression. All these types—the *raconteur*, *farceur*, *séducteur*—perform elaborate masks to maintain leverage in the local Breton economy produced by Gauguin and Vollard. Yet, their self-estrangement is passive, being enacted on them by a larger economic system. Lewis' narrator, on the other hand, manages to construct himself through observation, thereby implying his composite body, without leaving it prey to outside forces.

*"Modern Man," Impersonality, Dialogue and Dumb-show*

Kant covertly considered art to be a servant. Art becomes human in the instant in which it terminates this service. Its humanity is incompatible with any ideology of service to humankind. It is loyal to humanity only through inhumanity toward it.

—Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 197

Lewis's second published story, "Some Innkeepers and Bestre" (1908), reads like self-estranged theatrical writing, for it fragments the theater into dialogue and mute gesture. In the dramatic dialogue between a Frenchman and Englishman, the Frenchman alludes to the Marxist analysis of the money form. He creates an analogy between money and a model of impersonality that avoids the violence of coercion and assimilation in social interaction. Lewis's Frenchman says:

The characterless, subtle, protean social self of the modern man, his wit, his sympathies, are the moneys of the mind. When the barter of herds, tools, and clothing gave place to coinage this sort of fellow began to exist. And this artificial and characterless go-between, this common energy, keeps man's individual nature all the more inviolable and unmodified. . . . A man would ripen his friend like the sun--not impose on him his own forms and characteristics, but merely his vitality, his heat: he would have his friend's personality strongly fructify. And such a result can only be achieved by this modern ideal of abstracting energy from a purely personal and

coercive form, and making it a fluid, unaccented medium—the civilized man, in short (*CWB* 229).

The "Frenchman" makes a clear analogy between money and "the civilized man," who emerged when "barter...gave place to coinage." He evokes the Marxist analysis of exchange value as medium of equivalence, "a common energy," of which money is the objectification. According to the Frenchman's account of "civilized man," the person disappears from social exchange, for the human is objectified from a "personal and coercive form" into an "unaccented medium," which controls all social exchange. Like the transformation of commodity exchange (CMC) into capital (MCM), social exchange moves from already being impersonal to a further impersonal abstract exchange. "Civilized man" trades common energy, like capital, for more (or less) energy, ripening and fructifying others with one's "heat." In this analogy, the person is commodity and impersonality is the power to exchange.

Lewis echoes the commodification of the person in his theory of the Comic, in which we are primarily objects and only secondarily—and by chance—human. Lewis makes an imperfect, but unmistakable connection between mind and body, and money and commodity. He writes that, "the root of the Comic is to be sought in the sensations resulting from the observations of a *thing* behaving like a person. But from that point of view all men are necessarily comic: for they are all *things*, or physical bodies, behaving as *persons*" (*CWB* 158). Lewis' theory of comedy simplifies the human into its corporeal material, essentially a body, or a "thing." And it destabilizes the category of the human, for it is no longer given that we behave beyond the mechanical laws provided by our body. Extending the assumption that the mind is an observer, Lewis describes the Comic as an effect of observation, the "sensations" in the body of the observer. A man (or woman) is therefore a body performing as if it had a mind. Or, to Lewis, a person is a body performing in the capacity of an observer, whose faculties, states, and affections exceed expression in the body.

The first section of "Some Innkeepers and Bestre" posits the historical construction of impersonality—Lewis's Frenchman calls it "modern man"—as an abstract medium of social exchange analogous to money's role as an abstract medium of economic exchange. Lewis' dramatic dialogue reflects the impersonality of the modern man. "Modern man" is an objectification of personality, an abstract category of character, and a particular instance of impersonality. As a result, the category, "modern man," can be imitated, modified or rejected. But the French character in Lewis's dramatic dialogue extends the role of impersonality further, arguing that it, like money, makes social exchange possible.

*The Wild Body* (1927) excludes the early story's dramatic dialogue and concentrates instead on Bestre. Jumping ahead to Lewis' revision of "Some Innkeepers and Bestre" instructs us on the extent to which Lewis understood acting to be an effect of being observed. In the revised version, Bestre so perfectly communicates his experience as an observer to his spectators that they feel as if they were the spectacle instead of Bestre. The narrator experiences Bestre's gaze as pure reflection; what the narrator sees in Bestre's eyes is what he would experience if he were Bestre's performing body. This reflection produces a feeling in the narrator that is the exact opposite of what is actually happening in reality:

Now, what seemed to happen was that, as I bent over my work, an odiously grinning face peered in at my window. The impression of an intrusion was so strong, that I did not even realize at first that it was I who was the intruder. That the window was not my window, and that the face was not peering in but out: that, in fact, it was I myself who was guilty of peering into somebody else's window (76).

The narrator's exchange of glances with Bestre appears as an experience of the uncanny. Before the narrator realizes that *he* is the one staring in at *Bestre's* window, he reports that he is working in his room and it is Bestre who sends his dumb, intruding look at him. He no longer reports that he is on an "extremely cold walk through Kermanac to Braspartz" as he actually is. Rather, his walk has become transformed into intense concentration at a desk. Affected by the power of Bestre's gaze, the narrator actually switches places with him. No matter the actual conditions of seeing, his point of view is immediately exchangeable, transplanting the narrator's experience in precisely the opposite orientation. The observer fulfills his or her function in observing Bestre's body, and Bestre's body is the material in which that function is expressed. Lewis therefore presents Bestre in his 1927 revisions as a conduit of pure observational exchange, a mirror that transforms seeing into being seen.

Since Bestre's capacity for observational exchange is predicated on mind-body dualism—the estrangement of his body from his mind—Lewis argues that it follows the model of global capitalism explained by the Frenchman, a model predicated on the estrangement of a commodity's use- and exchange-value. According to the Frenchman, the French express their inward life through economic and social exchange; they represent "commercial life as the type of all life" and "[apply] forms of private life to public life" (*CWB*, 222, 227). Recognizing the similarities between Richard Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* and money's abstraction, the Frenchman explains an analogy between money and man's social nature "worked up into rather an exalted frame of mind by some of the Ring music" (*CWB* 222-3). The result is a romanticism of exchange value—the universality of money's capacity to acquire all material becomes internalized as an inward capacity of subjectivity.

In this complex analogy between money and modern impersonality, presented by the Frenchman, Lewis posits impersonality as a medium through which individuals may imitate each other in social exchange without engaging in a competition of individual wills. The Frenchman begins his analogy by discussing how a Spaniard might give all his personal effects to a friend, which represents the exchange of commodities with different properties. Although the Spaniard does this out of great affection, none of his gifts fit the body of the friend nor do they seem appropriate to his personality. For the Frenchman, the exchange signals the difference between a material object's use-value and money's exchange-value:

As it is, the Spaniard insists on my accepting all his rings. But whereas his fingers are long, fine and active, mine are corpulent, sleek, and meditative. So his rings are of no use to me except to pawn. Likewise his hat would fit me ill. But if he were to give me a thousand dollars I could provide myself with a costume analogous to his, but made to my measure, a hat to match, and spacious rings for all my fingers. In the same way one's gifts, one's susceptibilities, more essentially personal, cannot be given away, or always be assimilated and used by another. So man has developed a kind of abstract factor in his mind and self, a social nature that is the equivalent of money, a kind of conventional, nondescript, and mongrel energy, that can at any moment be launched towards a friend and flood him up to the scuppers, as one might cram his pockets with gold. One cannot give him one's own gifts or thoughts, but one bestows upon him this impersonal, social vitality, with which he can acquire things fitted to his particular nature (*CWB* 223).

According to Lewis's French persona, the Spaniard gives objects fit for his needs and bodily contours. The particularity of these objects—the hat and rings—highlights the difference between the material bodies of the Spaniard and Frenchman, for whom the objects fit "ill." The Frenchman emphasizes the differences that the rings evoke not only by marking the difference between the shape of their hands as "long, fine" or "corpulent," but also by attributing personal characteristics to

the physical features as either “active” or “meditative.” These attributes represent the fingers and, ultimately, the rings as extensions of each person’s personality. And so the particular material objects given as gifts reflect the differences in the people who might try them on, whether they are “fine” and “active” or “corpulent” and “meditative.” The material characteristics of the exchanged commodities actually make effective social exchange between the two men impossible. Thus, in the middle of the passage, the Frenchman suggests that the rise of capital is a better solution: if given money, the Frenchman could produce a costume exactly analogous to the Spaniard and express one aspect of the exchange in the accumulation of capital (M-C). As a medium that equates commodities of different qualities, money would not only enable the Frenchman to imitate the Spaniard, but also make performance generally possible.

The Frenchman’s exposition on money remarkably resembles the theories of money, and use- and exchange-value from Marx’s *Grundrisse*, and the transformation of commodity exchange (C-M-C) into capital (M-C-M) in *Capital*.<sup>31</sup> In Marx’s account of the process by which money achieves objective existence, one particular product is exchanged for another product of different properties and uses through a third medium. Because each object differs from the other by its use and material properties, a third medium must exist that could make them equivalent, measurable and comparable to one another. This third medium equates the two different objects through value, but allows their value to differ quantitatively, making the exchange of two different objects possible. That value is exchange value, which only differs quantitatively from product to product, even while the two commodities actually differ qualitatively because of their different material properties and uses. As a result of this split between the commodity’s exchange value and actual properties, the product develops two existences: one as a product with a use-value based on natural properties and uses, and another as an exchange value. In order to facilitate exchange in general, the product’s second existence as exchange value obtains objective existence outside of the commodity as money and mediates all economic exchange.<sup>32</sup>

The Frenchman’s theory transposes this genesis of use- and exchange-value from the realm of the commodity into the realm of the subject. The conflicting aspects of this double existence for modern man resemble the conflicting aspects of the particular commodity and money that Marx fleshes out in the *Grundrisse*. In an illuminating passage, Marx summarizes the differences between exchange value and particular commodities:

As a value, every commodity is equally divisible; in its natural existence this is not the case. As a value it remains the same no matter how many metamorphoses and forms of existence it goes through; in reality, commodities are exchanged only because they are not the same and correspond to a different system of needs. As a value, the commodity is general; as a real commodity it is particular... (The exchange value of a commodity itself, is *money*; the form in which all commodities equate, compare, measure themselves; into which all commodities dissolve themselves; that which dissolves itself into all commodities; the universal equivalent.)<sup>33</sup>

Here, as in the estranged modern man in the passage with which we began, money allows the commodity to “metamorphose” and change “forms of existence” like a modern Proteus. Money’s protean qualities, Marx highlights, stem from the incommensurable differences between money’s power of equivalence and the commodity’s particular properties and uses. For Lewis, the modern man experiences the same incommensurability between his individuality and his social persona. If “civilized man” is the antithetical abstraction of the individual’s particular personality, then this abstract social form must be “characterless, subtle, protean” (*CWB*, 223-4). It distinguishes itself by being a “universal equivalent” and thereby characterless, while it allows the individual a medium to “metamorphose” himself like a modern Proteus to every other individual with which he interacts.

Lewis demonstrates that impersonality allows a person to be universally exchangeable within a global society, and he essentially argues that, first, impersonality is performative and, second, it depends on the observer, allowing him, in the words of Marx, to “metamorphose” and change “forms of existence.”

While the division of modern man into the “savage and inner being” and civilized man represents an estrangement, the Frenchman argues that this estrangement is preferable to direct the violence of assimilation. He suggests that this estrangement is directly proportional to our progress in social exchange. “Civilized man” resists assimilation and coercion by mediating concrete social relations at the cost of personal social activity:

This is the modern man’s ideal of realizing himself in others; that is, the *degree* of himself, and not the specific character, which is inalienable. Those of the ancients that were not moderns, their personality not having become a medium of this sort, could not realize it in others, since it could not be assimilated raw; their way was to subdue and tyrannize over others, and in the mere power of destruction and of subjecting find self-realization (*CWB*, 224).

The rise of a universal type of social man produces two results, the first in service of the second: (1) the abolition of the necessity for the other to conform and (2) the one-sided intensification and accumulation of energy. These two claims reach their dialectical self-destruction in the apotheosis of the Frenchman’s Marxist aria. On one hand, the Frenchman defines “modern man” by his estrangement from social exchange, the result of which is a social medium that prevents the open violence, coercion, and the “mere power of destruction and of subjecting” exercised by the individuals of ancient cultures. On the other, like the dialectic of Enlightenment, civilized man serves to intensify and increase the difference between the individual and civilized man, which results in a savagery more insidious than the ancients: “Civilization has resulted in the modern man becoming, in his inaccessibility, more savage than his ancestors of the Stone Age” (*CWB* 224). In proper dialectical fashion, the difference between the destitute “savage and inner being” and the capital-rich “civilized man” intensifies until the violent form overtakes social man and erupts.

The conceptual exchange of dramatic dialogue preserves the differences between separate dramatic and philosophical positions, but only by rendering these positions entirely conventional. The Frenchman’s theory of modern man’s estrangement from himself cannot be represented as a drama of inner being and social being, but only as an exchange between two conventionalized characters. The dramatic dialogue is the circulation and exchange of performed characters. At the same time, Lewis’s dramatic dialogue produces this system of exchange. Lewis’s dramatic dialogue shares with its philosophical counterpart the disembodied articulation of concept: anything enunciated becomes an attribute of a reproduced and reproducible character.

Bestre is the embodied example of Lewis’s stereotypical Frenchman, who “[consider] commercial life as the type for all life” (*CWB* 222). Yet, Bestre is also an assemblage of his own internal antinomy: his hospitality as an innkeeper conflicts with his “great principle” of “provocation” (*CWB* 229). Bestre embodies a host of battling impulses akin to the dialectic between the “civilized man” and the “savage and inner being.” He is hospitable and provocative, a performer and a narrator, a master of reality and, yet, subject to it. Although Bestre’s “dumb show” is not fully legible in the body, his gaze is capable of reflecting the feeling state of the observer back onto him or her. Bestre operates in the milieu of the Frenchman’s romanticism of exchange value. He encompasses both the power of exchange and an alien existence: he at once provides for the necessities and desires of his guests as if by magic and alienates his neighbors in mute battles. Lewis’s narrator bears witness to a seeming contradiction between the aspect of Bestre that satisfies desires as if in a magical theater and the antagonistic aspect of Bestre’s “dumb-passive method.” The

theatricality of Bestre's hospitality seems to battle with mute theatrical gesture. During his "dumb show," Bestre's body becomes the remainder of the expressible thought and its resistance in the form of the body composed inexpressively; he transmutes the discursive thought in the exchange of gazes between his spectator and his body.

In an analogy to money's power to make different objects equivalent, Lewis presents Bestre's hospitality as an act of illusory theater that presents a world of deranged desires as natural and immediately satisfiable. Just as the Frenchman represents money as the *Gesamtkunstwerk* of economic exchange, so are Bestre's disparate and artful talents instrumental to his theater of hospitality. He portrays the extraordinary quality of "*understanding*, of being the only hotel-keeper or other man that does understand" his customer's needs and "particular idiosyncrasies" (CWB 229). By emphasizing his understanding, Bestre converts the customer's "particular idiosyncrasies," no matter how unreasonable, into an approved, general and natural desire. For example, Bestre happily accommodates "a madman who believed himself a hen" with a "comfortable perch to roost on" and "a man arriving at an inn and making no secret of the fact that he is a polar bear" (CWB 229). When fulfilling his customer's desire, Bestre appears like a "conjurer," who "draws the curtain aside and reveals to the dumfounded audience a peacock or a horse and cart where a moment ago there was nothing" (CWB, 229). The transition from Bestre's attitude of understanding his customer's needs to actually accommodating them appears to his "dumfounded audience" as a magic act, a trick of theatrical illusion. Indeed, Bestre veils reality in a kind of magical theater by casually accepting the customer's state of desire, even to the point "mental derangement," and providing for it. This theatrical illusion resembles Marx's early and more idealistic comment on money in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*: "[Money] translates [my wishes] from their existence as thought, imagination and desires into their *sensuous, real* existence, from imagination into life, and from imagined being into real being. In this mediating role money is the *truly creative power*" (EW, 378). Marx's statement demonstrates the powerful illusion produced when money or Bestre "magically" turns desire into actuality. So it is that Bestre's theatricality can create a truly "inverted world" (EW, 379), where men can believe themselves to be "hens" or "polar bears" or where man's own desires confront him as objects produced from those very desires. Lewis renders Bestre as the ritual performer in a magical theater of innkeeper hospitality, who toes the line of vulgarity: on one side, he perpetuates the immediate satisfaction of desire by material consumption and, on the other, he elevates its presentation through the performance of theatrical spectacle. In this way, Lewis critiques Wagnerian theater and depicts Bestre as an equivocal example of theater's malevolent character, for here, Bestre exemplifies theatricality's capacity to present illusory reality as perfectly natural.

Bestre's illegibility arises through his alienation function, his most remarkable "principle" of "provocation," and its presentation in "dumb show." Held in tension with his aspect of hospitality, Bestre's provocation precipitates violent reaction through inaction:

Bestre conducts long and bitter campaigns with some neighbour, that will consist almost entirely of dumb show, a few words only being exchanged—antagonisms that will become more and more acute through several weeks, burst forth and wear themselves out with their own violence—all without words, or even actions that could be remarked as distinctively hostile by an uninitiated observer... Probably Bestre's great principle, however, is that of provocation: to irritate his enemy to such a degree that the latter can hardly keep his hands off him—till the desire to give the blow is as painful as a blow received (CWB, 229).

"Dumb show," while it operates in the conventions of theater, appears opposed to the theatricality of Bestre's hospitality in so far as it dissects theatrical practice into mute gesture and words. Such acting does not result in a confirmation of desire. Rather it renders a negative and critical affect,

especially because Bestre's mute inaction cannot be made legible in any traditional sense. If it would seem to stop all understanding short, it only does so incompletely, for it composes a mood in the viewer that results in violent reaction. Lewis terms this Bestre's "dumb-passive method" (*CWB*, 231). Lewis's example of Bestre's provocation seems to support the thesis that seeing is also being seen:

On the fourth morning, as his sister's aggressor cast her eyes into the kitchen as usual, there stood Bestre himself, alone, quite motionless, looking at *her*; looking with such a nauseating intensity of what seemed meaning, but in truth was nothing more than, by a tremendous effort of concentration, the transference to features and glance of all the unclean contents of his mind, that had he suddenly laid bare his entrails she could not have felt more revolted... She paled, rendered quite speechless—in Bestre's sense, that is expressionless, her glassy look shivered to atoms—hurried on and home, and was laid up for several days (*CWB*, 230).

Bestre's success in this bout of gaping rests on his manifesting his internal and probably sordid thoughts into his features and glance. The dumb show appears as an objectification of Bestre's conscious mind into a bodily comportment. The comparison is quite literal. Bestre's transference of mind to body exceeds the revulsion produced by its corporeal counterpart, or the actual and probably extremely revolting display of one's internal organs. The comportment appears pregnant with "what seemed meaning" and betrays its status as a meaning that cannot be articulated. Instead, the result is deeply felt and actually imitated: "She paled, rendered quite speechless—in Bestre's sense, that is expressionless, her glassy look shivered to atoms." Her look takes on Bestre's "expressionless" aspect, shattering her inanimate look of bourgeois boredom, her "glassy" expression. Thus Bestre's accomplishment: he produces a mood in the viewer that imitates Bestre's bodily comportment without actually expressing anything.

On the other side of Bestre's internal agon, actual theater practice opposes the theatricality of hospitality. Bestre uses his "Wild Body" to compose the gesture and facial expression of his "dumb show." By bringing Bestre's ability to provide for his customer's wants into an analogy with Marx's ironic encomium of money, Lewis plainly signals the fantasy of making actual something that exists only in the imagination. From Lewis's perspective, both money and Bestre's theatricality vulgarize the imagination into the merely material, objectifying desire and imagination—dynamic expressions of the individual—into material and social conditions. For Lewis, however, Bestre's internalized antinomies portray him as a figure, who resists the one sided determination by either mind or material, not least because he is a moderately successful embodiment of The Wild Body. As Lewis writes in an early essay, "Our Wild Body" (1910), Bestre is the emblem of the public body, a body that discloses something superficially inward as a constituent part of social experience: "But this is the French idea of hospitality—the hospitality of the body—making another at home in one's body, so to speak, courteously throwing open the fleshy doors that lead to apartments usually regarded as private" (*CWB*, 251). This "hospitality of the body" has clear connections to Bestre's corporeal comportment; it figures interiority as a fold in the exterior, or the private apartments of the body. This exterior fold maintains the form of disclosing something internal, even if it were only the interior of the bowels. Such a fold would be the only outward signs of presenting a non-discursive, if hidden, subjectivity. Lewis, in the same essay, admires the French for their ability to communicate "man's consciousness" through the "expressiveness of the body" and face: "The French have a much greater sense of the expressiveness of the body. This is evident from their gestures, and in the style of their actors. But throughout the French people, the body is not neglected as a dull fellow, but shares with the face a man's consciousness" (*CWB*, 255). Bestre offers

Lewis the possibility that the observing mind and wild body could share an intimate, though separate, connection.

Lewis later describes the mechanism of this dumb communication as the “prefiguring” of a desired expression in his audience as if Bestre induced a mimetic practice in his audience: “Or he seems teaching you in his look the amazement you should feel, and his own expression gathers force and blooms as the full sense of what you are witnessing, hearing, bursts upon you, while your gaping face conforms more and more to Bestre’s prefiguring expression” (*CWB* 231). Rather than a forceful conformity of differences, however, this conformity mixes force with non-forceful language. Bestre’s expression “gathers force,” but only to “bloom.” His audience’s face “conforms” to his “prefiguring expression,” but only through the “teaching[s]” of his “look.” The power of Bestre’s facial expression lies in its capacity to induce imitation in the audience by its own mimetic performance of the contents of his mind. Yet, Lewis muddles this force of the artful expression and affective intensity with a more coercive force easily recognizable as the proto-Fascism of Lewis’s political work in the later 20s: “Has Bestre discovered the only type of action compatible with artistic creation, assuring security and calm to him that holds the key of the situation, in a certain degree compelling others to accept your rules?” (*CWB* 231). This early in his career Lewis still frames this as a question, even if it is not actually. In both his battle with the painter’s wife and the narrator’s observations about Bestre, his audience imitates his performative and prefigured expression. Or, to take Bestre’s perspective, he constructs a mode of bodily comportment weighted with the transference of the contents of his mind such that an audience could assume that comportment as their own mode for participating in various aspects of life. When in the context of battle, Bestre’s provocations can be alienating. But when one assumes that comportment in its forceful bloom, the results could be a new performative attitude or form of inaction ready to be imitated.

Bestre’s diegetic aspect, on the other hand, generates the distanced perspective of impersonality and incorporates observational looking into his aspect of performance. In addition to being performer, then, Bestre becomes his own commentator and narrator: “he has the air of a company promoter of genius, cornered, and trying to corrupt some somber fact into shielding for the moment his gigantic and not easily hidden fiction” (*CWB* 231). As in his hospitality, a romantic air of theatricality pervades his demeanor, except it appears modified by the promotional drive of advertisement. Shaping fictions, Bestre manipulates fact in order to obtain purchase in the moment of narration. His relation to reality seems to perform in an indeterminately dialectical fashion: “he will show a wonderful empirical expertness in reality, without being altogether at home in it” (*CWB* 231). While Lewis describes Bestre as alien to reality, yet still capable of assimilating it into the exaggerated fictions of his conquests, reality, on the other hand, seems to curb Bestre’s fictional tendencies. Characteristic of fictional construction, Bestre limits himself to the assembled fragments of reality when reconstructing outrageous histories of his conquests. Lewis renders Bestre pulled between these quickly multiplying dualities—speech and action, reality and fiction:

Bestre in the moment of action feels as though he were already talking, and his action has the exaggerated character of his speech, but strangely curbed by the exigencies of reality. He always has in his moments of most violent action something of his dumb-passivity—he never seems quite entering into reality, but observing it; he is looking at the reality with a professional eye, so to speak, with a professional liar’s (*CWB*, 231-2).

Lewis’s qualifications of Bestre’s action and speech prove his embodiment of the brain-body, the Wild Body. Bestre’s blank expressions and dumb looks communicate as though he were expressing something through language, but the “as” here preserves the difference between Bestre’s bodily

inexpression and language. Bestre's performance of dumb show becomes legible to his audience through the imitation of his bodily comportment and facial expressions, which represent the transference of the mind into the body, but which are not immediately perceptible as conventional language. Bestre's exaggeration of his actions and the histories he tells of them manifest in his bodily performance as if the body expresses the same capacity for fictional representation. And, yet, because Bestre's performance is so tied to the body, he preserves the limits of a material and bodily reality.

The paratactic structure of "Some Innkeepers and Bestre" makes clear the intention to separate dialogue from "dumb-show." Both forms represent only part of a dissected theatrical practice. Dialogic speech and mute gesture never cohere into a complete theatrical expression. Dialogue stages the intellectual drama of these types. Dumb-show separated from speech, then, becomes the resistance to the theorization of the dramatic dialogue. Bestre flattens out the depth of interiority and transfers the contents of his mind into provocative expression as if he were externalizing that which is already an external representation of the internal, as if he were displaying his entrails. By making the body the legible and indeterminate sign of internal estrangement, we make the object to which our observing mind occasionally attaches an expression of our internal state.

In the end, the form of the dramatic dialogue must estrange Lewis from the position of the Frenchman, especially because the purely theoretical character of the dialogue can only reproduce an already existing philosophical position, or stereotype, and, hence, only be a reproduction. Nevertheless Lewis remains interested in the civilized man as a medium of performance, but it is too global to be a viable model for living in a world dominated by the commodity and its circulation—"civilized man" obfuscates individuality into totality. Lewis, then, assumes that the truly artistic work must be an original production; it is a way to resist the machinations of capitalist reproduction, while it animates our inanimate, habituated life and provides new models for navigating it. Yet, because objectification of the human is a condition of modernity, Lewis tries to work out how one can model meaningful, or at least savvy, objects. Unlike the mechanically objectified and circulated "civilized man," which suggests that modern man might be a single object, the separation of the observing-mind and the Wild Body objectifies us into a mode of living akin to the theater. Every Wild Body observed by the mind has a mind that observes us as a Wild Body. Bestre exemplifies this dual aspect and capacity to observe and comport one's body, which resists objectification in so far as he can coordinate the many aspects of mind to his body. With Bestre, the embodiment of the duality of dramatic dialogue in his various internal agons (e.g. hospitality and provocation) seems to offer an originality or at least plasticity or dynamism that rote characterization cannot. So Bestre becomes an embodied example of internalized estrangement (as in the estrangement of money and the commodity); he is neither sublimated into some totalizing medium nor so individual as to ignore social, historical, or economic forces and thereby some ideal of comportment. In fact, Bestre is exactly the agon between his modern objectification and his primitive "savage and inner being"; he is the accumulating tension between savage man and modernity's continuing progress. Rather than man becoming entirely objectified in "civilized man" as a medium, Lewis wants to think through how Bestre embodies the art object, which achieves the special status of being more than its simply produced material, even if it can only be mediated through material.

### *Primitive Vision and Spectatorship in "Les Saltimbanques"*

In "Les Saltimbanques," Lewis observes two forms of conventional group spectatorship amongst audiences of the rural circus and bourgeois theater, which he constructs from his participation in those audiences and subsequent observations of them. The rural Bretons see with

“primitive vision,” whereas the bourgeois theater see from the perspective of “civilized man” (CWB 242). The rural Breton audience reaps several experiences from the theater: (1) they identify with the clown’s class; (2) they understand the circus to embody the conventional relationship between spectator and performer; (3) as an audience, they enjoy the circus as a hypnotic dream state that originates from their unconscious desire. Rather than question appearances or find develop a critical stance toward them, this form of primitive vision reifies the given as Fate.

If “civilized man” mediates all social exchange, then the bourgeois audience sees the theater exchanging fiction with life and vice versa, transforming the theater into the material *things* of life and life into theater. For the bourgeois audience, the boundaries of the stage disappear. Theater persists in places imperceptible to audience vision like the *coullisse* [wings], or the backstage. Art, in other words, diffuses into reality. Both forms of vision—the primitive and bourgeois—engender passive spectatorship; it is to be “*suggestionné* [influenced by suggestion]” (CWB 242). Given these audiences, Lewis’s narrator occupies a precarious position, being both individuated and encompassed by the Breton audience. On one hand, Lewis turns his pseudo-anthropological gaze on the audience. On the other, he is just as likely to be absorbed by the performance.

The narrator of “Les Saltimbanques” models his narrative impersonality on the performance conventions of the circus at Quimperlé. The clown, especially, directs the audience’s attention to the events of the circus as if he were a reporting narrator, only tripping from time to time over the fact of performance:

The clown conducted, so to speak, everything—acting as interpreter of his own jokes, tumbling over and getting up and leading the laugh, and explaining with real conscientiousness and science the proprietor's more recondite and tenebrous conundrums. He took up an impersonal attitude, as a friend who had dropped in to see the “patron,” and who appreciated quite as one of the public the curiosities of the show. He would say for instance: “Now this is very remarkable: this little girl is only eleven, and she can put both her toes in her mouth,” &c. &c. (CWB 243).

Here, clownish comedy mediates scientific explanation, actually enlightening the obscurity of the proprietor’s darkly “recondite” and “tenebrous” riddles and interpreting them for the working class audiences. All at once, the clown appreciates the spectacle, establishes its exceptional quality, and explains the joke with an “impersonal” and scientific rigor. Although the clown instructs the spectator on intricacies of the performance, he only does so to affirm the seemingly spectacular qualities of the performance. Lewis’s narrator extends these clownish activities into a critical engagement further displaced from the activities of spectacle. In a sense, he transports the clown’s “impersonal attitude” into a role played by the audience, by which they try to dissect the illusion of appearances.

Lewis’s narrator predates and anticipates at least one form of Bertolt Brecht’s *Verfremdungseffekt*. He resembles the “demonstrator” in Brecht’s essay, “The Street Scene,” who explains the elements of a traffic accident, for example, by recalling the heated conversation of the two involved, by bringing our attention to the way the pedestrian stepped off the curb, or by interrupting his account of the story to offer his own commentary. Like Lewis’s narrator, the demonstrator toggles between performative and narrative techniques of presentation: “The direct changeover from representation to commentary that is so characteristic of the epic theatre is still more easily recognized as an element of any street demonstration. Whenever he feels he can the demonstrator breaks off his imitation in order to give explanations.”<sup>34</sup> Since, of course, the narrator is only indirectly presented to the reader, he differs from the demonstrator’s active performance. Yet, the narrator of Lewis’s stories imitates only insofar as narrative impersonality allows him to see from the perspective of some of his subjects. On occasion, the performance could absorb the

narrator and encompass him within the body of the audience. Being a part of the audience, he can see from its point of view, while interrupting this spectatorship with his own commentary. Lewis's narrative technique produces such an estrangement and marks the audience or circus for critical observation. In "The Street Scene," Brecht describes the *Verfremdungseffekt* as just that: "What is involved here is, briefly, a technique of taking the human social incidents to be portrayed and labeling them as something quite striking, something that calls for explanation, is not to be taken for granted, not just natural. The object of this 'effect' is to allow the spectator to criticize constructively from a social point of view." Lewis's narrative showman and Brecht's demonstrator yoke critical engagement with quotidian spectatorship in order to estrange the ways in which we see from habituated conventions and clownish commentaries that present those activities as perfectly natural.

The circus at Quimperlé performs a meta-commentary on the interaction between performer and audience. In one of its conventional acts, the proprietor and clown engage in a "brisk dialogue," in which the proprietor of the circus aggressively hurls set-pieces, riddles and physical abuse against the clown. The proprietor plays a character that "without doubt...originally stood for the public" (CWB 240). And his character extends from a long line of circus tradition; he plays a "man who invents posers for the clown, wrangles with him, and against whom the laugh is always turned" (CWB 240). The clown plays himself, a comic circus performer, who can "never attack [the proprietor], despite the brutal measures he adopts to cover his confusion and ridicule" (CWB 240). In this act, the circus portrays an antagonism between the figure for the audience—a brutal interlocutor—and the self-aware clown. It presents the audience with a mediated form of the violence already occurring between them and the performers, a reification of the separation of stage and spectator into a set of conventions. The dynamic between performer and audience has become so habituated that it confronts both parties as the scripted conventions of a circus act and, thus, as a fatalistic fact of theater.

In the above passage, the performer's alienated labor becomes so naturalized as to appear as an ontological imperative to perform. Similarly, the animal nature of the audience appears to the performers as a naturalized fact of the audience. Lewis seconds this assessment later in the story, when he describes the fatalistic motive force of the Breton public animal. Instead of economic necessity, the Breton audience conceptualizes the necessity of their relationship to the performers as a decree of "Fate":

They dance, work, and amuse themselves fatalistically. There is a time for dancing and for working. Also there is a place, occasion and certain people marked out to entertain others, and fate has ordained that these people shall be the most diverting and comic folk that exist, else they would not be public entertainers. And if the clown and the manager consulted in an audible voice before cracking each joke, concocted it, in fact, in their hearing, they would laugh at it with the same fervor...It would be a revolt against Fate to criticize the amusements that Fate has provided for them, and it would be a sign of imminent anarchy in all things if they looked solemn while the clown was cracking a joke.

They are accustomed to look upon all conditions of life as inevitable. They can never conceive of a man being anything else but what he is (CWB 246).

Breton "primitive vision" sees without cause. The Breton public spectates with a naïve acceptance of appearances and naturalizes them with tautological logic: an individual is his activity because his activity is who he is. A person's characteristics are also tautologically attributed: Fate has chosen these people to be performers because they are the most comic; they are comic because they are performers. The Bretons believe their lives to be ordered by the hidden machinations of a fatalistic force, whose logic is obscured. Fate costumes the material infrastructure of economic struggle with

the theatrical trappings of existential struggle, of the participation in a tragic fate of miserable existence. This suffices to maintain the illusion of theater to the point, Lewis claims, that revealing the apparatus of comedy would still make it comic no matter how much the performers lift the veil. Since the circus reduplicates these fated social relationships, it transforms the tragic fate of the Bretons into farce, following Marx's revision of Hegel in the opening of *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*: "Hegel remarks somewhere that all great world-historic facts and personages appear, so to speak, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce."<sup>35</sup>

The exposed mechanism of theater generates different consequences for the rural Breton "theatre-goer" and the "more humble suburban theatre-goer" (CWB 241). For the Breton, going to the theater is like entering a dream-state, where the invisible unconscious distorts the visible appearances of the circus. In its rustic modesty, the circus at Quimperlé remains an open and vagrant circus, unadorned by the costly trappings of elaborate theaters. The physical layout of it is a theatrical apparatus turned inside out and this inversion only seems to increase the effect on the audience's imagination: "This out-of-door audience was differently moved to the audiences that I have seen in the little circus tents of the Breton fairs. The absence of the mysterious hush of the interior seemed to release them. Also the nearness of the performers in the tent increases the mystery... They do not readily dissociate reality from appearance" (CWB 241). Caricatured as pre-enlightenment primitives, the Bretons elevate appearances to the level of myth, suspending reality to let the imagination sustain the illusions of theater no matter how apparent the illusion. The circus displays its interior out of doors and situates the wings of the circus ring, like *The Theatre Manager*, in plain view such that the preparation for each act can be seen. Although the distance between spectator and performer closes, the audience "releases" their imaginations into full flight. As a result, the Bretons do not concern themselves with the reality of performance. Instead, they attach their imagination to the image presented in the theater: "However well they got to know the clown they would always think of him the wrong way up, or on all-fours" (CWB 241). The Bretons remember the clown in the postures fitting to his role, despite the reality of the person performing the role. For the Bretons, the stage presents things exactly as they are and it does not articulate any reality absent from it.

Caught in the hypnotic dream-state of the spectacle, the Breton audience understands, however falsely, that the spectacle originates from their unconscious desire, which modifies the spectacle by the audience's passive interaction. At a different indoor circus, the Breton audience's "imagination is awoken by the sight of the flags, the tent, the drums, and the bedizened people. Thenceforth it rules them, controlling the senses. They enter the tent with a feeling almost of awe. They are 'suggestionné,' [susceptible to suggestion] and in a dream the whole time. All they see they change, add to, and color" (CWB 242). The Breton entrance into the theater follows the contours of contained spectacle and evokes a phantasmagoric world separate from everyday reality. It induces the audience into a hypnotic state that cedes partial agency to the spectacle. The circus environment intoxicates the audience, and, in return, the hypnotic state sustains the illusion that the audience exerts a counter-force on the spectacle to "change, add to, and color" its appealing sensuousness. Through this impressionable state, the circus spectacle collapses the gap between psychological suggestion—the mode controlling the audience—and the audience's capacity to affect their surroundings. Through the eyes of "primitive vision," the theater produces the illusion that passive spectatorship creates a feedback circuit with the spectacle by suggesting that the theatrical space is psychological and changes at the whims of the spectator's desire.

But while this theatrical unconscious inspires the Breton spectator to participate in the imaginative delusion of the circus, it instigates in the urban bourgeois a tendency to transpose theatrical illusion into life. For the "humble suburban theatre-goer," the theater only enacts something with verisimilitude when it participates in life outside the theater. Lewis's narrator

compares the two spectators in a comic passage, in which, like the outdoor circus, the interiority of the theater—the backstage and the wings—are exposed to the urban bourgeois audience:

The more humble suburban theatre-goer would be twice as much affected if meeting the rouged and bewigged “prima donna” in the wings of the theatre, as in seeing her on the stage. Indeed it would be rather as though at some turning of an alley at the Zoo, he should meet a lion face to face—having gazed at it a few minutes before behind its bars. On the stage, and as seen from the pit, Othello is an ephemeral figure—a man that, like certain summer insects, never lives longer than two hours and a half. Met in the “coulisses” [wings] of the playhouse the actor would still be Othello for him, or more Othello than anything else, but in the flesh and in the same conditions of life as himself. The Moor might now have an intrigue with his sister Jane at any minute! The theatre, the people on the stage and the plays they play, is part of the surface of life, and is not troubling. But to get behind the scenes and see these beings out of their parts, would be not merely to be privy to the workings and “dessous” [back-stage] of the theatre, but of life itself (*CWB* 241-2)

For the “primitive vision” of the Breton audience, even when it experiences an early form of Brechtian alienation that exposes the illusion-making machine of the theater, reality is suspended in order to intensify the illusion of the circus. Primitive vision spectates in an imaginative world that it recognizes as separate from the rural labor of the Breton peasant. The bourgeois audience, on the other hand, confuses the backstage or the wings with the hidden hands of society, thereby wrongly assuming that society is transparent and the invisible forces shaping it are all apparent. Rather than recognize the theater as a separate dream-state, the bourgeois audience lives in the world as if it were in a dream-state without an unconscious. The bourgeois audience focuses on the acting personality imported into life, either as the living manifestation of a character—the Othello “in the flesh” having an affair with one’s sister Jane—or as the “prima donna” personality that plays superficially different characters by continually “playing” themselves. If the circus presents a separate dream world for the Breton audience, then the bourgeois audience casually accepts all of life to be governed by appearances. They create a selectively permeable boundary between the theater as the “surface of life” and life as a *theatrum mundi* such that appearing to see the reality of the theater backstage is equivalent to seeing the inner machinations of life. They cannot even attribute a hidden force to the drama of life, whether Fate or God. Once, for example, Othello leaves the confines of the stage, the bourgeois vision displaces theatrical appearances into dangerously literal circumstances: the attributes of the character cannot help but be the attributes of the man acting the character and so he might subject the world to Othello’s jealous rages or seduce your sister Jane like a mad method actor. The bourgeois audience, seeing with the exchangeability characteristic of “civilized man,” sees all appearances as exchangeable with another without, however, understanding the forces behind them. Breton “primitive vision,” Lewis would have us believe, at least separates life from the theater; the circus, the clown, the act between “public” and performer appear to the Bretons as if they entered a dream state. Bourgeois vision sees all life as a dream state. It cannot recognize the reality behind appearances because they imagine all appearances to be exchangeable.

Lewis attributes the transition from “primitive vision” to bourgeois vision to a historical force similar to the one that caused the transition from God and the sacred to the secular and the cult of genius. Lewis evokes the cult of personality surrounding great artistic figures in the eyes of the bourgeois public—Samuel Johnson, Goethe, and James McNeil Whistler—and their biographers—James Boswell, Johann Eckermann, and Mortimer Menpes—in order to link the bourgeois devotion to great men to a devotion to anything belonging to them. The secular

development of modernity reflects, according to Lewis, this disbelief in invisible forces and a complementary devotion to a vulgar materialism:

Is the illusion of a man's greatness diminished by reading anecdotes and biographies about him? It is only then that for his devotee the poignancy of the romance begins. The commonest detail—the sight of the most apocryphal pocket handkerchief or most dubious ink-pot, will excite his admirer more than a new work discovered from his hand. For with these humble, and even undignified, objects, the breathing man, life and all its boundless possibilities, is evoked, and all the volumes of the master's completed works could not move so much the devout imagination. The desire for intercourse and fleshly acquaintance with God that has always tormented man he has satisfied in the “great man” of these later times. In earlier epochs there were no “great men”; God was the Great Man (*CWB* 242).

Here Lewis betrays his troubling preference for hierarchies. Lewis ironizes the modern bourgeois by showing how it depends not even on material objects, but, rather, on the idea that makes every material object exchangeable for the idea of the great man. The bourgeois subject recognizes “life and all its boundless possibilities” by seeking to make the “great man” more like him- or herself. It stops up the gap between him- or herself and the “great man,” or God, with material detritus (the “apocryphal pocket handkerchief”), the material source of writing (the “most dubious ink-pot”), or, more broadly, by transubstantiating God into the flesh of “great men.” Everywhere the bourgeois theater-goer seeks out the immediacy of equivalence: the Othello in the wings is Othello in the flesh, the material sediment of the great man's life gives us direct access to it, the great man is a corporeal manifestation of the earlier epoch's God. Lewis' extends the logic of the bourgeois theater-goer explicitly: “Suddenly to be able to touch and to feel the breath of a thing of the imagination is a confirmation and reinforcement of the imagination” (*CWB* 242). Rather than recognizing the separation between the material world and an idea of the imagination, between the material commodity and exchange, the bourgeois audience sees a material object as immediately exchangeable with the person for whom the object was property.

Lewis seems to argue for a balance between recognizing an object's particularity, its exchangeability, and, especially, its function in a broader system of, perhaps, invisible structures or forces. Since primitive vision cannot spectate critically, for example, it can neither articulate how invisible forces relate to the object of its sight nor place conventional objects in new contexts. Those who see with primitive vision see only the use-value or habitual conventions of their tools, cattle, and all social relationships, including those between audience and circus. They cannot abstract from a given context and exchange it for another critical context, and, according to Lewis's logic, they effectively cannot observe as minds. An object cannot escape the confines of its praxis or givenness; the useful and given cannot be comic. Lewis writes,

The comedy, or possibility of it, that an educated man sees existing in everything, the people only feel in a restricted number of persons and things, and this is subject to the narrowest convention of habit. A peasant would never see anything ridiculous, or at least never amuse himself over, his pigs and chickens. The donkey that helps to get his living would never be a cause of amusement to him, as his constant sentiment of its utility would be too strong to admit another (*CWB* 245).

This passage betrays Lewis' snobbishness, but it also indicates that primitive vision cannot see given relationships as comic unless they already contain the concept of comedy. An object's use-value ties it to a specific context, but, if it were treated with measured sense of exchangeability, then suddenly the object would become liberated from its original or natural context. In Lewis's example, the

“educated man” can see the comedy in everything because his intellectual labor abstracts from the tools of labor such that, apparently, nothing is *only* useful. If an object could be likewise extracted from the context of its use, then it would be available to be exchanged into other contexts that might produce a new perspective on the object. If we multiply the points of view we might occupy, then we could develop a fuller sense of a given objects function in a system. Thinking comically or critically, to reverse the terms, would serve to see something from a new perspective and would be “a defiance flung at the hurrying fates” (*CWB* 152).

Lewis’ example of imagining a new point of view is a young boy in the circus audience, who breaks convention by outwitting the proprietor’s character. This boy enacts the critical and comical vision that sees the objects of primitive and bourgeois vision with new eyes from without the perspective of the Breton audience. Figuratively severing the boy from the public that the proprietor represents, the boy’s ridicule individuates him from the rest of the crowd. In the throes of prophetic vision, the boy also transports the proprietor’s character into a new comic context:

Then a strange thing happened. A little boy in the front row began jeering at the proprietor. It was apparently a spontaneous and personal action, and very sudden... This boy had probably never thought comically before. Like corrosive lavas that illuminate before they destroy the object in their path, the torrent of his thoughts wrapt this dim and brutal figure. Revealed by his own genial eruption he beheld it, with all the character of a vision. His oracular vehemence suggested a sudden awakening, as though the comedy of existence had burst in upon his active young brain without warning, and, in the form and nature of this awkward showman, was now raging within him like a heady wine. He had of a sudden opened his lips among the people and begun covering this man with his mockery. I was extremely moved and even awed at this sight... [The boy], however, was strong in his inspiration. He would no doubt have met death with the exultation of a martyr, rather than renounce this transfigured image of an old and despondent mountebank—like some stubborn prophet that would not forego the splendour of his vision—always of the gloom of famine, of cracked and empty palaces, and the elements taking new and extremely destructive forms for the rapid extermination of man (*CWB* 246-7).

Not only does the boy “transfigure” the image of the proprietor from performer to “old and despondent mountebank,” but his spontaneous inspiration also transfigures “vision” from the sensory faculty into a prophetic vision that sees a new reality—that is, from a perspective disarticulated from the audience. Rather than reinforce the given convention between spectator and performer, the boy begins to participate himself in the action on stage, essentially refusing to accept the given script as inevitable simply because it fits the conventions of the rural circus. The boy’s derision imitates “corrosive lava,” which reveals, or “illuminates,” the performer as inadequate, while it transmutes the static convention of spectatorship into a dynamic fluid. To use the explicitly Marxist language evoked in “Some Innkeepers and Bestre,” it is as if the boy’s “torrent” of thoughts abstracts the use-value of the current audience conventions into a context exchangeable with another, allowing it to circulate freely as comedy, critique, commodity, or other context.

### *The Enemy of the Stars*

*The Enemy of the Stars* abstracts and allegorizes the explorations of spectatorship and impersonality in Lewis’ early stories. He is an excellent example of a modernist who conceives of modern society as inextricably enmeshed with the idea of performance as an effect of being seen.

Lewis therefore presents the content of *The Enemy of the Stars* through the frame of scripted circus spectatorship. While Arghol and Hanp are grappling with ideas of existential importance, they are still only characters in a circus performance, performing roles as conventional as the circus proprietor and the clown. Ultimately, they are objects of the audience's social unconscious, reflecting the antagonism experienced by the audience in modern social practice into a figure to be cathartically sacrificed.

The action of "The Enemy of the Stars" is difficult to follow, but it can be split into three basic sections: (1) the advertisement that begins the play (2) the first of the declared two scenes, when Arghol's Uncle beats Arghol, to which belong the sections "**ARGOL.**" "**THE YARD.**" "**THE SUPER.**," and (3) the dialogue between Arghol and Hanp, indicated by the section "**HANP.**," which also contains Arghol's dream and murder (*ES*, 61-5). The plot is basic. Arghol is a wheelwright, working for his uncle, who beats him every night after work. Like clockwork, Arghol's uncle satisfies this habit and beats Arghol unconscious. Hanp, Arghol's presumed disciple, wakes him up and directs him to their shared hut where they eat dinner and dialogue about their rather bare existence: why Arghol does not retaliate against his uncle turns into a discussion of the nature of Individual and Collective; why Arghol, intellectually enlightened and having "read all the books of the town," returned from the metropolitan center to the small town where they now live turns into a discussion of destiny and the effect of life on the self; why Arghol bothers dialoguing with Hanp turns into a discussion of how one escapes the self, which, in turn, leads to Arghol's rejection of Hanp. Once Arghol shuns Hanp, they get into a physical fight, in which Hanp aggresses and Arghol only reacts as if by a mechanical law of nature—a pugilist notion of Newton's Third Law. Arghol wins the fight, knocks Hanp out, and falls asleep. Arghol dreams, allowing him to recount his time in Berlin from an outside perspective and to deny the various selves created by his social interactions. His dream leads him back to an assertion of himself, "I am Arghol" (*ES*, 80). Back in the waking world, Hanp becomes outraged at Arghol for having fought back. Arghol's snore disgusts Hanp and drives him to kill Arghol. Finally, Hanp commits suicide by jumping "clumsily" from a bridge (*ES*, 85).

Although the action of *Enemy of the Stars* does not explicitly present Arghol and Hanp in a circus, it is framed by a circus audience's spectatorship in the advertisement's miniature of the play. The advertisement gives the first stage direction, indicating the setting and describing Arghol and Hanp to be "**TWO HEATHEN CLOWNS**": "THE SCENE. SOME BLEAK CIRCUS, UNCOVERED, CAREFULLY-CHOSEN, VIVID NIGHT. IT IS PACKED WITH POSTERITY, SILENT AND EXPECTANT. POSTERITY IS SILENT, LIKE THE DEAD, AND MORE PATHETIC" (*ES* 55). Lewis explicitly scripts the circus and its audience, "posterity," ahead of the main action of the play. After "**THE ACTION OPENS**," the circus and its audience almost entirely disappear, but not before Lewis scripts the audience's spectatorship within a narrated dumb show, a play within a play:

[Posterity] strain to see him, a gladiator who has come to fight a ghost, Humanity—the great Sport of Future Mankind.

He is the prime athlete exponent of this sport in its palmy days. Posterity slowly sinks into the hypnotic trance of Art, and the Arena is transformed into the necessary scene.

THE RED WALLS OF THE UNIVERSE NOW SHUT THEM IN, WITH THIS CONDEMNED PROTAGONIST.

THEY BREATHE IN CLOSE ATMOSPHERE OF TERROR AND NECESSITY  
TILL THE EXECUTION IS OVER, THE RED WALLS RECEDE, THE  
UNIVERSE SATISFIED.

THE BOX OFFICE RECEIPTS HAVE BEEN ENORMOUS (*ES* 61).

In this prefatory dramatization of spectatorship, the sport of posterity becomes the gladiatorial combat between “protagonist” and “Humanity.” The actual challenges to collective Humanity by individuals become the objects of the latter’s spectatorial entertainment and specter-like elusiveness, in which, if the characters are clowns in a circus, their roles are restricted to circus convention. In fact, the outcome of the sport is already a foregone conclusion: in this sport, being the object of the spectator is tantamount to a condemnation to death. Lewis ironically displaces the agon between Humanity and the protagonist-performer into the identity of the spectator of Art: “Posterity slowly sinks into the hypnotic trance of Art, and the Arena is transformed into the necessary scene.”

Spectatorship, then, becomes cause and effect of the artistic scene. The hypnotic trance of art evokes the spectator’s passive pliability when confronted by art’s suggestion. And, yet, Lewis insists on the active participation of the audience. The spectators contribute to the play and shape it, like the Breton “primitive vision” figured in “Les Saltimbanques,” as if it came from the depths of their unconscious. Since the play scripts the spectators, the play’s Expressionist style does not stem from the singular mind of Lewis, but it makes a bid toward an Expressionism sourced from the landscape of the audience’s social unconscious. The observing minds in the audience can project and perform aspects of mind through the figurative sacrifice before them, and, since mind need not have a connection to body, they can preserve the roles played out by Arhgol and Hanp as representative but separate from their identity. Arhgol and Hanp are effects of spectatorship, but they equally represent aspects of the invisible body of the observer.

## Chapter 2:

### Seen Changing: Virtuality and ‘The Optical Paradigm of Theatre Space’ in Joyce’s “Circe”

*Drama is essentially a communal art and of widespread domain. The drama—its fittest vehicle almost presupposes an audience, drawn from all classes.*

—James Joyce, “Drama and Life”

#### *Introduction*

The “Circe” chapter of *Ulysses*, written in the typographical conventions of dramatic script, is a long demonstration on the difficulty of representing metamorphoses in theater. Recent critics sensitive to its proximity to the theater have dubbed it “modernist closet drama” and a “catachresis” for the impossible challenge it poses to embodied performance.<sup>36</sup> Much of this challenge arises from the rapid series of transformations that occur in the stage directions. The so-called “Messianic scene,” for example, presents one fantasy of Bloom as various types of public reformer whose subsequent demise parodies that of Charles Stewart Parnell, the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party and proponent of Home Rule. In this scene alone, the stage directions signal Bloom’s rapid changes from the “Lord Mayor of Dublin” to “emperor president and king chairman... Leopold the First,” “new womanly man,” “mother,” and “Messiah,” among others (*U* 478-499). Reinforcing the fantasy of each role, Bloom’s costumes, his supporting cast, and the *mise-en-scène* all transform according to Bloom’s personae. Indeed, as soon as one fantastic scene finishes, “all recedes” like a supernatural fog, leaving Bloom to “[plodge] forward again” through the relative reality of Nighttown.

The final stage directions of the “Messianic” scene are paradigmatic of “Circe’s” phantasmagoric atmosphere, produced by both the outrageous scale of its theatrical production and the impossibility of Bloom’s transformations:

([Bloom] exhibits to Dublin reporters traces of burning. The daughters of Erin, in black garments with large prayerbooks and long lighted candles in their hands, kneel down and pray.)

[...]

(A choir of six hundred voices, conducted by Mr Vincent O’Brien, sings the Alleluia chorus, accompanied on the organ by Joseph Glynn. Bloom becomes mute, shrunken, carbonized.)<sup>37</sup>

If the descriptions of Bloom demonstrating the light “traces of burning” and the state of being “mute, shrunken, carbonized” represent the static states of Bloom’s metamorphoses—that is, the local beginning and end points of his transformation—then entirely absent from the episode is the transformational movement between these states. This movement is “Circe’s” primary challenge to embodied performance, and it happens repeatedly in nearly every stage direction.

The present chapter seeks demonstrate that the seeming discontinuity between each of these consecutive stage directions can be bridged if we posit a continuum between the *representation* of a theatrical scene and the theatrical *presence* of the unperceived. This continuous space, consisting of both the perceptible and imperceptible, requires, I argue, an account of “virtual theater,” the only

partially represented space where a theatrical audience could witness the intricacies of Bloom's transformations or an audience could hear the music of the Alleluia chorus, and yet a reader could not. "Virtual" is a term used in optics to describe an imaginary luminous space, where light rays emitted from an object cannot actually converge. I use "virtual theater," to describe Joyce's evocation of theatrical space in "Circe," where the rays of audience perception, so to speak, do not converge in the stage directions of the dramatic script. Joyce's conception of the virtual, then, is thoroughly optical, for he produces this virtual space through another optical metaphor—namely through the narrative focalization of the audience in the stage directions. This chapter analyzes this focalization in an altered sense, however, insofar as Genette's classic account of focalization depends on the metaphorical optics evoked by its name. In optics, focalization is the convergence of light rays into a point or a coherent image and, in this sense, is the opposite of the virtual. Despite the antinomy that the virtual and focalization seem to present, this chapter traces Joyce's efforts to make audience focalization and the imperceptible converge within the continuous space of a virtual theater. For any given moment, the virtual theater presents to the reader a synchronic view of an optical system, of which an individual stage direction is only a single scene. This positions the reader in a non-place for observation. Since Joyce cannily excludes the reader from actual spectatorship and positions him at a distance from the convergence of light rays implied by focalized spectatorship, he enables the reader to see in one scene the actual image, the virtual image, the object, the lenses and mirrors as a continuous whole encompassed by virtual theater. This theater, far from being abstract, interacts with the stage directions as if according to knowable optical—not ontological—laws, allowing the reader a full synchronic map of how spectator perception relates to the imperceptible and, to an extent, depends upon it.

Critics who address "Circe's" relationship to theater have usually tended to focus on the qualities that resist the embodiment of the live actor and, therefore, emphasized either "Circe's" anti-theatricality or theatrical failure. Arguing that Joyce realizes the stage direction as a "form of present-tense narration," or a mode of *diegesis*, capable of transcribing the stage's theatricality into the text of the dramatic script, Martin Puchner thus aligns Joyce with the tradition of modernist anti-theatricality suspicious of the actor's *mimesis*.<sup>38</sup> "Circe's" narrative stage directions accordingly become the site of diegetic innovation, Puchner argues, by translating theatricality into the language of choreography and ritual gesture through an acute attention to bodily comportment or physical movement. When Stephen attempts to replace the ritual transubstantiation of the Eucharist with a single gesture painstakingly detailed in a stage direction or when Professor Maginni directs "Circe's" *danse macabre* in the idiom of ballet, these scenes transcribe theatricality into a form amenable to the text (*U* 433, 575-79). Theatrical transcription, then, becomes a tool for textual authority. By redirecting the authority of the stage directions into the voice of a narrator, who in turn addresses a private reader, Joyce exercises the prescriptive force of theatrical stage directions, Puchner claims, with an absolute authority typically challenged by the collaborative effort of theater production.<sup>39</sup>

While Puchner treats "Circe" as a closet drama, whose success depends on its resistance to theatrical representation, David Kurnick emphasizes "Circe's" status as a dramatic *text* and a "catachresis" for the impossible performance the chapter scripts.<sup>40</sup> Kurnick locates *Ulysses* within a counter-tradition to the "novel of interiority," a counter-tradition that expresses ambivalence about the increasing inwardness of the novel form and its correlative repression of collective life. It responds, according to Kurnick, by absorbing the theatrical failure experienced by such authors as Joyce, Henry James, George Eliot, and William Thackeray into an aspect of narrative form.<sup>41</sup> The novel's repression of theatrical failure re-emerges as the novel's longing for social literary forms, while it nevertheless reinscribes the novel within the constraints of medium specificity. After all, the novel, the argument goes, cannot actually be theater, which depends, among other attributes, upon live presence, collective reception and collaborative production.

Joyce often signals the existence of the virtual theater during scenes dramatizing the failure to hear. In the stage direction describing the Alleluia chorus, the reader cannot read the lyric that an audience present to the virtual theater could. Here, Joyce simplifies the reader's audience function into a mode of spectatorship by shifting the ability to hear onto the virtual audience. The key to understand Bloom's transformation into coal is the passage of time condensed in the stage direction: a "carbonized" fossil fuel, organically decomposing to the tune of Handel's iconic "Alleluia chorus." Presumably, coal soot covers Bloom's face when Zoe chides him after this stage direction, "Talk away till you're black in the face." Zoe's comment therefore suggests a visible link between the tableau of Bloom's aggrandizing choral fantasy and the quotidian conversation with Zoe, which signals Bloom's return to reality. First, the "traces of burning" in the previous stage direction exhibit the initial condition of carbonization. Then, "six hundred voices" sing the "Alleluia chorus." Although the stage direction does not voice the lyric "And [Bloom] shall reign forever and ever," the chorus recalls a speech at the beginning of the Messianic scene in which Bloom says, "But their reign is rover for rever and ever and ev..." (U 479). The unvoiced refrain, "forever and ever," substitutes for the passing of geological time, causing Bloom's fossilization into coal. Finally, Zoe recognizes the coal of Bloom's fantasy, but only as the ashy discoloration (and makeup of racial impersonation) incited by his emotional "stump speech" against tobacco, which initially propelled the Messianic scene (U 478). The stage direction does not voice the lyric from the Alleluia chorus and, yet, the lyric's evocation of geological time ("forever and ever") is the best explanation for Bloom's fossilization, when he "becomes mute, shrunken, carbonized." Unlike Bloom's earlier speech, which explicitly voices a distorted version of the lyrics, the stage direction only implies their enunciation. The reader cannot read the lyric that an audience would hear. Yet it is present in the virtual theatrical production condensed and implied by the stage direction.

Joyce inverts the conventional address of the stage directions, a revision to the dramatic script from which all the arguments of this chapter follow: the stage directions evoke, or represent, audience experience, rather than the audience's experience being the effect of the stage direction. Typically, the audience of a theatrical performance is unable to read the stage directions in the dramatic script, yet it beholds their materialization during performance. Joyce instead shifts the address of the stage directions from the theater personnel to the reader. Rather than deferring the audience's experience to a potential performance, he incorporates it into the present tense narration of the stage directions. The audience, then, mediates the stage directions for the reader, for whom they are the primary means of theatrical manifestation. The transmission of "Circe's" theatrical space to the reader depends on this audience's limited narrative perspective. The chapter—not simply a dramatic script—no longer awaits a potential audience and performance. Rather, its virtual performance occurs in parallel to its being read. The reader, distinguished from the theatrical audience, cannot therefore "see" or "hear" everything in the implied theatrical space, and yet must still assume a virtual theater that vouchsafes the existence of these imperceptible phenomena to him or her.

For Joyce, this inversion did not in fact originate with "Circe." Already in the manuscript of *Stephen Hero*, drafted between 1901 and 1906,<sup>42</sup> Joyce begins scripting a scene from a specific spectator's point of view. There we encounter a "fragment of colloquy" that occasions Stephen's frequently cited disquisition to Cranly about Joyce's aesthetic theory of epiphany.<sup>43</sup> While Stephen walks through Eccles Street, the story goes, provoking himself into antipathy for Emma, a love interest who rebuffed his sexual proposition "to live one night together," he overhears the following dialogue. Unlike any other moment in *Stephen Hero*'s manuscript, this fragment appears in the typographical conventions of dramatic script:

The Young Lady— (drawing discreetly) ...O, yes...I was...at the...cha...pel...

The Young Gentleman— (inaudibly) ...I...(again inaudibly)...I...

The Young Lady— (softly) ...O...but you're...ve...ry...wick...ed...<sup>44</sup>

While this scene reinforces the deluded epiphany that inspires Stephen to write “Villanelle of the Temptress,” its most curious feature is the inaudibility of the Gentleman’s speech. The ellipses double as both the Lady’s drawl and an auditory occlusion, when the stage directions “inaudibly” and “again inaudibly” mark the absence of the Gentleman’s speech between his insistence on “I.” The Lady’s response (“O...but”) registers an exception and responds to the Gentleman’s absent words, suggesting that the direction, “inaudibly,” is intended neither for her nor the Gentleman. Since “inaudibly” indicates a failure to hear, this fragment is not so much a dramatic scene as it is a dramatized reception. To whom, then, is it inaudible?

This chapter’s epigraph suggests the answer: “drama [...] almost presupposes an *audience*,” the assembly of people quite literally within the hearing range of a performance, event, or orator.<sup>45</sup> By implicitly referencing the reader in the stage directions, Joyce interposes the presupposed and, yet, textually absent audience as a mediating body between the reader and the scene represented. We cannot read the conversation in full, in other words, because Joyce dramatizes Stephen’s inability to hear the Gentleman’s speech in a scene that demonstrates epiphany’s dependence on reception, both spectatorship and audition. According to Genette’s narrative theory, Stephen’s limited perspective as a receiver is the dramatic fragment’s narrative “focalization.” Genette summarizes focalization’s function with the question “Who sees?” but this function could easily be expanded to all the senses and contained in the question, “Who perceives?”<sup>46</sup> If an assembled audience is defined by its ability to hear, then Stephen’s failure to hear is critical, for it excludes him from the constitutive perceptual activity of the audience. No longer subsumed into the point of view of a general audience, who successfully perceives and therefore remains inconspicuous to readerly attention, Stephen precipitates as a particular spectator as though out of a transparent chemical solution. Simply put, Joyce represents both the theatrical scene and the perception of it, foregrounding the experience of the spectator and entailing it into the dramatic script. By scripting Stephen’s imperfect reception, Joyce introduces narrative focalization into the stage directions. This introduction simplifies focalization into a function of spectatorship, for it shifts hearing to the audience occupying the space of the virtual theater. Joyce therefore isolates the optical metaphor embedded in narrative focalization, and uses it to posit the co-existence of a virtual and textual theater, which can be mapped according to optical laws.

### *The Optical Paradigm of “Circe’s” Theater*

“Circe” continually stages the incompatibility between what would be perceptible to a hypothetical theatrical audience and what is legible to its reader. In a stage direction flaunting its resistance to theatrical performance, Joyce scripts Bloom giving birth to eight children:

*(Bloom embraces [Mrs. Thornton] tightly and bears eight male yellow and white children. They appear on a redcarpeted staircase adorned with expensive plants. All are handsome, with valuable metallic faces, wellmade, respectably dressed and wellconducted, speaking five modern languages fluently and interested in various arts and sciences. Each has his name printed in legible letters on his shirtfront: Nasodoro, Goldfinger, Chrysostomos, Maindorée, Silversmile, Silberselber, Vifargent, Panagyros. They are immediately appointed to positions of high public trust in several different countries as managing directors of banks, traffic managers of railways, chairmen of limited liability companies, vice chairmen of hotel syndicates.)* (493-494).

Stage directions are typically instructions from the author to theater personnel for producing a theatrical performance. They tend to represent or suggest what would be perceptible to potential audience viewing the performance from the theater stalls. But this example from “Circe” openly flouts this convention, for there are two types of information available in it: (1) descriptive information that would be perceptible to a theater audience during performance, and (2) information that would be imperceptible to it, being only legible to a reader of the dramatic script. The audience would see, for example, that Bloom bears eight yellow and white children, and that they appear arranged on a redcarpeted staircase with plants. But the audience would not know the names of Bloom’s children as they are born, if it were not the case that “each has his name printed in legible letters on his shirtfront.” This theatrical, perhaps Brechtian, expedient allows the audience to know more than the typical spectator because it grants provisional access to the text of the stage direction.

This access is, however, limited. This stage direction is most remarkable for the information that the audience could not possibly know or judge without the help of the script. It is not apparent how the audience would judge Bloom’s children to be “wellmade” or “wellconducted,” or the plants to be “expensive.” Nor would an audience be capable of knowing that the children speak five languages or have an interest “in various arts and sciences.” Most of all, it would be beyond the scope of the perceivable to know “immediately” that each child is appointed to “positions of high public trust in several different countries.” This last would demand an omniscient audience. By drawing attention to the fact that an audience could know the names of Bloom’s children *if and only if* they were legible to it, Joyce draws the theatrical audience and the reader of the dramatic script together in the act of reading. Yet, he only does so to signal the epistemological gap between the two. While the audience would glean new knowledge through perception, the reader has access to knowledge in excess of the audience’s perception, evidenced by the information that would be legible only to the reader.

This raises a simple question: for whom are Bloom’s children’s names legible? Obviously, they are legible for both a reader and an audience. But in order for this stage direction to exist as a rhetorical effect in the text, it must presuppose a hypothetical audience limited, as all audiences are, by the conditions of perceptibility. Since the children disappear as soon as the stage direction ends and the chapter never references them again in any form, this audience would only know the names of the children if they could see and therefore read the names on the shirtfronts of Bloom’s metalbound progeny. The reader, on the other hand, is limited by the conditions of legibility, i.e. what he can read in the text. The limitations extend therefore in both directions. In the example that began this chapter, the reader does not read the lyrics to the Alleluia chorus, whereas an implied audience would hear it. And Joyce constricts or dilates these limitations by adjusting the tension between the focalized perspective of a perceiving audience and another point of view not limited by perception. It is certainly true that “Circe” resists embodied performance by placing difficult demands on an actor’s body or on theatrical representation in general. Staging the birth of eight children by a character we have known to be male would certainly strain a sense of theatrical realism, even if we could imagine a number of creative ways to represent it on stage. But the text is impossible to perform in another essential way precisely where the performance would need to toggle between different domains of knowledge in its reception—where “Circe’s” reader exceeds the knowledge afforded by the theatrical audience’s perception, or the audience perceives a phenomenon illegible to the reader because Joyce represents that audience’s experience in the text.

Joyce gives “Circe” the dimensions of space by modulating the perceptual horizons afforded by focalization in the stage directions, which delineate between what is available to the reader and what is not, effectively demarcating the boundary between “Circe’s” on- and off-stage. The entrances and exits of characters demonstrate that Joyce conceives of “Circe’s” theatrical space

differently from the typical dramatic script. Conventionally, “Enter” and “Exit” tend to mark an actor’s movement from off- to on-stage or vice versa, implying a physical division between the two spaces. But this convention implies more simply a division between what the audience could and could not see. Although few characters literally “enter” “Circe’s” theatrical space under the auspices of conventional notation, their entrances are abundant and varied. Rather than cross the threshold of the stage, they step forward, approach, or suddenly stand in view: “Leering, Gerty MacDowell limps forward” (U 442); “Mary Driscoll, a slipshod servant girl, approaches” (U 460); “The portly figure of John O’Connell, caretaker, stands forth” (U 473). The characters enter as if they were always present in nearby space, even if they might be neither recognized nor proximate enough to draw the attention of the audience focalizing the narration. Indeed, during the hallucinatory scenes, the imperceptible space of the chapter seems to be an inexhaustible resource out of which any character could be mobilized for the action of the play. Bloom, for example, during the trial scene that is important later in this chapter, appeals to a figure in the anonymous crowd and conjures Hynes, a reporter who owes Bloom £3 and speaks only a line before he disappears from the chapter: “([Bloom] turns to a figure in the crowd, appealing.) Hynes, may I speak with you?” (U 472). Such entrances indicate a public waiting beyond the spatial boundaries determined by the external spectator’s perceptual limits.

Exits, on the other hand, are rarely recorded. In a study of “Circe’s” stage directions, Katie Wales notes the “paucity of *exit*-SDs,” which “testifies to the fact that, in ‘Circe,’ characters appear, but tend not to disappear explicitly and tidily.”<sup>47</sup> Effectively, characters seldom leave the theatrical space. This capacity to retain characters on stage suggests a conception of space less rigidly bounded than either on- or off-stage. This capacity, combined with the entrances, imply a spatial continuity between the perceptible and imperceptible in the stage directions. Since the reader observes the audience and stage at a vantage that can recognize and distinguish the perceptible and imperceptible, we can recognize the implied continuity between them.

“Circe’s” entrances and exits, therefore, depend on the visual field of a specific narrative point of view. In one of many scenes that establishes the lurid atmosphere of Nighttown, Bridie Kelly, Bloom’s first sexual partner, reluctantly reappears in “Circe” as though her entrance were forced by the attention of an undesired gaze: “In the gap of her dark den furtive, rainbedraggled Bridie Kelly stands” (U 441). Bridie’s “dark den” breaks the continuity of visible space with a gap, and her furtiveness—her desire to escape attention—suggests that this discontinuity only exists as long as she successfully eludes observation. Before Bloom can respond to her open solicitation, “a burly rough pursues” Bridie until “he stumbles on the steps, recovers, plunges into gloom. Weak squeaks of laughter are heard, weaker” (U 441). Although the “burly rough” plunges into the “gloom” unilluminated to the focalized spectator, the decaying sounds of laughter imply a space beyond the visible horizon of the stage direction, yet, continuous with it. The progressive weakness of the laughter implies, first, the presence of an unidentified auditor, and, second, the laughter’s distance with respect to the limits of that auditor’s audible range. It also demonstrates that the chapter’s stage directions tend to represent space only if it is visible, even while it continuously asks us to hypothesize a theatrical space beyond the visible, which is here determined by the audible limits of a potential audience. At times, we can only indirectly discern the narrative focalization of the audience by attending to what would be perceptible and imperceptible in the theatrical space; yet, whether the audience is directly or indirectly discernible, it exerts a direct force on the dramatic text, shaping the field of perception’s legibility in “Circe’s” stage directions.

Focalization is explicitly an optical metaphor. To focalize is to cause the convergence of light rays at a single point. Narrative focalization implies therefore that the limiting point of view, from which a story is narrated, forms a scene or image for the reader as if it were an optical lens causing the light rays emitted from an object to converge into a “real image,” i.e. an image produced by the

convergence of light rays in a real location. Joyce's regular use of focalization in the stage directions places him in a tradition of writers who underwrite novelistic form with an "optical paradigm of theatre space."<sup>48</sup> Pannill Camp traces the genealogy of this paradigm to shifts in Enlightenment philosophy of vision and the practice of architecture, both of which "loosened perspective's grip" on the architectural design of theatrical space.<sup>49</sup> First, eighteenth century philosophers, such as George Berkeley, rejected the idea that the eye could calculate distances with an innate geometric faculty, and, instead, proposed that visual information could only be interpreted by comparing experiences, or, in the case of Diderot, senses like sight and touch.<sup>50</sup> This had implications for the theorization of theatrical space. Diderot, for example, theorized a concept of "sightless space" and, in a thought experiment, applied it to the theater. In such a theater, actors would not be aware of the direction from which the audience viewed them, allowing Diderot to imagine a new theater grounded in a "poly-directional structure of sightless spatial perception."<sup>51</sup> This, in turn, posited a theatrical space not organized around the traditional single point of view or perspective. Second, Camp argues that theater architects, "enamored with physical and optical representations of space," superimposed both spaces into their architectural plans, "[dissolving] the theatre space into the diagrammatic space of optics" and "[transforming] the playhouse into a new sort of optical machine."<sup>52</sup> Insofar as Joyce could be called an architect of "Circe's" theatrical space, he uses this "optical paradigm of theater space" to transform the text of "Circe" into "a new sort of optical machine" as if the reader were spectating the episode, at times unawares, through a system of focalized optics analogous to a focalized theatrical audience.

During Bloom's first entrance into the space of the "Circe" episode, Joyce explicitly evokes the everyday optical technology used in photography, *trompe l'oeil* and phantasmagoria, when he presents Bloom's transformed image in "Gillen's Hairdresser's" concave and convex mirrors (*U* 433).<sup>53</sup> As Bloom searches nearby provisioners for a midnight snack, a "lukewarm pig's crubeen" and "cold sheep's trotter," he disappears and reappears from the sight of the audience through "Rabaiotti's door" and "Olhousen's, the pork butcher," demarcating again the boundary between the visible and invisible (*U* 434). Yet, Bloom's first entrance into the chapter is most important because it introduces the focalized audience's limited ability to see at precisely the moment when Joyce focalizes actual optical media. It therefore asks us to compare how a reader would focalize an audience in the stage direction with how a spectator would see an image through an optical lens or mirror. Seen through the mirrors, Bloom's name distorts according to the actual optical effects:

On the farther side under the railway bridge Bloom appears flushed, panting, cramming bread and chocolate into a side pocket. From Gillen's hairdresser's window a composite portrait shows him gallant Nelson's image. A concave mirror at the side presents to him lovelorn longlost lugubru Booloohoom. Grave Gladstone sees him level, Bloom for Bloom. He passes, struck by the stare of truculent Wellington but in the convex mirror grin unstruck the bonham eyes and fatchuck cheekchops of Jollypoldy the rixdix doldy.

As if imitating the "composite portrait" of "gallant Nelson," these optical distortions present the reader with Bloom's image, synthesized from the gazes of three significant British military and political figures, as well as from an array of optical media. Crucially, the transformations performed on Bloom's name emphasize the literal optical technologies that produce them. Both "Booloohoom" and "Jollypoldy" reflect the actual optical effects of each mirror, presenting the comical figure of Shakespearean conscience in the transfigured image of the languid lover and Circean pig. In the concave mirror, Bloom's image is slimmer, reflecting an image of Bloom as a lugubrious lover weeping and pining away from his unrequited desire: "lovelorn longlost lugubru Booloohoom." In the convex mirror, Bloom bloats into one of Circe's pigs: "the bonham eyes and

fatchuck cheekchops of Jollypoldy the rixdix doldy.” Yet, Bloom’s reflected image is no image at all; instead, it comprises the expansion of his name by injecting it with onomatopoeia, epithet and nursery rhyme. Rather than describe the image, Joyce transcribes it into a textual metamorphoses of Bloom’s name as if language transformed according to the laws of geometric optics. If this example gives any indication, the images and spectacles intended by “Circe’s” stage directions, like Bloom’s focalized image in the mirrors, can only appear as transcription. Yet, the content of these images depends upon the actual properties of the focalized optical media.

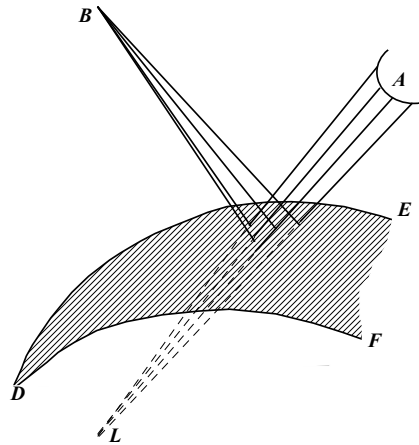


Figure 1: Light rays from the luminous point B pass through the optical system EDF and reflect into the pupil at A. The eye at A sees object B as if it appeared at point L, where the lines of reflection, which extend past the optical system, converge. Point L is the virtual image of point B.

Functioning analogously to actual optical laws, then, the mirrors focalize the “virtual images” of Bloom as lover and pig, and present them to the reader as “real images” through textual transcription. Figure 1 reproduces a diagram from James Gregory’s *Optica Promota* (1663), credited with the first definition of the virtual image.<sup>54</sup> A term borrowed from optics, virtual image refers to an image produced when the light rays emitted from an object (B) diverge after passing through an optical medium (EDF), e.g. a lens or mirror. The virtual image produced appears to originate from the so-called point of divergence (L), where no light rays actually converge. It appears, therefore, at the location of an imaginary luminous space. In a flat mirror, for example, we see our reflection as if it originates from the luminous space directly in front of us and behind the mirror. Although this space gives the impression of being a physical space, it does not actually exist as it appears. Of course we still see virtual images as if they are real images because our eye produces a “correction” when it focuses images onto our retina. Whether our eye sees an actual object, or a real or virtual image, it refocuses a “real image” onto our retina, where the “real image” is one produced at the location of converging light rays. The focalized spectator, who occupies the same optical space as the mirrors and who mediates it for the reader, ultimately produces a real image of Bloom. But in the analytical space of optics, where no actual spectator (or eye) exists, the virtual image maintains its potential existence.

Assume EDF is Gillen’s Hairdresser’s concave mirror and point B is Bloom. The optical system produces an image of Bloom through the focalized mirror as if Bloom were standing at point L, the apparent source of the image, “lovelorn longlost lugubru Boolooohoom.” The location and appearance of the image is only reflected in the text by the distortion to his name, suggesting that the text, as we might first surmise, is a space where no light actually converges and is therefore the virtual image. This conclusion, however, would ignore that the audience focalizes the stage direction, and shares the virtual space with the mirror and Bloom at B. We must, more appropriately, place the reader at a vantage resembling the optical physicist, who must imagine (or draw) the optical diagram

to understand the optical system's arrangement and effects. Then  $A$  would be the focalized audience who sees the image produced by  $EDF$ , the optical mirror, which mediates Bloom at the luminous point  $B$ . At  $A$ , the eye of the spectator produces a correction and therefore sees Bloom's virtual image as a real image, but the eye cannot acknowledge the full mechanics of the entire optical system from a point of view internal to it. That is, insofar as the focalized audience is limited by perception, it reproduces as real all the virtual formations of "Circe's" theater as though in a dream and it cannot imagine the potential existence of theatrical riches beyond the merely perceptual that could make use cry to dream again. By denying the reader the position of spectator, Joyce preserves the reader's position outside the spectatorial system and the virtuality of "Circe's" theater, allowing the reader access to the mechanics of spectatorship while denying perception the power to justify the perceptible as given.

The optical metaphor is essential to "Circe" for two reasons: (1) since Joyce transcribes the mirrored images according to optical laws, he makes the optical metaphor of focalization explicit—the stretched and bloated images of the concave and convex mirrors, respectively, always appear as virtual images; (2) since Joyce places the real image in the eyes of the focalized audience, he affords the reader a position from which he can discern the textual inscription of an imperceptible virtual theater, which is nothing but an effect of the chapter's spectatorial system. Further, the chapter's virtual theater levels the ontological priority between text and its potential performance, for it operates concurrently with the text that transcribes it into the present-tense narration of the stage directions. In other words, Joyce embeds in "Circe" the potential performance that the conventional dramatic script can only promise for the future. He therefore places the reader in the position of a new kind of spectator, sensitive not only to the "real image" generated by narrative focalization, but also to the virtuality that constitutes "Circe's" theatrical presence and space. Such a spectator is capable of analyzing the properties of "Circe's" theater as an optical system as if it functioned according to actual principles.

While I derive "virtual theater" from Joyce's use of optical metaphors in "Circe," Evlyn Gould first conceives of it to describe how a tradition of French literature transforms textual representation into a drama of subjectivity: "virtual" identifies the elusive figurations emanating from unconscious thought processes that bend or refract conscious foci as the telescope does light rays. 'Theater' supposes the externalization of these optical phenomena in a physical space designed for representation. 'Virtual Theater' is thus a paradox that proposes the externalization of internal and energetic optical phenomena in the physical space of textual representation."<sup>55</sup> Gould's source for the term, "virtual," is *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Freud appeals to the "virtual" in order to justify the topographical representation of the psychological apparatus, which distributes the perceptual, pre-conscious, conscious, and unconscious systems to "psychical localities" as if they had a physical orientation and direction in space.<sup>56</sup> Using an optical metaphor, Freud figures the psychological apparatus as if it were a system of lenses and mirrors that, so disposed, would produce a dream-image: "Everything that can be an object of our internal perception is *virtual*, like the image produced in a telescope by the passage of light-rays. But we are justified in assuming the existence of the systems (which are not in any way psychical entities themselves and can never be accessible to psychical perception) like the lenses of the telescope, which cast the image."<sup>57</sup> Even if the dream-image is "an object of our internal perception," or "*virtual*," Freud seems to say, it does not exclude the existence of actual systems that compose it. Functioning like an arrangement of lenses and mirrors in a telescope, this system of dream formation could be mapped in order to understand its laws and distorting effects on perceptions, or other conscious data. In the parenthesis, Freud is especially careful to distinguish these systems from the dream-images themselves. While we can apprehend the product of the system—the image—we cannot locate the apparatus of the system within the space occupied by the spectator, or dreamer. Such a system exists, as Lacan says, referring

to this section in Freud, in “the idea of another locality, another space, another scene, *the between perception and consciousness*.”<sup>58</sup>

The importance of this “between” to “Circe” introduces a necessary modification to Gould’s “Virtual Theater,” for Joyce never equates “textual representation” with “physical space.” Rather, the text is another image—a real image—produced when the audience focalized in the stage directions frames the virtual theater for a reader. When Gould equates “physical space” with textual space, she ignores Freud’s metaphor, namely that internal perception is produced *as if* according to the optical laws that posit the virtual. Yet, the structure of the optical system exists in a space different than that occupied by the optical real image, a virtual space that, after Proust, is “real without being actual, ideal without being abstract.”<sup>59</sup> To read is not to perceive. Rather, by carefully delineating a difference between the legible and the perceptible, “Circe” transforms its reader into the receiver of both the textual, real image and, what Freud called, the “internal perception” of its virtual theater. For the reader, the text of “Circe” and its virtual theater coexist. And the reader imagines that the text of “Circe” and its virtual images coexist as if they were produced according actual theatrical processes and systems, however virtual. In Freudian terms, it is not that the manifest content of the dream-image is inherently theatrical; rather, it is the analyst’s spectatorship of the complex system of manifest and latent content that theatricalizes it. When “Circe” scripts not only the actors and *mise-en-scène*, but also the reception of them by the theatrical audience, it dramatizes how the process of spectatorship, both actual and virtual, theatricalizes Bloom and Stephen’s interiority. Revising Freud we might say of “Circe”: “Everything that can be an object of the audience internal to ‘Circe’s’ stage directions is *virtual*, like the image of Bloom produced in a concave or convex mirror. But we are justified in assuming the existence of the theatrical systems of spectatorship like the lenses of the telescope, which cast the image.” We would have to add, however, that it is only by placing the reader outside the systems of spectatorship that we can distinguish the virtual from the real images. These latter images are actualized by the spectator’s presence—and not the reader’s—within the same virtual space as the theatrical system.

### *Virtual Theater in Focus*

This section develops a formal justification for point *L* of *Figure 1*, the virtual space and objects of the optical system. In the following pages, our optical system, as it were, is a second stage direction in which Joyce dramatizes the audience’s failure to hear. These moments of failed audition simplify the function of the audience into a spectatorial function. Joyce accomplishes this simplification by shifting audition, or its failure, to the virtual audience internal to “Circe’s” theater. The audience emerges most distinctly in key moments of Bloom’s trial and Messianic scene, two of several “hallucinatory” scenes in “Circe.” Both begin with imperatives, given in dialogue, to gaze on private and public life: “Why look at [Bloom’s] private life!” and “Why look at our public life!” (*U* 459, 478). Before the trial scene, while attempting to look after an excessively drunk Stephen, Bloom confronts figures of guilt and shame precipitated by his own self-scrutiny: his mother and father, Rudolph and Ellen, criticize him for carousing, while he hides his non-kosher midnight snack behind his back; his wife Molly appears, and the lemon soap, purchased for her from Sweny earlier in the day, rises radiantly as the sun; Mrs. Breen, Molly’s best friend, flirtatiously accuses Bloom of philandering and he responds with Don Giovanni-like charm, all while shielding the pig’s trotter and sheep’s crubeen from her prying eyes. While Joyce represents the mirrors, discussed in the previous section, as actual objects that reflect Bloom’s image in an optically predictable manner, albeit to unpredictable linguistic effect, here characters from Bloom’s past enter the scene and engage him in roles characteristic of their respective relationships, altering his appearance and the environment as a result. Only a moment later, deciding whether or not to continue following Stephen through

Dublin's red-light district, Bloom's self-scrutinizing conscience succumbs to the gaze of the police watch. Immersed in pervasive public spectatorship, Bloom transforms identities at every accusation and demand for information by the First and Second Watch. As he is accused of committing "nuisance," "cruelty to animals," and "unlawfully watching and besetting," he disassembles his identity accordingly with a number of expedient personae, including "friend of man," "Dr Bloom, Leopold, dental surgeon," and Bloom's *séducteur* alter-ego, "Henry Flower" (U 453-455). The momentum of these charges and transformations sends him headlong into a public trial and inquisition until the ghost of Paddy Dignam stands as supernatural testimony to Bloom's alibi. Rather than planting a bomb in an anarchist plot earlier in the day, as he is finally accused, Bloom attended Paddy's funeral in "Hades." Standard through out "Circe," the rapidity of these transformations and shifting plot lines generate a dizzying momentum as Bloom confronts the gazes of similarly shifting spectators.

In the trial that takes place during the scene sketched above, Bloom is accused, among other charges, of sexually assaulting Mary Driscoll. One stage direction, unique among the rest of the chapter, renders a dramatic monologue spoken by Bloom in free indirect discourse, or "the presentation, in the narrator's past-tense language, of the present-tense language of the character."<sup>60</sup> The tense of the passage modulates between the past tense of free indirect discourse and the present conventional to stage directions, as if it were being reported live by the collective audience of the courtroom, comprised of judge, jury, lawyers, stenographers, the gallery and, most notably, reporters. Bloom conjures the trial scene by an unprecedented address to a jury not yet seen in the chapter: "Gentleman of the jury, let me explain" (U 457). The layout of the typical courtroom follows shortly when Bloom "Turns to the gallery" to deliver one of many defenses (U 457). Finally, when Mary Driscoll makes a joke at Bloom's expense, it conjures the unseen presence of the courtroom audience by prompting its "General laughter" (U 461). Speaking to this "general" audience, Bloom makes a "bogus statement" on behalf of his own case, which renders his "long unintelligible" speech to the jury through an increasingly unstable and estranged narrative voice in an extensive stage direction:

(Bloom pleading not guilty and holding a fullblown waterlily, begins a long unintelligible speech. They would hear what counsel had to say in his stirring address to the grandjury. He was down and out but, though branded as a black sheep, if he might say so, he meant to reform, to retrieve the memory of the past in a purely sisterly way and return to nature as a purely domestic animal. A seven months' child, he had been carefully brought up and nurtured by an aged bedridden parent. There might have been lapses of an erring father but he wanted to turn over a new leaf and now, when at long last in sight of the whipping post, to lead a homely life in the evening of his days, permeated by the affectionate surroundings of the heaving bosom of the family. An acclimatized Britisher, he had seen that summer eve from the footplate of an engine cab of the Loop line railway company while the rain refrained from falling glimpses, as it were, through the windows of loveful households in Dublin city and urban district of scenes truly rural of happiness of the better land Dockrell's wallpaper at one and ninepence a dozen, innocent British born bairns lisping prayers to the Sacred Infant, youthful scholars grappling with their pensums, model young ladies playing on the pianoforte or anon all with fervor reciting the family rosary round the crackling Yulelog while in the boreens and green lanes the colleens with their swains strolled what times the strains of the organtoned melodeon Britannia metalbound with four acting stops and twelvefold bellows, a sacrifice, greatest bargain ever...)

(Renewed laughter. He mumbles incoherently. Reporters complain that they cannot hear.) (U 462).

Genette's distinction between narrative voice and focalization helps parse this stage direction, for he understood that the reader ought not to identify the voice of a passage ("Who speaks?") with the focus around which the narration is organized ("Who sees?").<sup>61</sup> The narrative voice of this stage direction undergoes a number of metamorphoses independent of its focalization in quick succession. From the first to third sentence, Joyce moves from the conventional narrative voice of the stage direction, to the unvoiced interiority of Bloom's "Britisher" persona, and, finally, to Bloom's speech reported by the focalized audience, who presents Bloom's dramatic monologue, implicitly spoken in the present-tense of theatrical performance, in the past-tense language of an external narrator witnessing the scene, i.e. in free indirect discourse.<sup>62</sup>

In no other stage direction is it more apparent that Joyce figures "Circe's" external point of view as a visible audience, who hears Bloom's speech and "reports" it as though the "presstable" were the theater stalls (U 462). The incoherence that ends Bloom's speech ("He mumbles incoherently") and the complaint that the reporters "cannot hear" recall the dramatic fragment of *Stephen Hero*, where the stage direction, "inaudibly," signals the omission of dialogue and betrays Stephen's presence as spectator to the scene. Here, as in several other stage directions, the "reporters" assume Stephen's role as the audience unable to hear. If they are the focalized point of view, then the stage directions can reproduce Bloom's speech only as long as the reporters hear him, even if they and the rest of the audience interpret his speech to be "unintelligible" or "incoherent." The ellipsis ending the stage direction, the interruption of "renewed laughter," and the reporters' complaint all indicate that Bloom's speech ends because the orienting perspective of the passage can no longer hear him. Their inability to hear demonstrates that Joyce uses narrative focalization to report Bloom's speech through the spectators present to the scene: judge and jury, lawyers, "Longhand and Shorthand," Professor MacHugh from the "presstable" and, most notably, the reporters, who "complain that they cannot hear" (U 462). The focalization of the reporters, and especially the narrative reporting of Bloom's speech, mobilizes narrative impersonality in order to generate a collective voice. By transposing Bloom's dramatic monologue into free-indirect discourse, Joyce estranges Bloom's voice from his person and aligns it with the reporters' focalization of his speech and, more generally, with the narrative voice of the stage direction. Indeed, Bloom's speech manages to belong to all three sources—Bloom speaking, the reporters reporting, and the stage direction directing a potential theatrical production—all at once.

The narrative effect of free indirect discourse has ramifications for the narrative internal to Bloom's speech because it aligns his speech with the narrative voice of the stage directions at the very moment that the syntax in Bloom's speech estranges Bloom, the see-er, from the "glimpses" he had seen. Transposed into dialogue, the passage would begin, "An acclimatized Britisher, I had seen that summer eve, etc.," linking the visual perspective of Bloom's speech from "the footplate of an engine cab" to his "Britisher" persona.<sup>63</sup> As though he were witnessing a montage of these colonial *tableaux*, Bloom sees "glimpses, as it were, through the windows," when he speeds one "summer eve" through Dublin on a "Loop line railway" train. In this moment, Joyce eloquently estranges the subject (Bloom) and verb (to see) from the object (glimpses) by interposing a string of prepositional and subordinate phrases: "*he had seen* that summer eve from the footplate of an engine cab of the Loop line railway company while the rain refrained from falling *glimpses*, as it were, through the windows." Augmented by the speed of the train, the images assume the quality of a rapid series of virtual images displaced from their actual source within the sentence. As Bloom passes each window, he frames an image narrated in the stage direction, which Joyce links grammatically, at first, to Bloom's "glimpses" by the repetition of "of" (i.e. "of loveful households in Dublin city and urban

district” “of scenes truly rural,” “of happiness,” and “of the better land with Dockerell’s wallpaper at one and nine pence a dozen”). Here the quantity of glimpses transforms their quality; so iterated, they estrange themselves from Bloom’s speaking position, last cited in “*he* had seen,” and become available as images for theatrical appropriation. The stage direction loses the quality of speech, then, and the glimpses begin therefore to stand in for Bloom’s position as speaker. Without a pronoun to anchor these images to a single spectator, they gradually appear to originate not from Bloom, but, instead, from the stage direction. That is, the reader—and not the audience—beholds the images as if they were the *mise-en-scène* implied by the stage directions. To the focalized audience, the speech does not offer a spectacle and it is “incoherent,” or “unintelligible,” because they hear it without the frame of the stage direction. After all, the audience bears witness to this stage direction as if it were a dramatic monologue. Yet, the stage direction assimilates Bloom’s descriptions of these unmoored images to the virtual theatrical production imagined by the reader. As Bloom’s voice becomes increasingly detached from his position as speaker, it becomes increasingly equivalent to the voice of the stage direction.

Integrating more fully with the linguistic conventions of the stage direction, Bloom’s speech metamorphoses further, moving from the virtual “glimpses” to virtual spectacles. Framed by the stage direction, each co-exists for the reader with the present tense of Bloom’s dramatic performance. When the stage direction introduces the continuous present verbs, “bairns lisp[ing]...scholars grappl[ing]...ladies play[ing]...all with fervor recit[ing],” Bloom’s speech takes on the characteristic voice and verb tense of the conventional stage direction that began the monologue (cf. “Bloom pleading not guilty and holding a fullblown waterlily”). At this moment, Bloom’s speech reads as indistinguishable from the conventional stage direction, indicating that the description of actions in it becomes the enactment of a kind of theatrical dumb show that is co-present with its description. This spectacle expands again when “while” introduces a separate scene taking place concurrently in a different geographical space, “in the boreens [narrow roads] and green lanes” of the idyllic Irish countryside. The final spectacle presents actions across Ireland from “Dublin city” to “scenes truly rural,” dilating the spectacle to include a simultaneous view of Ireland’s “boreens and green lanes the colleens with their swains” and, finally, the freighted imperial symbol of the “organtoned melodeon Britannia.” As more simultaneous actions accumulate, the spectacle represents scenes from a broad range of space and, therefore, forces the reader into a spectatorial position capable of imagining how this broad field of actions can co-exist in a single moment. While it is true that the focalized audience would not see these “glimpses” as images or the actions as spectacles (remember that Bloom is only describing them), the stage direction places the reader in a position that produces the virtual image of the “glimpses” and the virtual theater of the present continuous actions. Since they occur in the stage direction, the images and spectacles belong to the potential performance of the dramatic script, which “Circe” absorbs and re-presents as a virtual theatrical presence co-existing with the text.

While this chapter demonstrates how optical space maps the present within the space of virtual theater, it also reads these two key stage directions in “Circe” to indicate the opposing temporal vectors of virtual theater. In the focalization of the mirrors, the text produces a “real image” because the focalized audience sees the virtual image produced by the mirror and “re-focuses” the ideal image on its “retina,” which effectively translates that image into the linguistic distortion of Bloom’s name as if it were the actual image. If we were to ignore the presence of the virtual theater, it would be as if the text represents Bloom’s image in the order of discontinuous succession: first, the image exists in a fictional world, and, second, the text represents it to the reader, who then reads it in the present-tense of dramatic script. Virtual theater is, however, a continuum common to both the theater presented in the stage directions and another theatrical space only potentially activated by audience perception. In the example of Bloom’s mirror images,

the structure of the text posits a virtual theater according to an optical metaphor, where images, both virtual and real, are co-present. This theater, then, could only coexist with the text, which, we must hypothesize, exists contemporaneously with the experience of the audience focalized in the stage directions.

In Bloom's trial scene, Joyce enables the reader to imagine the *L* in Figure 1, the virtual image, whereas the focalizing audience cannot see it because they must perceive Bloom's monologue as speech. The narration of this scene in the stage directions produces a complex mediation of Bloom's dramatic monologue. As the focalized audience of this stage direction, the reporters narrate Bloom's dramatic monologue in free indirect discourse, dislocating Bloom's voice from his position as speaker, and thereby enabling the voice to multiply. On one hand, we know Bloom is speaking and it must be his voice. On the other, we know that we read the reporters reporting Bloom's speech in the stage direction through an impersonal voice. These facets of the stage direction's narrative voice, combined with the estrangement of Bloom's position as spectator from the descriptions of both the "glimpses" and the present continuous actions that he narrates, allows the stage direction to appropriate Bloom's voice for its own theatrical ends. So while the focalized audience cannot see the images or spectacles that Bloom describes in his speech, the reader treats them as if they were equivalent to the conventional function of the stage direction, i.e. as a description of a potential theatrical production. This theater, too, is a virtual theater, but it is oriented, like the dramatic script, toward the future of a potential performance. And, yet, this bid towards the future of performance occurs as we read. The temporality of "Circe's" virtual theater—the past and future orientations of its theatrical presence—crystallizes how it expresses the continuity between Bloom's impossible states of transformation by imbricating the perception focalized through the audience in the stage directions within the imperceptible phenomena of the virtual theater.

### *Virtual Theater's Potential for Transparency*

When the audience appears, it implies, first, a diegetic space inaccessible to the reader, and, second, a spatial morphology framed around the audience's arrangement in space. The latter is not always clearly delineated, as is the case with the presence of the anonymous crowd that extends into the surrounding space absent to focalized attention. Yet, Bloom's address to the jury, for example, conjures archetypal spaces like the courtroom. As a focal lens, the audience betrays perceptual limits that shape the spatial sense available in the stage direction by determining, for example, distance and proximity in the ability or inability to hear or see. And, finally, when Joyce represents the process by which the audience becomes a nexus for audio-visual perception, he establishes a spatial logic in the text not governed by linear perspective. In order to appreciate the ways in which Joyce imagines "Circe's" theatrical space through the audience and the specialized modes of perception he creates therefrom, we must understand how Joyce structures the narrative focalization in "Circe" with what Camp calls the "optical paradigm of theatre space." The models of optical science invoked by Joyce, which map the processes of parallax, stereopsis, and chiaroscuro, posit the possibility that "Circe's" rapid transformations and its physical plenum are functions of the theatrical audience's spectatorship, organized without a single perspective and figured as an optical system taken as a whole.

Critics have understood "parallax" to be a dominant model of spectatorship in *Ulysses*, using it as a model for the vision of characters, the structure of narration, or the process by which the reader composes a sense of the novel's depth.<sup>64</sup> Parallax, however, constructs space according to perspective and point of view. Parallax is half the angle of displacement of an object's apparent position against a fixed background, when viewing the object from two different observational

locations.<sup>65</sup> In the discipline inspiring one of Bloom’s utopian reforms of the “new nine muses,” “Astronomy for the People,” parallax is most often calculated when the earth is on opposite sides of its orbit around the sun (*U* 490; Figure 2). Although it primarily allows us to calculate distances between bodies in space, parallax is isomorphic to our own vision: our eyes, too, see from two different locations determined by the distance between them in our heads. Binocular vision, or stereopsis, as it is called, accounts for our experience of depth perception by describing how we combine the two slightly varied points of view available to our eyes.

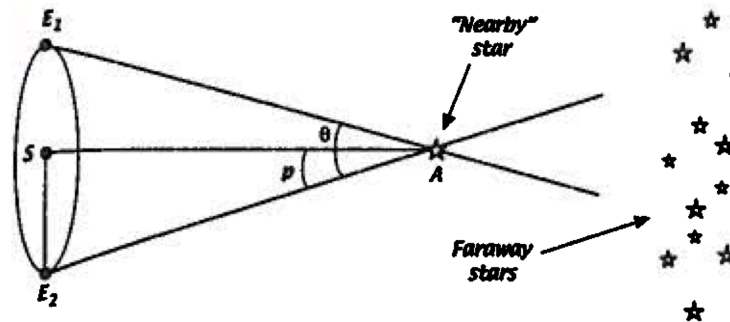


Figure 2: Reproduced from Hirshfeld.<sup>66</sup>

Both parallax and stereopsis, however, tend to fix objects in space by superimposing two points of view, maintaining the integrity of a single perspective. In “Circe,” Stephen contemplates his match, “Lucifer,” with which he fails to light a cigarette that Bloom soon after throws into a grate: “The eye sees all flat. (*He draws the match away. It goes out.*) Brain thinks. Near: far” (*U* 560). This recalls a moment in “Proteus” when Stephen extends the experiment to its conclusion: “Hold hard. Coloured on a flat: yes, that’s right. Flat I see, then think distance, near, far, flat I see, east, back. Ah, see now. Falls back suddenly, frozen in stereoscope” (*U* 48). After orienting himself with one eye open through several points of focus, Stephen opens both eyes and refers to the “frozen” quality of images seen in perspective through the stereoscope, invented by Charles Wheatstone. In his 1838 essay, “Contributions to the Physiology of Vision,” Wheatstone confirmed the operation of binocular vision in our anatomy with the invention of the stereoscope. When viewed by an observer, it produces an image of an object in “relief,” or three dimensions, by projecting a two-dimensional image of that object to the left and right eye from two points of view, measured by the distance between the two eyes of the observer.<sup>67</sup> Figure 3 pictures two such images—cubes in this case—similarly to how Stephen might see the match, “Lucifer.” The observer of the stereoscope combines image *b*, seen from the left eye’s point of view, and image *a*, seen from the right, to produce a single image of a three dimensional cube in perspective. This visual trick, Wheatstone claims, extends logically from the “established laws of perspective”: “the same object in relief is, when viewed by a different eye, seen from two points of sight at a distance from each other equal to the line joining the two eyes.”<sup>68</sup>

Joyce recognizes Charles Wheatstone, who invented the concertina, the stereoscope, and the “Enchanted lyre,” as an optical and acoustic scientist whose inventions experiment with sensory transmission. Although Wheatstone lurks behind *Ulysses* through stereopsis, Joyce, in *Finnegan’s Wake*, primarily associates him with his acoustic inventions. There are a number of such references to Wheatstone in the *Wake*. Anna Livia Plurabelle expresses a fondness for Wheatstone’s “concertina,” an instrument similar to the melodeon mentioned in Bloom’s plea to the courtroom (*FW* 28). But, most importantly, Joyce associates Wheatstone with inventions that convert sense data into sound: “‘Tis optophone which ontophanes. List! Wheatstone’s magic lyer” (*FW* 13). The magic lyer, properly called the “Enchanted Lyre,” or “Acoucryptophone,” refers to one of

Wheatstone's public demonstrations on the transmission of sound. Bowers describes it as follows: "Wheatstone enjoyed making up new words. Acoucryptophone is derived from Greek and means literally 'hearing a hidden sound'. The visitor could see a device in the form of a large ancient lyre suspended from the ceiling... The lyre was suspended by a brass wire which passed through the ceiling and connected with the sound boards of instruments in a room above, where unseen players performed on the harp, piano, and dulcimer" (*CW* 8). In *Finnegan's Wake*, both the optophone and the acoucryptophone ("Wheatstone's magic lyer") mediate something hidden, whether text or sound, into a sound displaced from its hidden source. The optophone (not invented by Wheatstone) uses a photoelectric sensor to scan text and to produce electrical signals that it converts into audible tones for people with visual impairment (*OED*). Wheatstone's acoucryptophone is both lyre and liar. The homophonous transition from the named optophone to the unnamed acoucry-ptophone suggests that both instruments share an etymological root and that both "ontophane." Parsing Joyce's neologism helps here. Combing onto-, relating to being, and -phane, the optical quality expressed through the medium specified in the prefix, ontophane refers to the conversion of a prior source of data into one that "appears" (*OED*). The sensory conjunction across which sight and sound transmit makes possible for Joyce the parallel technologies translating between sight and sound: the optophone manifests text to the person with visual impairment through audio; the acoucryptophone appears to play itself by transmitting the sounds of a hidden instrument in another room; the audience manifests Bloom's transformation in the hidden source of the stage direction's "virtual image" by the access it has to the theatrical space. The audience, then, becomes akin to a technology of sensory transmission.<sup>69</sup>

Joyce emphasizes the limitations of this single perspective in "Circe," where Stephen reproduces only in part the experiment with stereopsis he concludes in "Proteus." All three experiments—Wheatstone's and Stephen's in "Proteus" and "Circe"—proceed similarly: Stephen observes an object (a match in one case) against the external world with one eye closed, forcing him to differentiate the distance of objects both "near" and "far" by comparing relative experiences of visual distance. Without binocular vision, Stephen's single "eye sees all flat." Where Stephen stops in "Circe," he continues in "Proteus": he opens both eyes and notes the experience of depth as the moment the background falls behind the nearest object, a production of perspective that leaves the background fixed and "frozen in stereoscope." As a single observer, Stephen establishes that stereopsis foregrounds the object against an apparently frozen background, which, in turn, provides the visual context for that object. Perspective distinguishes between spaces based on distance: each visual plane—foreground, object, background—makes possible the occlusion of the space behind it. In the "Proteus" experiment, Joyce represents the process by which Stephen differentiates between the fore- and background through interior monologue, locking the reader into Stephen's point of view, which, in a chapter demonstrating the metamorphoses made possible by interiority, observes the fixity of perspective.

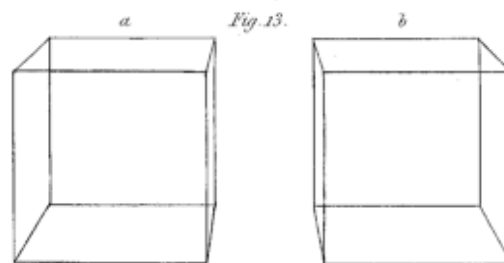


Figure 3: The figure is scaled to appear to be seven inches before the observer.

Parallax and stereopsis, then, seem inadequate to the account of audience and theatrical space above let alone to the insistent movement among and between objects and transformations throughout the episode. If we are to understand how “Circe’s” audience sees, then, we need to understand how individual spectatorship, exemplified above by Stephen’s experiment with stereopsis, will transform once it is an aggregate of diverse spectators within hearing range of “Circe’s” action or once it is attributed to a reader. If parallax produces perspective by combining two points of view, then the audience fractures this vision even further into a field of multiple points of vision in tension with a more general vector field of vision. Even further, “Circe’s” stalls spill out onto the urban space of Nighttown, expressing continuity with the space absent to focalized attention and expanding the possible arrangements of Bloom and Stephen’s spectators beyond the stalls of the theater. This transforms spectatorship into a function whose parameters now range in magnitude and possible orientation. In order to describe this newly robust spectatorship, we turn to another passage in Wheatstone’s “Contributions to the Physiology of Vision,” in which he cites Leonardo da Vinci as the scientific predecessor who had come closest to observing binocular vision. Wheatstone quotes at length from *Trattato della Pittura*, and modifies the illustration that da Vinci uses to demonstrate his experiment (Figure 4). The resulting schematic expresses an isomorphic structure to the geometry of parallax and stereopsis, but focuses, instead, on the properties of light and shadow (cf. Figure 2):

This great artist and ingenious philosopher observes, ‘that a painting, though conducted with the greatest art and finished to the last perfection, both with regard to its contours, its lights, its shadows and its colours, can never show a relieve equal to that of the natural objects, unless these be viewed at a distance with a single eye. For,’ says he, ‘if an object C [Figure 4] be viewed by a single eye at A, all objects in the space behind it, included as it were in a shadow E C F cast by a candle at A, are invisible to the eye at A; but when the other eye at B is opened, part of these objects become visible to it; those only being hid from both eyes that are included, as it were, in the double shadow C D, cast by two lights at A and B, and terminated in D, the angular space E D G beyond D being always visible to both eyes. And the hidden space C D is so much the shorter, as the object C is smaller and nearer to the eyes. *Thus the object C seen with both eyes becomes, as it were, transparent, according to the usual definition of a transparent thing; namely, that which hides nothing beyond it.* But this cannot happen when an object, whose breadth is bigger than that of the pupil, is viewed by a single eye. The truth of this observation is therefore evident, because a painted figure intercepts all the space behind its apparent place, so as to preclude the eyes from the sight of every part of the imaginary ground behind it.’<sup>70</sup>

In the process of describing the chiaroscuro effects of binocular vision, da Vinci proposes a definition of transparency that differs from its modern usage. For da Vinci, transparency is not solely a property of the object. Instead, it is a function of the spectator implied by points A and B. By analogizing each eye to a light source, he describes the visible limits of one and two points of vision seen by the individual spectator. The penumbra (HCG and FCE), obscured when seen from only a single point of vision, is the area made visible by binocular vision. The area concealed by the object reduces considerably when seeing from two points of vision: the umbra (CD) is the blind spot behind the object shared by both eyes. Seeing an object from a single position reveals one aspect of the object just as much as it conceals another and occludes our vision beyond the object. Seeing an object from two positions expands our field of vision, but it also circumscribes a shared blind spot in the area behind the object, the back of which is also invisible to the observer.

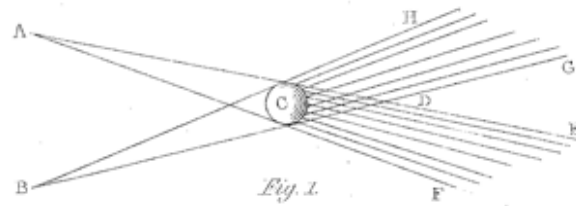


Figure 4: Wheatstone modifies Leonardo da Vinci's original illustration in the *Trattato della Pittura*.

Da Vinci's experimental apparatus, however, implies that the observer could orient his position and distance from an object so as to minimize the object's umbra, allowing the object to approach more closely the condition of the "transparent." This produces a surprising result. Typically transparency is a property of the object (e.g. a lens is transparent because it transmits light), but da Vinci transforms it into a function of the observer's position relative to an object, his angle of vision and distance from the object. If we extend da Vinci's experimental apparatus to the theater, we could populate the space around the object with additional spectators in the fashion of the stalls in theatrical architecture. This multiplication would amount to the difference between a single spectator (implied by points A and B) and the cumulative vision of an aggregate audience. If we take this even further, as Joyce does in "Circe," and dilate the theatrical space to include the urban space of Nighttown, then the positions of individual spectators in the crowd as Bloom and Stephen pass through different space create provisional spectatorial orientations around the object capable of different optical effects. The result would make it possible to imagine object C as entirely transparent to the assembled audience's vision, if, like an optical diagram, we consider the sight lines collectively. Everything behind the object—its visual context, background, or scene—would be manifest, revealing the object in relation to its fullest background as if we always know the answer when Mrs. Breen, or anyone, asks Bloom, "What are you hiding behind your back?" (U 444).

The audience expresses, to use Hayman's language, several "faces," or points of view, but a "single impulse."<sup>71</sup> This impulse is best described as a single narrative voice, which binds several points of view into a single speaking body that then produces a linear perspective. The passage ends with an instrument with "four acting stops," the "organtoned melodeon Britannia." A stop controls a set of reeds that produces a range of pitches, and, in organs, these stops are almost exclusively named for the instrument the organ-sound imitates.<sup>72</sup> A melodeon with four stops, then, could play as if it had several different voicings. The narrative mediation is homologous to the melodeon's mediation. Just as the narration gathers multiple voices through an increasingly shared spectatorial position, so does the melodeon concretize the mimesis of several voices articulating the same tune in unison. The voice, which began as Bloom and ended as the voice of the audience exponentially magnified to Imperial Britannia, loses its ability to articulate any individual position that it homogenizes. This is already apparent in the dubiously stereotypical domestic and pastoral scenes described in the stage direction. If, at first, the figure of Britannia standing in for a diversity of individuals gives us pause, recall that Bloom "mumbles incoherently," effectively ending his speech. Incoherence, then, describes this final figure of empire as an image that unifies a collective into a single body speaking a single voice that ultimately cannot cohere. Absorbing both the suppressed violence of homogenization and the dependence on exchange value, Britannia, both empire and squeezebox, is a "sacrifice, greatest bargain ever." The passage illustrates how quickly giving a single voice to a heterogeneous collective can lead to a bad totality and it puts this process on trial. Yet, that voice comprises the narrator's voice, Bloom's voice, and the virtual images, which appear to originate from the collective audience present to Bloom's speech and which imitate the narrative

voice of the stage direction. Ending in general laughter and incoherent mumbling, it is the image of a massively capacious audience that is ultimately too diverse, too aggregate, too incongruous, too internally contradictory to unify into a single body that speaks a single voice without breaking into ridicule and incoherence. An analogous claim can be made for vision. Joyce demonstrates that the law of perspective cannot govern the vision of the audience, for it requires a spatial perception no longer compatible or coherent within the logic of a single spectator or point of view. The audience, taken in the abstract, defines space non-linearly through audio, vision, and movement.

In the stage direction of Bloom's courtroom speech, Joyce literalizes what Dorrit Cohn calls free indirect discourse, or "narrated monologue."<sup>73</sup> Bloom's speech is announced as a monologue, and, yet, it is explicitly given in third-person. Rather than the seamless transition between narrator and character, which Cohn claims "casts a peculiarly penumbral light on the figural consciousness," Joyce's literalization of free indirect discourse's dramatic aspect makes its processes utterly transparent.<sup>74</sup> The passage itself maximizes the pluralizing effect of free indirect discourse on voice. Bloom speaks. The narrator writes. The courtroom audience focalizes Bloom's speech. When Bloom's speech disconnects from the first-person pronoun, it has the effect of locating the speech in the voice of the focalizing audience, which is confirmed by the pivot from Bloom into the ever-expanding visual perspective that his speech narrates. We could even claim that the speech strains to give voice to the absent whole of social totality implied by the continuity of "Circe's" space. This is the most complete figuration of "Circe's" audience, where authority seems dispersed into the spectating crowd and infuses it with the possibility for a collective and individual vision at once. Understanding this passage as an intermedial system, allows us to imagine both its total effect and the interrelation of its individual components.

This constructs a concept of transparency different from the representation of a character's consciousness. The metaphor of optical morphology generates a model for second-order observation—watching others watch a scene. If we were simply to treat the stage directions as a lens through which we uncover a character's consciousness, then we might only partially consider the lens, and pay primary attention to the content of the thoughts that lens reveals. Transparency, in this case, would be the metaphor for peering into the once obscured interior of the character's consciousness. But this chapter's analysis of "Circe's" audience suggests a more complex analogy to the production and analysis of the optical diagram (see Figure 1); for both model a second-order observation of the figural audience observing another actor, both of whom are oriented with respect to each other in space. The reader, then, sees this orientation at a further remove. This replicates the process of diagramming in ray optics. And it alters how one conceives of transparency. Rather than using the transparency of the lens to see into the mind of the character, we, first, develop the sense of space within the system and, second, understand the properties of the lens itself. In "Circe," the former is analogous to the theatrical space and the latter is the audience. We understand this new transparency to function for the audience and not the reader, even if our analysis discovers it as a spectatorial effect. The audience, then, sees Bloom and Stephen in the totality of their context as if it were entirely present within a theatrical space only partially represent in the stage directions. This produces a theatrical apparatus by which "Circe" makes any object appear or proffers any cause for transformation as if Bloom and Stephen were extended within a space of representation. The script of this episode, however, can only represent this through the rapid sequence of metamorphoses that constitute the episodes trajectory.

### *Conclusion*

I'll conclude by situating Joyce in a tradition of writers who underwrite novelistic form with an optical paradigm of theatrical space. Another optical structure could be found in the critical

preface to Henry James' *The Awkward Age*, where the architecture of the novel implies a variation on the spectatorial apparatus in Leonardo da Vinci's demonstration of visual depth:

I drew on a sheet of paper [...] the neat figure of a circle consisting of a number of small rounds disposed at equal distance about a central object. The central object was my situation, my subject in itself, to which the thing would owe its title, and the small rounds represented so many distinct lamps, as I liked to call them, the function of each of which would to be to light with all due intensity one of its aspects [...] Each of my "lamps" would be the light of a single "social occasion" in the history and intercourse of the characters concerned, and would bring out to the full the latent colour of the scene in question and cause it to illustrate, to the last drop, its bearing on my theme [...] The beauty of the conception was in this approximation of the respective divisions of my form to the successive Acts of a Play.<sup>75</sup>

James' figure is a metaphor for an underlying optical morphology of narrative situation, one that cannot be apprehended immediately in its totality. Instead, like the "successive Acts of a Play," the discourse of *The Awkward Age* requires a series of social occasions that can only reveal parts of the story. J. Hillis Miller describes each lamp as being comprised "of what a hovering, invisible spectator might have seen or heard, especially heard."<sup>76</sup> A description of Mr. Mitchett exemplifies how James evokes this spectator: "Mr. Mitchett had so little intrinsic appearance that an observer would have felt indebted, as an aid to memory, to the rare prominence of his colourless eyes and the positive attention drawn to his chin by the precipitation of its retreat from detection."<sup>77</sup> Even in James' description here, the fact of occlusion, the "retreat from detection," most strikes the observer's faculties of detection. Yet the observer like James' lamp is only imagined; she is posited without being given a position within the diegetic space of the novel. The spectator remains singular and James only establishes the supposition of a general and abstract spectator, one who unifies the diversity of the audience into a singular sensing body. Without solving the problem of representing a diverse social collectivity, as Joyce attempts, James' diverse lamps only reveals some aspect of the object, conceals another, and creates umbral effects, concealing and revealing, too, portions of the situation's background. And, unlike Henry James, whose drawing here only remains a metaphor, a "neat figure," or beautiful "conception," Joyce embeds the spatial coordinates of these strange optical orientations within the text as systems for establishing audience, theatrical space, and the ideal modes of collective perception made possible thereby.

## Chapter 3:

### Gertrude Stein, A Play and A Landscape are a “Disposition of Relations and Positions”

#### 1. Introduction:

In *A Transatlantic Interview* (1946), only seven months before her death, Gertrude Stein retrospectively articulated the principle of composition that informed all of her writing, as early as “Melanctha” in *Three Lives*, written 1905-6, and as late as *The Mother of Us All*, composed over the years 1945-46.<sup>78</sup> These forty years of composition, Stein claims, she owes to Flaubert and to Cézanne’s landscapes. She iterates the idea of Cézanne’s composition—“one thing is as important as another thing”—in several guises, transforming this egalitarian principle as it touches upon the “composition,” the “human being,” and the “landscape”:

Everything I have done has been influenced by Flaubert and Cézanne, and this gave me a new feeling about composition. Up to that time composition had consisted of a central idea, to which everything else was an accompaniment and separate but was not an end in itself, and Cezanne conceived the idea that in composition one thing was as important as another thing. Each part is as important as the whole, and that impressed me enormously [...] You see I tried to convey the idea of each part of a composition being as important as the whole. It was the first time in any language that anyone used that idea of composition in literature [...] After all, to me one human being is as important as another human being, and you might say that the landscape has the same values, a blade of grass has the same value as a tree.<sup>79</sup>

Stein insists on equality: “one thing was as important as another thing,” “each part is as important as the whole,” “one human being is as important as another human being.” And when Stein, at the end, equates the value of a blade of grass and a tree, she transitions from the sense of value as importance (“as important as”) to value in painting (the amount of white or black added to a color) by grounding the degree of both on a more fundamental concept of value as quantity or number.<sup>80</sup> But equivalence, here, does not mean that one could exchange or substitute the grass for the tree. Rather, equivalence signifies that Stein does not subordinate either the tree or the grass to the other. They occupy space and attention equally, combining together rather than contradicting or substituting each other. In painting, the value of colors in a landscape, especially where two touch, would draw the spectator’s eye to the darker over the lighter color. If Cézanne’s landscapes depict a blade of grass and a tree with the same value, then the eye would be drawn to one as equally as the other, allowing the grass and tree to relate, independent of comparison, through the additive contiguity of space.<sup>81</sup> Stein’s theory of composition, then, expresses equal value not through a simple equivalence, but, rather, through the equivalence of their absolute difference.<sup>82</sup> “It was all so nearly alike,” Stein remarks in “Composition as Explanation,” “it must be different and it is different.”<sup>83</sup> Unlike the “central idea” that dominated Stein’s earlier habits of composition, subordinating and subsuming everything in the composition to it, Cézanne’s landscapes offer a model whereby each element in the landscape relates to the others through the atmosphere of simultaneity rather than super- or subordination.<sup>84</sup> Every part of a landscape, to use Stein’s language above, is an “end in itself.”

Stein's idea of landscape, however, is not borrowed wholly from Cézanne nor from Flaubert for that matter. According to Stein's earlier narrative in *Lectures in America* (1934), at least, the concept of the landscape emerges only after the work on her plays from 1913-1921.<sup>85</sup> These plays attract comparatively little critical attention from scholars, as well as avant-garde theater producers, who laud Stein's later "landscape" plays and operas.<sup>86</sup> Only three plays and one portrait from *Geography and Plays* (1922) constituted 22 of 219 total theater productions from 1934 to 1981.<sup>87</sup> Although she appears to suggest that "landscape" always inhered in her work as a fully articulated concept, it only emerged gradually through her writing in *Geography and Plays* (1922), through the landscape in *Lucy Church Amiably* (1923), and through her "landscape" plays in *Operas and Plays* (1932), among other writings. *A Transatlantic Interview* and *Lectures in America* therefore present two competing claims for the genealogy of the landscape in Stein's writing. The former contends that landscape emerged as early as the writing of "Melacantha" (1909), whereas *Lectures in America* (1934) claims the landscape only occurred to her in 1922, when she began to spend her summers in Bilignin and after she wrote *Geography and Plays*. In its first inchoate form, the "landscape" arose specifically through the play: "I found that since the landscape was the thing, a play was a thing and I went on writing plays a great many plays. The landscape at Bilignin so completely made a play that I wrote quantities of plays."<sup>88</sup> If the "landscape" emerges as the final principle of Stein's composition in 1946, then it only develops through Stein's plays. That is, Stein developed the landscape as her compositional principle only through the mutual influence of Stein's intense period of writing plays for *Geography and Plays*, and her reflections on the difficulties posed to the theatrical audience.

This chapter focuses on *Geography and Plays*, which collates works that Stein composed from 1908-1920, and locates the plays between two bookends of her generic and compositional theory: the portrait and the landscape. At the beginning of this chronology is Stein's early portrait period, a period dominated by the critical vocabulary of the "continuous present," or, to borrow Wendy Steiner's phrase, "a series of self-contained nows."<sup>89</sup> At the later end of this chronology are Stein's "landscape" plays, best represented by the volume *Operas and Plays* (1932), which contains the celebrated *Four Saints in Three Acts* (1927).<sup>90</sup> Rather than examine the landscape plays in depth, however, I'll take as a theoretical end point Stein's description of the landscape in 1946 as a theory of compositional practice in the passage that begins this chapter—"the idea of each part of a composition being as important as the whole." Bearing this idea in mind, this chapter will conclude with a reading of Stein's landscape-portrait "Cezanne," written at the beginning of her landscape period in 1923. Within *Geography and Plays*, I locate the essential transition from the spectatorship of the portraits to the more inclusive audience of the plays in a sequence of texts (all written in 1913): "Scenes. Actions and Disposition of Relations and Positions" (1913), "One. Carl Van Vechten" (1913), "A Portrait of One. Harry Phelan Gibb" (1913) only briefly, and "A Curtain Raiser" (1913).<sup>91</sup> Placed between these two bookends—portraits and landscapes—*Geography and Plays*, I argue, fills in the theoretical gap between the "continuous present" and the "landscape" with the theatrical audience, elaborating on a continuous thought from the portrait to Stein's early plays and the landscape that constitutes Stein's theory of spectatorship.

First, I show how Stein's theory of the "continuous present" creates an unified duration from the seemingly differentiated "series of self-contained nows" because it is a spectator's sustained mode of experience—a continuous attention to the present that nevertheless dissects it into self-contained units. The effect of this attention is Stein's "entity." Famously, the portraiture involved "talking and listening." The production of the portrait relied heavily therefore on the will of the spectator-composer to impose a "central idea," or mode of reception, the compositional wrangling of which Stein derogates. In 1913, Stein claims she tried to "live in looking," and thereby produced the highly experimental work in *Tender Buttons*. By the time Stein begins writing plays, then, her reflections on the "bother" of being a member of the theatrical audience lead her to incorporate all

the simultaneous perceptions of both spectator and audience in the composition. Stein, then, turns to the play to disperse the compositional consciousness into elements of the text as if it were seen and composed by a theatrical audience viewing the simultaneous and changing constellation of perception in the theater. I say “as if it were a theatrical audience,” but I also mean that she discovers this possible dispersion through her experience with the theatrical audience, whether she reports it in *Lectures in America* or recalls it in her experience of *The Rite of Spring* just before she wrote “One Carl Van Vechten.” Ultimately, the radical equivalence seen in *A Transatlantic Interview*—among human being, grass, and tree—stems from Stein’s experiments with representing the vision of the collective theatrical audience without subordinating the individual spectator’s point of view to the audience as a whole.

As we would expect, spectatorship changes from the “one” “talking and listening” in the portraits to the many spectators in the theatrical audience. Stein’s turn to plays quite simply increases the number of figures present: “the only way to express this thing each one being that one and there being a number of them knowing each other was in a play.” Rather than subordinating other spectators to Stein’s spectatorship and her desire to produce a portrait of “one” by insisting on “one and one and one and one,” she begins to include “a number of them knowing each other” in the form of the play. Given the equality between all units of the landscape and, perhaps, the theater, the “number of them” includes both actors and spectators, allowing the vision of each to contribute to the composition as though a field of spectators within the text. By passively being represented and, yet, actively representing its vision, each point of view contributes to the play, bracketing the division between stage and audience, and their mutual dependence. This simultaneity of spectators echoes the “bother” of theatrical spectatorship—the open field of perception and emotion experienced in the theater—that Stein identifies in her lectures: “could I see and hear and feel at the same time and did I.”

The transition from the portrait to this simultaneous spectatorship occurs most distinctly in “One Carl Van Vechten,” a portrait that systematically produces the prepositional space when “one,” “two,” “four,” and “five” points of view bear on the portrait. Along the way, a definition of “scene” emerges that will recall the title of another text in *Geography and Plays*, “Scenes. Actions and Disposition of Relations and Positions.” It turns away from the temporal mode in the portraits to a suspended tableau that accumulates details and figures. Since “scene” includes both stage and audience, then “Actions” and “Disposition of Relations and Positions” produce the logic of both the actor and spectator—the spectator’s *position* determines the literal point from which they view and the *disposition of relations* constitutes the field of relations produced by that view. Crucially for Stein, spectatorship is as much an “action” and it is a “disposition of relations and positions,” effectively allowing both to lend the capacity to produce the scene in which they dwell.

But if “Carl van Vechten” accomplishes the transition, we can better understand how and why if we then consider “A Curtain Raiser,” which produces the entire theater within the space of a page and presents it in numbers divorced from sequence and adjectives unattributed to nouns. This personnel of “dispositions of relations and position” demonstrates how numbers like adjectives are transferrable across objects. But once number and adjective are divorced from the objects they modify or quantify, they obtain the aspect of Stein’s “entity” by which each number and adjective becomes self-contained, or what she sometimes calls an “end in itself.” While these entities stand alone as a spatial configuration on the page without a discernible sequence, they preserve the activity of relating, but only as a capacity uniquely belonging to that number or adjective. The unattributed numbers and adjectives therefore become Steinian entities, but ones that open a vector field of relating outside the bounds of narrative, sequence, perspective, or the “central idea” flouted by Stein. In other words, the numbers and unattributed adjectives become a kind of spectator within the textual theater that they occupy, shaping how the composition crystallizes and sublimates

connections. As the most abstract theater audience Stein represents, “A Curtain Raiser” successfully disperses narrative into the multiplicity of aggregate spectatorships through the idea of audience. And it is out of this success that Stein reaches the principle of equality between part, every other part, and whole that constitutes the “landscape.” Each entity expresses variegated positions and dispositions of relations as a result of its spectatorship. These spectatorships enact, too, the fantasy of diffusing Stein’s singular intentional vision into the audience, which manifests inverted in Stein’s compositions as a grammar of spectatorship. Ultimately, this chapter argues that theatrical spectatorship enabled Stein to turn from people to environments. By modeling the landscape in “Cezanne” and “A Curtain Raiser” on the aggregate of audience experience, Stein reinvents the audience as a utopian paradigm for the radical equality of collective perceiving, in which each seer contributes equally to textual composition without exerting the dominion of individual perspective.

## 2. *Deciding about Knowing in the Theater*

Before landscape took over the definition of her plays, Stein’s plays confronted what she would term the “bother” of theatrical spectatorship—the difficulty of attending to the vast network of simultaneous perceptions across the stage and audience. Stein begins her lecture “Plays” by stating a dynamic she observes to be constitutive of the individual spectator in the theater: “Your sensation as one in the audience in relation to the play played before you your sensation I say your emotion concerning that play is always either behind or ahead of the play at which you are looking and to which you are listening. So your emotion as a member of the audience is never going on at the same time as the action of the play.”<sup>92</sup> Posing a fundamental break from the “continuous present” of the portraits, the theater disrupts the synchronization of experience and its correlative emotions in the present tense, distracting our attention and confusing temporalities. The theater instead objectifies the experience of the present. It is not, as in the “continuous present” of the portraits, an intentional mode of spectatorship that constructs the experience of time in a uniform way. Instead, it is the objectification of that present time as something alien to the spectator. Theater appears as a temporal obligation to Stein, a time to chase or follow in order to align it with one’s experience. Far from an irresolvable problem, however, Stein calls this difference in time between the temporality of the stage and the emotional time of the audience “not a contradiction but a combination” (LA 93). That is, like the logic of the landscape, the different emotional times appear as equally viable possibilities at once, eschewing that antinomic opposition that produces the desire for resolution. For Stein, this generates an “impulse to solve the problems” of spectatorship as it manifests through emotion and time, seeing and hearing.<sup>93</sup> She describes this open question as a “bother,” and the experience of this as becoming “fairly consciously troubled,” yet it opens an inquiry into how theatrical spectatorship constructs, in part, Stein’s composition of plays, which will have lasting effects for her landscapes.<sup>94</sup>

Theater spectatorship proposes, in part, an inversion of the spectatorship involved in portraiture: the theater externalizes the “continuous present” experienced by the portrait spectator, into the unfolding present familiar to the theatrical spectator; the complicated network of people and things that interfere with theater and make it possible supplants the isolated “entity,” produced by the “continuous present.” In the lecture “Plays,” Stein identifies four aspects of the theater that trouble Stein’s refined theory of portrait spectatorship, interposing delays among the spectator’s awareness of how sight and sound, emotion and time all relate: (1) the action on stage is syncopated with the emotion of a spectator in the audience; (2) the architecture of the theater, the distraction of other spectators, the curtain, the many elements of the *mise-en-scène* all accumulate to create “stumbling blocks” to our emotion’s attempt to keep its paces with that of the stage; (3) the

magnitude of objects in variegated relationships disrupts any simple sequence of appearances suggested by the “continuous present” in favor of simultaneity; (4) the spectator’s familiarity with the play, or its characters, is limited to that produced within its run-time. In short, all the constructive and destructive contingencies of live performance, now independent from its script, that variously affect the audience contribute to the “bother” of understanding spectatorship. On one hand, the theater emerges as a promising candidate for the objective correlative of the “continuous present.” Yet, while the action on stage unfolds in the present, it is not controlled as the “continuous present”; conventional time and its analogs—sequence, plot, action, linear progression—all suggest causal or, at least, contingent connections between each moment. On the other hand, it bombards or distracts the theatrical spectator from Stein’s intention to produce each element of a composition as an “entity.” But, at the same time, it offers a seductive infrastructure for the spectatorship and spectacle of a highly unstable multiplicity unmoored from any authoritative or homogenizing perspective. All these characteristics of spectatorship draw Stein to the theater as a model of composition, and, yet, they will induce her to exert compositional control over aspects of it for her own plays.

For Stein, the disjunction between the actions on stage, the sights and sounds received by the spectator, and that spectator’s emotions emerge from the temporality of the theater—differentiated between stage and audience, the theater makes time unfamiliar, or out of sync, to both. This first aspect of spectatorship returns us to Stein’s constitutive observation of the audience: “the scene as depicted on stage is more often than not one might say it is almost always in syncopated time in relation to the emotion of anybody in the audience” (*LA* 93). If the “present continuous”—what Steiner called a series of “self contained nows”—offers a space in which the spectator can “begin again and again,” then the theater spectator surrenders any such control to the present progressive actions of the stage—a linear sequence of actions or plot imposed on the audience. The syncopation between audience and stage, then, supposes that the rhythm of dramatic beats does not match the emotional investment of the spectator. Far from negative, syncopation transforms into the “nervousness” of the spectator experiencing the unfamiliar time of the theater, an experience less “violent,” in Stein’s words, than jazz, which made syncopation an “end in itself.”<sup>95</sup>

Beyond simply being unfamiliar with the theater’s bifurcated temporality, Stein’s theater spectator encounters accident and contingency, removing the experience from her control. The architecture constitutive of the theater underscores this remove, literally placing a veil between audience and stage. Complementing the syncopation of time and emotion, the architecture of the theater reinforces delays in spectator experience. Stein cites as examples both the separation produced by the curtain and the possibility that other audience members “will be or will not be in the way when the curtain goes up.”<sup>96</sup> She also describes the other aspects of the theater that “consciously troubled” her as “things over which one stumbles” when viewing a play, overwhelming her attention:

Then gradually there came the beginning of really realizing the great difficulty of having my emotion accompany the scene and then moreover I became fairly consciously troubled by the things over which one stumbles over which one stumbled to such an extent that the time of one’s emotion in relation to the scene was always interrupted. The things over which one stumbled and there it was a matter both of seeing and of hearing were clothes, voices, what they the actors said, how they were dressed and how that related itself to their moving around. Then the bother of never being able to begin over again because before it had commenced it was over, and at no time had you been ready, either to commence or to be over. Then I began to vaguely wonder whether I could see and hear at the same time and which helped or interfered with the other and which helped or interfered with the

thing on the stage having been over before it really commenced. Could I see and hear and feel at the same time and did I.

I began to be a good deal troubled by all these things, the more emotion I felt while at the theatre the more troubled I became by all these things.

And then I was relieved (*LA* 114-5).

Stein describes the experience of being overwhelmed by theatrical stimulation, which the minute attention to every “self-contained now” in her portraiture only exacerbated. Disregarding for the moment how the spectator relates to the stage, we can understand how this overwhelming experience produces a bother about how the objects, people, and scenery relate on stage: how does the *mise-en-scène* and the speech of the actors relate, for example, to how they move on stage? Again, the mass of data supplied by the theater to the spectator produces an experience of unfamiliarity—there is too much and it is too new to parse. Stein suggests that beginning again, if it were possible in the theater, would allow the spectator to familiarize herself with the matrix of signifiers. Stein traces the parabola of experiences in the theater: from the syncopation created by the distracting confluence of details in the *mise-en-scène*, to the state of questioning produced by this syncopation, to the intensification of that state and its emotions, and, at its apex, relief. To complicate matters, this parabola is magnificently oscillatory in its local movements as Stein chases the emotional movements on stage through their development. The effect on Stein’s spectator is the instability that can only be satisfied with relief—the artificial upper bound of spectatorship when the play simply stops.

This last question—“could I see and hear and feel at the same time and did I”—refines the observation about the simultaneous relations among the *mise-en-scène* and actors by bringing this spectatorship into relief against the sequence of the “continuous present.” The theater makes this question more urgent: the simultaneous presence of all the “things over which one stumbles” creates a complex network among the multiple sets of stimuli and stumbling blocks as they relate to the total emotion of the play as it is performed on stage and experienced by the spectator. The theater is not a simple sequence of individual stimuli through time; the simultaneity afforded by the space of the theater, both on stage and in the audience, disrupts this irregular “tempo.” The intensity of Stein’s experience is both parabolic—her questions intensify with her emotion and then she is relieved—and unstable—the theater bombards her with visual and auditory stimuli, as well as personal feeling, such that her emotional experience becomes atmospheric instead of taking a particular shape. The analogy to cinema, which Stein makes twice in her lectures, will help us understand the difficulty that the theater poses to the “continuous present.” Stein connects portraiture to cinema through an analogy to the technology of film in “Portraits and Repetition”: “I was doing what the cinema was doing, I was making a continuous succession of the statement of what that person was until I had not many things but one thing” (*LA* 177). If Stein attempted to place the theater she describes above within something like the “continuous present,” then the relationships would become even more difficult to recognize. The theater replaces the neat sequence of frames (a simplified experience of film from the point of view of the film audience) with a continuous sequence of many simultaneous moving elements in three-dimensional space. As we’ll see, Stein’s solution to this difficulty will be to replace the “continuous present” of the portraits with the suspended tableaux of the past, or “what happened.”

The fourth experience evokes the terms of William James’ distinction between “knowledge about” and “knowledge of acquaintance,” the latter of which involves the familiarity brought about by repeatedly coming into contact with the “presence” of a person or thing.<sup>97</sup> Thinking about how the spectator relates to characters on stage, Stein makes recourse to describing an analogous experience: she describes the process of becoming familiar with real people, a process that depends

on the gradual accumulation of impressions much like Stein's description of cinema and portraiture. People in real life become familiar by a "prolonged familiarity" and "a progressive familiarity that makes one acquainted."<sup>98</sup> Although "prolonged" might tempt us to equate this with the "prolonged present," Stein more closely means, here, the repetition involved in the "continuous present."<sup>99</sup> After repeatedly encountering the presence of a person or thing, divorced from the causal relations that might produce a "knowledge about," we become acquainted with that person or thing. This "prolonged" or "progressive" familiarity is completely absent from the theater: "It is not possible in the theatre to produce familiarity which is the essence of acquaintance because, in the first place when the actors are there they are there and they are there right away" (*LA* 109). This reinforces the conclusions in Stein's previous observations about theatrical spectatorship: however constituted by the present tense and the presence of actors and *mise-en-scène*, the theater, for Stein, produces the experience of unfamiliarity in time, space, perception, emotion and knowledge. This unfamiliarity of the theater constitutes Stein's spectator, and frames the spectator's experience as the bleeding edge of knowing with respect to our emotion, time and perception. Stein signals this "inevitable problem of anybody living in the composition of the present time" by continuously framing questions about spectatorship.<sup>100</sup>

This "inevitable problem" becomes constitutive of the experience of theatrical spectatorship in Stein's theory. Critics often portray Stein's attitude toward the theater and the uncomfortable feelings it produces, especially in her lecture "Plays," as an anti-theatrical one.<sup>101</sup> The "bother," for critics, is definitively a "problem with plays," to which Stein must discover a "solution," rather than a problem prompted by the experience of spectatorship.<sup>102</sup> When Stein does pose this issue as a problem with a solution, she represents it as a problem produced by the experience of spectatorship, rather than a problem with the values of the theater:

I may say that as a matter of fact the thing which has induced a person like myself to constantly think about the theatre from the standpoint of sight and sound and its relation to emotion and time, rather than in relation to story and action is the same as you may say general form of conception as the inevitable experiments made by the cinema although the method of doing so has naturally nothing to do with the other [...] The fact remains that there is the same impulse to solve the problem of time in relation to emotion and the relation of the scene to the emotion of the audience in the one case as in the other. There is the same impulse to solve the problems of the relation of seeing and hearing in one case as in the other.

It is in short the inevitable problem of anybody living in the composition of the present time, that is living as we are now living as we have it and now do live in it.<sup>103</sup>

Here, Stein frames the problem of aesthetic distance between spectator and spectacle as the inability of the audience to synchronize its emotional experience with the spectacle. She calls this experience "nervousness," a second-order state that distracts one's emotional attention from the present tense toward a past or future because of the fundamental unfamiliarity experienced by the spectator.<sup>104</sup> The aesthetic distance objectified in the theater induces this nervousness.<sup>105</sup> After its final act, theater produces a feeling of "relief," rather than "completion," a feeling that speaks to theater's ability to induce an uncomfortable state of questioning during its performance that can only be relieved and never resolved.<sup>106</sup> Stein's "impulse," here, is toward the scientific; the question about the relation between emotion and time, sight and sound arises in the theater as well as the cinema, and, to Stein, these are the inevitable issues facing her historical moment as it is being shaped in "the composition of the present time." Stein's lecture continuously enacts the yet-to-be-determined quality of the theater when she repeatedly asks questions about the relationship between hearing, seeing and

feeling, rather than definitively stating answers. The difficulty, then, would be the theater's inability to fulfill the injunction of the continuous present to begin again and again. Essential to the experience of the spectator is the suspension of the ability to definitively know the answers to the questions raised by the theater.

Rather than attempt an incontrovertible answer, Stein allows this indefinite state of questioning to endure in her writing because it, like maintaining aesthetic distance, defies the judgment that aims to furnish fully determined knowledge or knowledge synchronous with its object. And this experience is inherent to spectatorship. Instead of providing the audience with an account of the theatrical spectator's emotion, even after promising to "tell it as so," Stein poses one such series of questions:

What happens on the stage and how and how does one feel about it. That is the thing to know, to know and to tell it as so.

Is the thing seen or the thing heard the thing that makes most of its impression upon you at the theatre. How much has the hearing to do with it and little. Does the thing heard replace the thing seen. Does it help or does it interfere with it [...]

I am posing all these questions to you because of course in writing, all these things are things that are really most entirely really exciting. But of course yes.

And in asking a question one is not answering but one is as one may say deciding about knowing. Knowing is what you know and in asking these questions although there is no one who answers these questions there is in them that there is knowledge. Knowledge is what you know.<sup>107</sup>

By posing questions, Stein writes, one takes a reflexive orientation toward knowledge. A question sets the hypothetical direction of inquiry, as well as the content of the knowledge sought after. If asking a question is "deciding about knowing," then it shifts the emphasis to an act of will or intention rather than a matter of knowledge. Stein enfolds the unfamiliarity of the theater produced by aesthetic distance into plaits of her intention. That is, she decides the vector field of knowledge, giving shape to possible answers but ultimately deciding that knowledge remains open to the way it will be known. Elsewhere in the lecture, she relates knowing to the past tense: "in order to know one must always go back."<sup>108</sup> This, of course, is impossible in the theater: "But the stage is different, it is not real and yet it is not within your control as the memory of an exciting thing is or the reading of an exciting book."<sup>109</sup> One cannot begin again and again as in the "continuous present," signaling the resistance of theater to Stein's will as a spectator-composer. Yet, Stein's plays will do exactly this (begin again and again) by making the initial focus out of which they spring the "essence of what happened." On one hand, this knowledge could represent one of a growing familiarity; we go back because over the prolonged experience of our lives we have become familiar with a question or a way of knowing. On the other, it is only knowledge if, according to *Narration* (1935), going back brings it to immediate present existence: "How do you know anything, well you know anything as complete knowledge as having it completely in you at the moment you have it. That is what knowledge is, and essentially therefore knowledge is not succession but an immediate existing."<sup>110</sup> This sheds light on the tautology above: "knowledge is what you know." The tautology, one compositional tactic Stein uses regularly, posits a statement that requires no referent outside of the present moment and offers none. As a result, although Stein's plays trouble her idea of knowledge most when she says one must always go back, her statement that "knowledge is what you know" firmly situates knowledge in the experience of it in the present moment of immediate existing, excluding reference to anything absent. The experience of the stage, then, is as an unfolding without familiarity, but within linear time, in which the spectator cannot become familiar fast enough to

become acquainted with network of things occurring on stage and in the audience. Thus, for Stein, theater is experienced, however much as a “bother” or “trouble,” as a disjunction between emotion, sight, sound, and also knowledge, all of which calls our attention to one part of experience at a time, leaving us wondering whether our experience matches the stage. More than anything else in her lecture, Stein formulates her experience of theatrical spectatorship as the “deciding about knowing” formulated above, which she transforms into an intention to shape the spectatorship of the theater into her plays that are a tableau of the past.

The questions of the theater are shaped, in part, by what Stein views as the spectator’s passive, or purely receptive, experience, rather than her active participation in shaping an event. The bother of the theater produces a state of “nervousness” about our emotion in relation to time, precipitated by the inability to feel the fictional world on stage as an actual participant in it. In order to differentiate between reality and theater, Stein describes the result of a lived dramatic scene (“an exciting scene”) and a live theatrical scene (the “theater”). The real scene produces “completion,” whereas the theater, as we have seen, produces “relief.” During the former, our emotion would unfold and color the event as we experienced the scene—our emotions would align with the emotion of the event and contribute to its dénouement. The theater, by contrast, becomes an experience of aesthetic distance, characterized by the theater’s unfamiliarity and our inability to shape the events viewed. “Real,” then, does not mean reality in a conventional sense; instead, it means that the real scene is one that we shape through our experience of it, and this includes spectatorship if its end is composition.

Stein redefines the “real” scene, “an exciting scene,” into one that involves familiarity, or people with whom we are acquainted or familiar. It therefore acts as a counterpoise to the theater’s unfamiliarity. The excitement that Stein attributes to the real scene stems from the characters’ transformation from familiar selves into characters entirely new and present. Completion is the end of this process, when the familiar characters accomplish the action of the scene and metamorphose, perhaps, because of it. Stein describes this process through the familiar actor and the “stranger”:

In a real scene, naturally in a real scene, you either have already very well known all the actors in the real scene of which you are one, or you have not. More generally you have than you have not, but and this is the element of excitement in an exciting scene...what makes it exciting is that insofar as the scene is exciting they the actors in the scene including yourself might just as well have been strangers because they all act talk and feel differently from the way you have expected them to act feel or talk. And this that they feel act and talk including yourself differently from the way you would have thought that they would act feel and talk makes the scene an exciting scene and makes the climax of this scene which is a real scene a climax of completion and not a climax of relief...it would be practically impossible in the real scene to have a really exciting scene if they were all strangers because generally speaking it is the contradiction between the way you know the people you know including yourself act and the way they are acting or feeling or talking that makes of any scene that is an exciting scene an exciting scene (105-6).

There are two “element[s] of excitement” in a real scene: (1) the transformation of the participants from what we knew about them through past familiarity to how they present themselves in the moment of action and (2) the “contradiction” between our idea of a character and how they present themselves acting, talking and feeling. This is a difference between the past tense (e.g. “you have already very well known all the actors”) and the present progressive tense (e.g. “the way they are acting or feeling or talking”). “Completion,” according to Stein, is the apotheosis of a real scene. Actors complete an action in a scene, implying sequence and linear progression. Stein imagines a real

scene to unfold in the following way: the real scene allows us to participate in various ways, our participation shapes how others participate, each participant's emotions orient themselves toward the act, a climax occurs, the act is completed, and our participation in the scene is over. On the other hand, the "relief" Stein feels at the end of the theater is the artificial end of an unresolved present. The distance that Stein suggests between "they the actors" and "yourself" in the strange locution "they the actors in the scene including yourself," places the "you" among both the audience and the actors. Such participation absorbs these scenes not as an unfamiliar experience, but, instead, as something that belongs to our experience, molding as well as witnessing it. Most often, how we see is secondary to how we participate in a scene, if only because how we register other people's emotions by looking, listening, and talking informs how we then interact with others in the real scene. These interactions, in turn, produce reciprocal actions, feelings, and speech in the other characters that contribute holistically to the completion of the scene's action. Implicitly for Stein, this produces one key difference between participating in a real scene and seeing a scene acted in the theater: our acting, talking and feeling dynamically *interact* with others present to the scene, transforming their own participation and lending the scene its overall trajectory toward completion. During that participation, our emotions unfold as inseparable from our speech and action, perfectly matching our emotions to the scene towards which they contribute. In other words, participation in a scene means that our emotions could never be ahead or behind a scene because our emotions become a part of that scene, implying an internalization of experience that produces knowledge without the intervention of narrative. Familiarity only develops through active spectatorship, that is, when "being existing that is talking and listening," as well as looking and feeling, "is action."

We, as the audience, are subjected to the theatrical scene and cannot contribute to it. The stage presents itself as outside us—outside our inner experience and memory. Following the implicit logic of this last formulation, Stein explicitly expresses the operations of the theater as an objectification of emotion: "all of [the theatre] making an outside inside existence for me, not so real as books, which were all inside me, but so real that it the theatre made me real outside of me which up to that time I never had been in my emotion" (*LA* 114). The objective circumstances of the theater—the architecture, its public spectatorship, the audience's lack of control, and its objectification of emotion—produce the separation of the audience from the stage, as well as the audience from their "outside inside existence." Theater endlessly defers completion because it disallows the audience to participate in the scene, control it, or internalize it as its own experience. The theater, then, prevents the audience from completing anything through its own agency, whether it is an action or a transformation, induced by the scene, from familiar to new.

Syncopated emotion between audience and stage, the distraction afforded by the theater and its audience, the difficulty of knowing how sight and sound interact with time and emotion, and the inability to generate familiarity—all these experiences elaborate, complicate, or formulate Stein's experience of the theater as one being composed in her contemporary moment. In large part, Stein's questions about the theater derive from the passivity of conventional spectatorship and the sheer number of internal and external perceptions available. As a first response, Stein would convert the "continuous present" into the "essence of what happened" in order to produce a past tense tableau capacious enough to include the vast network of inter-relating phenomena produced by the theater. In order to bridge the aesthetic distance and, yet, preserve the openness of the theater, Stein would collapse the function of the spectator and actor into one and absorb its effects within textual composition. Spectatorship becomes the prism for dispersing a singular perspective into a multiplicity of points of view—the audience—which represents the live abundance of the theater's complex relations. It is precisely this experience of multiplying points of view—the inside existence meets its "outside inside existence" meets an overwhelming *mise-en-scène* meets the audience—that Stein borrows from the theater. In other words, Stein's plays exchange, in other words, prescience

for presence: not the distant observation of a spectator, but the composition of someone who is present to the action and participates in it. Stein now includes the spectator-composer within the tableaux of the plays as an actor among more conventional actors. With this expanded idea of action, spectators and actors alike contribute to the play from their point of view. This, as we shall see, is the inevitable result of the transition that Stein makes from composing portraits to plays.

### 3. *Being Spectating is Action*

Stein preserves the equivalence between spectatorship and action from the “continuous present” of her portraits. But she soon realizes how the “continuous present” can only privilege a single person’s experience, for it is a uniform mode of experiencing time. Unfortunately, Stein can only achieve this uniformity by tightly controlling who spectates and how she spectates. Once she introduces “looking” into the spectatorship involved in *Tender Buttons*, and confronts the complexity of lived experience in the theater, she abandons the portrait for the inclusivity of the play.

While the portraits successfully demonstrate the difference between each moment through successively smaller changes, they nevertheless subordinate these differences to a highly refined and uniform experience of time. We can see the near-uniformity of the portraits in an excerpt from “Manguin A Painter” (1909), a portrait that operates under Stein’s simplified experience of the time:

To finish a thing so that any one can see that that thing is a finished thing is what some one, who is coming to be one finishing something so that any one sees that the thing is a finished thing and who has not been finishing anything so that any one can see that it is a finished thing, is certain is something.

This one is one who could come to be one finishing a thing so that any one can see that it is a finished thing. This one *was* one hoping to be expecting to be one who could be one finishing a thing so that any one sees it to be a finished thing.

[...]

He knew that making a thing a finished thing is something. He knew that he was coming to being one who was making a thing a finished thing. He knew that making a thing a finished thing is something. He made anything he was making, a finished thing. He finished everything he was making. He finished each thing he was making so that any one could see that it was a finished thing. He completely knew that making a finished thing is something. He knew this thing. He knew this thing. He knew he was certain of this thing.<sup>111</sup>

Manguin, the portrait suggests, is obsessed with a seemingly continuous, and therefore deferred, “finishing” that transforms into the hope for finishing, and, eventually, actually finishing. Although “finishing” is a present continuous verb, it reaches to both the future and past. The portrait pivots at its approximate center where it changes from present to past tense, from “this one is one who could come to be one finishing a thing” to “this one *was* one hoping to be expecting to be one who could be one finishing a thing.” The transition between these two lines, combined with the persistence of the past tense after the introduction of “was,” suggests that Manguin finished a thing in the moment between “is” and “was.” The final paragraph of the portrait transforms “finishing” from the present continuous verb to an adjective, indicating that it is no longer Manguin’s activity, but, instead, an attribute of a “finished thing.” The sequencing of statements, which is exemplary of the “continuous present,” can easily be seen over the course of the portrait of Manguin. But the whole impression of the portrait relies not only on the obsessive desire for finishing, but also the fact of the painting having been finished. Manguin’s apparent obsession with the continuous labor of finishing a painting lends the impression that the relationship between specific utterances in the portrait and the

whole process of completion operates under the filmic illusion of time passing—many discontinuous frames appear to present a whole moving image. For Manguin’s portrait, this moving image comes to fruition most legibly in the change of tense. More generally, however, the portrait relies on a uniform mode of experience, imposed by Stein onto her experience or the “sitter’s.”

Stein’s mode of early portraiture simplifies spectatorship by excluding all perceptual registers except “talking and listening.” This simplification concentrated Stein’s attention on the present primarily through the ephemerality of sound. One cannot hear what is not audible and one cannot actually speak in the past or future, even if we can conceive of it. Steiner describes Stein’s “talking and listening” concisely as “transmission-reception”:

Though this statement seems to imply a relation of the self talking to the self listening, the fact that the two activities are absolutely simultaneous removes the possibility of memory and even relationality. The movement is a simultaneous transmission-reception existing only in the moment and constantly in flux. Moreover it is completely self-contained.<sup>112</sup>

This simultaneous “transmission-reception” functions like an immediately creative receptivity that aligns the act of composition with a highly simplified mode of reception, namely *audience* without spectatorship. The unique capacity of simultaneous “talking and listening” to focus an audience on the present induced Stein to give it pride of place not only as an idealized reception, but also as an equivalent to existing: “being existing that is listening and talking is action.”<sup>113</sup> This equation is a remarkable revision of audience, for it renders transmission-reception synonymous with existing, giving the object of the verbal portrait an equivalent function to the composer-spectator. And, more importantly, it equates transmission-reception to action. This equivalence implies that Stein’s “talking and listening,” and its implied audience, during portraiture is an action equivalent to that of the sitter. The result cannot be overemphasized: the object of the portrait and the portraitist assume reciprocal roles as spectators and actors at once. This important idea persists in the composition of plays and landscapes, even if audience (transmission-reception) transforms into a fuller, more integrated reception at the cost of transmission.

Excluding spectatorship from portraiture and bracketing the presence of multiple subjects allowed Stein to live in the present tense more easily. Stein experimented with producing a subject’s portrait as he or she existed in the present without making recourse to other experiences of time evoked by the mind, whether a memory of the past or an imagination of the future. “The making of a portrait,” Stein lectures, “is as they are existing and as they are existing has nothing to do with remembering any one or anything” (*LA* 175). Stein’s use of the present continuous verb, “are existing,” is no coincidence here. It provides a grammatical correlative for the “continuous present,” which Donald Sutherland defines more directly than Stein ever did:

But a *continuous present*, I think I meant, would be one in which each unit, even if identical or nearly with the previous one, is still, in its present, a completely self-contained thing, as when you say one and one, the second one is a completely present existence in itself, and does not depend, as two does or three does, on a preceding one or two. One and one and one and one. In this case, each one is completely separate assertion of a complete entity and is not prolonged from the preceding unit or units, but comes as a new thing, and each one arrives in a continuous present, that is, the present is so continuous it does not allow any retrospect or expectation, as when you say, in such counting, two, you look backward to one and forward to three, or even more.<sup>114</sup>

Sutherland, here, imagines the “one” to be an indivisible quantity of the “continuous present” in the composition. Since “one” does not specify a unit (whether seconds, years, minutes, etc.), the experience of time as such disappears in the composition, transforming into a sequence of “ones,” which do not necessarily denote time let alone a uniform measurement of time. The “continuous present,” then, is the objectification of the present tense that occurs in the composition for which the qualities of being “self-contained” and a “completely present existence in itself” are the textual effects. Each unit of composition is new, and, yet, the “continuous present” links each moment in a discontinuous sequence.

Given the unit of composition’s “newness,” its “self-contained” quality, and its “existence in itself,” the term “continuous present” misleads Stein’s readers because it can be either continuous or discontinuous depending on one’s point of view. It is *discontinuous* in so far as each unit is separate, new and self-contained, however identical it seems to be to the unit before it. It produces discontinuous units. However, it is *continuous* in so far as each unit shares the quality of presence in common. To Sutherland, the “continuous present” assumes continuity as a quality of the present—“the present is so continuous it does not allow any retrospect or expectation.” *The present is continuous for someone*, who could retrospect or expect. The “continuous present” therefore implies a spectator who perceives the present moment *in a continuous way* such that this mode arises from it—the present is “so continuous” *for someone* who experiences it. This differs from the point of view that might represent an object’s continuity—e.g. my copy of *Portraits and Prayers* is the same copy it was a moment ago. In this last example, the object maintains, at the very least, a material identity. It is therefore the perceiver and not the object makes the present continuous. Although the “continuous present” does not interpret counting “one and one and one and one” with the passage of uniform units of time, its continuity can only make theoretical sense by positing a spectator who experiences time (the present) in a way consistent with the “continuous present.” That tautology expresses something of the difficulty defining the “continuous present” because it is a willed mode of perception, rather than an *a priori* of experience. The spectator imposes the continuous present on experience in order to emphasize the uniqueness of all appearances in any given present moment. Understanding Stein’s portraits as entities produced by spectatorship in the “continuous present,” we can now see that the relationship between part and whole of the portrait registers through a temporal mediation.

Stein recognizes the difficulty with introducing perceptual simultaneity when she introduces “looking” in *Tender Buttons* (1913). Although looking also occurs in the present, it introduces resemblances and therefore relations between objects throughout the visual field. Resemblance also introduces remembering and thereby introduces the past into the present, splitting attention away from the present moment. Resemblance multiplies if we imagine how Stein imports looking into the composition of the play, a Steinian genre dependent on spectatorship and audience. The move from the portrait to the play might be seen as a movement from dialogue to *mise-en-scène*. If Stein were a distanced theater spectator, then resemblances would abound through the visual field as “stumbling blocks”—costumes, scenery, other audience members, etc. This poses a natural challenge to Stein’s portrait audience: to preserve one point of view among the landscape of other points of view if Stein equally values all positions.

After discussing the inclusion of “looking” in *Tender Buttons*, Stein also draws a link between her portraits and plays through their refusal to tell stories: “But in portraits I had tried to tell what each one is without telling stories and now in my early plays I tried to tell what happened without telling stories so that the essence of what happened would be like the essence of the portraits, what made what happened be what it was.”<sup>115</sup> The refusal to tell stories in the plays is the conceptual remainder of “entity” developed in the portraits, a similar drive to repeat compositional elements without plot or causal links between them. It is another refusal of relation, but this time of causal

relations. Despite this refusal, whether of narrative or otherwise, Stein apparently relinquishes the hold of the “continuous present” and “entity” on her creative output. Telling what each one *is* in the portraits undergoes a necessary shift toward the past tense of “what happened.” As we saw in “Manguin A Painter,” Stein does not exclude the past tense from her compositions, even her portraits, but, here, the emphasis on “what happened” can only mean the end of the “continuous present.” If “what happened” organizes the object of the play, and whatever happened included “there being a number of them knowing each other,” then the play threatens the persistence of entity, too. The move from portraits, “to tell what each one is without telling stories,” to the plays, “to tell what happened without telling stories,” transforms the “one” into a simple past tense event (taken simply as “what happened”),<sup>116</sup> but it also transforms the one into the many and the variegated relations and individuals subsumed under the single rubric of “what happened.”

Then this process of spectatorship “bothered” Stein, striking her as an overly simplified model for what occurred in reality: “after all I listened and talked but that was not all I did in knowing at any present time when I was stating anything what anything was. I was looking, and that could not be entirely left out.”<sup>117</sup> Stein’s shift in emphasis to “looking,” as she lectures in “Portraits and Repetition,” resulted in *Tender Buttons* (1913), a work in which she “was trying to live in looking... [she] wished to reduce to its minimum listening and talking.”<sup>118</sup> Stein’s focus shifts noticeably to single objects, food, and rooms, rather than people, provoking the analogy of her writing in *Tender Buttons* to still life. Having included “looking” along with “talking and listening” as a receptive action, the movement toward plays appeared as one necessary result of including all three activities in the audience’s act of composition. Yet, this inclusive spectatorship begot another “bother”: beyond recognizing that spectating involves more than meets the ears and mouth (as with the act of looking), Stein became bothered by the sheer complexity of perceptual experience, which prevented full awareness of it at any present moment.

The plays, then, constituted a theoretical break from Stein’s relationship to time in portraiture; no longer do the plays relate part to part to whole through the illusion of temporality. So, too, do the plays threaten the consistency of “entity” by organizing “what happened” through a number of “ones” knowing each other, and by positing relations between individuals even if that way of relating (“knowing”) is not particularly dramatic. This helps to explain Stein’s shift to the “landscape” as a figure for plays: the organization of multiple individuals who all know each other within the rubric of “what happened” lends itself to a synchronous spatial composition that resembles the disposition of elements and features of a landscape. “Knowing,” then, gives us the disposition of those elements of the play towards one another, and, combined with Stein’s equation of spectatorship and action, it offers the inchoate form of the landscape whose egalitarian perspective emerges from the multiple points of view contained in the composition itself.

#### 4. *Plays on Number, A Portrait of One*

“One Carl Van Vechten” and “A Portrait of One Harry Phelan Gibb” inaugurate the shift from portraits to plays in *Geography and Plays*. They appear approximately half-way through the volume in the following order: “One Carl Van Vechten,” “A Portrait of One Harry Phelan Gibb,” “A Curtain Raiser,” “Ladies’s Voices” and “What Happened A Five Act Play.” I include Van Vechten’s and Gibb’s portrait in this series because their titles explicitly mark the transition from “one” to more than one, signaling the difference in number between the plays and portraits. The effect of the transition is heightened by the sequence of numbers (“Six./ Twenty,” etc.) that comprise the entire scene of “A Curtain Raiser.” But the ordering is nevertheless idiosyncratic because Gibb’s portrait comes after Van Vechten’s, and, yet, Gibb’s is firmly placed in the tradition

of Stein's early phase of portraiture.<sup>119</sup> In contrast, "One Carl Van Vechten" demonstrates a more mature style. Critics, tending to compensate for Stein's difficulty by schematizing her work, categorize it as either a portrait or play. In her appendix, "A List of Stein's Portraits," Steiner places it early in Stein's second phase portraiture, whereas Ryan's appendix, "Chronological List of Plays" claims it is Stein's second play after "What Happened."<sup>120</sup> The series of texts in *Geography and Plays* recalls Stein's "natural way to count," but it only imperfectly moves from Stein's portraits to plays by placing the more conventional portrait after the contested portrait-play. This order might be cleared up by the dual aspect of "one," characterizing at once "one's" uniqueness and its status as an element in a series.<sup>121</sup> Despite the differences between the portraits, or because of them, the sequence's transition from Van Vechten's portrait to Gibb's highlights the former's innovation on the old portraits, and complements the connection between "One Carl Van Vechten" and the plays that follow "A Portrait of One Harry Phelan Gibb." Given its position in *Geography and Plays* and its hybrid generic qualities, "One Carl Van Vechten," I propose, actively inhabits the transition between portrait and play by enacting within the text the successive transformations of spectatorship as it incorporates a plurality of points of view.

The first meeting between Stein and Carl Van Vechten, as told by *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, supports the relevance of spectatorship to Stein's portrait of him.<sup>122</sup> The story goes that Stein and Van Vechten shared a box seat and caught sight of each other for the first time during the second performance of *The Rite of Spring* in Paris. Stein was impressed by Van Vechten's "soft evening shirt with the tiniest pleats all over the front of it."<sup>123</sup> Like the distraction of the theater Stein discusses in her lectures, the performance seemed to Stein's Alice a veritable riot resulting in her being unable to hear the music: "The performance began [...] No sooner did the music begin and the dancing that they began to hiss. The defenders began to applaud [...] The dancing was very fine and that we could see although our attention was constantly distracted by a man in the box next to us flourishing his cane, and finally in a violent altercation with an enthusiast in the box next to him, his cane came down and smashed the opera hat that the other had just put on in defiance."<sup>124</sup> You can hear Stein asking, "Could I see and hear and feel at the same time and did I."<sup>125</sup> The performance, no longer simply a dance, transformed into a spectacle in which the audience actively participated, whether it was for or against *The Rite of Spring*, and actively embodied several opinions, responses, and points of view. Later that evening, Stein's Alice reports that Stein "did a portrait of the unknown called a Portrait of One," referring to Carl Van Vechten.<sup>126</sup> The portrait absorbs the exact problems prompted by the experience of spectatorship that Stein lectures about in "Plays," and reproduces the instability of Alice and Stein's spectatorial experience in its increasing points of view.

"One Carl Van Vechten" relies on a series of prepositional and spatial relationships, denoted by the repetition of the numbers, "one," "two," "four," and "five" in increasing order. Each number seems to denote the number of figures in the particular moment rendered by Stein's descriptive language. And each number develops a consistent prepositional figure. In contrast with "Harry Phelan Gibb," Carl Van Vechten's "one" almost completely lacks verbs, and "in" dominates its presentation:

One.

In the ample checked fur in the back and in the house, in the by next cloth and inner, in the chest, in mean wind.

One.

In the best most silk and water much, in the best most silk.

One.

In the best might last and wind that. In the best might last and wind in the best might last

Ages, ages, all what sat.

One.

In the gold presently, in the gold presently unsuddenly and decapsized and  
dewalking.

In the gold coming in (*GP* 199).

The insistence on “in” in each section signals how interiors constitute the “one,” not least because the two words relate aurally, each differing only by a single phoneme (/ɪn/ and /wən/). The prepositional phrases designate positions in limited spaces (“in the back” and “in the house”), in layers of clothing or textile (“in the by next cloth” and “in the best most silk”), and in circumstances (“in the...water much” and “in mean wind”). The portrait suggests the possibility for a vaguely hidden corporeal interior that only just teeters into a suggestion of the psychological: “inner, in the chest.” “Inner” describes a location as an inner space (as an adjective). Or it could be a neologism: a comparative of the preposition “in.” Like a set of Russian dolls, the series of prepositional phrases nest an interior “more in” than the fur and cloth of the previous phrases. Given these layered interiors, the “one” of “One Carl Van Vechten” is adorned with luxurious materials: “in ample checked fur,” “in the by next cloth,” “in the best most silk,” “in the best might last,” “in the gold presently,” “in the gold coming in” (*GP* 199). Although “in” cannot specify location beyond indicating in what something is contained or limited—“in” here only identifies location by a series of containers, but it cannot say where in the container it is—the “in” here functions to identify a position in a contained space, while, perhaps, indicating clothing and condition. Like the entity characteristic of portraiture’s “one,” the “in” cannot specify precise location through relation, except by what contains it.

Stein contrasts in’s quality of containment to parts of speech indicating proximity, suggesting how “one” can only express proximate or contiguous relations through sequence rather than its spatial characteristics. In effect, “in” defines a space, but it doesn’t develop position within a space. Stein introduces sequence, like the “continuous present,” to indicate how a “one,” defined as Stein’s “entity,” might nevertheless produce relationships to differing “ones.” This occurs on the scale of structure—the repetition of “One”—and locally within sections. The introduction of the adjective, “next,” which is also frequently a preposition, and “by” in “in by next cloth” defines a container of space but they augment “in” by determining a relative location within that interior. The “next cloth” implies a sequence of cloths, recalling how Stein counts by ones, and “by” indicates the space contiguous to it. The “and” separates strings of prepositional “in” phrases and creates the sense of several places without excluding one from containing the other: “In the ample checked fur in the back,” “in the house, in the by next cloth,” and “inner, in the chest, in mean wind.” The effect strangely decouples position from space; we know what spaces are available, but we cannot know where in that space the “in” designates. Just as when we speak of a theater audience in general, we could identify the general space it occupies, but not a position within that space, or where an individual might view, for example, *The Rite of Spring*. As a result, the position of “one,” defining a general space rather than precise location, forecloses a determinate position from which one relates, or, to invoke spectatorship, a determinate “point of view.” Although I borrow, here, from Lubbock and James’s account of point of view—in the former, a subject who knows and one who speaks, and, in the latter, one who knows—Stein redefines this within a context closer to the theater audience: the point of view is the actual position from which one spectates, and, therefore, spectatorship’s point of view can only expressed through a relative spatial relation.<sup>127</sup> There is no where to look but in, inside, or “inner.” Each “one” represents an individual element of the portrait that requires sequence to determine relative changes just as individual frames of film produce the

illusion of continuous movement. The repetition of “one,” and its associated moment of portraiture echoes Stein’s dedication to Carl Van Vechten in *Portraits and Prayers*: “To Carl who knows what a portrait is because he makes and is them.” Stein’s film analogy helps identify the units of “one” here tracking Van Vechten’s seeming approach until he arrives “in the gold coming in.”<sup>128</sup> In this first section, “One Carl Van Vechten” follows the sequence of Stein’s “continuous present” and its effect, “entity,” unable to define locations within space. The result exposes the limitation of “one” and interiors by their inability to express relation, yet it elaborates a *space* within which “one” could view another “one” without generating that relation.

If “one” establishes a general space, then the repetition of “two” in the second phase of “One Carl Van Vechten” expresses a relative *position* and *disposition*, arranging elements by how they come into contact with others within space. “Touching” decidedly dominates the portrayal of Van Vechten in the “Two” section. Stein pairs the adjectival and a participial forms of “touching”: as an adjective, it colors the atmosphere of the “two” with sentiment, and also describes the tactile state of two objects, shapes, places, spaces, etc. when they touch; as a participle, it places the “two” into active contact, i.e. something touching something. Both combine to evoke “touching” as a way to put two things into relation or reference without establishing necessary or causal connections.<sup>129</sup> Stein writes:

Two.

Two.

A touching white shining sash and a touching white green undercoat and a touching white colored orange and a touching piece of elastic. A touching piece of elastic suddenly.

A touching white inlined ruddy hurry, a touching research in all may day. A touching research is an over show.

A touching expartition is in an example of work, a touching beat is in the best way.

A touching box is in a coach seat so that a touching box is on a coach seat so a touching box is on a coach seat, a touching box is on a coat seat, a touching box is on a coach seat.

A touching box is on the touching so helping held.

Two.

Any left in the touch is a scene, a scene. Any left in is left somehow.

“A touching expartition” and “a touching box” suggest the key to understanding “touching” as the interaction of the geometric planes of an object. Expartition is Stein’s neologism, but it has a precedent in the legal jargon, “ex-parte,” which, as an adjective, describes a statement made on one side of an issue, or one perspective.<sup>130</sup> This provides a compositional correlative to the audience’s bifurcated and riotous uproar during *The Rite of Spring*, especially at its May 29<sup>th</sup> premier, but also at the June 2<sup>nd</sup> performance attended by Stein and Van Vechten. We could imagine the jeers and applause of the audience expressing two points of view based on its reaction to the ballet. This division occurs within the repetition of “one’s” prepositional space, denoted by “in,” generating the relative points of view within the interior space of “one”: “A touching expartition is *in* an example of work.” Both sides of the expartition touch inside of the “work,” dividing and comprising the whole, and, yet, giving two points of view inside the example.

“Expartition,” then, proffers the formal operation of the “Two” section, expressing either point of view, or, more simply, a relation, of two touching compositional elements. The “touching box” demonstrates the analytical potential of this spatial division of relation, demarcated by the plane or line at which two objects touch. The repetition of “a touching box” six times in its relation

to “a coach seat,” “a coat seat,” etc. imitates the six faces that bound a box and confirms the formal process of “One Carl Van Vechten” as the analytical separation of individual planes through which Stein frames a point of view. In this case, the planes produced by two (real or imaginary) surfaces touching bound a box or cube and explicitly evoke Cubism. Similar to Cubist form, the “touching box” dismantles Renaissance perspective by distributing it over simultaneous points of view organized by the spatial coordinates of six intersecting planes. The plane that bounds one side of the box divides “two” spaces on either side of it, and at the same time draws them together through touch. In its final iteration, “a touching box is on the touching so helping held.” Touching here becomes a state of the box, a state which determines the box as an entity that touches many other entities. Stein distinguishes this state of touching from the action of touching (the second occurrence in the sentence), which implies the reciprocal force of a side separate from the box (perhaps the seat), one that holds the box (“so helping held”). “Expartition” and the “touching box” indicates a relation between two elements that establishes “touching,” first, as the geometrical coincidence between two elements (two points are coincident if they are the same point), and, second, as the relation that one elements brings to bear on the other through their coincidental contact. While the first quality establishes the shared *position* of the two sides (their indifferent quality), the second quality emphasizes the difference between two *dispositions* brought into contact by chance. This second is the negation of position, or that which orients the thing toward something other than its current position, and Stein holds both together in “combination.”

If the “one” section establishes successive interior spaces, then “two” allows for the determination of position through its disposition relative to other positions contained by the space of the “one.” “Two” opens up relation, whereas “one” opens a space. This insight helps us understand the Steinian “scene” of the “Two” section: “Any left in the touch is a scene, a scene. Any left in is left somehow.” Stein posits the prepositional space of “one,” the interior, as “in the touch,” at the same time that “scene” departs from it by indicating direction (“Any left”) within that space. The direction of “left” immediately evokes the possibility for position and disposition—being to the left establishes one’s position relative to some other position established by their “touching.”<sup>131</sup> Yet, Stein plays on “left” as a past tense verb immediately after this definition of scene: “Any left in is left somehow.” “Left” combines the relative spatial coordinates of left and right, and the temporality required for something to have been left behind. In this last phrase, “left” is an action denoting a change of state from one moment in time to the next; it “is left *somehow*” and the manner (“somehow”) further characterizes this action, albeit abstractly. By now, Stein’s grammar has produced a coherent definition of “scene,” produced by the interior space of “one” and the relation of “two”: scenes consist of the *actions* (the “somehow” of a change of state over time) of multiple elements (at least two) within a whole space, in which the *positions* of the elements and their *disposition* towards each other can be determined through their relations to one another. This is consistent with Stein’s definitional title, “Scenes. Actions and Disposition of Relations and Positions,” which appears earlier in *Geography and Plays*.<sup>132</sup> In the scene, the disposition of relations and the position abstract away from viewing the qualities of point of view into a generalized form of spectatorship. Both position and its negation, *disposition*, are required to establish a spectatorial point of view: the position defines the location of the point of view relative to other positions within a whole space, whereas the disposition orients the point of view away from its position, manifesting its relations to other positions, object, elements, or entities in its view. By enacting this shift from “one” to “two,” “One Carl Van Vechten” realizes the differences in spectatorship that produce the portrait—entity, or self-relation in sequence—to the play—the past tense tableau of actions, the disposition of relations, and positions.

When “One Carl Van Vechten” jumps past three to the “Four” section, the spectatorship of four degrees normalizes representation most closely to theater spectatorship, the delineating figures

by the space of “between” them and their action in the present continuous, the verb tense most suited to live action. This spectatorship can be best imagined by asking, “How does the audience see?” We know that each audience member sees differently and from different positions and dispositions of relations. But when we ask our question about the audience, all of those diverse visions become a unitary body. Therefore, our question asks how this unitary body sees. Stein’s literary representation, it would seem, answers by turning to the objects of vision. And her “Four” section occurs against the background of a coach trip involving a team of horses that appears intermittently in key phrases throughout the portrait—“none in stable,” “a water house,” “coach seat,” “four between and hacking,” and “a saddle”—but never materializes as a coherent image. The “four” section ends the portrait:

Four.

Four.

Four between, four between and hacking. Four between and hacking.

Five.

Four between and a saddle, a kind of dim judge and a great big so colored

dog.

“Between” could be defined in the following two ways, first, literally, and, second, figuratively: “The proper word expressing the local relation of a point to two other points in opposite directions from it” and “Used of a similar relation to two immaterial objects figured as lying in space; or of a relation, figured as spatial, to two material objects.”<sup>133</sup> As we can see, “between” figures a spatial relationship of three points, and, taken figuratively, we could imagine that “between” could establish the spatial relationship of many more points in space. In “Four,” the “horses” are defined by this somewhat atmospheric space between them and their characteristic action, “hacking.” Notably, the present continuous verb is mimetic of the verb tense of live action, and adds to the theatrical quality of the spectatorship in “Four.” If in answering the question “How does the audience see?” we turn to the objects of vision, then the object of “Four” seems most accurately a kind of theater, in which the spectator cannot easily determine spatial relationships and the performers act in the present continuous tense. “Five” offers little innovation to four, except the addition of other figures, i.e. the driver (“a kind of dim judge”) and his “so colored dog.” Stein writes “between” to be more atmospheric than “in” and “touching” by repeating the prepositional phrase “four between” four times, only minimally modifying it through its iterations. “Between” becomes the space organized by the relations between three or more figures. If indeed the final image in “Five” is the broader image of a driver and his dog leading a team of four hack horses, then the interiority of “in” and the spatial relationship of “touching” becomes impossible to include for all figures presented. Stein presents “between” as a more capacious, but less determinate prepositional space, organized by the actions, disposition of relations, and positions of more than two figures and the amorphous space between them by which they are all simultaneously coincident.

Contested as either a portrait or a play by critics, “One Carl Van Vechten,” as I have demonstrated, comfortably inhabits the transition between the two, at once inaugurating Stein’s logic of scenic spectatorship by which Stein forms the actions, disposition of relations, and positions of multiple figures within the composition. Recall the salient characteristics of the play from Stein’s lectures. The first expresses the play’s inclusion of multiple figures, and how they relate through Stein’s specialized “knowing”: “the only way to express this thing each one being that one and there being a number of them knowing each other was in a play.” The second indicates how the play is a static tableau of “what happened”: “I tried to tell what happened without telling stories so that the essence of what happened would be like the essence of the portraits, what made what happened be what it was.” And the third, which relates more properly to the theater, helps us understand how

“One Carl Van Vechten” internalizes the riotous distraction of the *Théâtre de Champs-Élysées* for the spectator during second performance of *The Rite of Spring*: “to constantly think about the theatre from the standpoint of sight and sound and its relation to emotion and time, rather than in relation to story and action.” As “One Carl Van Vechten” moves from “one” to “two” to “four” and “five,” it includes more figures, produces the elements of Steinian scene, and makes those very formal operations the objectification of the confusion of the theater. “One,” the number of the portrait, presents whole interior spaces, possibly nesting within each other but never establishing positions relative to each other. “Two,” defined by how two entities come together in the coincident state of touching, presents the relative *positions* and *dispositions*. The “touching box” emphasizes how “Two” refines “One”: the bounded interior space produced in “one” becomes the relations produced by the interaction of “two” touching sides at the limits of “one.” “Four” presents the case when the points of view of multiple figures influence position and disposition in ways difficult to determine analytically; instead, “Four” relies on presenting the negative space “between” them. In this last, the scene acquires its final component, “actions,” most clearly. In “Five,” Stein continues to rely on the negative space generated by “four,” but shows that greater number of figures must matter through their presence. That is, the “dim judge” and the “great big so colored dog” bear the weight of significance as nouns with less determinate relations, either through prepositions or verbs. “One Carl Van Vechten” begins as a portrait, but it enacts the necessary transformation of portrait to play as it incorporates the logic of spectatorship that produces the scene—that is, the logic of both actor and spectator as they express multiple positions within whole spaces and dispositions of relations to each other, as well as the actions that solidify both. Or, put another way, Stein’s compositional principle, whether portrait, scene, play or landscape, transforms according to how each genre incorporates both its actors and *spectators* as elements of the composition. The scene, play and landscape change Stein’s composition through their simultaneity of position and disposition, whereas the portrait relies on a sequence of discontinuous and non-relational “ones.”

### 5. *A Curtain Raiser: Turning Number into Spatial Intensity*

Turning now to “A Curtain Raiser”—Stein’s first explicitly theatrical piece or play to appear in *Geography and Plays*—we understand how the prepositional space of composition changes according to the angles of vision provided by multiple figures within it (“two,” “four,” and “five”), altering in turn how those figures relate to each other simultaneously in the static past of “what happened.” The simultaneity of these angles of vision, seen in “One Carl Van Vechten” to find its occasion in the riotous spectatorship of the theater audience, forces Stein to abandon the sequence of the “continuous present” constitutive of the portraits in favor of a tableau of “what happened” now capable of rendering relations between people, objects, spaces, etc. through their “Actions and Disposition of Relations and Positions.” Here Stein compromises the “continuous present” and “entity” for a robust medium intended to present relations between aggregate bodies, whether a team of hack horses or a theatrical audience divided by its opinion of *The Rite of Spring*.

In “A Curtain Raiser,” Stein continues the thought articulated at the end of “One Carl Van Vechten,” where the nouns “dim judge” and “dog” preside as significant in their own right without establishing a prepositional space through which they could relate to, for example, “four between and hacking.” This last turn appears as if it were a triumphant return of “entity”; nouns, now fully alienated from their conventional context, sit independent of other relations, joined only by parataxis to other figures. Yet, given the intensity of attention given to “one,” “two,” and “four,” this seems like a disappointing end to the ecstatic fluorescence of relation present in the other numbers or the dynamic response of the audience to *The Rite of Spring*. Toggling between scenes of robust relation and monadic intensity in “One Carl Van Vechten,” Stein highlights “A Curtain Raiser’s” resistance

to sequence and takes to an extreme that an individual figure (here a number) contain significance on its own without relating to others. At the same time, Stein’s play recognizes the precarious state of non-relation and the perhaps surprising inanimateness of nouns when stripped of space and activity. The precariousness of entity, whether number or “dog,” manifests in its tendency to produce positions from which a disposition of relations orients a compositional element as if it were a spectator internal to the work.

While Stein argues that “being a relation is not a necessary thing,” she nevertheless preserves what we’ve identified as the formal manifestation of the theatrical audience’s simultaneous points of view in “A Curtain Raiser,” disposing the field of composition toward the relations that it generates from the variegated positions of its parts.<sup>134</sup> If *being* a relation—that noun again—is not necessary, then *relating as an activity* seems like a promising alternative. Recall, again, that we’ve located the spectator in the position and disposition of individual elements of a composition, and, as I’ve shown, that being spectating is action for Stein.

It won’t surprise us, then, that “A Curtain Raiser” explicitly evokes theatrical tradition, of which Stein made such frequent use. The eponymous genre of Stein’s play, the curtain-raiser, derives from a tradition of the theater that proliferated a diverse culture of “minor” acts to augment the evening’s entertainment around the “loftier” plays. A curtain raiser is often a one-act performance that begins a genre unto itself—the theatrical evening—and it refers to the act of raising the curtain for the first time.<sup>135</sup> A typical structure for the evening might include “opening music, curtain-raiser, pantomime, mainpiece, entr’acte, main piece, dancing, afterpiece, and song.”<sup>136</sup> Conventionally only a tertiary piece of a long list of evening entertainment, “A Curtain Raiser” signals the value Stein gives the often subordinated parts of the theater, equating them to the value of the whole theatrical evening or that of the mainpieces. Stein puts to practice, here, the principle of landscape that “each part of a composition being as important as the whole.” “A Curtain Raiser” only finds two other companion pieces in *Geography and Plays*: “Polybe in Port: A Curtain Raiser,” which is part of “A Collection,” and in the “Curtain Raiser” sub-section before Act II of “Ladies’ Voices,” which follows “A Curtain Raiser.”<sup>137</sup> Given its uniqueness in Stein’s play compositions and its status as a genre tangential to “important” theater, “A Curtain Raiser” is radical for all that it refuses: it eschews narrative, plot, and *dramatis personae*; it abstracts itself out of the implied bodies of actors and into the iteration of pure number among small phrases; it avoids spectacle, coherent image or icon.

Instead, the play dramatizes a sequence of numbers, their arrangement and their magnitude among a complement of seemingly isolated words and phrases that represent qualities or comparisons. Through nested puns, the numbers develop relations to quality not inherent to number, and, yet, never cohere into any necessary relations. While Stein presents the drama of number straining toward quality, she imbricates the quality of words with quantity. In this dynamic she enacts the balance between the possibility of relating and not. The text is short enough to quote in full:

A CURTAIN RAISER

Six.	
Twenty.	
	Outrageous.
Late,	
Weak.	
	Forty.
More in any wetness.	
Sixty three certainly.	
Five.	
Sixteen.	

Seven.  
Three.  
More in orderly. Seventy-five (*GP* 202).

Some readers might find the following analysis overwrought, but I maintain that the intricate number of relations that occur in this short work will demonstrate how “entity” and relating can coexist within a work. In this coexistence, we will recognize how number assumes quality through its position and the disposition of its relations, thereby producing not number, as in the quantity comprising a body of uniform objects, nor sequence, as in the necessary reproduction of similarity within that body over time (causal logic), but, rather—in a final twist—an aggregate of elements unique because of their activity of relating, or “one and one and one and one.” Here we recognize the body of the theater audience in the text, spectating from diverse positions and angles of visions.

“A Curtain Raiser” proliferates relations between its element through the coincidence of language and number. Nearly every number is punctuated by a period, except “sixty three,” which, when compared to “seventy-five,” could also be the series of “sixty” and “three” by Stein’s omission of the dash. The play contains three other repeating elements: adjectives dissociated from speaker or object, the repetition of “More in...,” and two adverbs, “certainly” and “orderly.” Considered independently, the numbers have no particular sense; they are neither the magnitude of concrete objects nor apart of an apparent pattern. Stein does not present the actual sequence of numbers in an organizing pattern or narrative: [6, 20, 40, 60, 3 (or 63), 5, 16, 7, 3, 75]. If we include the numbers contained in words and rhymed pairs (“late” and eight, “more” and four, “certainly” and ten), then sequence would be [6, 20, 8, 40, 4, 60, 3, 10, 5 16, 7, 3, 75]. Despite the seeming independence of each number, “A Curtain Raiser” produces possible relations among the sequence of numbers as they appear in the play: (1) six repeats in “six,” “sixty,” and “sixteen”; (2) “five” and “seven” begin a chiasmus that ends with “seventy-five”; (3) “three” repeats twice. Other relations appear between number and the linguistic refrains of the play. There are several coincident moments between number and word: (1) as mentioned before, one can easily hear “eight” in “Late”; a series of sounds evolves from “twenty” (/twɛntɪ/), “weak” (/wi:k/), and “wetness” (/wɛtnəs/); “twenty” puns on “when” (/hwɛn/), which could be answered by “late”; “weak” puns on “week” (/wi:k/), which distantly echoes seven; “Forty” contains the preposition-conjunction “for,” which rhymes with “more”; “certainly” contains “ten”; and “outrageous” produces the opposite vector of “More in.” If numbers and words interact and relate so readily, then iterations of numbers and the syntactical sequence of words mutually assume the characteristics of others. Number neither expresses certain parts of speech nor articulates quite like a language, but it begins, divorced entirely from quantitative number, to acquire a unique means of relating within the grammar of the composition. Far from overstating the contact between number and word, this detail only emphasizes the play’s exchange between quantity and quality. Since the numbers have lost their meaning in sequence, they either attain that Steinian ideal—“entity”—or they metamorphose into possible qualities within the field of the textual space.

While Stein detaches the numbers from their ability to describe the quantities of concrete objects, she juxtaposes them to the adjectives that interrupt the initial sequence of numbers. The adjectives together describe a number of deficiencies—“Outrageous./ Late,/ weak”—but the play does not attribute them to an object. Here the adjectives exist on their own just as the numbers exist without being quantities of objects. The inclusion of both isolated numbers and unattributed adjectives underscores the degree to which numbers can be adjectival, or transferable across objects, but only to emphasize how both number and adjective can be irreducible nouns, or “entities.”

The play explicitly references the exchange between adjective, noun, and quantity in “More in any wetness” and between quantity and adverb in “More in orderly.” “More” evokes quantity and the play satisfies this comparative adjective by jumping between “Forty” and “sixty three” and between “three” and “seventy-five.” But a comparison between the two jumps reveals the trouble with the increase encouraged by “more”: the omitted dash in “sixty three” indicates that as soon as “forty” leads to “sixty” it decreases quantity to “three.” If “more” dictates a logic of increase, it only achieves ephemeral success. The play reveals an ambivalent logic of sequence: the magnitude increases and the sequence continues according to an established logic, or the play describes the state of its disorder or the magnitude of its numbers as inordinate if we change the aural emphasis to “more in disorderly.” Again “more” acts as another unattributed adjective, achieving its own presence, especially when placed near “wetness”—an adjective made noun. “More in any wetness” evokes magnitude and a comparison, but it takes as its objects neither the numbers that precede or follow it nor the adjectives that appear earlier in the play. Therefore, “A Curtain Raiser” at once produces a set of Stein’s “entity”—the adjective’s ability to modify nouns no longer define it and number need not quantify anything—while this opens the number and adjective up to relating in non-normative grammars to the space of the text made possible by the play’s simultaneity. In Stein’s plays, this space opens through the theater, and functions as the audience’s spectatorship internalized in the form of the composition. What Stein achieves in the plays through the spectatorship of the theater audience will prove to be, later, the governing principle of her landscape.

The importance of number in “A Curtain Raiser” looks forward to “Detective Story No. 2” in *The Geographical History of America (1936)*, which Stein uses to demonstrate one of many differences between “human nature” and the “human mind,” which are functions of “identity” and “entity.”<sup>138</sup>

<sup>139</sup> In a passage previous to “Detective Story No. 2,” Stein imagines “Well it is astonishing to see a pigeon where you had not expected ever to see one,” and she imagines that this hypothetical pigeon, in turn, becomes so astonished to see two pigeons that were not there before that it “almost falls off.”<sup>140</sup> In the excerpt from “Detective Story No. 2” that I quote here, Stein attempts to detect “the difference between write it and tell it”; that is, she tries to detect the difference between telling a causal account of “what has happened” by supplying reasons for it and writing “what happened” without telling a story (one definition of a play in Stein’s lectures).<sup>141</sup> Notably, Stein uses painting to explain the non-narrative feature in part constitutive of plays:

There they are again.

The three pigeons are there again. There is no reason for it.

But if looking at it you are to paint it, the pigeon is there again and turning his back on the two other pigeons who are below it. You can only see from the side where you are seeing everything you only can see the two heads of the other two pigeons and now there are three. That makes four in all.

That is why numbers really have something to do with the human mind. That they are pigeons has nothing to do with it but that there was one and then that there were three and that then there are four and that then it may not cease to matter what number follows another but the human mind has to have it matter that any number is a number.<sup>142</sup>

Stein, perhaps classically by now, represents the looking of the human mind as the compositional act of painting on a canvas. The act of looking assumes the two-dimensions of the canvas such that the painter and spectator alike “only can see the two heads of the other two pigeons” from a fixed point of view. Yet, all she can see from “the side where [she is] seeing” becomes “everything” that is present to her point of view. But in this spectatorship imagined painting, Stein is not the only one in the audience: just as the first pigeon doubles Stein’s looking when it is astonished at the other two

pigeons appearing, so it again doubles Stein's point of view as it turns its back on the other two (both cannot see the pigeons from their limited point of view). It is as if the pigeon adjusts its point of view to mirror the scene composed by Stein, in which the other two pigeons are absent or partially occluded. Stein's hypothetical painting-detective story translates the sensible world into a spatial field. The sequence of appearances cannot matter in this spatial field, but the number present in any moment—one, three, four in all—must matter. The "four," though at first puzzling, derives from Stein's inclusion of herself in the painting. Stein and three pigeons "[make] four in all." And Stein includes her point of view as if she were a part of the band of pigeons. This cannot be emphasized enough: for Stein, spectatorship is always an action included in the composition, and always implies the presence of other spectators. The spectator cannot be separate from the scene; she is present to it and shapes it as much as the "actors," or pigeons, and she is as responsible for the relating made possible by her view as are the three pigeons. If her point of view is not to be valued more than the other pigeons, then the pigeons, too, have a point of view that composes the painting. The motive of the pigeons for being there is not sensible to the painterly perspective of the human mind. Nor can the painter sense the sequence of numbers as a single object. If "the human mind has to have it matter that any number is a number," then "A Curtain Raiser" faces the same combination of elements: number matters as a self-contained number ("The three pigeons are there again. There is no reason for it.") and number implies relation to other numbers through its own magnitude and position in a sequence or field ("But if looking at it you are to paint it").

"A Curtain Raiser" presents an especially compelling microcosm of the Stein play because it presents a sequence of units without causal connection (e.g., not a sequence), and, yet, shows how these coincident elements relate through themselves to other elements as if each were spatially present to the other with its own point of view—that is, its own positions and disposition of relations. At the same time, the sequential nature of the numbers points to Stein's difficulty representing the continuous present in a medium that requires alternatives to counting "one and one and one and one." The problem might be articulated by the gap suggested by attributing "one and one and one" to a medium in which a number of ones are there and individuated from one another. Sequence becomes recourse for simultaneity. Sequence suggests narrative pattern, organizing logic, or compositional intention, but the presentation of numbers or phrases, taken individually, need not narrate anything. The number is a presence with its own spectating activity; it is not "being a relation." As its own presence, the element develops an agency to shape itself to other parts of the text. In "A Curtain Raiser," Stein does not render it *necessary* for a number or adjective to be a relation (as a noun). But she slyly indicates that the number or adjective's relating (as a verb) could be *intentional*, when the spectator shapes the relations in the play based on an element's point of view of the play and its possible connections, even if they are finite. "A Curtain Raiser" builds point of view into a whole composition precisely through number—"forty" could relate to "sixty" and "twenty" as multiplies of twenty, as well as rhyme with "more in any." Any number in the play, taken individually, will produce a disposition of relations determined by its individual position and, therefore, its point of view.

The play of pure number in Stein and the resistance of number to sense demonstrates how any element of a play—anticipating the principle of a landscape—is equal to every other element and to the whole. The individual parts maintain their status as Steinian "entity"; they are not a relation, but they are relating to other entities. But "A Curtain Raiser" demonstrates, second, that one "entity" relating to another can be intentional. Our own reading demonstrates this possibility for any of the numbers; they can relate to the field of the composition through their own magnitude or quality and generate relationships through their own position and disposition of relations. In this auditorium, the compositional element takes its seat as a spectator within the field of the play or landscape. It succeeds in representing a collectivity—a diverse and differently positioned and

disposed aggregate of individuals—which Stein models on the audience as an aesthetic collectivity, spectating many phenomena simultaneously from their own intentional position of “knowing,” “seeing,” “hearing,” and “feeling.”

Yet, the intention of Stein’s spectatorial relating seems to be inverted. We are ascribing intention to the parts of a play and imagining their positions as if they were individuals in an audience, viewing themselves relate to others in the audience and on stage, where we would normally attribute intention to a consciousness. We saw such a consciousness in Stein’s “continuous present,” which we understood as a refined mode of attention that produced an experience of present time as a discontinuous series of “self-contained nows,” and, thereby, produced “entity” as an effect of that spectatorship. In the “continuous present,” “entity” is completely unique, non-relational movement, whereas the play, on the other hand, suspends movement altogether in the past-tense tableau of “what happened.” Written on the occasion of a raucous and divided theatrical experience at *Théâtre de Champs-Élysées*, “One Carl Van Vechten” generated prepositional spaces through the way discrete numbers of figures related by way of spectatorship, ending in the mute figures of the “dim judge” and “so colored dog.” “A Curtain Raiser” takes this end of “One Carl Van Vechten” to an extreme when the adjectival and numeric parts of its composition assume the qualities of nouns. Yet, they only assume the independence of nouns as unattributed adjectives and numbers, carefully preserving the possibility to relate to other parts within the play as they become entities in their own right. Unmoored from the necessary relating of adjective and number—the adjective modifies a noun and quantity describes the number of uniform objects—the mute numbers of “A Curtain Raiser” exceed their simple presence by how they orient to this new open field of relating. As a result, they form an “outside inside existence” (an existence Stein attributes to the theater) to Stein’s fundamental question of spectatorship “Could I see and hear and feel at the same time and did I.” In the play, Stein sublimates sequence—demolishing its possibility *and* preserving a residue of its architecture—producing a position from which the compositional element relates to the textual field of “A Curtain Raiser,” perceptible in its totality by dint of its concision. This is not “a contradiction but a combination,” to recall the opening of “Plays,” that Stein consistently confronts within the medium of language: sequences nevertheless imply a logic or pattern, something to predict the appearance of the next, and it is the preservation of this contingent possibility that creates a multiplication of relations between the given elements in a play or landscape. This position is the compositional element’s point of view and it determines what the element “sees” through the disposition of its relations to other elements. Each part of the composition becomes oriented like a spectator to the rest through its “entity”—that is, for example, the numbers in “A Curtain Raiser” do not relate to each other because of mathematical symbol (=, +, -, <, etc.), but, instead, they relate through their own qualities (e.g. “three” is an odd number, “forty” and “sixty” are multiples of “twenty”). And, rather than a sequence or causal logic enforcing a singular or limited vision, the parts of the composition acquire the attributes of that aesthetic collectivity, the audience, which aggregates the diverse spectatorship of many into a whole body. When Stein states that “being existing that is talking and listening is action,” and we discern that this relates to spectating in the portraits, she attributes both spectatorship and action to the parts of her composition and instills them with an existence. By this logic, each element of the play exerts pressure on the play without allowing one element to dominate as if each had a composing consciousness—the multiple and unique points of attention of spectators in the audience devolves to the element of composition.

## 6. Cézanne

Tracing a trajectory from “A Curtain Raiser” (1913), a play that I would categorize as an early landscape before the term gains currency for Stein, to “Cézanne” (1923), a portrait that stands firmly in her landscape period and acts as a panegyric to Cézanne, his influence, and his mode of composition, we can see that Stein’s principle of landscape composition develops directly from the imbrication of the theater audience with her composition, a task she set herself in her plays. In the epigraph of this chapter, Stein states the equal value of human beings and likens this principle to that of the landscape— “a blade of grass has the same value as a tree.”<sup>143</sup> This equality, achieved through value, establishes a collective body of equal value comprised of a diverse multiplicity of individuals; yet, the equality is achieved through the self-contained uniqueness of the individuals and the force of their equality is restored to them by animating their particularity. The transition seen in the epigraph—from human being to grass and tree—stems from Stein’s experiments in her plays with representing the collectivity of an audience that does not subordinate the individual spectator’s point of view to the audience as a whole.

Taking the landscape as the end point of a relationship between multiplicity and totality, the portrait and play produce different logics of the part’s relationship to the whole. First, the portrait, through the spectatorship of the “continuous present,” organizes the multiplicity of “self-contained nows”—or compositional units whose effect is entity—under the rubric of the portrait, a presentation of one “as they are existing.” The play, instead, suspends time in order to present simultaneously multiple figures, who are both spectators and actors, writing “what happened” without telling a story. Stein preserves “entity” through this last omission, dispersing a singular narrative by opening each figure or element in the composition to relate in the ways made possible by their composing consciousness—the intentional spectatorship, like Stein’s “continuous present,” composed by their position and disposition of relations. I argue that the principle of composition that governs the landscape expresses the same principle that governs the spectatorship of the theatrical audience: the spectatorship of each spectator is equal in value to other spectators and to the audience’s whole vision—both its sensation and the object of what it spectates. Allowing each element of the composition to assert its own intentional spectatorship on the composition, like Stein’s own “continuous present,” disrupts the perspective of a single beholder and produces the vision of the landscape as one which produces parts and wholes of equal value.

Although explicitly a portrait, it would come as no surprise that “Cézanne” gathers many of the qualities that Stein attributes to landscape. Necessary for a Stein portrait of Cézanne, its style reflects the manner of a landscape more than a portrait, and, as a result, reflects the compositional absorption of the theatrical audience’s spectatorship from Stein’s plays. In the reading that follows, we will locate in the landscape the same simultaneity that Stein produced in “One Carl Van Vechten” and “A Curtain Raiser” through the simultaneity of multiple spectatorships, or positions and dispositions of relations. What was a dissociated number or adjective in “A Curtain Raiser” becomes a compositional entity that takes on its own spectatorial relating as an activity within the whole text.

“Cezanne” opens by explicitly evoking the relationship between part and whole, and, over the course of the portrait, modulates its manner of composition (the “in this way” of the portrait) to match the processes of what “Cezanne nearly did,” an emphasis on the process of composing a landscape comprised of unique entities. If you’ll excuse some Steinian abstraction, every doing is a near doing, or an alteration of what’s already done. At the same time, “nearly did” emphasizes Cézanne’s characteristic incompleteness, exemplified by blank spots of canvas. The portrait is short enough to quote in full:

#### CEZANNE

The Irish lady can say that to-day is every day. Caesar can say that every day is to-day and they say that every day is as they say.

In this way we have a place to stay and he was not met because he was settled to stay. When I said settled I meant settled to stay. When I said settled to stay I meant settled to stay Saturday. In this way a mouth is a mouth. In this way if in as a mouth if in as a mouth where, if in as a mouth where and there. Believe they have water too. Believe they have water too and blue when you see blue, is all blue precious too, is all that that is precious too is all that and they meant to absolve you. In this way Cezanne nearly did nearly in this way Cezanne nearly did nearly did and nearly did. And was I surprised. Was I very surprised. Was I surprised. I was surprised and in that patient, are you patient when you find bees. Bees in a garden make a specialty of honey and so does honey. Honey and prayer. Honey and there. There where the grass can grow nearly four times yearly.<sup>144</sup>

In this portrait of Cézanne, Stein mobilizes his painterly techniques in language to render him through his process of composition, or what Stein characterized as the equivalence between part and whole. Caesar is like a jagged homophone of Cézanne, and puns on “see” (“Caesar” = “see-sar”) at the same time that “say” evokes “Cezanne” (“Cezanne” = “say-zanne”).<sup>145</sup> This suggests the equivalence of seeing in spectatorship and the saying in composition, a possibility that sight and sound do not supersede each other. This half-pun signals another aspect of Stein’s writing out Cézanne’s techniques of painterly composition; that is, it demonstrates that landscapes do not depend on the identification between two figures, but, rather, the differences that suggest near (“nearly did”) comparisons, even if they appear nearly alike, comprise the landscape.

Stein’s paradigmatic expression of the uniqueness of entities in portrait composition comes in “Composition as Explanation”: “It was all so nearly alike it must be different and it is different, it is natural that if everything is used and there is a continuous present and a beginning again and again if it is all so alike it must be simply different and everything simply different was the natural way of creating it then.”<sup>146</sup> Recalling again the equal value of each part to part and to the whole, we can read the imperative that it all being “alike it must be different” as the equivalence, achieved through “value” as the common ground for all entities, that emphasizes the uniqueness of each entity. This emerges from the portrait “Cezanne” as variation on phrases like “settled to stay,” “was I very surprised,” and “a mouth is a mouth,” which incrementally extend and repeat the phrase as if it were a local motif in the work. Other repetitions across the portrait, especially “in this way,” create spans connecting units across the portrait. The repetition of “in this way” links, too, proximate sentences to create a sense of contiguity, each “in this way” producing a link to the previous sentence not through subordination but through manner’s capacity to take on different objects. For example, the first “in this way” sends us back to the first paragraph to understand in which way “we have a place to stay,” but without any apparent logical connection.

Tracing out this example will link the portrait’s macro-organization to the portrait’s reflection on the relation of part to whole that Stein associates with the compositions of Cézanne and the theatrical audience. The relationship between “to-day” and “everyday” is presented in two aspects from inverse points of view, and, as a result, makes a space of time in a way familiar to readers of Stein. “The Irish lady can say that to-day is every day” could mean that to-day finds expression in all other days, or one day in the present is many days at anytime. Caesar expresses the inverse point of view: “Caesar can say that every day is to-day.” Caesar’s point of view, although nearly alike to the Irish lady’s, expresses an intensive relationship of “every day” within “to-day,” or all days into one day in the present. Quantitatively impossible, this relationship must express a qualitative interaction of every day within to-day. It posits the idea of simultaneity; all days are present in today. Both relationships between “to-day” and “everyday” express a relationship between part and whole, and the portrait posits both as valid. And if both are valid, then part and

whole must in some way be equal. That both Caesar and the Irish lady *can* say one thing or another allows them to hold a valid point of view despite their seeming contradiction. In Caesar's perspective, "to-day" "nearly" produces a flat perspective that renders time as a Cézanne landscape of a flat perspective. Yet, both perspectives flatten historical time into something constitutive of one of its individual units. The portrait manages to hold time in its simultaneity in such a way that all repetition becomes a different element of the whole. This opening paragraph has an analogue in Cézanne's composition. Stein renders the intensity of these statements—and here I mean intensity as the relationship between the part and whole so fundamental to Stein's theory of composition—precisely through the limited points of view that are simultaneously present in the portrait such that no single point of view dominates as the portrait's perspective. In the same way, Cézanne's painting eschews depth by valuing equally the point of view offered by one element and another such that two-dimensional space maintains stability on the canvas without giving way to a painterly perspective. And it must be through this relationship between part and whole, which constructs the planar space of Stein's portrait, that the "we" has a "place to stay," or an equally available position in space to dispose of its relations.

While this particular reading, produced by the first instance of "in this way," generates a local reading significant to Stein's theory of landscape, the repetition of "in this way" throughout the portrait preserves the vastly different content throughout the portrait. At the same time, it allows content to pass into manner ("in this way") like a parameter into a function, assembling connections without forging them. This open space of relating occupied by each element makes possible its disposition toward the other elements of composition, and, therefore, the purview of its compositional spectatorship. As a result, the portrait holds together like a Cézanne landscape. If this manner of linking local textual moments makes semantic sense, it is only through unconventional linguistic means. It is this active avoidance of apparent sense that draws us to one part or motif of the portrait in the manner of the landscape. Put another way, the complete lack of sense seems to distribute the value of our attention equally over the portrait. Stein only departs from this rule when Cézanne's name appears in the portrait and echoes the title. Stein places a high value on the sentence, "In this way Cézanne nearly did *nearly in this way* Cézanne nearly did nearly did and nearly did." It is only because Cézanne's name appears roughly in the center of the second paragraph, I wager, that this portrait acquires the status of a portrait rather than landscape.

Stein's portrait of Cézanne suggests that points of view always generate discrete positions from which a spectator views. After all both the "Irish lady" and "Caesar" could be identified nationally, though importantly they cannot be definitively located. Yet, Stein's portrait never generates the same scene within the space defined by the sum total of those positions: "In this way we have a place to stay and he was not met because he was settled to stay. When I said settled I meant settled to stay. When I said settled to stay I meant settle to stay Saturday. In this way a mouth is a mouth." In the way that the Irish lady and Caesar produce a point of view and, by implication, the "place[s] to stay" from which they generate those points of view, we create not only the location from which we see, but also the scenes in which we dwell. The portrait refers to a moment outside of the text: "When I said settled." But Stein's portrait never simply says, "settled," presenting instead "settled to stay." Hypothetically, then, Stein said "settled" at some point and thereby generated a chain of qualifications that produce a series of individually different phrases. Similarly, if the portrait is at all ekphrastic, as "blue" might suggest, then it would refer to a Cézanne painting outside of the portrait. Yet, all "originals" are missing entirely and they are never present to generate the gravity of an ontologically prior entity, or a vertical dimension that might make the illusion of perspective. The transition from "settled" to "settled to stay" to "settled to stay Saturday" produces the alliterative effect of layering that produces different phrases, while it refers to a single intention that is continuously revised and therefore no longer present, or only available through the iteration present,

changing again the quality of the iteration into an entity on its own. The speech referred to but never presented, “when I said settled,” depicts speech as congruent with the present tense; in speech, we lose what we say as we say it. The different phrases, from “settled” to “settled to stay Saturday,” never approach what is actually “meant,” but their process of approaching it produces the entities that acquire value through presence, as well as a uniqueness not derived from something prior. The passage “in this way a mouth is a mouth” reinforces this further, for “a mouth is a mouth” produces a tautologically true proposition. It requires no other referent or demonstration.

All values being equal, each part of a landscape’s composition represents a possible vista for viewing the rest of the landscape. While this visual position remains a formal feature of the textual composition, it represents the absorbed function of the individual theater spectator, who sits among a whole audience viewing developments on stage. The relationship of this individual spectator to that familiar totality that is the theater audience functions similarly to the relationship between part and whole in Stein’s theory of landscape composition. If the audience is regarded as whole, however, it is only because it is comprised of many spectators, who receive and organize perceptual experience differently. Because the audience shares loosely the perceptual stimuli of the stage, it is often regarded as a single body seeing the performance. If one fearful spectator searches for the exit behind him or another, confused about who is who, stops watching to reference her program, we still say, “the audience watches the performance.” But the audience could be formulated differently according to the principle of landscape composition: “After all, to me one human being is as important as another human being, and you might say that the landscape has the same values, a blade of grass has the same value as a tree.” If all parts are equal to every other part and equal to the whole, then every individual spectator is equal to every other, as well as to the concept of the audience as a single body. Extending Stein’s juxtaposition of human beings and the blade of grass in a landscape, then, the compositional element is a vista of the landscape but only because it absorbs a theater spectator into that point of view.

Only through her understanding of theatrical spectatorship and its role in the creation of scene in her plays does Stein reach a principle of landscape composition invested in the equality of part and whole, which Stein achieves through the open possibility of an parts spectatorship of the whole. Stein’s work on plays in *Geography and Plays* represents her most experimental work precisely because they pose so many problems to the usual critical rubrics Stein and her readers apply, whether “entity,” “present continuous,” or “landscape,” and the judgments of success that accompany them. “A Curtain Raiser” enacts one of many scripts that produces Stein’s principle of composition from a theory of theatrical spectatorship that developed from the early portraits to her plays and landscapes. In it, number no longer relates as number through sequence or prescribed quantitative relationship. Instead, number becomes an entity that relates from both the qualities that aggregate its uniqueness and the spectatorship (“actions and disposition of relations and positions”) within an imaginary theater as a singular point of view among the multiplicity of the audience, all of which preserve the possibility of relating anew by suspending the relations enforced from the outside-theater. This is Stein’s most abstract formulation, in which number and unattributed adjective replace entity as ideal units to work through qualitative uniqueness, including the inherent ways that particular numbers relate to others. All the while Stein’s numbers and unattributed adjectives, too, preserve something of the intentional sublation of sequence, mathematical relation, or noun, which remains invisible in the composition. This opens up new fields of relating, and, in the plays, these are incorporated, at least metaphorically, in the individual spectators at the theater. The landscape, then, is the vision of this idealized aesthetic collectivity—the amorphous theater audience.

## Chapter 4

### “*Sub Specie Aeternitatis* Vision”: The One and Many Spectators in Beckett’s Narrative Prose

[...] how would I know about these things, how would I understand what they’re talking about, I’ll never stir, never speak, they’ll never go silent, never depart, they’ll never catch me, never stop trying, that’s that, I’m listening. Well I prefer that, I must say I prefer that, that what, oh you know, who you, oh I suppose the audience, well well, so there’s an audience [...]

—Samuel Beckett, *The Unnameable*

I have been reading Geulincx in T.C.D., without knowing why exactly. Perhaps because it is so hard to come by. But that is a rationalization and my instinct is right and the work worth doing, because of its saturation in the conviction that the *sub specie aeternitatis* vision is the only excuse for remaining alive.

—Samuel Beckett, Letter to Thomas MacGreevy, 5 March 1936

Samuel Beckett’s letter to Thomas MacGreevy expresses an ignorance entirely appropriate to reading Arnold Geulincx, the 17<sup>th</sup> century Occasionalist philosopher and post-Cartesian best known for attributing all knowledge and agency to a God outside the frame of the subject. Beckett’s notes on Geulincx, compiled around the time he finished *Murphy*, mostly consists of passages copied verbatim, with little additional commentary from Beckett.<sup>147</sup> If at the time of his letter Beckett finds himself in a particularly Geulingian situation—reading Geulincx in the original Latin “without knowing why exactly”<sup>148</sup>—he overcomes this posture of incomprehension through an interest in the structure of spectatorship suggested by “the *sub specie aeternitatis* vision,” a vision from the perspective of eternity.

Not a Geulingian concept, *sub specie aeternitatis* vision is a Beckettian expedient for imagining the spectatorial position of God in Occasionalist philosophy. Critics of Beckett have long been familiar with Geulincx’s famous ethical principle, “*ubi nihil valet, ibi nihil valis* [wherein you have no power, therein you should not will].”<sup>149</sup> And Beckett readily produces it to explain one of two competing forces in *Murphy* in a letter to Thomas MacGreevy on January 16, 1936.<sup>150</sup> But the pith of this ethical principle and its usefulness in *Murphy* and *Molloy* have drawn attention away from its grounding condition in Geulincx’s philosophy—that is, the subject’s condition as a spectator. During self-inspection, according to Geulincx, the subject recognizes itself as a spectator within a *theatrum mundi*. Beckett’s notes to *The Ethics* transcribe the following conclusion about this condition: “Thus, I have now diagnosed my condition. I merely experience the World. I am a spectator of the scene, not an actor. And yet, the World that I observe cannot itself impress on me the likeness under which I observe it. The World impels its likeness towards my body and leaves it there: it is the Divinity that then conveys it from my body into me, and into my mind.”<sup>151</sup> Geulincx’s theory of perception leaves the body completely bereft of causal agency. God impels vision, for example, across the separation between the spectator’s body and mind. Since, according to Occasionalism, nothing created can be a cause, the spectator’s body cannot be the cause of the mind’s perception. At best, it is the *occasion* for the mind’s perception, for which God is the only cause.<sup>152</sup> God is

therefore the producer of the world-spectacle,<sup>153</sup> the spectacle of sense, from which the body remains separate.

Although Geulincx seems only to emphasize the finite spectator, Beckett extrapolates the spectatorial position of God—the point of view of eternity—from the temporality of God’s creation of Nature. The key question is when Geulincx’s God produces the spectacle. God’s gaze, as one of Beckett’s transcriptions helps us understand, authorizes our own, for God has seen in advance and all at once our wishes and wants, and already produced the world-spectacle for our mind: “To wish to obey the absolute, true, and strict will of God in some matter is to wish what has already been done [...] to want to obey God absolutely is...to want to do what is already done (*NE* 317). The past tense of God’s accomplishment is critical. Since He has already accomplished the sum-total of actions in creating Nature, the individual experiences only a portion of God’s work, and, further, perceives it as if God had accomplished our perception in advance. Having accomplished all acts, God always already observes everything simultaneously. This configuration repeats itself in the characterization of Murphy’s mind: “Murphy’s mind pictured itself as a large hollow sphere, hermetically closed to the universe without [...] Nothing ever had been, was or would be in the universe outside it but was already present as virtual, or actual, or virtual rising into actual, or actual falling into virtual, in the universe inside it” (*M* 107). This perspective—the perspective of a creator, for whom everything is already present—is a kind of *sub specie aeternitatis* vision that sees the totality of the world exclusive of time. It is an imperceptible perspective that looks on from elsewhere as we view a world-spectacle within a *theatrum mundi*. And it is the exchange of gazes between the finite spectator, the *sub specie aeternitatis* vision, and the world spectacle that, I contend, structures Beckett’s narrative prose. What in *Murphy* is only a characteristic of Murphy’s mind becomes a characteristic of the narrator elsewhere in Beckett’s prose; when Beckett switches the narrative voice from third-person in *Murphy and Watt* to first-person narration in *The Trilogy*, and when he plays with quoted monologue in *How It Is*. The idea of an absent spectator has obvious resonances with the stage’s “fourth wall,” but Beckett develops it fully in his narrative prose, where it becomes the spectatorial structure of narrative.

This chapter explains the development of Beckett’s narrative from *Murphy* (1938) and *Watt* (1953) to *The Trilogy* (1955-58) and *How It Is* (1964) as the evolution of a system of narrative spectatorship. Experimenting with narrative as a way of thinking through the tradition of Cartesian mind-body dualism, Beckett adapted two philosophical models in response: (1) the Occasionalist philosopher, Arnold Geulincx, who made absolute the divide between mind and body and therefore claimed that the subject could only ever be a spectator; (2) Leibniz, whose monism made every finite point of view a modification of the infinite’s perspective in a single system of spectatorship. Tracing these models of spectatorship through different styles of narration—from third- to the later first-person and, finally, quoted monologue—I argue that Beckett eventually combines these systems, culminating in *How It Is*. The narrator of *How It Is*, having self-reflexively adduced the entire structure of the novel through aspects of himself, Pim and Bom, requires the “ideal observer” Kram in order to record the novel in the first place. Ultimately, I argue that Beckett understands narration to be a system of interlocking observers, who are themselves only effects of being observed.

Beckett’s philosophical models respond differently to Cartesian dualism, wherein the mind (a non-extended thinking thing) and body (an extended non-thinking thing) are distinct substances.<sup>154</sup> The mind causes voluntary movements in the body, and the body causes sensations and affections in the mind. Geulincx’s and Leibniz’s responses to Descartes have ramifications for the models of spectatorship allowed by each. Geulincx’s response to Cartesian dualism makes the separation of body and mind absolute, effectively barring any causal interaction between the two. Instead, God moves bodily affections into the mind; we are merely spectators to the spectacles created by God. Leibniz, on the other hand, responds to dualism with the monad, a simple and unextended

substance that can neither transmit itself into other monads nor receive them. Being an aspect of the Infinite, the monad experiences mental and bodily states according to a pre-established harmony contained within it. As in Leibniz's famous analogy to the city of God, which God sees in its totality from all possible points of view, the monad, being an aspect of God, expresses a single point of view contained within that spectatorial system.

Beginning early in his career, Beckett framed the aesthetic through the problem of the spectator. In Beckett's essay, "Proust," written in 1930 (six years before he read Geulincx), he frames a series of problems for aesthetic experience in the well-worn terms of subject and object: the difficulty of attainment, or the identification of subject and object, the oscillation between "Habit" and the "suffering of being," and their correlative movements in memory, modeled on Proust's "voluntary" and "involuntary" memory.<sup>155</sup> Being Beckett's most straightforward reflection on aesthetic experience, this essay characterizes two important aspects of aesthetic experience relevant to Beckett's spectator: (1) the subject is not unitary but multiple—the subject is a series of subjects engaging similarly mobile objects; (2) aesthetic experience assumes the passive form of spectatorship, for Beckett argues that aesthetic experience arises independent of the subject's will and, further, it is only occasioned—not caused—by the sensuous experience of an object. The latter aspect prefigures an aesthetic variant on Geulincx's axiom above and follows from the meaningful impossibility of willing: Wherein you have no power to shape an elevated aesthetic experience, therein you should not will.

For Beckett, time conditions all aesthetic experience. The coincidence of subject and object is continually thwarted by their inability to synchronize. He begins the Proust essay by reflecting on the Proustian problem of "attainment," or "the identification of the subject with the object of his desire" (*P* 513). The subject, who is really a series of subjects, falls prey to change wrought by time: "[Time's] action on the subject," Beckett observes, "[results] in an unceasing modification of his personality, whose permanent reality, if any, can only be apprehended as a retrospective hypothesis" (*P* 513). Time melts and re-forges the "countless subjects that constitute the individual." Beckett will return to this series of subjects across his career in the frequent evocation of the sorites paradox: when does a series of elements become a whole? But this division of the subject into a series constitutes only half of the aesthetic equation, for the object is not immune to internal flux. "The observer," Beckett claims, "infects the observed with his own mobility" (*P* 515). Given the mobility of subject and object, attainment depends, as Beckett articulates it, on the synchronization of multiple different elements that are changeable on aesthetic grounds. The observer transmits mobility to the observed like a disease, and, if the observed is another subject, the situation is even more dire, for the aesthetic relationship is "two separate and immanent dynamisms related by no system of synchronization" (*P* 515). If this articulates a problem of aesthesis, it also articulates a condition of the Beckettian observer: expressed as a series of subjects extended through time, the observing subject is most aware of the asynchronicity of the external world.

Although the observer can be attuned to time's caprice in Proust's "involuntary memory," the subject's daily aesthetic activity subsists on the oscillation between dampening the force of the senses and intense vulnerability to them. The subject as series is in part this oscillation, which is always a function of time. Beckett terms the two poles "Habit," or sometimes "Boredom," and the "suffering of being": "The pendulum oscillates between these two terms: Suffering—that opens a window on the real and is the main condition of the artistic experience, and Boredom—with its host of top-hatted and hygienic ministers, Boredom that must be considered as the most tolerable because the most durable of human evils" (*P* 520). Habit is a conservative aesthetic relationship, one ensuring a safe compromise between an individual and his environment, and it must be renewed as often as the subject becomes a successive subject or as often as the subject changes environments. "Habit is a compromise effected between the individual and his environment," Beckett continues

further on, “the world being a projection of individual’s consciousness (an objectivation of the individual’s will, Schopenhauer would say), the pact must be continually renewed [...] Habit then is the generic term for the countless treaties concluded between the countless subjects that constitute the individual and their countless correlative objects” (P 516). Habit, according to Beckett, is only aesthetic in a minimal sense, for it only allows selective and mediated passage between the subject at a given moment and the sum-total of its correlative objects, which make up its surroundings. The “treaty” formed by Habit replaces perception with a pre-negotiated set of conditions that allow the subject to obtain a tolerable intensity or quantity of sensation, or lay to rest certain aspects of attention. Habit drugs attention and perception: “Because the pernicious devotion of habit paralyses our attention, drugs those handmaidens of perception whose co-operation is not absolutely essential” (P 516). And elsewhere: “Habit may not be dead (or as good as dead, doomed to die) but sleeping” (P 516).

The “suffering of being,” on the other hand, is aesthetic experience so heightened, so permeable to sense, that it threatens to be intolerable. Beckett relates such vulnerability directly to Kant’s “free play of the faculties of cognition,” through Schopenhauer: “The suffering of being: that is, the free play of every faculty” (P 516).<sup>156</sup> His account of aesthetic experience, then, adopts a tradition of perception and imagination without conceptual determination. Elaborating on the idea of suspended perception, Beckett does not claim that the object’s idea does not exist, but rather claims, as in Occasionalism, that it cannot be known: “But when the object is perceived as particular and unique and not merely the member of a family, when it appears independent of any general notion and detached from the sanity of a cause, isolated and inexplicable in the light of ignorance, then and then only may it be a source of enchantment. Unfortunately Habit has laid its veto of this form of perception, its action being precisely to hide the essence—the Idea—of the object in the haze of conception—preconception” (P 517). The object is enchanting when it is revealed in ignorance and is perceived to be unique, and when it eschews categorization, concept, and cause. The Idea emerges neither by the exercise of will nor by conceiving of the object, but by kind of pure perception. Aesthetic experience then is the perception of an object appearing by occasion rather than appearing to be governed by a cause.

Proustian involuntary memory becomes the exemplary experience of this type of perception because it synchronizes the subject to its object through the conceptual suspension sketched above. Habit, governed by pre-conception, and Suffering, experienced as a free play of faculties, directly correlate to Proust’s “voluntary” and “involuntary” memory, respectively. By turning to these concepts, Beckett emphasizes the role of the subject’s will within aesthetic experience as a function of time, the past and present. Voluntary memory corresponds to the memory of habit: this “memory is uniform, a creature of routine, at once a condition and function of his impeccable habit, an instrument of reference instead of an instrument of discovery [...] the uniform memory of intelligence” (P 521-522). “Involuntary memory” works through “the physical world, by some immediate and fortuitous act of perception” that “reduplicates” the past experience as an immediately experienced object in the present. This duplication extracts the subject, however momentarily, from time in extension (the series) and allows the past of the subject and to interpenetrate with the present of both subject and object. This cannot happen through an act of will. Like the spectacle impelled to our mind by God, it appears as if it were an “accident,” a “fortuitous act of perception”:

But if, *by accident*, and given favourable circumstances (a relaxation of the subject’s habit of thought and a reduction of the radius of his memory, a generally diminished tension of consciousness following upon a phase of extreme discouragement), if by some miracle of analogy the central impression of a past sensation recurs as an immediate stimulus which can be instinctively identified by the subject with the

model of duplication (*whose integral purity has been retained because it has been forgotten*), then the total past sensation, not its echo nor its copy, but the sensation itself, annihilating every spatial and temporal restriction, comes in a rush to engulf the subject in all its beauty of its infallible proportion (P 543).

Pure perception is the primary medium of the involuntary memory, and insofar as perception can be pure, it requires a diminished will, habit, voluntary memory, and consciousness. This experience emphasizes reception: it is a “miracle of analogy” that presents the past phenomenon to our perception, and it “comes in a rush to engulf” the perceiver. Evoking the language of Geulincx’s *Ethics*, I suggest it requires the subject to be “a spectator of the scene, not an actor,” and it requires that perception occasion and not cause involuntary memory.

Beckett’s “Proust” theorizes memory’s activation of aesthetic experience as a reduplication of the subject’s past, and it anticipates the way in which Geulincx’s God becomes the instantiation of the world as a unified and virtual memory—a work that has already been accomplished. The *sub specie aeternitatis* vision must always be posited as a virtual but ultimately absent vision, in order to condition the underlying spectatorship of Beckett’s narrators. If, on one hand, the Beckettian observer, plagued by time, is a series of different observers, for whom the object is equally mercurial, then, on the other, the *sub specie aeternitatis* vision, seeing a permanent reality, is immune to time’s mutations. God’s spectatorial position affords a permanent reality because His original creation is, to borrow a phrase from Beckett, a “retrospective hypothesis.” His work is already accomplished. And it is because of this vision that the position and passivity of spectator, who witnesses the miracle or is engulfed by the past, solidifies into an obligation imposed from elsewhere.

Having characterized Beckett’s account of aesthetic experience as dependent on a passive and limited spectator, as in Geulincx’s ethics, I will try to demonstrate in this next section how these limitations affect the ability of narrative creation to cohere into whole images. The narrator of *Imagination Dead Imagine* (1965) epitomizes a limited spectator who crystallizes several aspects of observation and aesthetic experience discussed in “Proust”: although he observes from the position of a creator, his active measurement of the environment and its figures only fragments its characteristics. At the same time, the narrator’s meticulous measurement accumulates into a series of details. As this section will show, this series spatializes time into the figure of an oscillation. Although this figure attempts to represent an integrated image of environmental behavior, it manages only to coordinate variables (light and temperature) as functions of time. The narrator, in other words, reduces the image to a series of contingent facts or details, deferring their synthesis by the imagination. The final impression is of a narrator who fails to imagine anything other than his inability to create an image.

The virtual promise of the *sub specie aeternitatis* vision is a perspective that can articulate the constituent parts of a system and their relation to each other in an integrated whole. If *Imagination Dead Imagine* mimics this perspective, it only betrays the observer’s limitations—his dependence on time, for example, or the inverse relationship between the exercise of his will and the possibility of aesthetic wholeness. The text performs the trap of the active observer, fulfilling a thesis Beckett posits in his essay on Proust thirty-four years earlier: “Imagination, applied—a priori—to what is absent, is exercised in vacuo and cannot tolerate the limits of the real. Nor is any direct and purely experimental contact possible between subject and object, because they are automatically separated by the subject’s consciousness of perception, and the object loses its purity and becomes a mere intellectual pretext or motive” (544). No statement better summarizes the endeavor of *Imagination Dead Imagine*. It demonstrates Beckett’s attempt to think through the apparent contradiction between our condition as passive spectators and our compulsion to create images.

The text of *Imagination Dead Imagine* is a series of observations that simultaneously creates and describes a world, one oscillating between extremes “from white and heat to black and cold” (*IDI* 362), and encompassing two bodies inscribed in a circle. The attention to geometrical precision is worth quoting at length because it echoes across Beckett’s work, as we will see in *How It Is*, and attempts the full determination of a single and closed system:

Still on the ground, bent in three, the head against the wall at B, the arse against the wall at A, the knees against the wall between B and C, the feet against the wall between C and A, that is to say inscribed in the semi-circle ACB, merging into the white ground were it not for the long hair of strangely imperfect whiteness, the white body of a woman finally. Similarly inscribed in the other semicircle, against the wall his head at A, his arse at B, his knees between A and D, his feet between D and B, the partner.<sup>157</sup>

Hardly a free-play of faculties, the geometrical description is so constrained that it is actually difficult to imagine without a diagram. In this text, the observation and geometrical description, both of these two figures and of their environment, are equivalent to the processes of the imagination. Observing the world, Beckett’s narrator attempts, makes it so. The narrator operates, then, as an “ideal observer,” to anticipate a phrase from *How It Is*, who can modify his position of observation without constraint.<sup>158</sup> Although I evoke the “ideal observer” of *How It Is*, the narrator of *Imagination Dead Imagine* is in a decidedly different position. While the narrator of *Imagination Dead Imagine* speaks from the position of an ideal observer, who, though he can see all, cannot know all, *How It Is*’s narrator speaks from a point of view similar to the geometrically inscribed bodies. Here, at the distance of observation, the narrator effectively over-determines the spatial coordinates of the rotunda in the text, betraying the difference between observation and measurement: “Till all white in the whiteness the rotunda. No way in, go in, measure. Diameter three feet, three feet from ground to summit of the vault. Two diameters at right angles AB CD divide the white ground into two semicircles ACB BDA. Lying on the ground two white bodies, each in its semicircle...Go back out, a plain rotunda, all white in the whiteness, go back in, rap, solid throughout, a ring as in the imagination the ring of bone” (*IDI* 361). In place of an image, measurement quantifies the exact dimensions of the environment’s shell, rendering its structure without giving it life. While observation maintains aesthetic distance and remains passive, measurement gives access where it is not granted (“No way in, go in, measure”). By collapsing the distance between observer and observed, measurement actually intensifies the felt distance between the narrator and the two bodies and their rotunda. Such distance is only augmented by the narrator’s dissection of space and figure, a process that only diminishes the imagination’s capacity to produce a whole image.

When Beckett’s narrator introduces the oscillation between white and heat, and black and cold, the imagination mortifies further because the narrator inevitably introduces time and the “countless treaties” pursued by Habit between the subject and its environment. A spatial figure that represents a regular variation, the oscillation is always a function of time. As Beckett introduces it into the text, he also introduces rhythm to the created world:

Emptiness, silence, heat, whiteness, wait, the light goes down, all grows dark together, ground wall, vault, bodies, say twenty seconds, all the greys, the light goes out, all vanishes. At the same time the temperature goes down, to reach its minimum, say freezing-point, at the same instant that the black is reached, which may seem strange. Wait, more or less long, light and heat come back, all grows white and hot together, ground, wall, vault, bodies, say twenty seconds, all the greys, till the initial level is reached whence the fall began (*IDI* 361).

The modulation of present tense and active voice (e.g., “the light goes out”) with the past and passive (e.g., “black is reached”) demonstrates a transition from the observation of the present to a broader generalization traced out by time’s curve. Rendering time—the “twenty seconds” to reach either extreme—as an oscillating curve, the narrator introduces a kind of memory or store of experience, as well as the quality of “strangeness” that surprises preconceived expectations, to the rhythm of temperature and light. Suddenly “experience,” rather than direct observation, “shows” something to be the case: “for there may intervene, experience shows, between end of fall and beginning of rise, pauses of varying length, from the fraction of the second to what would have seemed, in other times, other places, an eternity” (*IDI* 362). As the narrator describes the oscillations further, his memory allows him to reach a general observation without charting the vicissitudes of the oscillation. But this moment also introduces perspectival relativity, for the narrator imagines other temporal (“other times”) and spatial (“other places”) positions that could experience “the fraction of the second” and “eternity” in other possible ways. As the oscillation presents a temporal rhythm in a spatial figure, the observer, first, interpenetrates perception with memory—the present with the past—and, second, loses a stable and single point of view from which a single image could be seen.

Despite the reference to a place and time outside the world of the text, however, the narrator reasserts a single point of view: “But whatever its uncertainties the return sooner or later to a temporary calm seems assured, for the moment, in the black dark or the great whiteness, with attendant temperature, world still proof against tumult. Rediscovered miraculously after what absence in perfect voids it is no longer quite the same, for this point of view, but there is no other” (*IDI* 362). The oscillation from black and cold—the “absence in perfect voids”—to white and heat betrays the mutual dependence of each pole on the other as the experience of one affects the opposite. Importantly, this mutual evolution of extreme states contradicts the narrator’s statement the world is “still proof against tumult.” Instead the narrative world, whether of its own volition or of the observer’s, continuously changes and thereby resists the order of image formation, except in the graphic representation of time as an oscillating line. Soon after, the “perfectly stable” extremes, or the “lulls” become shorter and the intermediate phases are “never twice the same storm.” *Imagination Dead Imagine*, bereft of a final image, is exemplary of how measurement, or the strict and active determination of details, only accumulates static pieces of a coherent whole. It tracks the predicament of a narrator, who attempts to create: in a position like the *sub specie aeternitatis*, the narrator still lacks the agency to imagine and, further, displaces his capacity to receive an image through a mode like involuntary memory. The active imagination, then, betrays the changeability of the image and its inability to cohere in the eyes of the finite spectator.

*Imagination Dead Imagine* is the perfect companion piece to Beckett’s essay on “Proust” because it demonstrates time and again the failure of the active imagination to shape aesthetic experience. *Imagination Dead Imagine* asks how a series of narrative observations cohere into an image of the deadened capacity to form images. Deleuze asks analogous questions about the internally divided and collectively unified whole in Beckett’s work: “How can one imagine a whole that holds everything together [*un tout qui fasse compagnie*]? How can one make a whole out of the series? By going up the series, by going down it, by multiplying it by two if one speaks to the other, or by three if one speaks to the other of yet another?”<sup>159</sup> These are questions that Beckett asks whenever he evokes the Sorites paradox: if we add one grain of sand to another grain of sand, and another to those two grains, and so on until *n* grains of sand, when do the grains of sand become a heap?<sup>160</sup> References to this problem abound in Beckett: the “great alp of sand, one hundred metres high” in *Watt*; the similarity in *Malone Dies* between Mrs. Lambert’s pile of lentils and how Malone is “to be removed grain by grain until the hand, wearied, begins to play, scooping us up and letting us trickle back into the same place” in *Malone Dies* (*T*, 213-214, 224); the explicit connection between the grain

of sand and time in *The Unnameable* (“why time doesn’t pass, doesn’t pass from you, why it piles up all about you [...] why it buries you grain by grain neither dead or alive” [T, 389]); the “acervation of sacks,” or the piling of them into heaps, in *How It Is* (H 137); the mound of dirt accumulating around Winnie in *Happy Days*, and so on. Beckett’s sorites paradox implies that the series always promises and, yet, always defers the whole. The series is not sufficient to form a whole because it quantifies an accumulation of elements without elaborating their possible relations within the set. Sorites is an extended series, whereas the heap configures itself recursively.

Beckett finds one response to Sorites in Leibniz. In a model of perception adapted from Leibniz’s *Monadology*, the individual perceiver is a “perpetual living mirror of the universe” and so can participate in the whole as a modification of the Monad that sees the whole as unitary.<sup>161</sup> This suggests continuity between the individual observation and the *sub specie aeternitatis* vision that could perceive the whole and its internal relations at once. If there is continuity between an individual perception and the perception of totality, or what amounts to that which the individual cannot see, then the relation between an individual observer and the *sub specie aeternitatis* vision is the relation between a part, or series of parts, and a whole. The sorites paradox, the accumulation of measurements and observations in *Imagination Dead Imagine*, and the series of subjects in “Proust” all articulate the problems and strategies of forming a whole, whether an image or subject, through a series, for example, of partial observations or subjects. Yet, as the promise and deferral of the heap makes plain, the more an individual accumulates details for a total image, the more we recognize our limitations in achieving such an image.<sup>162</sup> This limitation reinstates a practical gap between the observer and the *sub specie aeternitatis* vision. Although these two positions remain connected through a virtual continuity, Beckett’s limited spectator, like that of Geulincx, requires an outside force to integrate the multiplicity of detail perceived. In Beckett’s earlier work, especially in *Murphy* and *Watt*, we’ll soon see that he represents a divided spectatorial body in third-person narration as a strategy for multiplying the points of view within it, while at the same time observing the spectatorial body from a narrative position without it. In the next section on *Watt*, we will see how the third-person narratives so frequently turn spectatorship into spectacle. But, later, in the first-person narratives, we will see how Beckett absorbs the internally divided spectatorial body into the constitutive structure of the narrator and his narration, becoming finally both the spectating-object and spectacle to the *sub specie aeternitatis* spectator always posited outside him.

The academic committee witnessing Ernest Louit’s dissertation defense in *Watt* gives us an early model for the Beckettian spectatorial body as an audience, comprised of multiple spectators, a collection or assemblage of witnesses. Beckett mediates the story of Louit and Mr. Nackybal through two nested narratives that suggest an imbricated system, one that collapses the telling of a story and its reception. Watt overhears Arthur, another servant of Mr. Knott (and so another iteration of Watt), tell it to Mr. Graves, Mr. Knott’s gardener; Watt tells it to *Watt’s* narrator in distorted language (the “ill-said” of *Ill Seen Ill Said*); and the narrator finally communicates it to the reader. In the third section, when the narrator and Watt meet at the furthest physical boundaries of their masters’ houses, the narrator observes Watt “as though [he] were standing before a great mirror,” and notes all Watt says.<sup>163</sup> Watt’s speech, too, is initially inverted as if it were mirrored at the level of text. “Wonder I,” he says, “panky-hanky me lend you could, blood away wipe” and, later, “*Deen did taw? Tonk. Tog da taw? Tonk. Luf puk saw? Hap! Deen did tub? Ton sparp. Tog da tub? Ton wonk?*” (W 159-160, 166). As the narrator continues to meet Watt at the fences separating their masters’ houses, the latter’s speech goes through an increasing degree of distortion—described by the narrator as if it were a literary history of Watt’s style—while the narrator meticulously records it word for word into a notebook: “Often my hands left his shoulders, to make note in their little notebook” (165). This he uses to make Watt’s language familiar enough to give us the story of Louit and Nackybal: “To these conversations we are indebted for the following information,” referring to

Louit's dissertation defense (*W* 169). These narrative mediations prefigure the first-person monologue of *How It Is*, in which the narrator is the witness and scribe of Watt, who receives fragments of a story from a voice outside him.

The story of Nackybal repeats the figure of the witness, but does so through the collective body of the "Grants Committee during Louit's account of the field work for his dissertation, "*The Mathematical Intuition of the Visicelts*" (*W* 171). Louit proposes a research expedition in County Clare, where, it is assumed, he will conduct field research on the innate knowledge of mathematics in a fictional native population of Ireland. After returning to conclude his research three weeks before he was expected, in poor health and bereft of his possessions, Louit defends his dissertation in the general condition of any humanities graduate student: "To the relation of these painful events, that is to say the loss of his boots, his dog, his labour, his money, his health and perhaps even the esteem of his academical superiors, Louit had nothing to add" (*W* 173-174). The centerpiece of Louit's defense is Mr. Nackybal, who, Louit claims, is a "native of Burren," a rocky area of County Clare unaccommodating to agriculture. After Arthur concludes his story to Mr. Graves, we find out that Mr. Nackybal is actually a man named Mr. Tisler, who lives by a canal near the college. In the story, however, Louit claims that Mr. Nackybal "has never [...] received any instruction other than that treating of such agricultural themes, indispensable to the exercise of his profession"—that is, his only knowledge is "how to extract, from the ancestral half-acre moraine, the maximum of nourishment, for himself and his pig, with the minimum of labor" (*W* 174-175). When Louit presents Mr. Nackybal, he causes the discomfiture of the committee, which must exchange looks with one another in order to transmit "the comfort and the reassurance, necessary for a resumption of the business in hand" (*W* 175). This begins a long list of unreciprocated gazes among the committee, witnessed, in turn, by Louit and Nackybal. Since to quote the scene in its entirety would take pages, I quote only one configuration of the committee's gazes:

They then began to look at one another, and much time passed, before they succeeded in doing so [...] when five men look at one another though in theory only twenty looks are necessary, every man looking four times, yet in practice this number is seldom sufficient, on account of the multitude of looks that go astray. For example, Mr Fitzwein looked at Mr Magershon, on his right. But Mr Magershon is not looking at Mr Fitzwein, on his left, but at Mr O'Meldon, on his right. But Mr O'Meldon is not looking at Mr Magershon, on his left, but, craning forward, at Mr MacStern, on his left but three at the far end of the table. But Mr MacStern is not craning forward looking at Mr O'Meldon, on his right [...] And so on. Until of the five times eight or forty looks taken, not one has been reciprocated, and the committee, for all its twisting and turning, is no further advanced, in this matter of looking at itself, than at the now irrevocable moment of its setting out to do so (*W* 175).

The committee and the narrator's account of it give us two versions of the same self-inspecting group of spectators: the committee "in theory," dispatching their gazes with the literal efficiency of a mathematical solution, and the committee "in practice," making up "the multitude of looks that go astray." In practice, as it is quoted above, the order of the committee's gazes is basically a problem of permutation, in which the total number of unique orders of stray looks is, like Murphy's biscuits, 120. The first four orders provided in *Watt* are [Fitz, Mag, O'Mel, MacS, deB] (quoted above), [Fitz, O'Mel, deB, Mag, MacS], [Fitz, MacS, Mag, deB, O'Mel], and [Fitz, deB, MacS, O'Mel, Mag]. The permutations simplify the actual spatial configuration of the committee, the first of which is sketched in Figure 1. The series of looks, then, becomes a narrative expedient for arranging the stray

gazes in space, rather than being a visual representation carefully constructed by the attention given to the committee's positions and "all its twisting and turning." It is a series rather than a heap.



Figure 1: The Grant Committee's configuration of gazes for the first permutation, quoted above, where the arrows here indicate the direction of each committee member's gaze.

The solution to the committee's stray gazes, the narrator goes on to demonstrate, is the simple application of combinatorics, a branch of mathematics that deals with the combination or arrangement of elements in finite sets according to prescribed rules. Often the rules are key limiting conditions and distinguish, in this case, the theoretical solution from the permutations of stray looks iterated above. Central to the theoretical solution's configuration will be that only two people look at each other once, and each look is returned. The stray looks, only sampled above, give a finite but narratively endless set of looks because the looks are deferred elsewhere and are therefore never returned. Combinatorics, to state the obvious, solves the problem of stray looks by introducing ordered pairs, who meet each other's gaze. If the narrator desires the minimum number of looks, the order does not matter so long as the correct pairs match gazes.

The narrator gives the theoretical solution by numbering each member of the committee and by having each look at one another in order, eventually producing the following solution, of which I will only quote the beginning: "Then, when the time comes for the committee to look at itself, let all the members but number one look together at number one, and let number one look at them all in turn, and then close, if he cares to, his eyes, for he has done his duty" (*W* 179). Figure 2 graphically represents the full set of possibilities, which the narrator presents algebraically as follows: "Then it will be found that the committee has looked at itself in the shortest possible time, and with the minimum number of looks, that is to say  $x$  squared minus  $x$  looks if there are  $x$  members of the committee, and  $y$  squared minus  $y$  if there are  $y$ " (*W* 180). The committee's exchange of looks is one among Beckett's most prominent examples of permutations and combinatorics. Other instances include the order of Murphy's biscuits, the optimal order of Molloy's sucking-stones, and the narrator's system in *How It Is*. The committee is unique among these examples because it constitutes a collective body of observers, mediated by the whole of the committee. By producing the solution to the problem of the committee's self-spectation, as well as its stray looks, Beckett effectively represents a group of spectators in all their positions and arrangements. The series of stray looks indicate part of the 120 permutations, whereas the theoretical solution presents both the internal relations implied in the ordered pairs and those pairs as a totality. This image prepares the reader for the committee's observation of Mr. Nackybal, and gives us the figure of the self-divided spectatorial body, which Beckett's narrators later absorb into the process of narrating. The committee itself is divided into separate functions during Louit's defense, chief among them Mr de Baker, the committee's secretary and notetaker, which Beckett frequently figures in his novels. The whole committee, however, witnesses Nackybal's ability to calculate, if somewhat inconsistently, the "cube root of a number of six figures" (*W* 188).

1	2	3	4	5
(1,2)	(2,3)	(3,4)	(4,5)	
(1,3)	(2,4)	(3,5)		

(1,4)	(2,5)			
(1,5)				

Figure 2: Beckett effectively describes this graphical solution to the optimum orientation and sequence of the committee's looks, adding the reciprocal glances (e.g. [1,2] and [2,1]) to the total number of possible looks computed by  $x^2 \cdot x$

The contention is that combinations and permutations require a point of view because they render spatial and ordered configurations. Isabelle Ost describes combinatorics in Beckett as a topographical function, mapping the positions and functions of each element in the set: "Indeed, the writing process based on mathematical combinatorics reduces every element to its position alone, thus to its function alone. Therefore, the imaginary dimension, semblance, and thus the psychological features of the characters, identifying traits, is abolished in a purely structural, symbolic architecture."<sup>164</sup> Given that combinatorics maps positions, function and configurations, it requires a totalizing point of view to observe it, whether in space (practice) or virtually in the mind (theory). This much is implied in Figure 1, where the narrative order of looks is communicated as a permutation, or the mere order of looks, but the actual description constructs the spatial image in Figure 1. So, on one hand, Ost is right that Beckett produces a symbolic architecture, which, if seen from the point of view of the "*sub specie aeternitatis* vision," expresses a structural totality. Yet, on the other, this architecture is only constructed through the series of descriptions in the narrative, which actually deters visualization. That is, the totality and the perspective that can apprehend totality all at once exist, but they can only be expressed through the accumulation of their expressions in the narrative.

Beckett deliberately presents these moments as aspects of the same spectacle: there exists in Arthur's narrative a virtual point of view that could apprehend the totality of the theoretical solution and this point of view is in tension with the spectacle of its inefficient expression. Molloy, too, enacts this very spectacle contained in the order of sucking stones: "Good. Now I can begin to suck. Watch me closely. I take a stone from the right pocket of my greatcoat, suck it, stop sucking it, put it in the left pocket of my greatcoat, the one empty (of stones)," and so on (*T* 72). When Louit argues that Mr. Nackybal's innate faculty for mathematics is best demonstrated by calculating the cube-root, he rejects the task of calculating the square, cube and square-root of a number because "A visualizer can cube and square in his head, seeing the figures come and go" and "A visualizer can extract the square root in his head [...] as with a paper and a sheet of pencil" (*W* 192). These operations would not give sufficient evidence of Mr. Nackybal's innate capacity for mathematics because they could be construed as easily visualized in the individual's mind. The visualizer could actively form the mathematical solutions into images, whereas the solution would appear in its entirety to the person who works by intuition as if it came from outside his mind's eye. In other words, there exists a point of view outside the frame of the individual subject, which is some virtual totality, and the subject can only express it through the dramatization of its perceivable parts. This division between part and whole maps onto the combinatorics problem above, for the narrative expression is a visualization of the virtual theoretical solution, which apprehends the total solution at once, and both mutually authorize the other point of view. The "*sub specie aeternitatis* vision" confirms that the spectacle adds up to some totality, and the totality can only be expressed either symbolically or through the cumulative witness of its parts.

Thus, the committee and their stray looks, expressed through permutation, exhibit a spectatorial position that requires and aspires to "*sub specie aeternitatis* vision," and, yet, is a spectacle of a finite spectatorship, however multiplied by the collective of spectators within the committee. These spectacles, where Beckett enumerates the sum-total of possible situations, are antithetical to narrative progress because they express no preference for one detail or event over another. It must

be remembered, of course, that Arthur sets out to tell Mr. Graves a story about Bando, a panacea and aphrodisiac, and, yet, he never manages to get beyond the story about Louit's dissertation defense. "If I tell you all this in such detail," Arthur tells Mr. Graves, speaking of Louit and the Grant Committee, "the reason is, believe me, that I cannot, much as I should like, and for reasons that I shall not go into, for they are unknown to me, do otherwise" (*W* 181). These details, exhaustively combined and permuted, exhibit a resistance to narrative insofar as they exhibit structures of possible relations without expressing a preferred sequence of events. And, yet, they can only resist narrative within narrative, which inevitably thwarts both narrative progress and the articulation of a whole system of possibilities.

Branka Arsić describes this internal resistance to narration as an effect of "God's visual language": "In God's visual language, everything unfolds as a kind of artistic practice in which different spectacles are not reduced to a single vantage point, but each constitutes for itself its own 'fluctuating' center, thus releasing the field from vision of the difference between center and periphery [...] Simply put: the non-narration of God's visual language means that within it, the stories multiply, but there is no narration."<sup>165</sup> "God's visual language" represents the apotheosis of the unitary image, which, like Leibniz's "city of God," contains all possible points of view. Beckett, then, reduces narrative to permutations of narrative sequence in order to attempt this image. Yet, such narrative expression resists its own momentum toward the wholeness of "God's visual language." This double bind articulates the "cannot" behind Arthur's inability to "do otherwise" than enumerate details. In the committee's visual language, the narration of stray looks is scalable, in general, according to the number of committee members present. This multiplication of narrative details therefore changes narrative qualitatively. We seem to read a story of endless detail, reduced at times to pure narrative sequence. At the same time, however, that there are no stories except through this same narrative accumulation. This accumulation, and its deferred end, is the reason that recommending Bando to Mr. Graves occasions Arthur's story and, yet, the story never mentions Bando, being instead a narrative about Louit, Nackybal, and the Grant Committee (*W* 198).

In "The Exhausted," Deleuze constructs three meta-languages to describe Beckett's tendency to exhaust all possibilities, all permutations and combinations. The "exhausted" refers to the end of possibility, when all possibilities have been imagined. He writes, "Exhaustion is something entirely different [from tiredness]: one combines the set of variables of a situation, on the condition that one renounce any order of preference, any organization in relation to a goal, any signification."<sup>166</sup> Unlike Murphy, who cannot access the 120 unique orders of eating his biscuits because he expresses a preference for the ginger and distaste for the anonymous, the Exhausted, by expressing no preference at all, imagines the sum-total possibilities available. This form of totality allows for the condition of what Deleuze calls the "inclusive disjunction," when the possible includes everything, even if it contains impossible elements.<sup>167</sup> For Deleuze, the possible configures a totality akin to Leibniz's Monad: "There is no existence other than the possible [...]" The disjunction has become inclusive: everything divides, but into itself; and God, who is the sum total of the possible merges with Nothing, of which each thing is a modification."<sup>168</sup> From the position of *sub specie aeternitatis* vision, an imagined spectator is the sum total of the possible at the same time that he sees it, however impossible its elements.

Deleuze then develops three metalanguages that depend on this idea of the possible, of which *I* and *II* are the most relevant for Beckett's prose-narrative.<sup>169</sup> *Language I* exhausts the possible through the permutation and combination of elements within a set, whether objects or ideas; it is "a language in which enumeration replaces propositions and combinatorial relations replace syntactic relations: a language of names."<sup>170</sup> This is the language of the Grant Committee during Louit's defense, and that of Molloy's sucking stones, among many other examples. If *Language I* exhausts the

possible by combining and ordering elements into all possible configurations, then *Language II* is the derivative of *Language I*—that is, it is not the objects and their names in structural configuration, but, instead, the rate of change of language, or the movement of speech. *Language II* is “a language that no longer operates with combinable atoms but with blendable flows. Voices are waves and flows that direct and distribute the linguistic corpuscles.” Although *Language II* more accurately represents tendencies in Deleuze’s philosophy than in Beckett’s writing, it articulates well the ways in which Beckett’s voices blend and divide because their sources are not easily locatable. These indistinct voices describe the internal division of the voice in Beckett’s work like *How It Is* or *The Unnameable*, in which the source of voices multiply and become atmospheric, even if they seem to reduplicate one another and converge within an individual. Deleuze calls these voice “Others”: “the Others are *possible worlds*, in which the voices confer a reality that is always variable [...] the Others constitute [...] stories.”<sup>171</sup> These voices tend to be mediated through a narrator, and, yet, they are the self-division of that narrator’s voice into a chorus of voices whose source is not localized. It is worth noting, here, the differences between a Leibnizian model and Geulincx’s. In a monist system, the voices must originate within the system, whereas, in a dualist system, they might come from without.

The interrelation between *language I* and *II* articulates a fundamental problematic of Beckett’s texts. *Language II* describes how the multiplicity of voices are attributed to “Others” and, yet, contained within a One. We saw this in the narrator of *The Unnameable*, who apperceives “all these Murphys, Molloys, and Malones” and subsumes them as only a part of himself. It is even more explicit, if still confusing, for the narrator of *How It Is*, who speaks the novel entirely in three monologues. He, too, consists of external voices (“I say it as I hear it”), which oscillate between being all one or decomposed into their parts. This indistinction of voices (and, therefore, equivalence) reframes the problem of narrative voice not through the differences of voice, but through the dialectic of part and whole. In this dialectic, the whole can only be the expression of its parts and the parts gain force through the imagined wholeness, which is nowhere empirically available and must therefore be imagined from a virtual point of view. *Language II* reflects onto *Language I*. If *Language II* articulates the distribution and flux of subjectivity through one and other, then *Language I* articulates the integration of their positions and relations through the point of view that can see all at once.

The sum-total of possibilities is the antithesis of narrative, which must express preference for one detail, or one possibility, over another. The former brackets time or sequence, expressing instead the coordinates of the possible and the relations of their mutual coordination. But the sum-total always fails because each collected sum always posits a greater collection outside of it. The problem of observing a totality exerts the force of an axiom: seeing totality so as to give an image of it defines it as a function of a spectator’s point of view and so always posits a perspective outside of that spectator’s. The spectator can never articulate the system, but he can see it through its functions. The opposite of totality, then, occurs in the accumulation of possible detail: as one completes the sum-total, one recognizes the increasing disjunction between it and what it excludes. For Leibniz, there is God, who both sees the whole and actually is the whole. Hence, we turn to the body divided unto itself—the figure of the audience, construed as an inclusive disjunction and body containing multiplicity, which likewise becomes a relation between part and whole, each part expressing a possible collection unto itself. This reckoning of possible collections multiplies our efforts but within a contained and decomposed whole. Space, then, becomes the only thing that can hold these efforts together.

Beckett’s word for the dissection of a whole into parts is “decomposition,” more than just a suggestion of bodily decomposition. The narrator of *Malone Dies* describes the ability to distinguish a single noise within a cacophony of noise as “the faculty of decomposing”:

Oh not that I was ever even incompletely deaf. But for a long time now I have been hearing things confusedly. There I go again. What I mean is possibly this, that the noises of the world, so various in themselves and which I used to be so clever at distinguishing from one another, had been dinning at me for so long, always the same old noises, as gradually to have merged into a single noise, so that all I heard was one vast continuous buzzing. The volume of sound perceived remained no doubt the same, I had simply lost the faculty of decomposing it. The noises of nature, of mankind and even my own, were all jumbled together in one and the same unbridled gibberish.<sup>172</sup>

The whole is “one vast and continuous buzzing” and “the same unbridled gibberish,” whereas the individual sounds by dint of the faculty of decomposition might be “in the outcry without, the leaves, the boughs, the groaning of trunks, even the grasses and the house that sheltered me” or the “barking of the dogs [...] where the stone-cutters lived” (T 206).

The faculty of decomposing is evident in the third-person narratives, and especially in *Watt*, where the committee is decomposed into looks that go astray. But the first-person narratives absorb the problem of decomposition differently. If, as in *How It Is*, voices all seem to come from without, then the ‘I’ can distinguish between one voice and another, but it cannot use the categories of “part” and “whole” to identify one voice as belonging to the ‘I’ or not. This inability to identify voices, too, occurs in *Malone Dies* between Sapo (later Macmann) and the narrator, Malone. Malone can distinguish between himself and Sapo but he cannot understand if they belong to the same whole, and whether that whole is Malone or someone else: “I did not want to write, but I had resigned myself to it in the end. It is in order to know where I have got to, where he [Sapo] has got to [...] I write about myself with the same pencil and in the same exercise-book as about him. It is because it is no longer I, I must have said so long ago, but another whose life is just beginning” (T 207-208). Here the problem of impersonality bears on the asynchronicity of subject and object that Beckett describes in “Proust.” Malone maintains the ability to distinguish between “I” and “he,” when he writes about Sapo and himself in his notebook. But it also seems possible that “he” is just an objectification of the “I,” and both belong to the same life. Beckett makes this more problematic, when the “I” is no longer “I,” and so it is equally unclear where the “I” and “he” identify with a unified “I,” belonging to Malone and not Sapo, or vice versa. This example of impersonality, in which the serial subject becomes a serial object for itself, ushers in a transpersonality that ebbs and flows between the unified and decomposed subject, the one and many. While Malone meditates over this problem, he regains his ability to decompose the “one vast continuous buzzing” enough to hear a choir without that also goes on within: “And I hear also, there we are at last, I hear a choir, far enough away from me not to hear it when it goes soft. It is a song I know, I don’t know how, and when it fades, and when it dies quite away, it goes on inside me, but too slow, or too fast, for when it comes on the air to me again it is not together with mine, but behind, or ahead. It is a mixed choir, or I am greatly deceived” (T 208). When the faculty of decomposing discerns a sound, it retains the quality of being part of a whole, but it can only discern the source of the sound if the auditor hears the inside and outside sounds simultaneously and asynchronously. Malone, then, is audience to a mixed choir within him and without, both singular and multiple, as well as the source of the choir’s song. Rather than play on the gender of the “mixed choir,” he transposes the song into a question of the interior and exterior. “Assume notably henceforward that the thing said and the thing heard have a common source [...] Situate this source in me,” the Unnameable says, “without specifying where exactly, no finicking, anything is preferable to the consciousness of third parties, and, more generally speaking, of an outer world” (T 390).

If, in Geulincx, God has already done all possible action and motion, and man cannot act except do what God already accomplished, then God manifests the sum total of all possible actions within the world. There exists, then, a correlative perspective that can perceive and intend the sum-total of actions simultaneously. On the other hand, in Leibniz, the parts produced by decomposition retain the possibility of being part of a whole, implying a system beyond the one part. But nowhere is this system locatable, for the partition between the inside and outside is permeable. If the system is self-enclosed, as in Leibniz, then the 'T' is self-divided into voice/audience, spectacle/spectator, etc. and still retains the possibility of only being a part of the whole. If the system is locatable outside, as Geulincx suggests, then it posits a third-party distant observer.

When the narrator in *The Unnameable*, speaking through Worm, contemplates his status as a spectacle, he numbers the *sub specie aeternitatis* spectator one among many. The chop house owner, Madeleine, displays Worm in a jar near her restaurant, giving him up to the eyes of an audience and allowing his eyes to return their gaze: "If I turn, I shall not say my head, but my eyes, free to roll as they list, I can see the statue of the apostle of horse's meat, a bust. His pupilless eyes of stone are fixed upon me. That makes four, with those of my creator, omnipresent" (*T* 327). Here Beckett already exploits the ambiguity of identifying Worm's creator with either God or the unnameable narrator, and he makes explicit the condition, experienced by the first-person narrators, of being seen by an absent spectator. This condition indicates a shift from at least *Murphy* to *The Unnameable*, by which Beckett translates the locus of the "*sub specie aeternitatis* vision" from the character to the narrator. Recall that the mind of Murphy, "hermetically closed to the universe without," sees and is a mirror reflecting all that "ever had been, was or would be" in the universe as "virtual, or actual, or virtual rising into actual, or actual falling into virtual, in the universe inside it" (*M* 107). In *The Unnameable*, this characteristic of Murphy's mind, visible to the narrator of *Murphy*, shifts to the narrator as a now absent and constitutive point of view generating the prose-narrative. The narrator is at once the vision that sees and is his characters, and the spectacle seen by a vision without him, felt but not seen, who authorizes his stories by witnessing them.

This condition of the narrator is explicit in *The Unnameable*: "All these Murphys, Molloys, and Malones do not fool me [...] They never suffered my pains, their pains are nothing, compared to mine, a mere tittle of mine, the tittle I thought I could put from me, in order to witness it" (*T* 304). And, yet, the narrator is always the object of other witnesses and masters: "if there are others, to whom [this voice] might belong, they have never come near me, I won't delay just now to make this clear. Perhaps they are watching me from afar, I have no objection" and "My master. There is a vein I must not lose sight of. But for the moment my concern—but before I forget, there may be more than one, a whole college of tyrants, differing in their views as to what should be done with me" (*T* 307, 310). On one hand, the narrator self-reflexively externalizes "the tittle [he] thought [he] could put from [him]," transforming it into the "Murphys, Molloys, and Malones [...]" in order to witness [the tittle]." They are the partial objectifications of the whole narrator so that he could better inspect aspects of himself. On the other hand, spectators, an audience, or a "whole college of tyrants" witness the narrator from the outside. If this witness is reciprocal, then the narrator's Murphys, Molloys and Malones return his gaze and he is likewise objectified, a part of someone else's whole. As soon as Worm, for example, rolls his eyes to gaze upon the apostle's bust gazing back at him, Beckett transforms the scene into a spectacle of spectatorship, whereupon he imagines the omnipresent creator as a new witness. This spectatorial dynamic, then, posits a whole system of witness and a series of witnesses. Any one spectatorial system is neither closed nor final. This, then, always allows for the possibility that another spectator, "the everlasting third," witnesses one spectator watch another and so on in series (*T* 375). These systems of spectatorship, then, ground Beckett's prose and implicate them in the idea of theatrical spectatorship.<sup>173</sup>

Beckett divides *How It Is* into three parts, each a monologue quoted in the present: “how it was I quote before Pim with Pim after Pim three parts how it is I say it as I hear it.”<sup>174</sup> The temporality of the novel is asynchronous: his speech’s content (“how it was”) asymptotically approaches the temporality of his speaking (“how it is”). Since the monologue is mediated speech, it already signals the narrative’s dependence on an audience, taken literally as an auditor, even if it is absent from the structure of the novel, while the novel announces its parts at its beginning. The most intense statement of the novel’s structure comes from the narrator in Part III. Before we get to this schema, however, it is necessary to describe the other parts of the novel. The three sections encompass different states of the speaker with respect to Pim. First, the monologue recounts the speaker’s experience alone and “[crawling] in an amble ten yards fifteen yards” toward—we later find out—Pim (*H* 19). In part two, the speaker reaches Pim and becomes his tormentor, devising a simplified “script” to train certain behaviors, which he summarizes in a table of stimuli: “table of basic stimuli one sing nails in armpit two speak blade in arse three stop thump on skull four louder pestle on kidney/ five softer index in anus six bravo clap athwart arse seven lousy same as three eight encore same as one or two as may be” (*H* 69).<sup>175</sup> Here, the forms of expression, whether singing or speaking, articulate an index of torture. The tormentor (in this case, also the speaker of the novel) cannot speak when tormenting Pim, whereas, from Pim’s point of view, these various abuses above goad him into speech. When the speaker prompts Pim, he speaks about his “life above,” which are the only overtly storied fragments in the novel. For example: “papa no idea building trade perhaps some branch or other fell off the scaffolding on his arse no the scaffolding that fell and he with it landed on his arse dead burst it must have been him or the uncle God knows” (*H* 78). Although the speaker cannot speak with Pim, he communicates with Pim by using the nail of his index finger to write words on Pim’s back “in great capitals,” which Beckett indicates in the text with caps: “YOU PIM pause YOU PIM in the furrows here a difficulty has he grasped no knowing” (*H* 71). In the company of Pim, the voice—Pim’s, the speaker’s, Bom’s (the speaker’s future tormentor), and the “voice of us all quaqua on all sides”—begins to merge into a single voice so that distinctions between Pim and the speaker blur: “I talk like him Bom will talk like me only one kind of talk here one after another the voice said so it talks like us the voice of us all quaqua on all sides then in us when the panting stops bits and scraps that’s where we get it our old talk” (*H* 76). While the voices begin as similar among distinctive constituents, the speaker provisionally internalizes the external “voice of us all quaqua on all sides,” which seems impervious to full internalization. The multiplicity of voices in the voice is decomposed in part three: “quaqua the voice of us all who all all those here before me and to come alone in this wallow or glued together all the Pims tormentors promoted victims past” (*H* 107-108). And, yet, since the narration is a monologue, nothing modulates the narrative voice of the speaker within the text. The speaker, then, equates Pim’s life above with his own. The extent to which he does so becomes apparent in the system devised in part three, which Pim’s departure inaugurates. The final section synchronizes the narrative past, “how it was after Pim,” with the speaker’s present, “how it is,” before Bom arrives to torment him just as he tormented Pim. He says, “add it quick before Bom before he comes to ask me how it was my life here before him [...] how it was after Pim before Bom how it is” (*H* 98). It is here in the third part that the speaker speculates about the system governing the novel’s structure in ways already described above (i.e. crawling in the mud, tormenting another, lying alone in the mud, and being tormented).

The rhetorical mode of the monologue synchronizes the temporality of each section’s story to “how it is” in the present, and bestows the function of ‘speaker’ and ‘hearer’ on the narrator, who says it as he hears it. This confluence of roles in the narrator immediately posits a voice separate from his functions as speaker and hearer. The second paragraph of the novel introduces the figure of the voice: “voice once without quaqua on all sides in me when the panting stops” and “I hear it in

me that was without quaqua on all sides” (*H* 7, 47). The voice, which the speaker quotes as he hears it, at first begins outside the speaker as an indistinct and unlocatable utterance, and he only internalizes it when the panting does not supplant the attention of his hearing. Banfield describes the “quaqua” as a way to root out the lexical expansiveness of the Joycean neologism with a baby-talk that tends in the opposite direction of being better able to express.<sup>176</sup> Insetad, Beckett reduces language to its elemental units, a process that Banfield shows Beckett theorizing in *How It Is*.<sup>177</sup> I reach a similar conclusion by understanding “qua” as a preposition indicating the capacity of some element (e.g., man *qua* man).<sup>178</sup> Rather than “quaqua” functioning to further refine the voice as “qua” might, “quaqua meaning on all sides” becomes qua<sup>2</sup>, a second-order abstraction of “qua” defining an area of indistinction and equivalence (“on all sides”), as if Beckett were calculating the area of a square (*H* 107). This tends in precisely the same direction that Banfield indicates. Rather than augment the lexical expressiveness of language, as in Joyce, the source of the monologue in *How It Is* tends toward indistinction and the intensifying inability of language to express. The equivalence of linguistic units implied by this indistinction explains the lack of punctuation and other syntactical markers. The speaker, then, must distinguish voices within that indistinct voice in order to speak the novel. This occurs just as Beckett decomposes the narrative function into a system of simpler functions (‘speaker’, ‘hearer’, ‘voice’, the ‘witness’ “Kram” and the ‘scribe’ “Krim”). The narrator of *Malone Dies* experiences a similar “quaqua” (he calls it “one vast continuous buzzing”) and describes this ability to distinguish a single noise within a cacophony of noise, “the faculty of decomposing.”<sup>179</sup>

That the speaker receives his speech from another raises a question for him: does he speak the sounds he hears or does he simply mouth the voice, for he cannot hear himself speak. He poses it as such: “brief movements of the lower face no sound it’s my words cause them it’s they cause my words it’s one or the other” (*H* 44). Such a self-reflexive question—whether the movements of his jaw cause him to speak words or whether the words that he hears cause his jaw to move—requires a further decomposition. The speaker introduces therefore the witness and his notetaker as new narrative functions, as if self-knowledge required someone external to him to verify its validity:

say say part one no sound the syllables move my lips and all around all the lower that helps me understand

that’s the speech I’ve been given part one before Pim question do I use it freely it’s not said or I don’t hear it’s one or the other all I hear is that a witness I’d need a witness

he lives bent over me that’s the life he has been given all my visible surface bathing in the light of his lamps when I go he follows me bent in two

his aid sits a little aloof he announces brief movements of the lower face the aid enters it in his ledger (*H* 18).

The speaker oscillates between attributing the voice to the innumerable and the singular, both of which might be the same. The voice becomes the site of oscillating composition and decomposition. At some points in the novel, the voice is a multitude: “quaqua the voice of us all who all all those here before me and to come alone I this wallow or glued together all the Pims tormentors promoted victims past if it ever passes” (*H* 107). At other times, the speaker insists that he and the other characters are all-one, or alone: “but that in reality we are one and all from the unthinkable first to the no less unthinkable last glued together in a vast imbrication of flesh without breach or fissure” (*H* 140). When the speaker suggests that he internalizes every element of the novel—that he is all

one, alone—he almost always posits an ineffable observer, who affirms his movements, whether he is crawling, moving the lower jaw, tormenting or being tormented. This figure he calls “the ideal observer,” or “an ear above in the light”—either spectator or audience (*H* 95, 135). He describes the latter: “fallen in the mud from our mouths innumerable and ascending to where there is an ear a mind to understand a means of noting a care for us the wish to note the curiosity to understand an ear to hear even ill these scraps of other scraps of an antique rigamarole” (*H* 134). Or he describes this “means of noting” as Krim and Kram, decomposing the sentient mind-ear into two characters based on their function: Kram is the witness and Krim is the scribe. Or Krim and Kram are only Kram: “some ancient scraps for Kram who listens Krim who notes or Kram alone one is enough Kram alone witness and scribe his lamps their light upon me Kram with me bending over me till the age-limit then his son his son’s son so on” (*H* 133). No matter the name, function, or organ, the speaker consistently posits an idealized perceiver to bear witness to the content of his monologue. And the swing between a unity within the narrator and a multiplicity of individual functions decides the horizon of perception possible at any given moment, or locates it within the speaker or outside him. When alone, the speaker’s self-awareness depends on the existence of the ideal observer, even if it depends only on the speaker’s imagination of the ideal observer. This process already begins the process of decomposition, by which the speaker imagines again a multiplicity of victims and tormentors, journeying and abandoned, observers and scribes. In the enumeration of characters, the speaker places himself in a position as if he were the ideal observer witnessing the machinations of the system of the novel, and, in fact, the novel seems designed to produce this reciprocal witnessing.

The oscillation occurring in the voice also occurs in the system proposed in part three. Here is the order the speaker proposes for the novel: “assuming one prefers the order here proposed namely one the journey two the couple three the abandon to that to those to be obtained by starting with the abandon and ending with the journey by way of the couple and ending with the/ with the couple/ by way of the abandon/ or of the journey” (*H* 116). This order the speaker models for a finite set of characters “numbered 1 to 1000000” before he simplifies it to a geometrical model “numbered only 1 to 4” (*H* 117). By combining the geometrical model with a numerical sequence, Beckett enables the speaker a speculative conception of his environment’s space and emphasizes the function tied to each spatial coordinate. Although the novel only contains three sections, the narrator incorporates a fourth figure, who completes the system and of whom the narrator has no direct knowledge. Even the self-enclosed system, then, posits a figure outside what is directly observable from the speaker’s point of view within the system. Modeling the system as such contrasts with the recurring possibility that he is alone: “and if on the contrary I alone then no further problem a solution which without a serious effort of the imagination it would seem difficult to avoid” (*H* 117). The speaker’s description of the system, then, requires “a serious effort of the imagination,” detailing his position within it, the others involved, and everyone’s function:

And three if only three of us and so numbered only 1 to 3 four rather it’s preferable clearer picture if only four of us and so numbered only 1 to 4

then two places only at the extremities of the greatest chord say A and B for the four couples the four abandoned

two tracks only of a semi-orbit each say how shall we say AB and BA for the travellers

let me for example be numbered 1 it’s not asking a great deal and at a given moment find myself abandoned that is to say again abandoned at the extremity A of the great chord and assuming we turn deasil

then before I can find myself again at the same point and in much the same state I shall have been successively

victim of number 4 at A en route along AB tormentor of number 2 at B abandoned again but this time at B victim again of number 4 but this time at B en route again but this time along BA tormentor of number 2 again but this time at A and finally abandoned again at A and all set to begin again (*H* 117-118).

Although Beckett obfuscates the ability to visualize the geometry here by using technical language, he narrates a clear image: (1) “two places at the extremities of the greatest chord say A and B,” where “the greatest chord” is simply the diameter of a circle; (2) “two tracks only of a semi-orbit...AB and BA,” where two “semi-orbits” would trace a circle and where AB and BA practically overdetermine the description; (3) “deasil” simply means clockwise. Such technical language evades *a priori* distinction—a quality often attributed to geometry—by using concepts dependent on other concepts, whether of the circle, or circular trajectories or objects. The resulting cycle would produce the states pictured in Figure 1, where the novel would take place during states iii, iv, and v, corresponding to “how it was [...] before Pim with Pim after Pim,” respectively (*H* 7).

Ultimately the system imagined by the speaker takes on greatest detail when he limits its scope to his immediate point of view. Such a limited observational position is evoked several times as the speaker imagines the novel’s structure. First, the speaker charts the movements of Pim and Bem, though it seems that his knowledge of Bem should be impossible, at least by any means other than geometry: “at the instant Pim leaves me and goes toward the other Bem leaves the other and comes towards me I place myself at my point of view” (*H* 112-113). The speaker’s point of view does not seem to limit his observational position despite its invocation. Neither should the speaker know whether Bem leaves his position “at the instant Pim leaves” nor should the speaker be able to self-reflexively place himself at his point of view unless he were at a position removed from it. “I place myself at my point of view,” he quotes as he hears, “Bom then me and Pim me in the middle” (*H* 114). At the instant the speaker posits a limited point of view, he implies a perspective beyond the frame of the speaker’s observational and speculative position that could take in the system as a totality. The evocation of point of view, therefore, betrays the speaker’s position either somewhere outside the system he imagines, or, at least, suffusing it. So when the speaker imagines the system of “millions millions there are millions” and then imagines it for “1 to 4,” he constructs a potentially infinite order from the finitude of his position, even while he places himself outside the system as its spectator and creator. The individual nodes within the system and their corresponding points of view are the basis for knowledge of the system. Knowing the system, he claims, is knowing the others within proximity of our position and how we relate to them: “as for number 3 I do not know him nor consequently he me just as number 2 and number 4 do not know each other/ for each of us then if only four of us one of us for every unknown or known only by repute there is that possibility” (*H* 118). When he considers the case of a million, then he concludes: “rumour transmissible ad infinitum in either direction” (*H* 120). The knowledge possible by point of view—the same structure of perceiving and knowing between part and whole—could be overcome by the rumored account given by Bom, or 4, to the speaker. Or, rather than being overcome, it allows induction to fabricate a system that represents what is imperceptible to the speaker.<sup>180</sup>

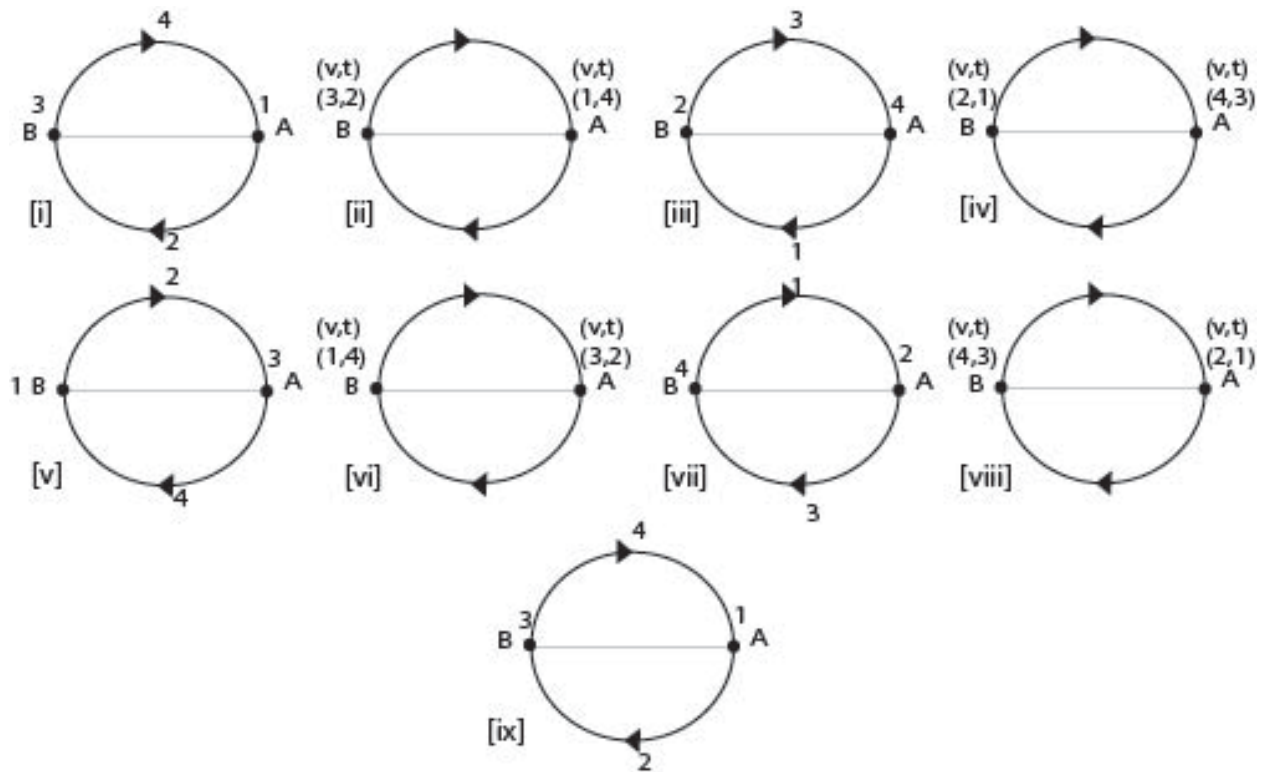


Figure 3: This diagram represents one full cycle in the “round” as it is described by the speaker of *How It Is*. The novel takes places during iii, iv, and v.

The absent witness validates self-observation in Beckett’s characters. Often Beckett does no more than imply the existence of such a witness; or he narrates the characters imagining the presence of such an absent witness. I want to investigate the connection between such an absent witness and the partial absence of the novel’s system (i-ii and vii-ix, in Figure 3) posited by the speaker’s point of view within it. The more finite a character’s point of view—for example, when the speaker is alone rather than populated with innumerable figures who can transmit rumor—the more necessary becomes a point of view that can confirm what is infinite, or imperceptible, in the system. In other words, the more finite the point of view, the greater need for a point of view outside the system that can perceive it as a totality. As stated before, whenever alone, the speaker quickly imagines the witness and scribe, Krim and Kram, even if he ultimately concludes that they are only a fabrication. He even goes so far as to generate a dialogue between them in the Part II, where the speaker is silent and torments Pim into speech:

in a word Pim’s voice then nothing life as we say little scene one minute two minutes good moments then nothing even better not a doubt Kram waits one year two years he knows us something wrong there but all the same two years three years in the end to Krim they are dead something wrong there

Krim dead are you mad one doesn’t die here and with that with his long index claw Kram shaken pierces the mud two little flues to the skins then to Krim right for you they are warm Krim to Kram roles reversed it’s the mud Kram we’ll leave them open and see one year two years Kram’s finger skins still warm

Krim I cannot credit it let us take their temperature Kram no need the skin is rosy  
Krim rosy are you mad Kram they are warm and rosy there it is we are nothing and  
we are rosy good moments not a doubt (*H* 93).

Noting from his own position, the speaker describes the periods of speech and silence during his time with Pim, whose voice could be the voice he would have quoted as he heard it then. But then the speaker, then, posits a better possibility, which could either expunge doubt or without a doubt be a better moment, wherein Krim and Kram become distant observers of Pim and the speaker. The scene illustrates the reciprocal nature of witness in Beckett, for imagining Krim and Kram as witnesses of the speaker and Pim becomes a drama of observation, in which the speaker is the witness of Krim and Kram. Attributing qualities to the speaker and Pim only occurs in a theater of observation, where the typical roles are reversed and spectatorship is the only action available to the scene.

#### *Coda*

Imagining a *sub specie aeternitatis* spectator, therefore, engages that point of view in a system of reciprocal witnessing, in which Beckett's narrator subjects its gaze to observation. Beckett's narratives therefore dramatize the absent gaze, which makes a spectacle of its vision, producing the spatial, totalizing, accumulative, combinatorial, or diagrammatic images in Beckett's work. One strategy for composing the point of view of the *sub specie aeternitatis* vision is multiplication, on one hand, and self-division, on the other. The former is Beckett's strategy in *Watt*, where the ordering and combining of the Grant Committee multiplies stray and returned gazes by finite numbers. In turn, ordered and combined sets present a narrative strategy that accumulates the possible and underlying spatial configurations into a set aspiring to the virtual perspective of some posited totality, whether that is simply the sum-total of possibilities or the theoretical solution under certain constraints. Each set figures a possible set of relations. Although this accumulation can only occur in narrative, the spatial configurations that underlie one set of a permutation produce a resistance to narrative time, as if an ordered set presents space as though it could only be represented in series. When Beckett absorbs this multiplicity into his first-person narrators, it produces a series of self-divisions that multiply into the indistinction of a possible infinite series of observers: if the imagined observer's spectatorship is made into a spectacle and its vision represented, then neither the narrator nor the spectator can be a unified whole; this produces the "everlasting third," who, theoretically, produces another combinatorial set of reciprocal gazes *ad infinitum*. *How It Is* presents this in the problematic of part and whole, of a point of view and the system. Point of view presents a partial systematization of the environment and figures surrounding it, but it can imagine an "ideal observer," who sees the system as a totality or who sees any point within it. Krim and Kram, or just Kram, variously assume the position of the ideal observer, and demand that the systematization of the novel's structure expand to encompass them and their own genealogy of observers. When the narrator asserts that he is actually alone, he then posits that the system and its external spectators are all part of a self-divided subject, who is only articulated through the position, function, and expression of the narration as a system of spectators.

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<sup>1</sup> Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time, Vol. 1, Swann's Way*, Trans. C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin, Revised by D.J. Enright (New York: The Modern Library, 2003), 100.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, *Within a Budding Grove*, 23.

<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Crary polemically describes the experience of the stereoscope as follows: "The stereoscopic spectator sees neither the identity of a copy nor the coherence guaranteed by the frame of a window. Rather, what appears is the technical reconstitution of an already reproduced world fragmented into *two* nonidentical models, models that precede any experience of their subsequent perception as unified or tangible. It is a radical repositioning of the observer's relation to visual representation. The institutionalization of this decentered observer and the stereoscope's dispersed and multiplied sign severed from a point of external reference indicate a greater break with a classical observer than that which occurs later in the century in the realm of painting. The stereoscope signals an eradication of the 'point of view' around which, for several centuries, meanings had been assigned reciprocally to

an observer and the object of his or her vision. There is no longer any possibility of perspective under such a technique of beholding. The relation of observer to image is no longer to an object quantified in relation to a position in space, but rather to two dissimilar images whose position simulates the anatomical structure of the observer's body." Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992), 128.

<sup>4</sup> Proust, *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>5</sup> Niklas Luhmann, *Art as a Social System*, Trans. Eva M. Knody (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> Georg Lukács, "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat," *History and Class Consciousness*, Trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1967), 90.

<sup>7</sup> Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, Trans. (New York: Dover Publications, 2001).

<sup>8</sup> Aristotle, *Physics Books I-IV*, Trans. P.H. Wicksteed and F.M. Cornford (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957) and Aristotle, *Physics Books V-VIII*, Trans. P.H. Wicksteed and F.M. Cornford (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934).

<sup>9</sup> Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 153.

<sup>10</sup> Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, Trans. N. M. Paul and W.S. Palmer (New York: Zone Books, 1990), 74. Hereafter abbreviated *MM* and cited parenthetically by page number.

<sup>11</sup> G. W. Leibniz, "Monadology," *Discourse on Metaphysics, Correspondence with Arnauld, Monadology*, Trans. George Montgomery (La Salle, IL: Open Court Publishing Company, 1995), §56 and 57.

<sup>12</sup> Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1953), 4.

<sup>13</sup> Vincent Sherry argues that Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis belong to a tradition of proto-Fascist and Fascist continental criticism and philosophy that prefers sight to sound. See Vincent Sherry, *Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis, and Radical Modernism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

<sup>14</sup> Paul Edwards describes this painting as "a representation of the artist able to synthesize different types of humanity," evoking the "types of humanity" in Lewis's essay, "Inferior Religions." In Edwards's reading, the theater manager synthesizes these different actors into a presentation that will satisfy an audience. While Chris Mullen points out Lewis's debt to Gustave Le Bon's *The Crowd*, in which Le Bon writes that the theater manager "should be able to transform themselves into a crowd," Edwards points out that such a transformation only occurs through the manipulation of a "ready-made set of symbols and signs." He reinforces this claim by noting that the theater manager reads from an accepted script and by citing Richard Cork's argument that the actors in the painting are figures modeled, or "pre-scripted," from Albrecht Dürer, Leonardo Da Vinci and Pablo Picasso. All told, Edwards argues that the painting obtains expressive richness by allowing both a "Romantic idea of the pure creative personality" and an idea of a pre-determined set of symbols and signs. Paul Edwards, *Wyndham Lewis: Painter and Writer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 30; Chris Mullen's point is cited by Edwards in *Wyndham Lewis: Painter and Writer* from Chris Mullen's contribution to Jane Farrington *Wyndham Lewis*, Exhibition Catalogue (London: Lund Humphries in association with the City of Manchester Art Galleries, 1980), 50; *Ibid.*, Edwards cites from Richard Cork, *Vorticism and Abstract Art in the First Machine Age*, which is itself cited in Farrington, *Wyndham Lewis*, 50.

<sup>15</sup> Rose notes that this letter was unfinished and probably not sent. Lewis to T. Sturge Moore, Paris, ca. 1909, in *The Letters of Wyndham Lewis*, ed. W. K. Rose (London: Metuen & Co. Ltd., 1963), 39-40.

<sup>16</sup> "The 'Pole,'" "Some Innkeepers and Bestre," and "*Les Saltimbanques*" were revised in 1927 and appeared in *The Wild Body* as "*Beau Sejour*," "Bestre," and "The Cornac and his Wife," respectively.

<sup>17</sup> Vincent Sherry and Frederic Jameson provide some of the best criticism on Lewis's Fascist political and literary dimensions. See Vincent Sherry, *Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis, and Radical Modernism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) and Frederic Jameson, *Fables of Aggression: The Modernist as Fascist* (New York: Verso, 2008).

<sup>18</sup> See Laura Winkiel, "Cabaret Modernism: Vorticism and Racial Spectacle," *Geomodernisms: Race, Modernism, Modernity* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005) for an account of Lewis's short involvement in the English Cabaret.

<sup>19</sup> The Pole could range from a man of German birth, whose appearance resembles a "Royal Academician of Celtic Origin," whose speech is accompanied by a "French grace," and whose name was due to his Italian ancestry, to a "Lapp, Esquimaux, or other dim and hyperborean personage who had found his way to these parts" (P, 263, 265).

<sup>20</sup> Lewis never explains the ramifications of assuming the dichotomy of mind and body. He therefore seems to conflate the mechanism of the Cartesian body with what seems like the organism of the Wild Body. This metaphoric substitution is characteristic of Lewis's metaleptic style.

<sup>21</sup> The following quotations from "On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry" are all taken from Friedrich Schiller, "On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry," Trans. William F. Wertz Jr., *The Schiller Institute* accessed on April 10, 2017 [https://www.schillerinstitute.org/transl/Schiller\\_essays/naive\\_sentimental-1.html](https://www.schillerinstitute.org/transl/Schiller_essays/naive_sentimental-1.html)

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Wyndham Lewis, *Blasting and Bombardiering* (New York: John Calder Publishers, 1982), 3.

<sup>26</sup> Quote reproduced from Wyndham Lewis, "Physics of the Not-Self," *Collected Poems and Plays*, ed. Alan Munton (Manchester: Carcanet, 1979), 199. Hereafter abbreviated *PNS* and cited parenthetically by page number.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 195.

<sup>28</sup> Plato, *The Symposium*, quoted from "Physics of the Not-Self," 204.

<sup>29</sup> The "composite body" is the synthesis of both an emotional body and the Platonic forms. The full passage is as follows: "At the end of the *Symposium*, Socrates is described as persuading the last of the revelers that 'the same person is able to compose both tragedy and comedy, and that the foundations of the tragic and the comic arts are essentially the same.' Since there is a unique point of common emotion from which these two activities arise, to which both can be traced back (and on account of which common source the same poet enabled to excel at both), so no doubt the different categories of forms, and their archetypes, would be fused, for such a mind, somewhere or other, into one *composite body*." *Ibid.*, 199-200.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Kreisler's dance with the widow at the Bonnington Club in *Tarr*: "He clasped her firmly in the small of the back, and they got ponderously in motion, he stamping a little bit, as though he mistook the waltz for a more primitive music. He took her twice with ever-increasing velocity, round the large hall, and at the third round, at breakneck speed, spun with her in the direction of the front door. The impetus was so great that she, although seeing her peril, could not act sufficiently as a break on her impetuous companion to avert the disaster. Another moment and they would have been in the street, amongst the traffic, a disturbing meteor, whizzing out of sight, had not they met the alarmed resistance of a considerable English family entering the front door as Kreisler bore down upon it...The widow had come somewhat under the sudden fascination of Kreisler's mood. She was really his woman, he had known it. She felt wrapt in the midst of a simoon—she had not two connected thoughts. All her worldliness and measured management of her fat had vanished. Her face had become coarsened in a few minutes. But she buzzed back again into the dance, and began a second mad, but this time merely circular, career." Wyndham Lewis, *Tarr (1918)* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926), 144-145.

<sup>31</sup> See Karl Marx, "Chapter on Money," *Grundrisse*, Trans. Martin Nicolaus (New York: Penguin Classics, 1993) and Karl Marx, "General Formula for Capital," *Capital*, Trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Penguin Classics, 1992).

- <sup>32</sup> Marx provides his own summary of this process in the *Grundrisse* as follows: “The product becomes commodity; the commodity becomes exchange value; the exchange value of the commodity is its immanent money-property; this, its money-property, separates itself from it in the form of money, and achieves a general social existence separated from all particular commodities and their natural mode of existence; the relation of the product to itself as exchange value becomes the relation of all products to money, external to them all. Just as the real exchange of products creates their exchange value, so does their exchange value create money.” Karl Marx, “Chapter on Money,” *Grundrisse* Ibid., 146-7.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid., 141-2.
- <sup>34</sup> Bertolt Brecht, “The Street Scene,” *Brecht on Theater*, ed. and trans. John Willett (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), 121-129.
- <sup>35</sup> Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: International Publishers Co, 1994).
- <sup>36</sup> See Martin Puchner, *Stage Fright: Modernism, Anti-theatricality, and Drama* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); David Kurnick, *Empty Houses: Theatrical Failure and the Novel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012).
- <sup>37</sup> James Joyce, *Ulysses* (New York: Vintage International, 1990), 498. Hereafter abbreviated *U* and cited parenthetically by page number.
- <sup>38</sup> Puchner, *Ibid.*, 87.
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>40</sup> Kurnick, *Ibid.*, 188.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid., 2. See especially 1-10.
- <sup>42</sup> Theodore Spencer, “Introduction,” *Stephen Hero*, Eds. John J. Slocum, Herbert Cahoon, and Theodore Spencer (New York: New Directions, 1955), 15.
- <sup>43</sup> James Joyce, *Stephen Hero*, *Ibid.*, 211.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>45</sup> “Audience,” *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 20 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989): “All the people within hearing of something; (hence) the assembled listeners or spectators at a public performance or event (as a play, film, lecture, etc.) considered collectively.”
- <sup>46</sup> Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay on Method*, Trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 186.
- <sup>47</sup> Katie Wales, “‘Bloom Passes through Several Walls’: The Stage Directions in ‘Circe,’” *Reading Joyce’s ‘Circe.’* Ed. Andrew Gibson (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), 265.
- <sup>48</sup> Pannill Camp, *The First Frame: Theatre Space in Enlightenment France* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 193.
- <sup>49</sup> Camp, *Ibid.*, 213. Although Camp makes this argument for theatre during the Enlightenment in France, her argument holds true for “Circe’s” theatrical sources because Joyce grapples everywhere in *Ulysses* with the same touchstones in the philosophy of vision. In “Proteus, for example, Stephen experiments with something similar to Diderot’s ‘sightless space.’” And, in “Circe,” Stephen experiments with Berkeley’s claim that distance between objects is known through the comparison of two experiences.
- <sup>50</sup> Ibid., 179, 207-208.
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid., 179-180, 181.
- <sup>52</sup> Ibid., 208, 201.
- <sup>53</sup> See Terry Castle, “Phantasmagoria: Spectral Technology and the Metaphorics of Modern Reverie,” *Critical Inquiry* 15.1 (1988), 26-61; Peter Otto, *Multiplying Worlds: Romanticism, Modernity, and the Emergence of Virtual Reality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), especially 107-128.
- <sup>54</sup> Ian Bruce “James Gregory’s Optica Promota,” accessed October 31, 2015, <http://www.17centurymaths.com/contents/contentsGregory.htm>.
- <sup>55</sup> Evelyn Gould, *Virtual Theater from Diderot to Mallarmé* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 1.
- <sup>56</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Trans. James Strachey (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 538.
- <sup>57</sup> Ibid., 606.
- <sup>58</sup> Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, Ed. Jacques Alain-Miller, Trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1998), 56.
- <sup>59</sup> Proust quoted in Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, Trans. Paul Patton (New York: Continuum, 2001), 208.
- <sup>60</sup> J. Hillis Miller, “Henry James and ‘Focalization’ or Why James Loves Gyp,” *The Companion to Narrative Theory* Eds. James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 124.
- <sup>61</sup> Genette, *Ibid.*
- <sup>62</sup> Katie Wales identifies this moment, too, as free-indirect discourse, but elides its idiosyncrasies under the heading of the “novelistic” without further comment. Wales, *Ibid.*, 273.
- <sup>63</sup> Although the point is somewhat lateral to my argument, Bloom’s “Britisher” persona is important to note in this passage because it is the point of view that produces the idyllic (and stereotyped) images of Ireland and the fantasy of their appropriation by Imperial “Britannia.”
- <sup>64</sup> See Hugh Kenner, *Ulysses* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1980), especially 74-75; Barbara Heusel, “Parallax as a Metaphor for the Structure of ‘Ulysses,’” *Studies in the Novel* 15.2 (Summer 1983).
- <sup>65</sup> “Parallax,” *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 20 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989. “Difference or change in the apparent position or direction of an object as seen from two different points; (*Astron.*) such a difference or change in the position of a celestial object as seen from different points on the earth’s surface or from opposite points in the earth’s orbit around the sun.”
- <sup>66</sup> Alan W. Hirschfeld, *Parallax: The Race to Measure the Cosmos* (New York: W.H. Freeman and Company, 2001) 67-68.
- <sup>67</sup> Charles Wheatstone, “Contributions to the Physiology of Vision. Part the First. On Some Remarkable, and Hitherto Unobserved, Phenomena of Binocular Vision,” *Philosophical Transactions Royal Society of London* 128 (1838), 371.
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>69</sup> Joyce recognizes Charles Wheatstone, who invented the concertina, the stereoscope, and the “Enchanted lyre,” as an optical and acoustic scientist whose inventions experiment with sensory transmission. In *Finnegan’s Wake*, Joyce primarily associates him with his acoustic inventions. There are a number of such references to Wheatstone in the *Wake*. Anna Livia Plurabelle expresses a fondness for Wheatstone’s “concertina,” an instrument similar to the melodeon mentioned in Bloom’s plea to the courtroom (*FW* 28). But, most importantly, Joyce associates Wheatstone with inventions that convert sense data into sound: “‘Tis optophone which ontophanes. List! Wheatstone’s magic lyer” (*FW* 13). The magic lyer, properly called the “Enchanted Lyre,” or “Acoucryptophone,” refers to one of Wheatstone’s public demonstrations on the transmission of sound. Bowers describes it as follows: “Wheatstone enjoyed making up new words. Acoucryptophone is derived from Greek and means literally ‘hearing a hidden sound’. The visitor could see a device in the form of a large ancient lyre suspended from the ceiling...The lyre was suspended by a brass wire which passed through the ceiling and connected with the sound boards of instruments in a room above, where unseen players performed on the harp, piano, and dulcimer” (*CIW* 8). See James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999); Brian Bowers, *Sir Charles Wheatstone FRS 1802-1875* (London: The Institution of Electrical Engineers, 2001); “Optophone,” *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 20 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); “onto—” *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 20 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>70</sup> Charles Wheatstone, *Ibid.*, 372. Wheatstone quotes from Leonardo da Vinci, *Trattato della Pittura*, CCCXLVII, “Why the most perfect Imitation of Nature will not appear to have the same Relief as Nature itself.”

<sup>71</sup> David Hayman, *Ulysses: The Mechanics of Meaning* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982).

<sup>72</sup> “Organ stop,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Ed. Stanley Sadie, Executive Ed. John Tyrrell, Vol. 24 “Sources of instrumental ensemble music to Tait” (New York: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2001). “A rank of organ pipes of a specific construction, colour or pitch; also sometimes used to refer to the knob or tablet controlling a specific rank of pipes. With regard to construction and tone-colour, organ stops fall into four basic ‘families’: principals or diapasons (the ranks of flue pipes that provide the basic ‘organ tone’), flutes (flue pipes of various constructions but wider-scaled), strings (narrow-scaled flue pipes), and reeds (differing from the other three categories in that the sound is produced by a beating metal tongue)...By 1500, builders were making many kinds of pipes and almost without exception giving them the names of instruments or sounds which they were thought to imitate (Trumpet, Horn, Recorder, Gemshorn, etc.), sometimes picturesquely so (Old Women’s Voice, Nightingale)” (659).

<sup>73</sup> Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978).

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>75</sup> Henry James, *The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1934), 110.

<sup>76</sup> J. Hillis Miller, “Henry James and ‘Focalization’ or Why James Loves Gyp,” *A Companion to Narrative Theory*, Eds. James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 128.

<sup>77</sup> Henry James, *The Awkward Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 52.

<sup>78</sup> This according to the Yale Catalogue reproduced in Richard Bridgman *Gertrude Stein in Pieces* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 365-385.

<sup>79</sup> Gertrude Stein, “A Transatlantic Interview,” *A Primer for the Gradual Understanding of Gertrude Stein* (Los Angeles: Black Sparrow Press, 1971), 15-16.

<sup>80</sup> Lyn Hejinian draws a parallel between Cézanne’s use of planar perspective to make several parts of a landscape intense all at once and Stein’s landscape and landscape as play that “distributes value or meaning across the entirety of any given work; the emphases are panoramic.” Lyn Hejinian, *The Language of Inquiry* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 116.

<sup>81</sup> Donald P. Sutherland expresses this effect in Cézanne with respect to Stein’s writing: “One of the major accomplishments of Cézanne was precisely the assertion of the equal existence of each or millimeter of his canvas with the existence of every other inch or millimeter. With Cézanne this is not a dramatic exaltation or subordination of certain parts of the picture over others, though they do, as we say, add up to a total. No doubt the origin of this in Cézanne was in part the impressionist movement, or the pointillist movement, in which every spot of color was an equally important and equally scientific optical or retinal event, but Cézanne made objects and shapes, not merely events, into an equally emphatic existence in equilibrium over his whole canvas. The Cubists took this up too, the equal diffusion of geometric shapes over a whole canvas, with no dramatic focus or culminating point.” Donald P. Sutherland, “Gertrude Stein and the Twentieth Century,” *A Primer for the Gradual Understanding of Gertrude Stein* (Los Angeles: Black Sparrow Press, 1971), 145-16.

<sup>82</sup> Stein recognizes the inevitability of recognizing resemblances, especially when “looking,” rather than simply “listening” and “talking.” While she describes this as “trouble,” she orients toward it as a productive constraint on this kind of spectatorship, which she attributed to *Tender Buttons* (1913) and her early plays. Stein’s difficulty with resemblance or repetition lies in its ability to disrupt concentrated attention to the present, in which everything appears as an object with a difference: “The trouble with looking, as I have already told you, was that in regard to human beings looking inevitably carries in its train realizing movements and expression and as such forced remembering and in forcing remembering caused confusion of present with past and future time...The painters naturally were looking, that was their occupation and they had too to be certain that looking was not confusing itself with remembering.” Stein, “Portraits and Repetition,” *Lectures in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 188.

<sup>83</sup> Gertrude Stein, “Composition as Explanation,” *Stein: Writings 1903-1932* (New York: Library of America, 1998), 525.

<sup>84</sup> “Stein’s landscapes,” as Lyn Hejinian puts it, “are resolutely synchronous. Key elements coexist with their alternatives in the work. Nothing is superseded. A phrase or sentence is not obliterated when an altered or even contradictory version of it appears.” Hejinian, *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>85</sup> Stein’s critics tend to favor the genealogy Stein describes in *Lectures in America* rather than “A Transatlantic Interview.” Betsy Alayne Ryan, for example, follows Stein’s own narrative in *Lectures in America* and accordingly categorizes Stein’s plays into three roughly bounded periods: “plays as the essence of what happened” in 1913-1921, “plays as landscapes” in 1922-1931, and “plays as narratives” beginning in 1932. Betsy Alayne Ryan *Gertrude Stein’s Theatre of the Absolute* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1984), 47-60.

<sup>86</sup> See Leslie Atkins Durham’s book *Staging Gertrude Stein: Absence, Culture, and the Landscape of American Alternative Theatre* for an account of how several avant-garde American theaters, including Robert Wilson and the Wooster Group among others, produced or adapted Stein’s *Four Saints in Three Acts*, *Each One As She May*, *Doctor Faustus Lights the Lights*, and *The Mother of Us All*. Leslie Atkins Durham. *Staging Gertrude Stein: Absence, Culture, and the Landscape of American Alternative Theatre* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005).

<sup>87</sup> I reach this number by adding up the total number of productions, regardless of the length of their run, in Ryan’s “Chronological List of Productions.” The portrait is “Susie Asado” and the plays are “What Happened,” “A Curtain Raiser,” and “Ladies’ Voices.” Ryan, *Ibid.*, 165-189.

<sup>88</sup> Stein, “Plays,” *Lectures in America*, *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>89</sup> Wendy Steiner *Exact Resemblance to Exact Resemblance: The Literary Portraiture of Gertrude Stein* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1978), 50.

<sup>90</sup> If a published volume contains an individual text, I will give, first, at the mention of the volume its year of publication, and, second, at the mention of an individual text its year of composition according to the *Yale Catalogue*. I follow the *Yale Catalogue* chronology as it is reproduced in Appendix C of Richard Bridgman’s *Gertrude Stein in Pieces*. Richard Bridgman *Gertrude Stein in Pieces* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 365-385.

<sup>91</sup> Stein actually misrepresents the order in which she composed these central plays in her *Lectures in America* (1934): “And so I wrote, What Happened, A Play. Then I wrote Ladies Voices and the I wrote a Curtain Raiser” (119). I suspect that she mistakes the order because “A Curtain Raiser” takes the experiment “to tell what could be told if one did not tell anything” to the furthest extreme, and so either consciously or unconsciously makes this the endpoint of the most central plays to *Geography and Plays*.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, “Plays,” *Lectures in America*, 95.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>95</sup> The passage in full: “The jazz bands made of this thing, the thing that makes you nervous at the theatre, they made of this thing an end in itself. They made of this different tempo a something that was nothing but a difference in tempo between anybody and everybody including all those doing it and all those hearing and seeing it. In the theatre of course this difference in tempo is less violent but still it is there and it does make anybody nervous.” *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> Stein intentionally conflates multiple kinds of knowledge at once: the feeling based knowledge that syncopates with the stage, the knowledge afforded by perception, and the knowledge that affords certainty. Steven Meyer argues that Stein’s idea of knowledge owes much to William James’ distinction between two types of knowledge, or what he, in *The Principles of Psychology*, termed “knowledge-about” and “knowledge of acquaintance”

(Meyer 6). James writes of the experience of these two forms of knowledge: “I am acquainted with many people and things, which I know very little about, except their presence in the places where I have met them...About the inner nature of these facts or what makes them what they are, I can say nothing at all. I cannot impart acquaintance with them to someone who has not already made it himself. I cannot describe them” (James 216-217, qtd. in Meyer 6). Meyer writes that Stein experiments with “[imparting] acquaintance to someone who already hasn’t experienced it...she replaces acquaintance *without* description with what she would term, in 1926, ‘an acquaintance with description’” (Meyer 6). As with the syncopation between the stage and audience above, Stein imbricates these two types of knowledge in complex ways. Meyer writes about Stein’s statement, “knowledge is what one knows”:

Most languages may express this distinction with two different terms [e.g. *noscere, scire*], but English does not; and in order to articulate it in his native tongue James had to resort to phrases like ‘knowledge of acquaintance’ and ‘knowledge-about.’ Consequently, when Stein defines knowledge as ‘what one knows,’ she leaves herself, and her listeners and readers, with the problem of deciding just which kind of knowledge it is that one knows. To solve *this* problem one must know the difference between knowledge of acquaintance and knowledge-about as well as how they are related. This presents a particularly knotty problem, made even more so by the inevitable reflexivity of its formulation: one has to *know*, after all, just what knowledge-about, knowledge of acquaintance, and their disjunctive and conjunctive relations come to (Meyer 14).

While Meyer makes it his task to better describe what one knows about the knotty problem he maps, Stein makes the theater the medium *par excellence* of this problem of knowing. She refers to knowledge as a whole entity and rarely dissects it into parts, whether knowledge of acquaintance or about. The difficulty, then, would be the theater’s inability to fulfill the injunction of the continuous present to begin again and again. Stein constantly formulates the theater not as a problem of knowledge to be solved, as Meyer above, but as a question to be experienced. Steven Meyer, *Irresistible Dictation: Gertrude Stein and the Correlations of Writing and Science* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); William James, *The Principles of Psychology* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), 216-217, quoted in Steven Meyer, *Irresistible Dictation*, 6.

<sup>98</sup> Stein, “Plays,” *Lectures in America*, *Ibid.*, 108-109.

<sup>99</sup> Wendy Steiner notes that, while Donald Sutherland differentiates strongly between the “prolonged” and “continuous present,” “Stein herself did not distinguish between these terms with any precision.” Steiner, *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>100</sup> Stein, “Plays,” *Lectures in America*, 104.

<sup>101</sup> Martin Puchner’s *Stage Fright: Modernism, Anti-theatricality, and Drama* is paradigmatic example of this argument. There he argues that “We can see in [Stein’s] decomposition of theater something akin to Plato’s anti-theatricalism [...] Stein integrates into the dramatic form those elements of the dramatic text that can be said to belong to the category of the descriptive and narrative, namely, stage-directions. Instead of simply mediating theatrical representation through a narrator, Stein undermines the spatial and temporal continuity of the theater, inventing a dramatic form that pits theatrical mimesis and diegesis against one another, interrupting the flow of narrative time and theatrical action.” Puchner, *Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>102</sup> Linda Voris posits the landscape play and Stein’s experiments with them as this very solution, while Chad Bennett sees the summary of Stein’s play theory as an exhausted narrative without interrogating the idea of the play as an open question. Linda Voris, “Interpreting Cézanne: Immanence in Gertrude Stein’s First Landscape Play, *Lend a Hand or Four Religions*” *Modernism/Modernity*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 73-93. Chad Bennett, “‘Ladies’ Voices Give Pleasure’: Gossip, Drama, and Gertrude Stein” *Modern Drama* Vol. 53, No. 3 (Fall 2010), 311-331.

<sup>103</sup> Gertrude Stein, “Plays,” *Lectures in America*, 104.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>105</sup> For Stein, this produces a second-order state, “nervousness,” based on the temporal phase shift between our own emotions and the emotions on stage, as well as the interference produced by the curtain and the other audience members (*LA* 98). Stein explicitly links nervousness to the relation between emotion and time: “This that the thing seen and the thing felt about the thing seen not going on at the same tempo is what makes the being at the theatre something that makes anybody nervous”; “the cause of nervousness is the fact that the emotion of the one seeing the play is always ahead or behind of the play” (*LA* 95, 99). “Relief” occurs when we are no longer subjected to seeing the scene on stage—the cessation of “nervousness.”

<sup>106</sup> Stein uses the rubric of “relief” and “completion” to differentiate between the emotion felt on the stage and the emotion felt during a “real presentation that is really something happening” (*LA* 96-7). Ultimately, “completion” marks the end of an emotion felt in synchronous time with it really happening, whereas “relief” marks the end of a spectator seeing or hearing a scene. As a participant in a real scene, you are both a participant in the action and a spectator, contributing to dénouement of the scene and controlling to some extent your participation in it. As the real scene reaches its climax, “whatever it is that does happen then when it happens then at the moment of happening” becomes a thing actually felt in the “moment of happening” rather than something to which we are subjected and to which we react emotionally after the fact. Memory produces a similar effect to the theater: “As you go over the detail that leads to culmination of any scene in real life, you find that each time you cannot get completion, but you can get relief and so already your memory of any exciting scene in which you have taken part turns it into the thing seen or heard not the thing felt” (*LA* 98).

<sup>107</sup> Stein, “Plays,” *Ibid.*, 101-102.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, *Narration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935), 20.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, *Portraits and Prayers*, 54-56, my emphasis.

<sup>112</sup> Steiner, *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>113</sup> Stein, “Portraits and Repetition,” *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>114</sup> Donald P. Sutherland, “Gertrude Stein and the Twentieth Century,” *A Primer for the Gradual Understanding of Gertrude Stein* (Los Angeles: Black Sparrow Press, 1971), 146-47. Just before he defines the “continuous present,” Sutherland also defines the “prolonged present,” which Stein experimented with in her early portraits and *The Making of Americans*, finished in 1911. He writes, “A *prolonged present* asserts a theme and proceeds to complicate and elaborate it, in the manner of say a fugal theme in Bach, so that the presence of the original theme, no matter how elaborately overlaid with variations, is maintained or prolonged as a going existence in each present passage or moment. It is as if one counted one two three four five six and so on, where the original unit of one is prolonged and present in the other figures in which it remains a component.”

<sup>115</sup> Stein, “Plays,” 121-122.

<sup>116</sup> “In essence the landscapes, by virtue of its own laws, is transformed under attention into a tableau, a *tableau vivant*; episodes become qualities...Events are presences.” Hejinián, *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>117</sup> Gertrude Stein, “Portraits and Repetition,” *Lectures in America* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1985), 188.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 189.

<sup>119</sup> Steiner, *Ibid.*, 83-89. Steiner suggests that “Harry Phelan Gibb” is paradigmatic of Stein’s early phase of portraiture, in which “redundancy and schematism” dominate (89). It portrays Harry Phelan Gibb’s struggle to express, “in saying that something is something.” Stein achieve the mimesis of this struggle by repeating syntactic structures, using present continuous verbs, and nesting “that” clauses after “knowing” “hoping” and “saying” (verbs

of thinking or saying). If “A Portrait of One Harry Phelan Gibb” represents the paradigm of Stein’s early portraiture, then it also emphasizes the portrait’s commitment to “one,” even if that one is a series of succeeding ones.

<sup>120</sup> Steiner, *Ibid.*, 211; Ryan, *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>121</sup> Following along the lines of my analysis in “Being Spectating is Action,” Steiner calls “one” “one of the most compact epitomes of [the portrait] genre,” suggesting that “it identifies as ‘one’ in the sense of a unique individual [...] and at the same time it makes him a ‘one,’ a unit of a group or a sequence.” Steiner, *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>122</sup> Gertrude Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (New York: Vintage, 1990), 135-137.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 136. For a chronology of their meeting, reconstructed from letters, that differs from both Stein and Van Vechten’s accounts see, especially, Appendix A of *The Letters of Gertrude Stein and Carl Van Vechten 1913-1946 Vol. II*, Ed. Edward Burns (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 847-853. Stein (“Baby Woojums”) refers to Carl Van Vechten’s “white pleated shirt” in a letter to him, dated 28 June 1946 (828).

<sup>124</sup> Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, 137.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, *Lectures in America*, 114.

<sup>126</sup> Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, 136.

<sup>127</sup> For Percy Lubbock’s account of “point of view” developed from James’s narrative technique see *The Craft of Fiction*. I borrow this summary of Lubbock’s and James’s “point of view” from Kristin Morrison. She concludes her essay, “James’s and Lubbock’s Differing Points of View”: “For James’s prefaces to mesh with Lubbock’s analyses of the James novels, for James’s term ‘point of view’ (and center) to relate meaningfully to contemporary terms such as first person and omniscient narration, it is necessary that the reader realize James’s ‘point of view’ refers primarily to a knower, Lubbock’s ‘point of view’ to both a knower and a sayer. To James the novel was primarily a picture to be apprehended; to writers and critics contemporary with the stream-of-consciousness of Joyce and Faulkner, it has become more a voice to be heard” (255). Refining the use of the term, she also demonstrates how James uses “center” and “aspect” as near cognates to the narratological account of “point of view.” Kristin Morrison “James’s and Lubbock’s Differing Points of View” *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Dec. 1961), 245-255.

<sup>128</sup> Stein describes her shared ambition with the cinema in her lecture, “Portraits and Repetition”: “I was doing what the cinema was doing, I was making a continuous succession of the statement of what that person was until I had not many things but one thing” (*LA* 176). The “One” sections of “One Carl Van Vechten” have this quality of successive frames such that it appears as if Carl Van Vechten is approaching in frame after frame until he arrives “in the gold coming in.”

<sup>129</sup> “Without concord, becoming entirely prepositional: In reference or relation to; as to, respecting, regarding; in the way of mentioning or treating of; concerning, about.” *Oxford English Dictionary*.

<sup>130</sup> Ex-parte: “(1) *Law*. On one side only: said respecting an affidavit, application, commission, evidence, testimony, etc. (2) *Transf.* Of statements, etc.: Made with respect to, or in the interest of, one side only” (OED). Partition: “To divide or sort into separate parts or portions; to divide and share *out, among, or between*; to distribute, share out, allocate (esp. land or territory)” (OED).

<sup>131</sup> This anticipates Stein’s use of “left and right” in her landscape romance, *Lucy Church Amiably* (1927), in which left and right indicate directions on a surface landscape, rather than the cardinal directions (requires a view perpendicular to the surface of the earth) or “backward and forward” (allows for the possibility of moving through and behind the surface of a landscape). Gertrude Stein *Lucy Church Amiably* (Champaign, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 2000), 43. The full passage is as follows: “There are four kinds of left and right. Left to right with remaining differently. Left and right with restfulness restfulness of their being identically withstood as if there was a difficulty of backward and forward. Left and right without any doubt of which hesitation takes more space than a little in an animated compliment of which it was repeated. Left and right in recalling their have been why they were wishing for this if you please” (*LCA* 43).

<sup>132</sup> “Scenes. Actions and Disposition of Relations and Positions” supports this definition of the scene as being comprised by these three elements. In it, actions appear frequently in the infinitive. See for example: “To come into the relation means that if there is a response something has been said” and “To answer when there is no question, to intend to follow when there is no plunging, to embody that which has knowledge, all that is the way to remain with the little button that has a button-hole” (99, 101). The general space that I associate with “one” and “in” appears frequently as “the whole place”: “The whole place is one place and the place that is that place is the place where the hope is that which has no time” and “The whole place has that which it has when it is found and it is there where there is more room. Room has not that expression. It has no change in a place” (100). Stein establishes the particular position made possible by “two,” then, through relative position. In the following example, too, relative position correlates to looking and seeing: “To place on by the side of another and they both have something that is their color to do that and not languish is to look then and see that relinquish what it will have when it remains where it is to be” (100). The “disposition of relations” frequently occurs in “Scenes” as the repetition of actions or prepositional orientations to objects. Here again seeing is linked to this disposition by the text addressing a spectator with the imperative to see “Thomas” in a scene: “See Thomas bring the grain, see the grain have the color that grain [...] See Thomas bring the rain and see that the thunder is not the thunder that any rain raining longer is having thunder when having thunder,” etc. (108). We can see how disposition works more directly in the following example: “To the rug that has that hole and that color, to the wood that has that color and that white, to the bed that has that shade and that carving, to the lantern that has that light and that cover,” etc. (109).

<sup>133</sup> “Between,” *Oxford English Dictionary*.

<sup>134</sup> Gertrude Stein *The Geographical History of America, or The Relation of Human Nature to the Human Mind* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 89.

<sup>135</sup> Daniel J. Ennis and Judith Bailey Slagle (Eds.) *Prologues, Epilogues, Curtain-Raisers, and Afterpieces: The Rest of the Eighteenth Century London Stage* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), 14. Ennis and Slagle argue for a broader consideration of a historical period’s theater by considering not only mainpieces, but the tertiary pieces of the theatrical evening often subordinated to the main plays. Such an approach, they argue, would render the theatrical evening a genre unto itself, allowing it to “be ‘read’ like a symphony with separate movements.” The OED defines the curtain-raiser as follows: “A short opening piece performed before the principal play of the evening.”

<sup>136</sup> Ennis and Slagle, *Ibid.* Importantly, they broaden the scope of theatrical consideration to situate the play, or mainpiece, as only a part of a larger whole (15). Citing Sherburn and Bond, Ennis and Slagle identify the eighteenth-century as proliferating a particularly rich culture of theatrical entertainment incidental to the mainpieces due to the lack of new and strong mainpiece material in the first half of the eighteenth-century (18). For more information about the tertiary pieces of the theatrical evening, and their treatment in theater studies see especially the introduction (13-29), which has the only mention of curtain-raisers in the book.

<sup>137</sup> There is some confusion about whether the title of *Ladies’ Voices* includes “Curtain Raiser” or not. The table of contents to *Geography and Plays* lists “Ladies’ Voices (Curtain Raiser),” whereas the title in the volume is “Ladies’ Voices” with a subtitle “Curtain Raiser” in the same typography as the act and scene divisions. The *Yale Catalogue* titles it “Ladies’ Voices. Curtain Raiser.” And Betsy Alayne Ryan entitles it “Ladies’ Voices” in her appendix, “Chronological List of Plays.”

<sup>138</sup> Although Stein avoids strictly defining these concepts, “Human nature” roughly corresponds to habit, which requires memory, action, and the causal connections that link the latter two in time as necessary. On the other hand, “human mind” is self-contained activity, for example, seeing,

talking, listening and writing. Meyer describes the difference between the two as follows: “Human nature was a function of identity, constructed over time and experienced in temporal terms. ‘You know who you are because you and others remember anything about yourself.’ By contrast, ‘when you are doing anything essentially you are not that,’ for human activity cannot be understood exclusively in terms of identity or memory.” Meyer, *Ibid.*, 113-114.

<sup>139</sup> Steven Meyer hits upon the scenic metaphor that I wish to evoke when he speaks of human mind and human nature: “Instead of requiring a dualistic explanation, mental and emotional experience might be understood as operating in terms of the nonvitalist organicism articulated in Stein’s automobile simile, not as ‘a contradiction but a combination.’ The important thing about the simile is that in it Stein refuses to decouple the internal movement of the car (the motions of the motor) from the external movement (registered in terms of the car’s passage through the environment, and against its backdrop). The experience of being ‘most intensely alive’ involves the coordination of heterogeneous parts, one environmentally defined, the other not, yet each ‘part of the same thing.’ Human *nature* is a matter of how one identifies oneself, or finds oneself identified, against a background (whether of family or generation, social or cultural group, whether constructed on the basis of skin color, economic status, sexual orientation, nationality, or psychological type), much as a car is seen to move only in terms of the background it moves across. By contrast, the human *mind* operates inside one, invisibly, like the car’s engine, or more exactly like the brain or nervous system in one’s body.” *Ibid.*, 116-117.

<sup>140</sup> Stein, *The Geographical History of America*, *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 117-118.

<sup>143</sup> T.J. Clark’s moving description of Paul Cézanne’s *Bathers at Rest* gives an exemplary reading of Cézanne’s paintings as “paratactic,” or “a compound of separate images,” at the same time that they are unified. It is this critical stance that I am locating in Stein’s landscape’s principle of composition. Clark writes: “Bringing on dream-work, I realize, tips my hand. If you put the *Bathers at Rest* alongside a typical scene of swimmers from the early 1890s (fig. 80)—the kind it would have hung next to in 1895—and then look for a word to distinguish its tone and tactics of representation from what came later, the word ‘dream’ seems to me to come to mind irresistibly. Or maybe ‘nightmare.’ By this I mean several things. Never, for a start, has a picture so declared itself so openly—so awkwardly—as made out of separate, overdetermined parts coexisting with only sufferance. The paint is piled up and up around the contours of the bather in the center, or the one lying on the ground, or the smaller one at rear staring off into the landscape, and the build-up in each case seems intended to effect some final disengagement of figure from ground—some absolute, and no doubt absurd, isolation of the body not just from the other next to it but from *anything* else. Even from light (which snaps at the heels of the figure in the background like an ineffectual shark). The picture is paratactic. One can almost hear the dream-narration beginning [...] And, of course, to say that what results from this is a compound of separate images is exactly not to say that the scene lacks unity. Just as much as a dream it is irrevocably (ludicrously) all one thing. It is shot through with visionary intensity. There will never be a moment like it again. Even the clouds seem to participate in the general dementia. They peer down on the poor bathers’ doings with shocked solicitude, inquisitive despite themselves, like the gods in Homer. It is just what this charged momentariness might be about that is obscure” T.J. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999), 140-141.

<sup>144</sup> Stein, *Portraits and Prayers*, 11.

<sup>145</sup> Ulla E. Dydo observes these puns in her introduction to the portrait in *A Stein Reader*. Gertrude Stein, “Cezanne,” *A Stein Reader*, Ed. Ulla E. Dydo (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 427. Caesar also makes a notably erotic appearance in Stein’s “Lifting Belly,” where it puns on “Seize her.”

<sup>146</sup> Stein, “Composition as Explanation,” 525.

<sup>147</sup> For more information on the two fair copies and the manuscript available at Trinity College Dublin see Anthony Uhlmann, “Introduction to Beckett’s Notes to the *Ethics*,” *Ethics With Samuel Beckett’s Notes*, Trans. Martin Wilson, Eds. Han Van Ruler, Anthony Uhlmann, and Martin Wilson (Leiden: Brill, 2006), especially 307-308.

<sup>148</sup> See, for example, the following from Beckett’s notes on Geulincx: “But I cannot get beyond *I do not know*, there is nothing I can add to this *I do not know*. I do not know how I came to this condition...What is lacking is the knowledge of how I came to this condition. [From Treatise I. Chapter II. Section II. §2. Inspection of Oneself. Paragraph 12.]” Arnold Geulincx, “Samuel Beckett’s Notes to His Reading of the *Ethics* by Arnold Geulincx” *Ethics With Samuel Beckett’s Notes*, Trans. Martin Wilson, Eds. Han Van Ruler, Anthony Uhlmann, and Martin Wilson (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 334. Hereafter abbreviated by NE and cited parenthetically by page number.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 316.

<sup>150</sup> He writes to MacGreevy: “I suddenly see that *Murphy* is a break down between [Geulincx’s] *ubi nihil valet ibi nihil valis* (positive) & Malraux’s *Il est difficile à celui qui vit hors du monde de ne pas rechercher les siens* (negation).” Samuel Beckett, *The Letters of Samuel Beckett 1929-1940*, Eds. Martha Dow Fehsenfeld and Lois More Overbeck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 299. It also appears explicitly in modified forms in *Murphy* and *The Unnameable*, translated as “worth nothing” in the former and “can do nothing” in the latter. Anthony Uhlmann, “Introduction to Beckett’s Notes to the *Ethics*,” *Ethics With Samuel Beckett’s Notes*, Trans. Martin Wilson, Eds. Han Van Ruler, Anthony Uhlmann, and Martin Wilson (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 305.

<sup>151</sup> Geulincx, *Ibid.*, 334.

<sup>152</sup> Branka Arsić describes such occasion as “only a contingency that is not necessarily realized [...] does not produce consequences, and is not included in what is going to happen.” Branka Arsić *The Passive Eye: Gaze and Subjectivity in Berkeley (via Beckett)* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 57-58.

<sup>153</sup> The sixth to eighth conclusion from self-inspection reads, “6. I am but a spectator of the World. 7. Nevertheless, the World itself cannot produce that spectacle for me. 8. God alone can produce that spectacle.” *Ibid.*, 336.

<sup>154</sup> I take these characterizations of mind and body from René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Trans. Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., Inc, 1993), 51.

<sup>155</sup> Samuel Beckett, “Proust,” *Samuel Beckett: The Grove Centenary Edition, Vol. 4 Poems, Short Fiction, Criticism*, Ed. Paul Auster (New York: Grove Press, 2006), 511-554. Hereafter abbreviated by P and cited parenthetically by page number.

<sup>156</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment* Ed. Paul Guyer and Trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 103.

<sup>157</sup> Samuel Beckett, “Imagination Dead Imagine” *Samuel Beckett: The Grove Centenary Edition, Vol. 4 Poems, Short Fiction, Criticism*, Ed. Paul Auster (New York: Grove Press, 2006), 361-363. Hereafter abbreviated by *IDI* and cited parenthetically by page number.

<sup>158</sup> This filmic and mobile point of view is the so-called “eye of prey,” prefiguring E (the camera) in Beckett’s *Film*, whose basic function is to perceive.

<sup>159</sup> Gilles Deleuze, “The Exhausted,” *Essays Critical and Clinical*, Trans. Daniel W. Smith and Daniel A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 157.

<sup>160</sup> “Sorites Paradox” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/sorites-paradox/>, accessed April 12, 2016.

<sup>161</sup> G.W. Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics, Correspondence with Arnauld, Monadology*, Trans. George Montgomery (La Salle, IL: Open Court Publishing Company, 1995). See especially §56 and §57 of *Monadology*: “Now this interconnection, relationship, or this adaptation of all things to each particular one, and of each one to all the rest, brings it about that every simple substance has relations which express all the others and that it is consequently a perpetual living mirror of the universe” and “And as the same city regarded from different sides appears entirely different, and is, as it were, multiplied perspectively, so, because of the infinite number of simple substances, there are a similar infinite number of universes which are, nevertheless, only the aspects of a single one, as seen from the special point of view of the Monad” (263).

<sup>162</sup> I have in mind the logic displayed in the following from “Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat”: “The specialization of skills leads to the destruction of every image of the whole. And as, despite this, the need to grasp the whole—at least cognitively—cannot die out, we find that science, which is likewise based on specialization and thus caught up in the same immediacy, is criticized for having torn the real world into shreds and having lost its vision of the whole [...] The more highly developed it becomes and the more scientific, the more it will become a formally closed system of partial laws. It will then find that the world lying beyond its confines, and in particular the material base which it is its task to understand, its own concrete underlying reality lies, methodologically and in principle, beyond its grasp.” Georg Lukacs, “Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat,” *History and Class Consciousness*, Trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1967), 103-104.

<sup>163</sup> Samuel Beckett, *Watt* (New York: Grove Press, 1953), 159. Hereafter abbreviated by *W* and cited parenthetically by page number.

<sup>164</sup> Isabelle Ost, “‘Till ooze again and on’: Textual Desire and the Subject’s Presence (Beckett, Deleuze, Lacan)” *Deleuze and Beckett*, Eds. S.E. Wilmer and Audrone Zukauskaite (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 97-110.

<sup>165</sup> Arsić, *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>166</sup> Deleuze, *Ibid.*, 153.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 154. Referenced a page earlier, the term is first coined on 154.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

<sup>169</sup> *Language III* obviously favors, as Deleuze makes explicit, Beckett’s works that are non-textual, especially his works for television. It is the language of images and spaces, and the limitations of the previous two languages: “It is no longer a question of imagining a ‘whole’ of the series with language I (a combinatorial imagination ‘sullied by reason’), or of inventing stories or making inventories of memories with language II (imagination sullied by memory) [...] It is extremely difficult to tear all these adhesions away from the image so as to reach the point of ‘Imagination Dead Imagine.’ It is extremely difficult to make a pure and unsullied image, one that is nothing but an image, by reaching the point where it emerges in all its singularity, retaining nothing of the personal or the rational, and by ascending to the indefinite as if into a celestial state.” Deleuze does not state a possible debt to Beckett’s essay on Proust, where the Deleuzian image resembles the Proustian involuntary memory, except stripped of a remembering subject. Like the involuntary memory in Proust, as described by Beckett in his eponymous essay, *Language III* occurs in the cessation of willed reason and memory, and precisely in their failure, as a reduplication of experience as if it were immediately present, whether aural, visual, or spatial.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>172</sup> Samuel Beckett, *Malone Dies*, Trans. by the author (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 207. Hereafter abbreviated by *T* and cited parenthetically by page number.

<sup>173</sup> Incorporate the following: “how would I know about these things, how would I understand what they’re talking about, I’ll never stir, never speak, they’ll never go silent, never depart, they’ll never catch me, never stop trying, that’s that, I’m listening. Well I prefer that, I must say I prefer that, that what, oh you know, who you, oh I suppose the audience, well well, so there’s an audience, it’s a public show, you buy your seat and you wait for it to begin, or perhaps its compulsory, a compulsory show, you wait for the compulsory show to begin, it takes time, you hear a voice, perhaps it’s a recitation, that’s the show, someone reciting, selected passages, old favourites, a poetry matinée, or someone improvising, you can barely hear him, that’s the show, you can’t leave, you’re afraid to leave, it might be worse elsewhere, you make the best of it, you try and be reasonable, you came too early, here we’d need latin, it’s only beginning, it hasn’t begun, he’s only prelude, clearing his throat, alone in his dressing-room, he’ll appear any moment, he’ll begin any moment, or it’s the stage-manager, giving his instructions, his last recommendations, before the curtain rises, that’s the show, waiting for the show, to the sound of a murmur, you try and be reasonable, perhaps it’s not a voice at all, perhaps it’s the air, ascending, descending, flowing, eddying, seeking exit, finding none, and the spectators, where are they, you didn’t notice, in the anguish of waiting, never noticed you were waiting alone, that’s the show, waiting alone, in the restless air, for it to begin, for something to begin, for there to be something else but you, for the power to rise, the courage to leave, you try and be reasonable, perhaps you are blind, probably deaf, the show is over, all is over, but where then is the hand, the helping hand, or merely charitable, or the hired hand, it’s a long time coming, to take yours and draw you away, that’s the show, free, gratis and for nothing, waiting alone, blind, deaf, you don’t know where, you don’t know for what, for a hand to come and draw you away, somewhere else, where perhaps it’s worse” (*T* 381-382).

<sup>174</sup> Samuel Beckett, *How It Is* trans. by the author (New York: Grove Press, 1964), 7. Hereafter abbreviated by *H* and cited parenthetically by page number. “I say it as I hear it” echoes Sir Walter Scott’s introduction to “My Aunt Margaret’s Mirror,” where he states, “I tell the tale as it was told to me,” nesting the tale’s narration by Mrs. Swinton, whose family member served as an “eye-witness of the incidents recorded in [the story],” within Scott’s re-framing of the tale. Beckett absorbs this narrative mediation—a story told by another of whom we cannot have any direct knowledge—as one constitutive characteristic of the speaker in *How It Is*. Sir Walter Scott, “My Aunt Margaret’s Mirror,” accessed April 7, 2017 <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1667/1667-h/1667-h.htm>

<sup>175</sup> This chapter will use the “/” to indicate a paragraph break in *How It Is*.

<sup>176</sup> Ann Banfield, “Beckett’s Tattered Syntax,” *Representations* 84.1 (Nov. 2003), 13.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>178</sup> “In the capacity of, as being. Usu. with following noun clause without article.” “Qua,” *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 20 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). Here is an example from Beckett: “He was now exerting himself to the utmost, and indeed he feared greatly beyond his strength, with a view to recuperating his MS, which, qua MS, could not be of the smallest value to any person other than himself and, eventually, humanity” (*W* 173).

<sup>179</sup> “Oh not that I was ever even incompletely deaf. But for a long time now I have been hearing things confusedly. There I go again. What I mean is possibly this, that the noises of the world, so various in themselves and which I used to be so clever at distinguishing from one another, had been dinning at me for so long, always the same old noises, as gradually to have merged into a single noise, so that all I heard was one vast continuous buzzing. The volume of sound perceived remained no doubt the same, I had simply lost the faculty of decomposing it. The noises of nature, of mankind and even my own, were all jumbled together in one and the same unbridled gibberish.” Samuel Beckett, *Malone Dies* trans. by the author (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 207. Hereafter abbreviated by *MD* and cited parenthetically by page number.

<sup>180</sup> Cf. 127-128 in *Watt*.

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