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ABSTRACT

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Doctor of Philosophy in English

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This dissertation puts philosophies of existence in dialogue with general and historical grammar to describe the moments in which a style comes into being. Cultivating a poetics of prose hinged between nineteenth-century realism and an emergent aesthetics yet to be called modernism, the dissertation identifies in the *Bildungsroman* of D. H. Lawrence and James Joyce the "weak" means – neither explicative nor narrativized – of circumscribing structures of reflection into linguistic forms. The protagonist's existential quandary conditions the expressions of the first person, the foreclosure of dialogue the second person. This formal undercurrent found in proto-modernist novels, in which grammatical functions exploit the modes of the "subject" or "agency" operating in the narrative, persists throughout the long twentieth century. I turn to Doris Lessing and a generation of mid-century critics whose writings are hinged between the modernist avant-garde and a formal exhaustion yet to be called postmodernism. Lessing's postwar *Bildungsroman* theorizes collectivity through the grammar of the third person and the ensuing problem of its capaciousness. According to the existential grammar of modern narratives presented in the dissertation, the dynamics of historic accumulation inverts that of language to the point of its utmost evacuation.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: THE PROSAICS OF WEAK MODERNISM

> One evening, in a mood of helpless sadness, I caught myself using a ridiculously wrong subjunctive form of a verb that was itself not entirely correct German, being part of the dialect of my native town. I had not heard, let alone used, the endearing misconstruction since my first years at school. Melancholy, drawing me irresistibly into the abyss of childhood, awakened this old, impotently yearning sound in its depths. Language sent back to me like an echo the humiliation which unhappiness had inflicted on me in forgetting what I am.
>
> -T.W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia*

> Our life today is shaped in such a way that glances which no one has noticed or words which have been let fall without being heard or understood are coming to be the forms in which souls communicate with one another. It is as though the process of their intercourse were softer yet more rapid, and the contrast area larger and rougher and more broken.
>
> -Gyorgy Lukács, "The New Solitude and its Poetry"

> I do not know which to prefer,
> The Beauty of inflections
> Or the beauty of innuendos,
> The Blackbird whistling
> Or just after.
>
> -Wallace Stevens, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird"

1.1 Existential Grammar

There is rhetoric that speaks and stresses, rhetoric that hints, and rhetoric that merely elbows forward its absence. For Stevens's listener, a negative moment of silence emerges not in contradistinction to, but as part of the whistling. No mere remainder, the beauty of "just after" interpolates the listener into silence as an aftereffect, and by interpolating, into a temporal relationship to sound. There is language in the wake of language, glances unnoticed or words unheard, and for Lukács, that unregistered matter becomes precisely the means by which we, or at least our "souls," now communicate. In this intercourse, only more of the gap, the rough and broken contrast area formed between articulation and its dissipated matter, emerges. It fritters away but never completely, liable always to return some unexpected evening, reawakened as a sound that yearns, but impotently, old but only as one's childhood grammar. What such an utterance echoes for Adorno is not the self, whether past or present, but the humiliation at the fact of having forgotten what it is. It, identity, is an effect of language, and only a grammatical slip-up could stage the abysmal failure of the *I*. Indeed, the subjunctive, the verbal mood expressive of wishes and imagined possibilities, is a grammatical condition that necessarily forgets "what I am" now. Grammatical form, especially in its misconstructed state, puts the writer in a temporal relationship to his past speech, which is as close as he can get to grasping whatever he was in the past. There is a fundamental relationship between grammatical

construction and self-construction, one that moreover bespeaks not what one is but what one forgot to be, wished to be, failed to notice or to understand.

This dissertation is about this performative relationship between grammar and existential dilemmas – the problem of defending the possibility *to be* – as presented in modern novels. I attempt to produce a philosophy of narrative grammar, which, I argue, is constituted by the grammar of persons in the modern novel. The monograph chapters each take up a principal unit of the grammatical person – the first person (the speaker), the second person (the spoken to) and the third person (the spoken about) – in works that best exemplify the dilemma facing each person: respectively, *Sons and Lovers* (1913) by D.H. Lawrence, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1914) by James Joyce, and *The Golden Notebook* (1962) by Doris Lessing. I begin (chapter 2) with the first person and the dilemma of a character's existence – what *is* vs. the uncertainty and the possibility of what *could* be – literalized at the level of the sentence. I then (chapter 3) take up the second person and the dilemma of speaking to a character who is no longer present in the narrative, identifying the syntactical means by which a wholly other way of being and seeing is inscribed. Finally in the last chapter (chapter 4) – and it will become clear in the last section on periodization (1.4) why I jump from the early springs of modernism to its aftermath in a postwar narrative – I read the third person as presenting a dilemma of collectivity, the weight of everything else besides the first and the second bearing down on narrative structure.

The linguistic, grammatical phenomenon produced by the problem of existence is, I discover, a weak one. As the third section further explains, the sense of "weakness" operating throughout this dissertation – derived from the linguist Otto Jespersen's historical account of the weak development of English grammar – is a grammatical function. As a paradigmatic example, we can begin with what Jespersen calls "existential sentences," sentences produced by a deictic construction, which works to distance the nominative case.[1] When 'A king once lived' is weakened to 'Once upon a time, there was a king,' an active sentence is reduced to its mere predicate, its subject rendered indefinite and generic. To assert or deny the existence of something necessitates both a weakening of the subject position and its verbal, qualitative content. By a narrative necessity – namely, the necessity to assert something so that a relationship can be created through the sequence of assertions[2] – the subject diminishes.

Most crucially then, weak grammar exploits grammar's capacity to extend the definition and the function of a subject beyond agency or activity. Consider the passivity of a sentence like 'He had his hair cut' or the "double-faced" relationship, as Jespersen calls it, in sentences like 'The stream abounds in fish,' synonymous with 'Fish abound in this stream.'[3] There is no question as to the grammatical subject in each, but the notional subject – who is doing the cutting, what is abounding in what – indicates a complex but a "more pliable" and "animate" way by which an action, a process or a state can be asserted.[4] Secondly, weak grammar exploits grammar's capacity to arbitrate such complex relationship between things by their placement in the sentence. The primary elements of a sentence like the subject, the object or the indirect object can be further distinguished in terms of their proximity or essentiality to the verb. If, in a sentence like 'They gave the butler a gift,' an object is slightly less intimately connected to the verb than the subject, it is also more essential to the completion of the verb than the indirect object despite the seemingly privileged position of the latter.[5] Such *understood* aspects of the sentence – subjecthood outside of agency or a relationship cultivated through the distance from the action – are unexpressed but certainly "present in the mind," as Jespersen notes, their presence heighted by modes of grammar.[6] These "elliptical elements," as he calls them, may be

that residual and implicit matter described by the abovementioned modern poet, philosopher and critic alike, echoing just after words have been let fall.

To think the subject in the grammatical sense, then, has not only to do with what the authors may have felt were limitations apparent in other modes of thinking the subject – the impossibility of divining a person psychologically or even logically – but more importantly with grammar's distinctive capacity to express through positionality, to denote the sheer fact or existence of something by virtue of the space it takes up in the sentence. Hence, the elliptical or deictic aspects of grammar that we see throughout the readings are comprehensively referred to as "weak" rather than "passive," say, both because the weak grammatical function extends beyond the passive construction and because the weak function actually works to assert, albeit in a circuitous way, what cannot otherwise be asserted ontologically through hermeneutics or narratively through description. Through its weak function, grammar takes up and takes over the problems of the narrative, suspending the narrative bind and gesturing a way it can be further maneuvered by the authors.

Broadly interpreted, *Sons and Lovers* deals with a protagonist's existential crisis; *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* with a departure from the dialogic other; *The Golden Notebook* with social totality. The novels put forth and thematize these problems of constrained subjectivity and historical stasis, articulated self-consciously by the central characters. The characters do not, however, find a way out; the novels cannot narratively resolve or philosophically explain the problem away. Narrative wobbles as the person wobbles. In that sense, *Bildung* proves itself to be obsolete as a form, for it fails to fulfil its mission to negotiate the relationship between the individual and the social or collective life. Their (characters') problems are, however, worked out at the level of the sentence – worked out to the extent that technique, the grammatical embodiment of narrative dilemma, can drive cognitive problems.

It makes sense, then, that Jespersen's near-Euclidean definition of the sentence – "*A sentence is a (relatively) complete and independent unit of communication* […] the completeness and independence being shown by its standing alone or its capability of standing alone, i.e. of being uttered by itself"[7] – lines up with the essential quality of "narrative" found in most accounts from Aristotle to the Russian Formalists and beyond, that narrative is some sort of a communicative relation through some sort of an organizing sequence. Even before narrative engages with substantive matters – temporality, meaning, representation or experience described – it shares with the sentence a function that is interchangeable. In a generic and formal sense, sentences compose the narrative. Above and beyond that metonymic, compositional relationship, for the novels featured in the dissertation, the sentence substitutes the narrative function with its function so that the narrative problem of existence is rectified by the first person, the problem of the dialogic by the second, of social totality by the third. Lawrence develops the problem of the first person, Joyce the second and Lessing the third. Taken together, the authors move us through the complete grammatical ordinals 1, 2, and 3.

In an intellectual climate troubled by assumptions of narrative progress and the ontologies on which it was based, sentences simply cannot make positive statements about the character, expecting the statements to accumulate into a narrative. Their grammar must slacken to meet the task of expressing a diminished sense of self. The two concepts of the subject operating in a weak grammar, as an existential unit and as a mere position of utterance, doubly tax, and by taxing draw out, the novelistic convention of narrating the self. The resulting weak narration attempts to resolve this tension by shifting the function of the "person" or "agency" from the substantive and the political to the performative and the grammatical. I thus isolate the

grammatical person as the means to test the larger hypothesis suggested here, that grammar must first strip down in order to assert the existence of a character or the referential world around it. After all, what more fully encapsulates the project of *Bildung* than the assertion and the development of a person? The *Bildungsroman* is a species of novel committed one way or another to the human subject and its relationship with the larger collective, i.e. with various permutations of other persons. This dissertation thus traces the development of a new *Bildungsroman* founded on a bare claim to existence, showing the ways in which writers like Lawrence, Joyce and Lessing contend with the specter of realist narration by draining it of agency. Intervening into the *Bildungsroman* tradition, two in anticipation of modernist aesthetics and one in its recession, *Sons and Lovers, A Portrait* and *The Golden Notebook* narrate the weakening of personhood and of the mimetic capacities available to the sentence.

1.2 The Soul of a Sentence

Novelistic sentences are not "laid" end to end but "built" into arcades or domes, Virginia Woolf tells us in *A Room of One's Own*. Though such a structure too has been "made by men out of their own needs for their own uses," it is, relatively speaking, an untrammeled thing in contrast to the older edifices of literature like the epic or the poetic drama that have been hardened and set by the time women have gained enough income and privilege to write. The novel alone, Woolf says, was "young enough to be soft in her hands."[8] But perhaps it too was already petrifying, both for the woman writer ("who shall say that even this most pliable of all forms is rightly shaped for her use?") and the male, for the culturally and linguistically native writer and for those inculcated.

In attempting to give language to the gap moment transitioning out of realism into modernism, we are in a sense talking about what Lukács calls "soul," a misleadingly mystical word for something like an experience/idea not yet formally expressed. When Lukács theorized that the novel is the epic of an age in which the totality of life – the immanence of its meaning – "is no longer directly given," "yet which still thinks in terms of totality,"[9] he may have been elaborating on an earlier, more simplistically stated conundrum he posed to Leo Popper about experiences "which cannot be expressed by any gesture and which yet long for expression."[10]

Without selling short the problem of totality, it is worth reminding ourselves that even the more developed theory of totality had as its basis what the 1962 Lukács, looking back on his 1914 writing, referred to as his "'Kierkegaardisation' of the Hegelian dialectic of history,"[11] namely that the admittedly "highly naïve and totally unfounded utopianism" of the teens was itself an expression of "an intellectual tendency which was a part of the reality of that time."[12] Whatever the status of nostalgia in *The Theory of the Novel* – after all, it is a book founded on, if nothing else, a longing to travel by the light of stars – there are two distinctive points to be extracted from what the later Lukács has to say about the early Lukács. First, such a "germinal," "undifferentiated" sense is not a lesser form of the socio-economic analyses that appear in the decades following but characteristics definitive of *its* historical moment. Secondly, Lukács's insight in reversing the Hegelian "world of prose" – the notion that historical, philosophical development annuls the aesthetic principles that determined development up to the present – into a prosaic world mirrored in the novel form began with a Kierkegaardian premise of having lost the totality of existence. To put it bluntly, the later social analysis of realism is rooted in understanding form as an existential clash imbricated in the present, and if the vocabulary of existence drops out, the dynamic elision between the disjointed totality of being and the

disjointed totality of form is here from the start. In arguing that the function of the sentence replaces the function of the narrative, this dissertation often turns to Lukács to define the latter; for in the case of the *Bildungsroman*, the genre of works at hand, the function of the narrative is overridingly the realist function. The bass note between the early Lukács, writing contemporaneously with Lawrence and Joyce, and the later Lukács, writing contemporaneously with Lessing, and through him an ongoing iteration of existence in form, provides one link between the intergenerational authors.

In this germinal, earlier moment, the senses have little access to the internal struggle in which gestures long for expression, Lukács tells Popper, so that one's outward features must await "in rigid mobility"; any gesture to express it would "falsify that experience, unless it ironically emphasized its own inadequacy and thus cancelled itself out."[13] This is a strange kind of awareness, medial and sensory, knowing something is there but ungraspable – a condition of suspension that is described in much less sedimentary terms than the "permanent despair" over the world identified in the later works, more fascinated than lamenting. The spirit of the age as Lukács sees it is registered in rigid mobility, detected and felt even without a definite externality. Lukács asks what literary form could such an experience take, and "form," as it becomes clear throughout his early essays, is that social element in literature, social in so far as we are talking about a new way of experiencing the world that awaits, or "yearns," as Lukács would say, for its expression by artists and public alike. (As the last section goes on to show, we find a similar diagnosis only a year before in England, treated as a sociological and political condition particular to its national character.) Even before Marxism furnishes him with a more muscular vocabulary, Lukács attempts to flesh out a dialectical relationship between the inarticulate desires of the soul and its inarticulate expression in form, the very equivocation of his statements at this juncture perhaps more befitting of the matter at hand: linguistic failure as a unique set of experiences, fueling the attempt to build form around the experience of being flummoxed. What ties stylistically similar artists in this sense is only secondarily about contextual contiguity or even the semblance of their works but the particular nature of the connection between form and world view, their approach to form and technique as a means to solve a particular problem of an experiential predicament. Form is, as Lukács puts it, a "destiny-creating principle."

To reverse Lukács's statement, the longing for expression, as an experience, would have to take a form which emphasizes its inadequacy, which cancels itself out, which points to its gaps. Such an experience, following Woolf's description, would be built through the syntactical holes within the novelistic sentence, verbs evacuated of action, pronouns evacuated of agents. The formal energy that fueled the writers featured in this dissertation was not the pliability or the nescience of the novelistic sentence but its inveteracy, the constrained sense that its possibilities are exhausted and sculpted beyond refinement or elaboration, e.g.: Stephen Dedalus's obstinate complaint, "The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine"[14]; or the disingenuous apology from Lawrence's poet for causing a scandal, "for using words they privately keep/ for their own immortal ends," followed by a promise "never to use/ more than the chaste, short dash."[15] By comparatively analyzing the style of each featured work in light of its early drafts and the techniques refined in the author's later works, I aim to show that modes of syntactical subtraction and evacuation, the "weak" grammar, are the key mechanisms that drove Lawrence and Joyce onto 1920 and 1922 respectively, the implosion of re-jiggered sentences in *Ulysses* or *Women in Love* that takes place only as a consequence of the syntactical vacuuming throughout *Sons and Lovers* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.*

In effect, the chapter readings show the narrative possibilities it takes to apprentice modernism. By treating a text as the sum of multiple versions, I emphasize the notion of a work in progress, symbolically significant throughout the novels and thematized explicitly in the *The Golden Notebook*. Incomplete endings and troubled beginnings present a crisis for the protagonists but a valuable learning curve in the authors' stylistic development. The 'autobiographical' element of these works, I argue, resides in this reflexive relationship between the philosophical arc of *Bildung* (the construction of character) and the self-conscious rendering of prose (technique). My reading thus relocates the site of the *Bildungsroman* from an individual to its composition, that is to say, from the representation of growth or stasis to the author's handling of the mimetic medium at the level of the sentence.

As it turns out, our grammarian was also concerned with the matter of "soul." In a brief coda titled "The Soul of Grammar," Jespersen defends his efforts to produce a "higher theory" of grammar based on "fewer definitions, and infinitely more observation of actual living facts," at once paying heed to the principles of universal grammar customary or even requisite to linguistic study in his day but attempting as well to move beyond pure logic that fails to acknowledge deviations and conflicting tendencies as values constitutive of linguistic history. Believing that "linguistic history has hitherto perhaps been too much occupied with trying to find out the ultimate origin of each phenomenon," Jespersen urges instead to take stock of the "many things nearer our own days which are still waiting for careful investigation,"[16] effectively relocating the site of linguistic and historical research to the present. Only by starting from form as it currently exists, proceeding through its function and perhaps then to notional or inner meaning, he stresses, is it possible to understand how various languages express the fundaments. "Soul" in this context implies something like an intentional manifestation in the now, the seeming "imperfection of language" in its current state (as his critics would have it) to be accounted for as purposive and even "progressive," its losses (of case endings, for example) a sign that language has abandoned "all these clumsy remnants of a bygone past."[17] To reverse the investigative paradigm from form to function to notion, then, is to respond to the specificity of the current historical condition and to acknowledge the inevitable retrospection integral to the medium whose history always precedes the practitioner. As will be underscored throughout the chapters, each author's historical perspective and their intervention into it are implied in the way they functionalize the sentence by stylization.

In so far as this dissertation engages not with universal grammar but with a peculiar, historical treatment of its tendencies through Jespersen, I do not offer an overarching interpretation of the grammatical figures explored in the chapters. Rather, the definitive traits of each grammatical person as they appear in the featured novels open up specific modes of receptivity and reading, which I have named in the following way: perspection, elision, and duration. I develop a vocabulary for an alternate model of reading available in a newly weakened *Bildungsroman* in which language is absolved of its signifying function but charged as a surrogate for forms of seeing. Following Gérard Genette's insight that narrative, the linguistic production of events, develops in the manner of the verb, "weak" narration proceeds from Lawrence's systematic reduction of novelistic action into static, intransitive, or interactive verbs in *Sons and Lovers*. In numerous instances of characters looking together at mundane objects and struggling to articulate what they see, narration is increasingly given over to "perspection," a discourse in which thinking and observing unfold congruently. Further eliding description into perception, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* surrenders its explication in order to thicken the kinship between the grammatical subject and object. Joyce displaces Stephen Dedalus's

prolix and hyper-interpretative narration by stitching it through the minor character Cranly. Joyce's narration absorbs Cranly's most recognizable traits like the fig-seeds to a dust-ball, while eliding their bearer, who speaks habitually in ellipses. I suggest this practice of "elision" lingers in *Ulysses*, where Stephen repeatedly conjures Cranly from the things he sees; fusing things and person, these indirect objects allude ironically to the claims of autonomy Stephen makes in *Portrait*. Indeed, retrospection governs the structure of *The Golden Notebook*. Lessing discards the conceit of development altogether, dilating narration into a rhetorical system that circles around itself. "Weak" narration ultimately appears as a historical problem in what Lessing describes as "the thinning of language against the density of our experience." Intent on reanimating the historical novel she claims to be writing but bereft of its traditional linguistic resources, Lessing posits a "thin language" to stall the traffic between the individual and totality, in effect folding the historical novel into the *Bildungsroman*.

Part of the gambit in replacing the rhetorical commonplace about modernist experimentation or newness of spirit, which presumes a history of difference, with my account of "weak" modernism has to do with the onus of realism's social function that remains with the writers and their critics, albeit expressed in radically contrarian ways. I posit the syntactical scaling down visible *Sons* or *Portrait* as an underhanded negotiation with a particular social problem that each writer is dealing with, suggesting more broadly that the weak mode of style is an attempt to salvage the social and political function uniquely credited to realism. In fact, even after the implosion of works eventually termed modernist and the conception of modernism as such, novelistic realism persists, coming back with full force in the postwar period. And if the postwar *Notebook* deals self-consciously with both realist and modernist legacies as roadblocks to narration, the post-Communist Lessing of the 1980s comes full circle to taking up what sounds remarkably like a staunch Leavisite position. It seems everything was rejiggered, though nothing quite changed.

To situate this larger argument, I now need to define two large coordinates. The following section outlines Jespersen's historical argument about the English language from which the structure of weak grammatical form emerges. The final section provides a periodizing argument, turning to the late nineteenth-century economist J.A. Hobson, whose unlikely investment in literary realism as a social principle situates the discursive field around the turn of the century and its attitudes towards the not-yet articulated problem of modernism. Through Hobson, I contextualize the function of realism, so far discussed more broadly through Lukács, to the situation in England and to the English novel. In juxtaposing an early linguist and a political economist, writing at the same time yet worlds apart, both literally and in the substance of their thinking, I suggest where they do coincide, namely in their rational, progressive outlook. What new hopes Hobson saddled on literary realism, Jespersen expressed through grammar, especially the development of modern English grammar.

1.3 Jespersen: Modern Language Develops out of Grammatical Weakening

"Our task," Jespersen concludes in 1933, was to "have tried to give an idea of the grammatical structure of the English language as it is spoken and written in the beginning of the twentieth century."[18] Of the many grand tasks Jespersen achieved (from the "creation" of several international languages to a thoroughgoing campaign to reform pedagogy),[19] his contribution most relevant to this dissertation has to do with his ideas about the fundamental difference of

modern languages from the classical ones, a claim that was originally developed for pedagogical uses then taken up through historical research. Linguistic change, he argued throughout his career, depends on cultural and political history, and his seven-volume *A Modern English Grammar on Historical Principles* (1909-49, posthumous) illustrates this thesis through a thorough taxonomy of linguistic changes recorded in texts throughout history; in the first volume, for example, he coined the phrase, "The Great Vowel Shift," now a general name for the process that took place between the mid-fourteenth century and the sixteenth when English spelling and pronunciation forked away from continental languages. His work paved the way for modern linguistics and phonology, shaping the field for a distinctly Anglo-American scholarship.

The inquiries made by nineteenth-century linguistic science regarding the hereditary kinship among languages and their historical development (that English has roots in Old English, which is rooted in West Germanic, which was rooted in Common Germanic, and so on), led Jespersen to conclude that the further back one looked in linguistic history, the fuller the inflexional system becomes (more cases, more conjugations). Paul Christophersen, Jespersen's pupil and collaborator, explains that German romantic scholars, most notable among them Jakob Grimm (the discoverer of Grimm's Law on the first Germanic Sound Shift in 1 B.C. and the elder of the Brothers Grimm), tended to see such inflexional simplification as a deterioration of language, referring to the later developments in terms of a "weak" conjugation of the verb and the older, more formally numerous types as exemplifying a "strong" conjugation.[20] August Schleicher's theory, more or less canonical at the time, described the historic development of languages towards linguistic and phonetic reduction as the story of decay.[21] Latin and Gothic aspire to a higher degree of linguistic perfection, he thought, for their grammar more intricately accounts for changes in temporality and states of being, while modern languages like French or German represent a mere attrition from the earlier languages. Historical events, in Schleicher's opinion, accelerate the decay of language, and thus English in particular has suffered a great loss in volume and shape. For Grimm and others like him, "it looked as if languages were becoming increasingly weak and impoverished."[22]

As early as 1891 (*Studier over engleske kasus*), Jespersen rejected the German romantic school of linguists, considering grammatical erosion or reduction to be a great improvement in language which, in his view, *ought* to move towards greater flexibility and facility. Against their admiration for classical form coupled with a contempt for modern languages, Jespersen argued that linguistic perfection should be judged by privileging the language that achieves the highest degree of communication through the simplest means (a take on Humboldt's definition of language as a means of communication). From one of his first books, *Progress in Language* (1891), to his last, *Efficiency in Linguistic Change* (1941), Jespersen argued that rationalism expressed itself through grammatical simplification. From Jespersen's perspective, the *weakening* of grammar is both historically natural and definitive of modern language, proving its advancement over classical cultures. To stress the key postulate at stake for the dissertation: *language evolves towards weakness*.

Within the massive volume of his works, the ones most relevant for this dissertation are the philosophical studies of syntax that occupied his attention later in his career. Syntax for Jespersen is the *way* a thought is expressed. In *Essentials of English Grammar* – a greatly abbreviated, single text version of *A Modern English* – Jespersen poses, in the middle of a discussion about sentence structure, a curious question: "What means does the English language possess to enable the man in the street, who is no grammarian and has no need of learned terms like subject and object, to understand the meaning of sentences?"[23] In supposing a pedestrian (in

the full sense of the word) who knows no principles of grammar but who can, upon hearing "John saw Henry," grasp immediately who is the seer and who the seen, there is an implicit claim about linguistic capacities. Since language develops its structures prior to the rules postulated upon them after the fact, Jespersen seems to suggest, the principles we now extract from them would reflect the needs and practices of speakers beyond and encompassing written language.

Explicitly stated, Jespersen argues that the situation depicted in the sentence would be apparent to the non-grammarian pedestrian because the English language has done away with cases for the most part and instead developed a relatively fixed word-order. The general, historical flexibility of language has manifested itself in English through two forms of non-variables, the "unchanged word" (reduced or no endings) and a stable syntax; formal distinction (cases) gives way to order (syntax) in determining the role that various elements (persons, subjects, objects) play in a given situation. Jespersen's question demonstrates his belief that a fixed word-order is easier and thus more accessible, in short, more sympathetic towards the general population of language users. According to Jespersen, the "S-V-O syntax," a description that seems to be a relatively new formulation at this time (if not altogether coined by him), represents the more democratic side of language.[24] In other words, the simplicity and the fixity of the syntax stands not only for a progressive history of language but of its users who assert themselves through their use of language. Jespersen thus preferred a literary style stripped of rhetorical decoration, reflecting instead plain, everyday speech.

The English tendency towards the "unchanged word" may have stuck Jespersen as a particularly excellent demonstration of his linguistic philosophy that language is a product of human activity, "primarily speech" and "nothing but a set of human habits."[25] "Grammatical expressions," Jespersen claims, "have been formed in the course of centuries by innumerable generations of illiterate speakers, and even in the most elevated literary style we are obliged to conform to what has become, in this way, the general practice."[26] Grammar, I venture to suggest, struck Jespersen as an ideal form because it is a genuine *sensus communis* of sorts, a reflection of the "general practice" of everyone, especially those outside privileged classes, over time. If prescriptive grammar provides the rules by which to learn a language, especially for the foreigner, descriptive grammar – which is of a greater value, Jespersen insists – aims at a scientific understanding of the rules "followed instinctively" by speakers and writers. It is explanatory, providing psychological and historical reasons, and "appreciative" – "examining whether the rules obtained from the language in question are in every way clear (unambiguous, logical), expressive and easy, or whether in any one of these respects other forms or rules would have been preferable."[27] In Jespersen's definition of his subject matter, grammar observes first, then reflects where it currently stands in the ideal of language progress.

If, however, language develops toward weakness, i.e. reduces its inflections by virtue of the fixed position, to what extent can this development continue on its course? Does weakness reach a stasis? It is only a matter of time before the weakening progress of language reaches an asymptotic point at which, reduced and further reduced, linguistic forms risk sinking into themselves, depleted of any signifying elements (cases, accents, conjugation, etc.) and there simply for the sake of being there. For if weak narration is built on the grammatical contract by which certain placement of words serves to imply an existence of something, in turn, all that can be guaranteed really is the preservation of the position as such. This – the vacuity of everything but the mere imputation of an underlying structure – is the language development that mirrors the historical predicament in which Lessing finds herself, the predicament of "the thinning of

language." In Lessing, the realist grammar persists well into post-1945 transformation of society, but in a radically erosive form. The breakdown of narrative grammar is itself reflective of and contiguous to the historical phenomena described inside the novel, adopting a relationship stronger than contingency but less than causality. There is a logic propelling the process by which weak narrational structure would inevitably and in time lead to an altogether thinned language. For this, we turn to a diagnosis of realism produced at a moment when weak grammatical tendency appears, the "proto-modernist" aughts and teens.

1.4 Realism According to J.A. Hobson: The Density of Function, the Thinning of Language

The last entry in the October 1909 issue of the *English Review*, a magazine founded in 1908 and edited by Ford Madox Ford (M. Hueffer) for fifteen issues until his lack of business acumen led him to hand over the editorship to Austin Harris – is a grandly titled essay, "The Task of Realism," [28] by J.A. Hobson, a political economist best known for his *Imperialism: A Study* (1902), mainly because of its later influence on Lenin.[29] Why is a political economist theorizing realism, and why that specific word in the first place? Strictly speaking, Hobson's "realism" barely pertains to the realist style or to literary aesthetics at large, less still to any mimetic principle; as it turns out, "realism" is a placeholder for just about everything around literary realism. Hobson's particular – and peculiarly English – sense of the relationship between socialism, nationalism and literature, and his naming of this assemblage as "realism" begins to give us a sense of the overwhelming amount of functions named "realist" that pressurize the realist prose. If the realist function lies at the heart of narrative function, what narrative must sustain in order to fulfill the "realist" function as laid out by Hobson is disproportionate to its capacities. Below, I list the surfeit of ideas that "realism" stands for in Hobson's account.

To the readers of the *English Review*, Hobson complains about the "failure of intellectual synthesis" pervasive to contemporary British society and underscores the role that newly imported works – Zola and Ibsen, Tolstoy and Whitman, Millet and Whistler – could play in cultivating a dialogue between different sectors of society. Realism, then, serves a social function. Realism is also opposed to a bad, "destructive" turn that rationalism has taken, an age (late nineteenth century) that is "coldly skeptical and tending towards and ever-narrower specialization."[30] Realism is for Hobson the true heir of revolutionary enthusiasm (mentioning at once the practical reform of Godwin and Paine and the philosophical reflection of Coleridge and Shelley) and, by extension, establishes historical continuity through the continuity of transformative politics. Realism thus fosters utopian hopes to recover "the larger purpose" that has since passed out of rational thinking, and Hobson synonymizes realism with a generalist spirit – iterating throughout "a general transformation of life," "a new general plan of life," changes conceived "not departmentally, but in their bearing upon the general life"[31] – that can serve as an antidote to the over-specialization of thought. "Realism" is then a cue for a greater synthesis of intellectual labor – a "new conception of continuity" against crass utilitarianism and an economic mismanagement of intellect in institutions of higher education.[32] While improved education did increase the "raw force for progress," he writes, in the nineteenth century, the material bases of progressive thinking were "drawn off into numerous little channels to turn little private mill-wheels or to irrigate separate enclosures" instead of "flowing freely to the fertilization of the whole kingdom of humanity."[33] As hinted by the geographic metaphor, "realism" stands not only against the division of labor but becomes the very means to imagine a

new economy that can regulate the division of labor: a "*firm principle* of co-operation" that "underlies and dominates division, maintaining the *supremacy of the unity* and harmony of the whole process"; "a strong *centralizing force* to keep the special sciences in their proper orbits in the intellectual heavens"; "Proper intellectual *authority*, correlating a the work of the innumerable groups of scientific hodmen" (all emphasis mine). "Realism" is supposed to supply what is missing, the "proper correlation of its specialisms" in the current "un-co-ordinated kingdoms" and "local self-government" of thought based on self-interest. "Realism" thus becomes for Hobson a means to channel and organize intellectual labor for the public, essentially as a principality in a socialist governance of thought.

We can already sense the undue expectation levied on the idea of realism, and consequently the absurd, increasing scale of the demand placed on realist literature to come. The central organizing principle that can regulate the entire economy of thought is to be found with the influx of literary innovation, and for Hobson, the task of realism ultimately lies in subsidizing the "task of constructive liberalism." Hobson stresses that English culture is plagued by a preference for "small specialized to large general activities of the mind," and his critique of the English national character and its conservatism will eventually turn into a critique of economic separatism in international relations at large. As Hobson sees it in 1909, English national character is shaped by a proclivity toward sanctimony and an "inward fortress of conservatism" built to resist disruption and protect established beliefs and institutions "not in a formal repression or boycott, but in a steady silent refusal to face the intellectual consequences."[34] What the Liliputian fortress tries to keep out is the tide of realism from overseas. In what Hobson calls the "true story of the modernizing movement in our seats of higher education," the new insights of science and arts – all comprehensively called "realism" ("realism of modern science and of a literature and art which was drinking eagerly the realistic sprit"[35]) – are denied entry until their cultural relevance could be "endorsed by proved utility and their fiery spirit tamed by slowly acquired orthodoxy."

But, he notes, the energies of realist literature were irrepressible. The "shocking" and "uncomfortable" works of Tolstoy, Zola, Ibsen, Shaw, Brieux could not be shunned out beyond a generation, and by the turn of the century, "they are now visibly upon us," Hobson observes, steadily eroding the old order by influencing and taking life in England's native writers from within. By this logic, writers and artists of this moment – the aughts and teens when Lawrence and Joyce are scripting their *Bildungsroman* – would be considered avant-garde not so much for the specific aesthetic they espoused but in the definitive sense that they precociously received the imported works; they were in short early adaptors. While blind critics are deploring the decline of genius, Hobson argues, "new forms of realism" struggle for positive expression in art today, breathing life into poetry, drama, prose fiction and art. Social and natural science may have been "realist" *avant la lettre*, but it remains for the new, realist art and literature to show the way now:

> The very problems which, springing directly from scientific history, biology and economics, had hitherto been most successfully evaded, have forced their way into a drama and a fiction which are actually becoming popular. Heredity…the origins of poverty and luxury, the struggles of sex, of capital and labour, the corruptions of politics and religion, not merely furnish the material of art and drama, but they are treated in modes of demonstration which, challenging the fundamental assumption of the older art, give it a novel intellectual and emotional authority. [36]

If the decay of practical politics demands a new set of principles, what is required is "the same penetrating force of realism." For Hobson, realism here becomes synonymous with socialism – as it became for Lukács later on. Though Lukács would deplore the naturalist and organicist rhetoric privileged by Hobson, the extent to which their language echoes each other at times is remarkable, and *Soul and Form* resonates in moments like this: "[The current moment] is a time of short intellectual leases, not of permanent abodes. This restlessness is due not so much as is often held, to a nomad state of soul, as to an experimental discovery of defects in these improvised synthesis."[37] For socialism is a "great educator" with a substantive force greater than "the ghosts" of Whiggism and Toryism. As Hobson's rhetoric turns more rhapsodic ("The age of shirking, vapouring and opportunism is passing," etc.), the case for a realist ethics lands on its stylistic procedure: an insistence on "plain intelligible answers"; a reversal of "dissociative current" towards a unifying process and an "orderly assemblage of ideas"; "not so much a system of thought….as a single spirit in the conduct of life."

A stupendous weight of realism's political and ethical function besieges realist seeing. Realism redoubles Enlightenment rationalism in its "clear-eyed following of fact" and a totality of seeing, an "outlook upon life" out of which "unity" emerges to "clos[e] up this false division of the human standard," especially institutional and market forces.[38] In "realism," Hobson detects an awakening of thought *across* different intellectual spheres, the "spirit of realism" intelligible in recent comparative approaches to religion, the crafting of realpolitik, a financial emphasis on conceiving international relations, etc. Such a "new and common spirit" found in the works of Wagner or Ibsen thus point to a new insight of the age at large.

To reiterate, "modernism" is not a term in currency yet. As betrayed by the writers and artists mentioned, what Hobson calls realism is essentially what we've come to refer broadly as modernism. From the point view of 1909, the modernism to come is essentially "the fuller realism" that has evolved from the "cruder realism" (of romantic naïveté and naturalism). And as the sweeping rhetorical force of essay lands on a hope fueled by realism – "towards a community of thought and feeling" and towards "a 'practical philosophy' of life" – Hobson presents both his essay and the goals of the incipient *English Review* as being devoted to the *cause* of realism and its search for "experiments in collective self-consciousness."[39] In other words, "realism," the adaptation of continental literary insights onto the native soil, has essentially become the new *sensus communis*.

Hobson's expansive realism tells us of two problems to come. At the simplest level, "realism" is tasked with too many problems from nation-building to utopianism of labor. I began by identifying the fact that for Lawrence and Joyce, the sentence, in its weak grammatical capacity, substitutes the *Bildung* function of their narrative, that their sentences serve to assert the first person (*Sons*) or to manifest the second (*Portrait*) in ways that otherwise could not be accomplished by narrative discourse alone. Tasked with a relatively simple function such as that, the sentence forms a stop-gap, filling a breach in the narration. A surfeit of narrative functions, however, especially as they tend towards forms of collectivity, surpasses what weak grammar can do. The English sentence, Jespersen's account goes, can do things through its fixed position. But there is only so much it can put into place: the subject and the various types of object, the plurality of either, their relationship arbitrated by the verb. By definition, syntax places words in order to arrange and distinguish them; an undifferentiated totality or a collectivity runs counter to its modes of coordinating a relationship. Yet one of Hobson's main goals thrust upon realism is the collective function, a way to operate "the general life." This, the problem of syntactical and structural unsustainability tasked with collectivity amongst a surfeit of other functions, comes

crashing down on the prose of *The Golden Notebook*. Language, the capacity of the sentence to point to something, thins out under the density of every experience to be accounted for and pointed to.

Finally, then, Hobson's mega-realism lends itself to a second problem that crops up both in Lessing and in the critics of her generation looking to modernist works: the injunction to articulate collectivity. Especially as realism becomes a catch-all word including, surprisingly or unsurprisingly, an Arnoldian stress on the moral health of the collective, Hobson conveys a tendency typical in many English critics to imagine an umbilical cord between realist style and English national identity. When Hobson wrote the introduction to *The Meaning of Socialism* (1919) by John Bruce Glasier,[40] he defined socialism away from the scientific (Marxism) towards its basis in arts and culture, providing a peculiar conception of humanistic socialism and reflecting the belief that culture serves the health of the larger, social body. To critique an economic problem like self-interested profiteering (which he finds to be the operation essential to imperialism), Hobson posits a distinct communal – for all intents and purposes, national – interest fundamentally at odds with imperialist ones. Cultural structures like art are elevated in order to reject certain political and economic structures in the interests of the larger body, the conception of which depends on a relatively coherent sense of the communal self. Hobson's critique of imperialism, which he takes to be anomic at heart, depends on parsing out culture from it. To reiterate, socialism is in this sense culturally based, the cultural presupposition, to borrow Williams' terminology, of an "affiliative" relationship to community in which people are inseparably and intimately tied to their land, figured as another person of the community. (This may be what Lenin found useful.) In the English context, it seems, socialism and nationalism – especially a land-based conception of community – are intricately and emphatically linked in forming a discourse of resistance of which realist literature avails itself as an icon.

This, perhaps, is the dilemma that tangles up English critics, a pressure felt as early as the proto-modernist intellectual culture to make the newly emerging "realist" novels solve the problem of overspecialization of knowledge and to square them with a critique of capitalist, privatizing interests against a collective interest. Hobson's pan-category of "realism" paved the way for cultural critique as later generations of critics set themselves up for the task of cultivating a common cultural core, imagining a pastoral, native socialist past (E.P. Thompson) or a familial community (Raymond Williams). For F.R. Leavis – his own brand of working-class anti-authoritarianism and anti-institutionalism transformed into literary traditionalism and a textual reliance on some Lutheran turn of logic – there is a greater temptation to cast authors like Lawrence, Hardy, or George Eliot in the role of community builders, their novels forging the values of the community in one form or another. The next chapter begins by addressing some of these problems, identifying the relevant cultural and political context in which Lawrence wrote and was received.

The subsequent chapters are about the conflicting pressures of realism placed on novels and the recessive process by which the realist gene gives way to an alternate stylistic vision (the full psychological interior monologues of *Women in Love*, dramatic and multiple personae of *Ulysses*, the speculative turn in *A Descent into Hell*). The realist kernel – the task of realism to sound out a social totality – that keeps cropping back even as it is being actively exorcised and written out, that cannot find a satisfying solution within the novel form, moves, perhaps, onto the shoulders of the critics. We thus find the midcentury critics using literary works, which now stand for the idea of culture itself, to work out for themselves what was initially the substance of the realist novel, the problem of individual, social and communal formation. As the classical

account of the *Bildungsroman* goes, it not only represents the growth of the individual, but more essentially and rhetorically aligns subjective identity into a social/cultural ideal. The weakening force of grammar once allowed modernist authors to develop their compositional program. If an earlier realist aesthetics gave way to modernist works thanks to the insight garnered though weak narration, its function never did. In straining to account for the ever-growing function of realism, prose, by the time in reaches Lessing's hands, weakens evermore.

CHAPTER 2

"NOWHERE TO GO, NOTHING TO DO, NOTHING TO SAY": VERBAL BEGINNINGS, INTRANSITIVITY AND AGENCY IN *SONS AND LOVERS*

2.1 Chapter Introduction: Clearing Away

They all gave a fair warning: as Anne Fernihough puts it, "the academic study of Lawrence became a curiously self-defeating enterprise, reduced to the tautological replication of Lawrence's own terminology and the ritualistic rehearing of his prophesies"[1]; as Linda Williams puts it, "The heady amalgam of life and work turned Lawrence into an Example to us all"[2]; as Chris Baldick puts it, "the after-Lawrence or posthumous Lawrence consists of course in what others have made and remade of him and of his works … this Lawrence is, in the leaden Franglais of the scholastics, a 'site of contestation'; or, in English, disputed ground."[3] Least of all do I wish to be tangled up in questions of Lawrence reception: the perennial role his works play in mobilizing a national or class sentiment; the once-popular questions of aesthetic ideology in conjunction with Bertrand Russell's famous hyperbolic stricture that Lawrence's kind of thinking "led to Auschwitz"; various permutations of psychoanalysis, vitalism, or reader-response claims on Lawrence as a "writer's writer" [4] with its counterintuitive effect of assigning Lawrence as the vanguard of the middlebrow; debates about censorship and cultural distinction, the redemption of middlebrow or populist taste, and so on. None of these issues does this chapter engage with (if "issues" are dealt with at all), except to the note that controversies tend to propound at a comprehensive level ("Lawrence") and that when specific, notoriety tends to stem from Lawrence's mid- to late- career works. Lawrence's initial success, what made say *Sons and Lovers* so fresh in the eyes of the early critics (as I chronicle in more detail in 2.3) had less to do with questions of sexual or class politics than with a particular perceptivity that had yet to be experienced in the English novel. On this, Raymond Williams's idiom proves to be most salient.

Two very telling, antithetical publications on D.H. Lawrence appear in 1970: Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* and Raymond Williams's *English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence*. Millett's work undertakes to expose both the sexism that she see as inherent in acclaimed male authors (Henry Miller, D.H. Lawrence, Norman Mailer, and Jean Genet) and the problems of midcentury criticism in misrepresenting the sexual dynamics of their works.[5] If, for F.R. Leavis, the famous "England! My England!" passage in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928, a later work) – in which Connie Chatterley confronts the social struggles of the Midland mining society by asking "But which is *my* England? […] One England blots out another" – is the quintessential expression of Lawrentian thinking, the same passage for Millet conveys merely Lawrence's desire to sexually "return industrial England to something like Middle Ages." Millet "knocked Lawrence off the pedestal" on questions of sexual and moral progress, Anne Fernihough recalls, and heightened the sense, perhaps latent since the embattled and embittered Leavis's over-endorsement of the author, that "Lawrence and academia, like oil and water, do not mix." [6] Millett's scathing commentary, justified or not, could not have been the only reason why Lawrence enjoyed his last bit of critical respect, but it usefully marks the point at which Lawrence's post-Romantic language and enthusiastic tone, his sincere rage against industrial and bourgeois life both, would begin to sound much too quaint and outdated to the critical ear.

Williams's work (which I revisit in 2.3) is equally telling in inserting Lawrence into his ongoing genealogical project to unearth a socialist spirit native to England. Following in the footsteps of his teacher Leavis, Williams reads Lawrence within the larger tradition of the English novel; though Williams's pivot toward the left after the war dissociates him from the classic, Arnoldian liberalism championed by Leavis, there is of course far more affinity between the two men half a generation apart than between the contemporaries across the Atlantic. *English Novel* identifies a "new kind of consciousness" emerging from the Chartist crisis of the 1840s, noting more generally that out of the "crisis of experiences" comes "a confirmation of a generation" – Dickens, Brontë, George Eliot, and so on with Lawrence dovetailing the enterprise – to provide a central bearing for the reader: "the exploration of a community: the substance and meaning of a community."[7] The substance and meaning of a community to be handled in the novel from 1840s on consist of intense skepticism and an experience of society as overwhelming. Through these authors, Williams charts a key change in the function of the novel, from describing a "knowable community" and relationships to experimenting radically in response to a new belief that persons and relationships are "fundamentally, crucially unknowable." While the full consequence or the "seriousness" of this divergence comes to surface only towards the end of the century with Hardy, the pressure is visible from Dickens on. In creating this genealogy, Williams is after the "original and creative use of the novel as a form" to identify, articulate and make manifest the crisis of the knowable community. (Williams eventually gathers the formal insights here into a broader theory of the "structures of feeling," the relationship between an individual and the social sphere that is actively defined through the process of being lived.) In Williams's account, the difficulty of knowing a community – in its increasing scale, greater division and complexity of labor and altered relations between classes – has to do essentially with a problem of "finding a position, a position convincingly experienced, from which a community can begin to be known."[8] It is to this problem of knowing a community/finding a position that the "major phases in the development of the novel must be related."

I begin by taking at face value Williams's proposition that novels develop in order to *find a position*, harkening back as well to Jespersen's interpretation of linguistic development toward finding a syntactical position. To recall Jespersen, the characteristic simplicity and communicative facility of English had everything to do with its development of fixed grammatical position over case endings. To collate Williams and Jespersen, the novel develops to find and establish a grammatical position, a position convincingly experienced from which further relationship can begin to be known. *Sons and Lovers*, I propose, is a novel concerned with the process of finding and establishing for the protagonist Paul Morel a position, the first person pronoun, from which his experience can begin to be meaningful, from which he can hope to begin to be know a community. The first person pronoun is the *I* from Paul's point of view, but we might consider it more fundamentally as the position of the speaker (the second person being the spoken to, the third spoken about).

Reading across different versions of *Sons and Lovers*,[9] I track the process by which Lawrence attempts to establish the first person in three measures. First, I identify the problem the novel is confronting, namely the problem of describing something that isn't there and narrating nothing that is there. Neither is a philosophical gambit, for the problem of describing around arises from the conditions that bind the characters (2.4-6). I thus consider the value of seemingly inefficacious, habitual actions performed by characters who are limited to a working class domestic life. The countless instances of "looking together" or "telling" a story convey the extent

to which the novel is devoted to describing acts of perception or narration rather than the object viewed or the story told. Secondly then, this chapter locates *Sons*'s handling of its narrative and descriptive problem at the level of grammar, specifically that of the verb. The prevalence of discursive and interactive verbs produce what I call an "intransitive" style. The novel, I argue, is built around actions that highlight the lack of significant events or things that would have organized the prose around nouns and adjectives. The chapter thus addresses the difference Lukács poses between narration and description, wherein the narrative actions of the historical novel are replaced by static descriptions of objects and interior spaces in the modernist novel (2.4). Lawrence works the absence of direct objects (culminating for Paul in his mother's death) into the narrative by turning loss as a theme into formal gaps in storytelling.

Finally then, this chapter takes stock of the implications of *Son*'s narrative grammar centered around the particular class of verbs, asking what such weak verbs enable in terms of ever knowing a community or finding a position from which a community can be known. As seen in the numerous description of the characters "brooding" or imagining figures who are not present, the novel turns direct observation of life into contemplation, in a process I call "perspection," a discourse that merges seeing with thinking (2.6). The discourse of perspection is one way in which *Sons*'s weak grammar manages to position the characters in relation to each other. I contrast perspection, which is a kind of shared grammar, to Wittgenstein's language games, which also purport to bring out the "activity" (what Wittgenstein also calls the "forms of life") involved in speaking language and to acknowledge our "craving for generality" that constitute the contracts of ordinary language (2.8). Whereas the Wittgensteinian activity of "seeing connections" satisfies the gap in the material presence of things, perspection draws it out. What Wittgensteinian schema cannot accommodate – the anxiety of existence toiled over by the protagonist and its analogous grammatical construct – becomes, I argue, the constitutive aspect of the character as such. The problem of existence sets up the problem of character to look back to the *Bildungsroman* function from this vantage point (2.3 and 2.9).

2.2 The Agony of Narrativizing

"The real agony," we are told in one of the last passages of *Sons and Lovers* after Paul Morel's mother has died, "was that he had nowhere to go, nothing to say, and *was* nothing himself" (412). She was everything to Paul, so the loss is ineffable and he is driven to a near-suicidal state. While the chapter of her death is called "The Release," either of the mother from her burdensome life or of Paul from her fraught maternal presence, Paul suffers from having no place to be released *into* thereafter: "Where could he go? There was nowhere to go, neither back into the inn, or forward anywhere […] There was nowhere for him" (412). The lack of an objective world that can receive the actor renders any action moot, conveying only the prepositional disconnection between the two realms, neither back nor forward. Echoing the state of suspension, the infinitives in the sentence name the uninflected form of the verbal possibilities confronting Paul; to go, say and be are not actions to be taken but moods not yet activated, not yet predicated by a subject – a mere inkling that prevails. The grammatical difference between, say, "he can't go somewhere" and "he has nowhere to go" marks the difference between a subject's inability to do something and the surprisingly substantive potential to enter into a negated space of action. In the former, a subject still remains to underscore the particular action that *he* doesn't perform. In the latter, to go nowhere or to say nothing – if nowhere is indeed

spatial and nothing indeed substantial – presents a challenge of sorts. Could Paul act into the negative substantives he holds, to go nowhere, say nothing, and be nothing, effectively yielding up his subjectivity? The sentence opens up the kinetic, grammatical operation central to this chapter's line of inquiry, the gamut of agent-less/semi-agentive, negative actions that govern *Sons and Lovers.* Not doing something versus doing nothing, though their ends might be similar, are qualitatively different actions in the novel.[10] Both are modes of action available strategically within constraint and contingency; if one denotes resistance, the other offers an evacuated performance. The rest of this strange final passage, which I will revisit at greater length in the last section, presents Paul with a possible mode of action he has not learned from anyone, verbs that are not buttressed by experience, singular to him and heretofore unexplored: to go nowhere, to say nothing, to be nothing.

The rest of this section lays out the problem of action facing Paul, and how the character's problem of action is mimicked at the level of narration, whose modal characteristics are encapsulated by the term "agony." In other words, rather than read Paul's "real agony" as a generic descriptor of his existential stuckness, I consider the term to be a typical Lawrentian nomenclature whose meaning reflects the compositional undertaking around the abovementioned unexplored possibility. Given the novel's tendency to recycle a handful of abstract words that often coalesce around specific characters – Clara's "passion" or Miriam's "soul" – Paul's "agony," too, seems to be something of an emblem that figures its linguistic connotations, a sum of the sensibility brought forth in each set of descriptions in the last chapter. "Agony," both the anguish of the mind and the paroxysm of the suffering body (OED), not only defines the condition Paul experiences at the moment but literalizes, too, the difficult and belabored process of grasping and entering into the realm of the concrete – the paroxysm of doing nothing. The expository passages throughout the novel's last chapter get at the same feeling, repeated at different registers: cognitively, Paul is "feeling unsubstantial, shadowy, as if he did not count for much in this concrete world" (408); physically, "he felt he couldn't touch the lampposts, not if he reached" (412); symbolically, "his soul oscillated, first on the side of death, then on the side of life, doggedly," to take a few examples. These passages work their way around different categories of description from the sensible (or lack thereof) to the psychological, trying to figure out whether to articulate Paul's condition ontologically as a problem of being nothing or phenomenologically as a problem of grasping nothing, and if both, how one relates to the other.

With such shifts of intent at the level of description, we might suggest more generally about the last chapter of the novel that narrativization itself appears to be in agony, grappling with the very problem of ascribing and giving descriptive content to the no-thing and the no-where – by definition experiences without a reference to the particular. Since the experience under examination is one in which "Nothing was distinct or distinguishable," or "everything seemed to have fused, gone into a conglomerated mass," the description of indistinctness cannot settle on a specific image, a thing or even a name of a thing. Nothing may be ("was") but everything else can only "seem." That is, the idea of indistinctness could be affirmed, but to give it material presence in language, Lawrence has to qualify it as such, lapsing into a mere attempt to describe what it's *like* as opposed to what it is, framed in a comparative relationship of "as if" or "seeming": "Everything *seemed* to have gone smash for the young man"; "There was that dark, strained look in his eyes, *as if* he were hunting something"; "Something felt sulky, *as if* it would not rouse"(409, 10, 12, all emphasis mine). Each description refers to another set of descriptions, but no claim can be made of nowhere or nothing itself.[11] The experience of nothing and nowhere remains devoid of substance and language precisely because it is surrounded by

descriptions of everything else that resembles the experience. Paul's agony occasions a belabored process for the narrative to textualize material absence through descriptions that keep pointing elsewhere, to that which can be concretely named in language. Though it may seem paradoxical to understand nowhere or nothing as having shape or substance of any sort, the textual "agony" is what remains of the negative procedure taken by the descriptive language of Lawrence's last chapter. The existential problem of the character Paul – what establishes the arc of this *Bildungsroman* but has failed to be resolved through its content thus far – is being worked out at the level of narration. Narrative itself emerges as a figure, "agony," straining to solve the problem offered by the character.

Agony speaks to a textual dynamic in which the descriptive sentences compose a negative image, fleshing out a vacuous center by describing around it.[12] This is not exactly a conceptual problem of imagining what can't be described (ineffability) but a language problem of articulating, to borrow Wittgenstein's phrase, "the connection between the name and the thing named set up"[13]: the name "nothing" and some referential thing that is supposed to be the nothing. Of course, there is no such thing, and Paul's agonizing experience lies in being denied the reference that *is*, the ability to identify something. Or put differently, this language problem of a name surrounded by but ultimately unconnected to its description is what is being narrated to us in the form of Paul's existential agony. His incapacitation gives way to a newly awakened sensitivity to the feeling of unreality, the recognition that forms lack a meaningful point of origin or words their reference. If there are legible forms of phenomena, there never existed, actually, any trustworthy causal relationship between actions (e.g. grasping something) and their agents (e.g. being something):

> There seemed no reason why people should go along the street, and houses pile up in the daylight. There seemed no reason why these things should occupy the space, instead of leaving it empty. His friends talked to him: he heard the sounds, and he answered. But why there should be the noise of speech he could not understand (410).

Physical descriptions and cognitive descriptions are not necessarily correlated; the former can be put to words, while the latter raise an unanswerable question. People go, houses pile, things occupy, noises are heard; actions are registered and felt, but the question as to the existence of the particular agents of the actions – why they should *be* in the first place – produces no understanding whatsoever. Where reason ceases, no account is possible. Here, then, is the crux of this chapter, the existential subject transposed as a narrative causality, or a lack thereof. Lawrence treats the problem of existence as a problem of the first person pronoun, as a matter of establishing the point view of an *I* from which Paul can convincingly occupy and relate to the houses and noises around him. For Paul's quandary over the purposiveness and origin of things cuts into the fundamental premise of Lawrence's narrative: before Paul does anything, why should there be "Paul Morel" in the first place? Or does "Paul Morel" need to *be* in order for anything to happen? Description – whatever Paul is or seems – is built atop something that cannot confirm its own status of being. The 'why,' once asked, sharply punctures the utter fallacy of the 'should,' releasing any pressure of obligation, probability and expectation in the existence of things. Perhaps inadvertently, the novel, a form constructed out of utterances, calls itself out: why should there be the noise of speech in the first place?

Paul's questions do not deny materials themselves (he doesn't doubt hearing sounds when they are made) but his understanding of them as such, *as* the noise of speech. "Everything seemed so different, so unreal," not because things have lost their reality but because the

constructive power of his perception, its reality-giving force, has been pulled asunder. "His mother had really supported his life" (407) in the sense that she had provided a mental apparatus for him to incorporate things into definitive existence: "They two had, in fact, faced the world together. Now she was gone, and forever behind him was the gap in life, the tear in the veil, through which his life seemed to drift slowly, as if he were drawn toward death" (407). If, with her husband "She tried to force him to *face* things" (14, my emphasis) and failed, Mrs. Morel had nonetheless succeeded in drawing Paul into facing the world together. Walter Morel cannot face things because, Mrs. Morel realizes with bitterness, he takes up only the sensuous present tense: "What he felt just at the minute, that was all to him"; "There was nothing at the back of all his show" (14). What Paul had thus abided by, in facing the world with his mother, was both progressive time in which minutes add up and three-dimensional space in which actions move through depth. In other words, perspectival necessity – a narrative order – grounds what Mrs. Morel considers to be moral necessity – responsibility and interiority. Stuck in nowhere, "neither back […nor] forward anywhere," Paul sees that the category of necessity – what *should* be – was itself the veil, as was narrative continuum, both now torn apart. Precisely because material life remains indifferent to Paul's anaerobic state, its activity – incessantly going, piling and occupying – underscores the extent to which labor had been involved in living in relation to the material world, *facing* the world,[14] meeting it and dealing with it, rather than simply existing in it; there was, "in fact," always agony, he comes to understand. Through the character's inner turmoil, the narrative lays bare its own fundamental premise that the reader had thus far taken for granted, that a narrative should *be*. Paul's inaction in the final passage thus figures a narrative problem of an absent causality that arises once his conviction in the validity of things is annulled.

2.3 Training for Loss: A Necessary Procedure for Beginnings

How does Lawrence arrive at the insight that Paul's existential dilemma boils down to the tenuousness of his claims to the first person? Paul's sense of "agony" – distressed, writhing and contested – clues us into a key textual problem the novel operates around: the descriptive struggle involved in imagining a set of actions once learned actions and their originary objects have been lost. To clarify, the descriptive struggle is Lawrence's, trying to capture Paul's struggle with action. The central relationship of reflexivity and mirroring in the novel – what might generally be referred to as its "autobiographical" element – is constituted by an analogous sense of the agony facing the character regarding his action and the author regarding his articulation of it. This section pulls out from the novel for the time being to address Lawrence's writerly agony in broader, procedural terms.

Whatever parallels there are between the character Paul and the author Lawrence, they deceive when considered contextually and thematically (Paul's aspiration as a middling, local watercolorist on the side hardly compares to Lawrence's polemical and multi-media artistic campaign throughout his career, though as a painter Lawrence was hardly more than middling[15]) but click into place when considered as formal catalysts. The narrative of *Sons and Lovers* slouches toward an irreparable loss, the death of the mother that Paul Morel must learn to live past and begin anew. The death of *his* mother during the initial writing process in 1910 had arrested Lawrence temporarily, only to propel him into an intense period of production – four rather different drafts in a year – to finish this novel. Lawrence began plotting the earlier drafts that came to be collected under the title *Paul Morel* in October of 1910, stopping around the time

of his mother's death in December (MS1). He prepared an altogether different draft of the story starting in March of 1911(MS2, *Paul Morel*), only to abandon it after four months. He soon began a new, third draft (MS3 – considered the "manuscript" version), finally completing it around February of 1912.[16] After Jesse Chambers, after whom the character Miriam is modeled, commented extensively on the draft,[17] Lawrence rewrote yet again (MS4); by the time he renamed the draft *Sons and Lovers* in October, the novel as we know it had been three-fifths completed.[18] *Sons and Lovers*, the result of the fourth writing effort, may have been published in 1913, but the staggering process of starting and restarting that preceded the published text locates its critical inception and formative period in the year bracketing his mother's death.

Lawrence's painstaking drafting process of doing away with what has just been done – rather inefficient to say the least – shifts the paradigm of loss from a biographical context to one of textual history underwritten by a galvanic procedure of losing and restarting, of beginning again after having begun once. The rewritings seem to have been motivated by changes in Lawrence's style as well as intention, i.e. his sense of what his novel *is*. In a letter he wrote as he began plotting the novel, Lawrence declares, "*Paul Morel* will be a novel—not a florid prose poem, or a decorated idyll running to seed in realism: but a restrained, somewhat impersonal novel,"[19] then upon deciding to rewrite the novel, tells his (new) editor, "I've thought of a new novel—purely of the common people."[20] By the time he gave it a new title and "licked it into form," Lawrence retells the plot to his editor as a psychoanalytic, archetypical narrative of male sexuality channeled through the maternal:[21] of "the split that kills him"; "The son loves the mother—all the sons hate and are jealous of the father"; a universal story "rather like Goethe and his mother and Frau von Stein and Christiana" as well as Ruskin's, "a great tragedy" that is "the tragedy of thousands of young men in England."[22]

The shift could certainly be attributed to meeting Freda Weekley, who introduced Lawrence to Freud in the spring of 1912;[23] but more to the point, Lawrence's own readings of his novel in the letters indicate that, while he doesn't doubt its accomplishments, he never quite figures out what it accomplishes or even what a satisfying account of it might be. Despite his own reduction of the novel to Oedipal types, he rails against a psychoanalytic review of the novel for failing to "see the wood for trees" and reducing it to a "Mutter-complex," for the novel is, in his reading, "as art, a fairly complete truth" in contradistinction to such typology.[24] At one point, he outright calls it an autobiography despite claims for its impersonality or universality, raising the question of what an autobiography means for Lawrence.[25] The novel first aspires to a strict realism cleared of decorative elements, veers more toward an ethnographic account of the ordinary, takes a sudden turn into symbolism, and finally becomes a personal work for Lawrence. There is of course no reason why a single work couldn't fit several categories. What nonetheless becomes clear is the sense yet again that an absence of something articulable lies at the core of the novel, legible here in the indeterminacy of Lawrence's intention.

Several early reviews also picked up on this confusion, though they often attributed it to an error of stylistic inconsistency or a crass, autobiographical impulse that detracts from the provision of a life-like portrait. This is not a well-made piece of work, asserts a contemporary critic, because the "author has lived so completely within his creation" and does not employ the protagonist in his service.[26] Though Paul is written in the third person, he ends up replicating the ignorance of the "I." We are left at the end of the story without understanding the nature of the man about whom story is told, the critic complains, for "No doubt he himself would not, in real life, have understood it." The critic is absolutely right: the novel's faithful mimesis of the unknowing self – the self Lawrence lives inside and does not himself understand – fails to

achieve the closure that a conventional mimetic narrative ought to have provided.[27] Another critic extols the "strange" and "surpris[ing]" power that makes the narrative "pass from fiction into glowing reality," while censuring the intrusions of the writer as flatly "wrong."[28] The critic quotes at length a scene in which the wind blows in Miriam's skirt and fills it "like a balloon," until Paul holds down the hem of her dress "perfectly and simply, as he would have picked up her glove." For the critic, this is the kind of intuitive detail that could not have been invented, a pure fragment from life and "one which not a novelist in a hundred could produce." In contrast, certain statements are too consciously made, a thinly-veiled expression of the "thoughts which belong to [the author] and not to [the characters]."[29]

These comments shed an interesting light on narrative distance. Lawrence's closeness to life produces authentic, vivid descriptions that lend a sense of reality. Too close and inside, he ends up laying bare his own struggle to tell *something*, obtrusive to the mastery of reality that ought to feel un-crafted. The looking eye that captures true details, when transmuted to the telling mouth, will speak words that are untrue to the characters. Lawrentian seeing shuffles between reflection and interpretation with mixed results. For what he is able to do with the first person speaker differs from what he is able to do *as* the first person. There is only narration. Mimetic telling, even for the characters, serves an interventionary, surrogate function in the absence of full access. No matter the texture of detail – seemingly authentic or not – their reality *is* mediation. The novel is not so much "autobiographical" as it is about the difficulty of establishing a consistent distance from objects. Put another way, to describe the novel as autobiographical refers not to the author but to the problem of objectifying (something or oneself). Instead of locating the purposiveness of the work in Lawrence's intention – for he obviously lacks finesse here – we might instead consider it a matter of narrative intention. If authorial intention has to do with being the first person speaker, narrative intention has to do with the attempts to properly position the *I* inside the narrative, the design or planning involved in the attempt. Intention is the novel's predicative element in the sense that the predicate, in Jespersen's definition, is what is said about the thing. Given Lawrence's numerous statements about the novel, we might say that *Sons* suffers from an excess of intention.

The instability of a central objective, then, is more than a mere reminder of the multiplicity of the text or the "death of the author." Rather, the literary critical aspect of Lawrence's own readings of his work is noteworthy, as if *Sons and Lovers* presciently tests out each garb of what is to become a key category in novelistic discourse, such as Joycean free indirect discourse/impersonality lifted from Flaubert (further discussed in the next chapter) or competing accounts of realism in the modern novel. Like the descriptions of nowhere and nothing that are fleshed out negatively through their family resemblances, the novel's intention – the accreting, shifting designs predicated upon it – including the style governing it, is cast by breaking off each mold. Lawrence, at least, seems to be interested in identifying what his work is *not* in relation to his other work. During the early stages of *Women in Love*, called *The Sisters* at that point, he informs his editor that it shall be "*very* different from *Sons and Lovers*: written in another language almost," and that he "shan't write in the same manner as *Sons and Lovers* again, [he] think[s]—in that hard, violent style full of sensation and presentation."[30] The writerly procedure of differentiation serves a self-pedagogic function. With the beginning of each draft, Lawrence learns by practicing a new style, so as to move on yet again to "another language" of expression. Loss is, above all, integral and necessary to build up *Sons and Lovers*.

In this context, it is worth noting the stylistic differences that occur even between each draft of *Sons and Lovers,* paraphrased here for the sake of economy. While the earliest notes

reveal that the novel was conceived as a series of episodes, short pantomime pieces woven together without a concern for an overarching significance or telos – "Death of Walter Morel" followed by an episode about "Aunt Ada" – most of these happenings either disappear or are significantly changed by MS4.[31] *Paul Morel*, naturalistic and filled with industrial landscapes that call to mind Hardyesque descriptions, emphasizes the goings-on of domestic and village life: sibling rivalry, the games children play, vendors who carouse in the street. Despite being a quaint novel of small scales, the narrative is still action-driven with far more events, small as they are, happening constantly. [32] Whereas the final draft paces out the relative non-happenings by pausing for reflection and commentary in indirect discourse, *Paul Morel* develops the characters through lengthy dialogues, including at one point the letters between Paul and Miriam, written in their own voices. In the final writing, plot empties out and characters are reduced to the essential players, while still maintaining the episodic feel of the earlier drafts; it has the scale of the vignette without the vignette's decorative excesses, more consistent and formally streamlined.[33] Such stylistic differences have less to do with levels of sophistication, but rather, given the decisive and epiphanic turn in each draft, with what concerns the language, the techniques of seeing that undergo dramatic and rapid stylistic changes throughout the early drafts.

Style, Edward Said tells us, is *"not* the origin of a text, but that which the *beginning* of a text *intends*"; it is the author's signature-writing that "blots out origin, and substitutes for it the beginning, which is the writer writing his text."[34] Style is what remains when an author writes toward a beginning in lieu of an origin. The entire corpus of *Sons and Lovers*, including the drafts, allegorizes what Said refers to as a pure or an "intransitive" beginning: a beginning without a determined intention and origin, a beginning in the sense of being merely first. Thus, Said observes, "a beginning, which intends the textuality of a text, can *transform* language generally into a specific text by a particular writer."[35] "Intention," Said notes in a remarkable echo of Williams, "is the link between idiosyncratic view and the communal concern."[36] The work of intending has to do with "an appetite at the beginning intellectually to do something in a characteristic way" and comes down to the designation of order involved in any verbal construction. The "internal production of meaning" *is* the narratological stuff such as precedence and consequence, the procedure taken by or the duration of the material. Whether "In the beginning was the Word" or "For a long time I used to go to bed early," the beginning point marks that primal, individuating choice for Said. Style stands for the writer's signature, and with just a bit of exaggeration, is the point at which:

> A text can speak once the writer's subjectivity has fully appropriated to itself an entire textual language in which the "I" of the writer/speaker designates an ego functioning in a reality created by that language. […] My thesis is that at a crucial midpoint in the career, the writer's text *has itself become a discourse*, a praxis by which statements can be made, statements whose purpose—since we are discussing literary texts here—is not to convey information but *to speak* to the reader. (257-8)

With each draft, Lawrence inaugurates another beginning with its own set of intentions and styles working towards praxis. The specific text, in other words, is the manifest style. Discontinuous in time and no longer with claims to a hereditary model, the modern subject in Said's diagnosis must forge a radical starting point for himself. Modern beginnings "show us how much language, with its perpetual memories of silence, can do to summon fiction and reality to an equal space of the mind."[37] Lawrentian beginnings thus show us both the extent to which the realist inheritance is exploitable and the incipient attempt to forge a radical starting

point.[38] The Saidian intransitive mode, then, helps us to consider how a deficit – dropping styles and intentions throughout each draft – opens up a condition of possibility, of "the new style" that will be in *Women in Love* (the mid-career text, to weld Said's schema to mine, that can fully speak to the reader from the position of the "I"). Though we generally assume that something lost or nonexistent cannot be described – that is to say, inaugurated into language – the process that the novel takes to become itself shows just that: both narrating the absence of a describable object (what *Sons and Lovers* is) and describing the absence of a narrative possibility (what it no longer is).

Intransitive beginning – the "second sort of beginning" that has "no intention other than to simply be a beginning" and signifies in its search to be located a radical rupture in continuities – is then the central procedure that constructs *Sons*. The ending of the novel, which presents the narration of a missing description – that which would give words to the experience of the mother's absence – proves the power of the narrative to produce something into being and begin anew, tenuous as it is. Saidian beginnings thus speak to an economy of possibilities available within language as yet spoken, to borrow Said's description of the intransitive beginning, tautological and "endlessly self-mimetic."[39] Paul's realization that a house has no more grounds to be than an empty space (1.2) is no ordinary existential crisis but a rupture in the logic of causality fundamental to the narrative enterprise. Likewise, Lawrence's writing process is not cumulative and progressive; he reignites similar content with a different intent at each turn. Just as "agony" shifts the category of autobiography from one of thematic content to one of performative modeling, Lawrence's continual rewriting shifts the *Bildung* concept from an issue of epistemic condition to one of production, one without a clear telos. *Bild* literally means image and, according to Thomas Pfau, *Bildung* by extension oscillates between product and production.[40] Lawrence's drafting process thus suggests that we understand *Bildung* more holistically to consider prior textual losses as part of *Sons*' narrative of non-teleological development, expanding *Bildung* into a longue durée of stylistic procedures. The aspect of *Bildung* that concerns me here deals with the history of distinct mimetic strategies as itself a developmental narrative. *Sons* results from shedding several different techniques of seeing in the earlier drafts and undergoing dramatic and rapid stylistic changes throughout the earlier drafts. Losing, in other words, constitutes the *Bildungsroman* process of the novel working itself out.

The death of Lawrence's mother has some correlation to *Sons and Lovers* as a novel that builds toward Mrs. Morel's death as the irreparable point of no return for Paul; somewhere along the drafting process, Lawrence begins to use the novel to work out a problem of describing what's no longer there. The maternal loss is climactic for the protagonist, but the novel is otherwise filled with characters finding ways to say and do what they do not have language for. "There was no Time, only Space," the narrative remarks at the very end of the novel, as if to ask how a narrative could exist outside of temporality, of the logic of origin and outcome. *Sons and Lovers* as a novel of loss, both thematically and mechanistically, has first and foremost to do with the formal attempt to build a novel out of non-temporal movement, of non-generative and non-progressive acts: actions in the intransitive mode, both in the grammatical sense of not taking an object and especially in the Saidian sense of having "no object but its own constant clarification."[41] Loss thus emerges as a force beyond a paralyzing absence, something productive even without an outcome. Though negative in substance, loss – both of content and of style – nevertheless redefines action altogether; it is inevitable and the narrative must teach Paul to act in spite of it and for Lawrence to write in spite of it.

The following sections (2.4-6) square narrative intention with grammatical intransitivity in order to distinguish two types of intransitive verbs at work in this novel, the verbs that intend nothing (take nothing as its object) and the 'pale' verbs that act for the sake of beginning an action (the Saidian intransitive as a secondary mode). It is necessary to sort out the set of actions available to Paul, the "he can't go somewhere" actions, from the radical demand to act onto negative substantives. The former are actions of habitus by which the characters Mrs. Morel and Miriam contend with their conditions of limitation, and subsequently their inability to do something, by coming up with their own strategies for nonetheless exerting influence on and affecting other persons. Paul both learns and recoils from these modes of effective inability, ultimately abandoning each mode as well as the person tied to it.

2.4 The Form of Loss: Pale Verbs

Sons and Lovers describes around description, describing without the thing itself. Perhaps unsurprisingly, such referencing or alluding to an unspoken content is a narrative mechanism specific to the novel in which nothing much happens in the first place. This may be a novel of the everyday, but the everyday life itself isn't made up of much stuff. The novel takes remarkably little interest in the materiality that could conceivably orient the prose more toward distinctive nouns and adjectives. Even in a scene at the local market, a perfect Dickensian locale to load up on observations of the culture and its environment, the narrative instead runs through Mrs. Morel's activities:

> In the tiny market-place on the top of the hill, where four roads, from Nottingham and Derby, Ilkeston and Mansfield, meet, many stalls were erected. Brakes ran in from surrounding villages. The market-place was full of women, the streets packed with men. It was amazing to see so many men everywhere in the streets. Mrs. Morel usually quarreled with her lace woman, sympathized with her fruit man—who was a gabey, but his wife was a bad 'un—laughed with the fish man—who was scamp but so droll—put the linoleum man in his place, was cold with the odd-wares man, and only went to the crockery man when she was driven—or drawn by the cornflowers on a little dish; then she was coldly polite (73).

Consider the extent to which the narrative takes interest in catching the scuffles and the interactions at the market place over, say, an account of regionalism or the particular things of the market. Besides a vague sense of crowdedness in what sounds like a child's sentence – "It was amazing to see so many men everywhere in the streets" – the narrative makes barely any observation about the place. The quaintness, a quality of experiential intimacy that grounds the novel in its setting and personages stems from the comforts of the verbal discourse, including snippets of Mrs. Morel's observations in her own diction: "a gabey, but his wife was a bad 'un"; "scamp but so droll." If there is an ethnographic component to the passage, such observations are seen through Mrs. Morel's eyes and translated through her diction. A simplicity of tone colors the passage, on par with Mrs. Morel's simple, straightforward actions. The verbs, listed in an ordered, syntactical pattern, not only mimic her routine at the market but mark her route through it; if we could imagine something as oxymoronic as an unrestrained, easy determinism, the confidence of her actions owing to habit embodies it.[42] The passage revels in what Mrs. Morel *does* with others, handling the vendors one after another with familiarity and confirming her on-

going relationship with these occasional friends. The verbs are intransitive and interactive – quarrelling, sympathizing and laughing – exchanges of the moment without ends. They are forms of exchange, habitual and social, that elude the abstract logic of exchange that otherwise governs a marketplace.

If a narrative account is to be (and not undermine itself completely by the end[43]), it seems Lawrence can either retain the realist confidence – people go, houses pile up and things occupy, de facto – or invent, in the spirit of experimentation, an altogether different logic of things existing and occurring; either prevent the tearing of or altogether circumvent the blinding veil of causality. Yet the novel bypasses the realist/modernist either/or, retaining instead the shapes and forms of realism but to unexpected ends. Critics have long had a problem situating *Sons* within Lawrence's oeuvre, whether with the early fictions of impressionism or with later works of the metaphysics of feeling. Michel Bell attributes the elusiveness of the novel to Lawrence's distinct but uncertain definition of artistic impersonality at this point, which is neither an authorial posture (more Woolfian) nor a technique applied to the material (Flaubertian). Rather, Lawrence's impersonality is, according to Bell, "an ontological sustaining of otherness, albeit within an imaginary arena, which cannot be a neutral or indifferent act although it results in the maximum freedom of the created life."[44] Bell derives this claim from Lawrence's introduction and review of the Sicilian realist Giovanni Verga in which Lawrence states his partiality towards what he identifies as Verga's comic and benevolent, Christian god-like impersonal relation to his free-willed subjects over and above Flaubert's atheistically withdrawn impersonality of technique.[45] Leaving aside the correctness of Lawrence's assessment – or his dismissal of Flaubertian influence on modern literature as the theories of "the literary smarties of Paris" bullying for example the "poor Verga" into a self-effacing submission to the "Paris ready-mades" – we should note that this sense of impersonality is being developed in and through *Sons.* Lawrence seems by this point to have intuited the emotional and artistic significance of the term "impersonality," Bell thinks, while the full potential of the term as both a necessary detachment and a richness of feeling vis a vis others still escapes him: "In *Sons and Lovers* Lawrence has not quite sorted out what impersonality means to him, although he seems on the verge of doing so, and this is reflected in the swervings from impersonality in his handling of the narrative itself."[46] But if Lawrence's impersonality has not yet found a full philosophical articulation in *Sons,* the corresponding narrative uncertainty – its "local shifts" and "tendentiousness" identified by critics – in effect dramatizes the mobility of the emotional material relative to different points of view, at times omniscient ("Mrs. Morel usually quarreled…"), at others subjective ("who was a gabey").

Perhaps the preeminent critic of a world of realist objects unmoored in time, Gyorgy Lukács juxtaposes description to narration in his 1936 essay, "Narrate or Describe?" Description, traditionally one of the subordinate modes of epic art, becomes a principal mode in modern composition, Lukács tells us, for it is now the writer's "substitute for the epic significance that has been lost."[47] Descriptive details are particular qua particular, merely contingent to the setting and no longer fully purposive to the character or to the narrative event; to recall an Auerbachian paradigm, it is the inevitability of Odysseus's scar as opposed to the excursive occasions opened up by the brown stocking that Mrs. Ramsay is mending. For Lukács, the circumstantial banality of description and its pervasiveness in the modern novel result plainly from the dehumanization of social life, from the decay of the "inner poetry" of experience. Without an innate interrelationship between them, objects acquire significance only by assignment, by association with an abstract concept that forms the author's world view. The symbolization of objects that

informs naturalist fiction – which, for Lukács is the ineluctable nineteenth-century descendent of the historical novel from the preceding age – is as spurious as the commodity value that orders modern life. In a scathing diagnosis of the descriptive mode of the modern novel and the supposed consciousness developed from it, Lukács refers to the "feeble and purely subjective" knowledge derived from seeing what is essentially an already-dead character merely come into awareness of his incapacity: "The writers' fatalism, their capitulation (even with gnashing teeth) before capitalist inhumanity, is responsible for the absence of development in these 'novels' of development."[48] The static present-tense of the descriptive mode cannot fulfill the promise of the *Bildung* conceit that founds the novel form.

As if to bypass the empty signification of objects, Lawrence composes the novel by stressing verbs over nouns, depicting the poetic inner life – to create in a reduced scale what Lukács calls the "epic relationship" – through the verbal acts of the characters. *Sons and Lovers* strikes a strange and deceptively remarkable chord, by recycling pieces that do not work, the tropes of realism – namely description – that have been emptied of their intended use but retain enough vestiges of their aesthetics to create movement: to generate going, occupying and hearing without the nominal density of people, houses and speech.

Before Paul reckons consciously with the absence of an origin or the immateriality of experience, the novel has, from the outset, divested itself of production, abstracting them in order to underscore their compositional dynamic. The very signifier of machinery and production, the factory in which Paul works, buzzes with conviviality and "homely feel" quite unlike the industrial world of the nineteenth century novel. In lieu of a mechanized or even an occupational life, Lawrence depicts a decidedly domesticated social life, a workplace filled with chit-chats during lunch break, mannerisms of "the girls," food-sharing and gift-giving so that "the time went along happily enough," the factory generating life not through work but everything around it.

Even in the earlier draft (MS2 *Paul Morel*), more realistic in convention and with greater interest in establishing the setting, the mines and the pits become a pastoral landscape, allowing Paul "to sit on the bank where dirty, dusty stichwort grew, and watch, hour after hour, this pageant of industry" as an impressionist painter might, watching the sunlight transform a church. In an instinctively sensitive passage that was excised from the final version, not function but the semblance and the pattern of industrial movements dominate:

> Raised on its black bank, [the mine] balanced in silhouette upon the golden, wintry mist. High up, cresting the headstock, the four wheels that carried the ropes spun quickly, twinkling their darkness, resting, and twinkling back the other way. […] The pit was shimmering with dark activity, re-echoing with hollow sounds, while all around it stood tall, broadening columns of icy stream, blue upon the golden mist, and swaying as if alive, things between earth and heaven (*Paul Morel*, 22).

The pits and the natural stream are on the same imagistic plane, a whole composite of things between earth and heaven. Paul's gaze tells us not what the mines are for (function) or what they are (definition and meaning), but their "dark activity," how they crest, twinkle, and sway "as if alive."

What comes alive in Lawrence's writing is community, claims Raymond Williams, by which he means a "feeling with others, speaking in and with them." After George Eliot and Hardy, Lawrence is the first and, according to Williams, the most successful writer to alter "the novelist's language of description and analysis to the colloquial and informal from the abstract

and polite."[49] Indeed, where dialogue is concerned, the language of the novel is at one with the language of the characters, written in a vernacular such as Mrs. Morel's description of her fruit man. Things like mines and pits, on the other hand, don't have a language for Lawrence to speak in and with them, though they are constitutive of and indeed the bedrock of the mining community. The oft-cited vitalist impulse in Lawrence, at a very basic level, is an attempt to describe not things as they exist but the activity ("life") native to them. Over and above a metaphoric descriptor such as "the pageant of industry," the passage is much more intent on articulating the verbs enacted by the industrial beings (mines, pits, wheels and machines) as if motion is the language by which they communicate: balancing, spinning, twinkling, resting, shimmering, re-echoing, swaying. The verbs thus allow the writer to "speak in and with" inanimate objects, if objects mediated through an analogous, human vocabulary. It is not that language as we understand it could be anything but man-made. Personification, voicing the object from the human point of view, essentially describes through the *I*. Indeed, any structure of relations to the external world established in terms of the inner/subjective experience follows the logic of the first person pronoun. Recognizing that the words of movement are man-made participles, "columns… swaying… alive," Lawrence scrupulously inserts the "as if"; but the human verbs still manage to draw out a visual composition of a distant yet constantly reverberating dark mass flanked by two swaying light bodies.

Like factories and coal pits, bodies, too, do not live up to expectation or work the way they should, though the characters remember for each other when they had. Unlike the usual times when she recoils from the mere presence of her husband, Mrs. Morel is pinched by the fleshy vulnerability of Walter Morel's body mid-wash and remembers the young man: "It might have been the body of a man of twenty-eight, except that there were, perhaps, too many blue scars, like tattoo marks, where the coal-dust remained under the skin, and that his chest was too hairy" (197). As if to brag, she excitedly imitates for her son Walter Morel's healthy constitution and the "once handsome bearing" that only she is now privy to; it "humbled" Walter Morel to see the sudden spark in her and to feel "the ruin he had made during the years" (197). Disillusionment is too puerile a word to describe the piteous sympathy between the husband and wife in the mutual and unspoken remembrance of all they've used up in each other, the loss visible only to them. The scars and hairs, the corrugations of the surface, remain as a reminder of the ideal state, helping its reader re-enter, if momentarily, into the old game and its practices. Though "very rarely she would do anything so personal for him," Mrs. Morel takes the soaped flannel and washes his back. If we read as Mrs. Morel does, for whom the body carries a reminder of what it used to be, we would accept that obsolete pieces have their place. As if to anticipate an irreconcilable loss of a paradigm, Lawrence trains his characters, and Mrs. Morel her son, through obsolescence, trading realist verbs for nouns, garnering their visual, communicative affects to ensure that verbs happen, going, piling, occupying and hearing, whether or not nouns exist as such, as people, houses, things and pits. Verbs serve an "as if" function, to hold a movement in sight, to suggest a form at work in the movement and thus to imply an agent tethered to the movement – though almost certainly, there is no agency to speak of.

Mrs. Morel's actions mark her regular movement at the market without adding up to anything significant in terms of plot; they are reduced, habitual acts that arise from the given situation in response to another person. To borrow from Lukács, narration recounts the past by selecting the essential actions of the drama and produces a perspectival distance to reveal the effect of events upon the characters. Description, on the other hand, "contemporizes everything,"

the spatial present "confer[ring]" a temporal present on the objects.[50] For him, this is an illusory present, not the present of the immediate, narrative action. Intransitive actions like Mrs. Morel's at the market take up the present in both senses – the participial capturing a movement in time, that moment created by a *presence*, by taking up space – yet neither in full. Hardly actions of necessity or causality, laughing with the fish man and quarrelling with the lace woman bear no weight except in the moment of experience; or rather, their value lies in conferring a temporal presence onto the narrative. By emphasizing verbs over nouns, Lawrence thus meets the challenge posed by the modern description by postulating a *missing* description and narrating from it (2.2). The intransitive verbs, which do not render an object, are the narrative modalities of the missing description. Though it may appear generally that something nonexistent or lost cannot be described, the novel is an exercise in attempting this – to narrate the absence of a describable object or to describe the absence of a narrative possibility. The narration of missing description proves the power of the narrative to produce something into being, an ontology of sorts – tenuous and pale as it is. The next two sections delineate weak narration more thoroughly by analyzing the specific types of intransitive verbs and their uses, namely telling and then seeing.

2.5 Pale Agency, the First: Telling as an Act of Narrativizing from Absence

Quite literally composed of mundane verbs of speech-acts like "telling" and "listening," Lawrence's narrative continually shows its characters engaged in trivial habits of interaction. The peculiar relationship between Paul and his mother is formed through the act of telling:

> Everything he did was for her. She waited for his coming home in the evening, and then she unburdened herself of all she had pondered, or of all that had occurred to her during the day. He sat and listened with his earnestness. The two shared lives. (114)

The verbs "to unburden" and "to ponder" confer gravitas onto the content of Mrs. Morel's thoughts. Paul acts the part of the priest in the confessional, as if to authorize an inward dimension to the otherwise unremarkable domesticity of her daily life. In fact, Paul replaces the role played by a character that was excised after the second manuscript, a shy village reverend who visits Mrs. Morel on a daily basis to listen to her and take comfort in her bossy, maternal ways; the scene still retains a religious appreciation for telling and listening, the "earnestness" of it all. The two "faced" the world together and shared their lives not through social, functional activities during the day but through a mutual, discursive reflection at the end of it. More than a social discourse, the act of *telling* is particularly indispensable for these characters who are constrained by their situation and therefore hold dear the illusoriness of living that telling enables. After all, far from being historical agents, the Morels have no connection to dramatic events to pull them from obscurity or give distinction to their inner lives save for the verbal reckoning they do for each other; Paul "launches into life" no farther than "Thomas Jordan, Manufacturer of Surgical Appliances" in a town nearby, feeling himself already "a prisoner of industrialism." Yet the condition of constraint is a fact of the novel rather than a source of drama as it in naturalist fictions whose plot is driven by characters at the mercy of contingency.[51] Telling stands in lieu of a grander narrative construction, transforming a mere occurrence into a representational story, a production of meaning that requires only an audience of one to bear witness to it and confirm it.

Not the characters' narrative (what Mrs. Morel tells her son) but a description of narrativizing, of the pleasure that the characters take in narrativizing for each other, abounds. Telling is a crucial way of being part of the family and the greater community. In his status as "an outsider," shut out of the family in the days following his outburst of anger and abuse, the father is barred from the exchange of telling: "no one told him anything" and "conversation was impossible between the father and any other member of the family" (63). He redeems himself in his children's eyes by telling them about the pit, for "Morel had a warm way of telling a story" (64). The mother, on the other hand, arbitrates the children's reality through telling: "Nothing had really taken place in them until it was told to their mother" (62). Paul takes an "intense pleasure" in talking to Miriam about his work. At the factory, the girls tell Paul of the woes between different departments so he can plead the case for one party or another. Lawrence registers the absence of content by wrapping narration within itself, narrating the process through which the characters narrate. Laying out each step that leads up to Paul's habit of post-work narration, Lawrence tells us:

> His mother rose with gladness as he entered. He put his eight shillings proudly on the table. […] Then he told her the budget of the day. His life-story, like an Arabian Nights, was told night after night to his mother. It was almost as if it were her own life (113).

Whatever there is to tell about the budget or however it translates to "his life-story," we see only the effects of narration, transforming the daily happenings at the factory into a proper story. The ritual of telling is an incantatory act that enables further living, inhabited "as if her own life." As readers, we are not privy to the full content of "his life-story" but are in turn told that telling takes place.

A limited agency is found in the circular stories the characters tell each other, and the narrative conveys just how much the characters keep trying to access each other without declaring that they are doing so. Not content, but telling as a gesture affects the characters. Looking over Paul's sketchbook, Miriam, the neighborhood girl and Paul's childhood sweetheart, ponders, "Why do I like this so?" Paul repeats the question back to her, "Why *do* you?" to which she answers:

> "I don't know. It seems so true."
> "It's because—it's because there is scarcely any shadow in it; it's more shimmery, as if I'd painted the shimmering photoplasm in the leaves and everywhere, and not the stiffness of the shape. That seems dead to me. Only this shimmeriness is the real living. The shape is a dead crust. The shimmer is inside really."
>
> And she, with her little finger in her mouth, would ponder these sayings. They gave her a feeling of life again, and vivified things which had meant nothing to her. She managed to find some meaning in his struggling, abstract speeches. And they were the medium through which she came distinctly at her beloved objects. (152)

Paul's convoluted explanation does little to actually account for the image. Some version of impressionist aesthetics seems to emerge from Paul's speech, but the explanation is itself "struggling" to express itself and cannot address why Miriam likes it or feels it to be true. Perhaps the abstruse reasoning behind the words compares to what Paul calls the "stiffness" and the "dead crust" of an object's shape. As Paul does with the photoplasm of nature – though we're never actually told what is depicted in this painting – Miriam treats his words as a "medium" for accessing another aesthetic object (the painting); his speech is the active "shimmeriness" that

vivifies her relationship to the objects and helps her understand her own emotional response. Her intensifying mode in turn activates Paul when "He got tangled up in his own speech; but she brooded on it, and he had a strange, roused sensation, as if his feelings were new" (153).

Despite the narrative emphasis on telling, there is not a single long speech spoken by a character, and we're apt to wonder to what extent these quiet characters who struggle to express their own impulse or to understand that of others ever really meet the demand that the other tell and listen. Through the characters' discursive, dialogical interpretation of each other's words, the narrational focus on telling steps in for the characters' struggling, unseen labor of narration. Often, the same intransitive verbs describe both Paul and Miriam, as if they trade verbs in lieu of physical exchange; pondering, brooding and other verbal struggles both point inward and charge their reality with an affective dimension. Our experience of the narrative comprises just such acts of mediation suspended into reality. The novel thus makes a crucial distinction between the activities of shimmeriness and shape, between words as medium and as abstract speech. Characters do not convey anything in particular or effect change but they can narrate. If narrative is the space or the medium of action as Lukács insists, Lawrence's constellation of telling and listening advances a pale agency from the narrative actions 'happening' via brooding and pondering, telling and listening. We see agency not in the usual sense of exerting will onto the social structure, but still with its form. The agent's existence is asserted by his or her simple presence: someone is there to tell something; someone is there listening. These actions are intransitive in the sense that they do not manifest into anything but reflect back on the there-ness of the verbal agent. This is the case throughout the novel. Verbs like "listening," "sympathizing" or "quarrelling" are grammatically intransitive as well as in meaning, but the novel has a way of giving an intransitive veneer – shimmeriness as it were – to other verbs too like showing or telling or pondering that would otherwise be grammatically transitive. The use of these verbs highlights both the lack of mobility or kinetic action and the absence of a necessary relation to an object. Besides the verbs of telling, the narrative is composed of characters watching, sharing work, looking together, listening, brooding, pondering, and feeling: modalities of weak action available within the situation of constraint, limitation and loss. These are not actions that belong in the *Bildungsroman* proper, which serve to earmark events and propel plot development. In the constellation of telling and listening, the description of a scene of narration in lieu of narrative content produces a pale agency, agency limited in its capacity to will something but serving the same narrative function.

2.6 Pale Agency of Seeing: Perspection as Perspective

Mrs. Morel's actions, as we have seen, make transparent the illusory production of time and space at the heart of fictionality by arguing for a necessary transmogrification of spatial description through action, verbs as the means of presencing. Naturally, Paul's first lessons on living within intransitive verbs come from Mrs. Morel. Laid up with sickness and half-asleep, Paul the child "opened his eyes to see his mother standing on the hearth-rug with the hot iron near her cheek, listening, as it were, to the heat" (66). Paul's sensitivity toward perception in this scene, observing her "still face" and catching all her quiet, intransitive activities around the ironing board, parallels Mrs. Morel's agility toward action:

> She spat on the iron, and a little ball of spit bounded, raced off the dark, glossy surface. Then, kneeling, she rubbed the iron on the sack lining of the hearth-rug vigorously. […]

> Paul loved the way she crouched and put her head on one side. Her movements were light and quick. It was always a pleasure to watch her. (66)

A choreography builds around an incremental, barely visible movement that is part of Mrs. Morel – the little ball of her spit. Paul takes pleasure in watching her movements, the way she interacts with domestic surfaces, as if her ironing and scrubbing motions are the "shimmeriness" around the kitchen and its objects. Emerging from the scene, according to Paul's logic, is the "real living" inside her, bestowing her shimmering movement with capacity beyond domestic efficiency. By reading her movements, Paul learns that agency can be found not by some ideal of pure action but through a patient meditation on nimble, habitual actions to become adept at working through constraint. The relationship between the mother and the son takes precedence over Paul's sexual and romantic relationships not only psychologically and chronologically but verbally as well, in a mimicry of watching and doing. The title suggests that the narrative watches over Paul's development from Mrs. Morel's vantage point, of (her) sons and (their) lovers, or of sons who are also lovers.

Loving, then, correlates formally to the act of watching, both static yet powerfully transitive acts. As if to atone for bringing the unwanted child into life, Mrs. Morel swears to love Paul "with all the force, with all the soul," a love that can "[melt] the marrow in her bones with fear and pain" (37). Indeed, Mrs. Morel's loving-through-watching takes on a near physical energy. Bidding Paul farewell from her kitchen window each morning, Mrs. Morel watches one son cross the field and visualizes the other bounding around in London:

> She stood in her white apron on the open road, watching [Paul] as he crossed the field. […] She thought of William. […] He was away in London, doing well. Paul would be working in Nottingham. Now she had two sons in the world. She could think of two places, great centres of industry, and feel that she had put a man into each of them, that these men would work out what *she* wanted; they were derived from her, they were of her, and their works also would be hers. (101)

Seeing, for Mrs. Morel, is an affirmation, synonymous with feeling and articulating how she relates to the world. In a reverse-manifestation of sorts, seeing lets her explain to herself, "they were derived *from* her, they were *of* her, and their works would also *be* hers" (my emphasis). Prepositions put nouns in relationship with each other, not only placing objects next to one other but imposing a causal relationship on them by 'taking' objects; the preposition is the device that transforms contingency into relation, intransitivity into a semblance of transitivity, and operates beyond itself to imagine the effect onto another. The passage imagines several set of relationships between the mother and the sons through the prepositions: "from" implies temporality and origin; "of" belonging and partiality. As the prepositional logic turns from the derivative to the possessive and finally to the predicative, wherein objects are one and the same, seeing becomes identification: "their works would also be hers." Mrs. Morel reminds us that her sons' subjectivities were once an object of her transitive action par excellence, of her birthing them. She can assert her own desire – what *she* wants – because she correctly identifies the reciprocity forged in offering herself up as the object of dependent relationships, of possession and *pre*-position. She reminds us, moreover, of the near-perpetual endurance of her action – the future conditional expectation, "would be," built into her relationship with her sons above and beyond what or where they are now.

In her assertion that their actions are hers, Mrs. Morel binds Paul into an axiomatic use of verbs, as if to decree that to be derived from an action is not only to be constituted by that action but to be a constituent of it. According to the logic of her world, there is no way to be affected by an action without also being its object: "They would work out what *she* wanted." Even as agents of social actions, the sons' independent, working lives in the world only affirm their original objecthood, "put into" the industrial centers by another agent, their mother. Their partiality to her underwrites the intrinsic, grammatical passivity of their agency as men in the world; however they succeed in the world, grammatically speaking, they are prepositional objects. If Mrs. Morel epitomizes of how an action that is weighted and rooted in context – bearing Paul – can also be the focal point of all her agency, the grammar of the passage inflects how she forges the her relationship with her sons into one of transitivity.

Like a lens, the grammatical element of the preposition determines the intensity and the extent of her perspective. Just as Paul's subjectivity is reined in by Mrs. Morel's need to envision him to prop up her own identity, the novel encloses the characters in one another's observations. We might consider Mrs. Morel to be a masterful practitioner of a perspective-laden indirect discourse: *perspection*, a term I supply to emphasize a discourse possessed by perception and to distinguish it from the traditional free indirect discourse. The word nicely ties up the original Latinate verb for seeing through and looking closely into something with its early modern connotations of contemplation (OED). Perhaps the best use of the term comes from the seventeenth-century physician John Bulwer's *Anthropometamorphosis: Man Transform'd*, a text that catalogues and illustrates bodily decorations and transformations of all kinds (tattoos, scars, piercings, etc.) throughout the ancient and modern, new and old world: "Not only made… for ornament unto the eye, but for perspection."[52] Perspection implies that one regards in a heightened manner, here in an anthropological inspection of a bodily form. Such a scientific quality of seeing may have been what Leavis was channeling from Lawrence's novels when he named his critical journal *Scrutiny*, another principal synonym for perspection. In my use of the term, I stress its contemplative component, perspection as a form of mental beholding that bears an intensity and attentiveness in the act itself irrespective of an outcome. In perspection, by reveling in the very act of observing as a source of pleasure and meditation, subjects who look produce in the reader a feeling of familiarity that is not dependent on knowledge. Indeed, as concerns basic empirical expectations, perspection amounts to a weak form of knowledge, but precisely with a weakness that can point to the fallacy in knowing confidently. If thinking is congruous with observing, the word also reminds us that the observing eye is at once limited to that particular perspective yet reflects more than what the eye sees.

With extreme proximity, the narrative eye zooms in and out of the characters through the gamut of verbs having to do with watching, looking and observing. The characters look not at each other but at objects together, gazing at the little gifts they give to each other or at the flowers they have picked during their walks. The mother and son, "the two [stand] looking together" (75) at a decorative dish that was bought from the market – the mother excited but embarrassed by her little indulgence, the son boosting her excitement by delighting in the dish's cornflower painting and suggesting its place in the kitchen, the dish occasioning a much needed approval and encouragement of her action. It is as if the novel is enamored with the act of looking in itself, as are the characters for whom looking is one of the limited number of ways they can express love and tenderness for each other. Paul and Miriam's conversation overlooking his sketchbook may be reconfigured in this light as well. Neither of them can act erotically upon the affection they have for each other, but the intensity of Miriam's perspection produces in Paul

"a strange, roused sensation, as if his feelings were new" (153). If, as a scene of telling, the conversation between Paul and Miriam describes the characters struggling to narrativize to and for each other, as a scene of looking, their interaction narrativizes the characters struggling to describe what they see. Perspection, in other words, puts telling into a relationship with looking by charging words and images with an extra-visual layer and unravels, through visual meditation, abstraction into affect.

Everyday affects like Mrs. Morel's anxiety at Mr. Morel's habitual late and drunken returns home – precisely because they are constantly experienced and negotiated with – are more transient than those of historical actions yet shift through just as complex an order:

> In the winter nights, when it was cold, and grew dark early, Mrs. Morel would put a brass candlestick on the table, light a tallow candle to save the gas. The children finished their bread-and-butter, or dripping, and were ready to go out and play. But if Morel had not come home they faltered. The sense of his sitting in all his pit-dirt, drinking, after a long day's work, not coming home and eating and washing, but sitting, getting drunk, on an empty stomach, made Mrs. Morel unable to bear herself. From her the feeling was transmitted to the other children. She never suffered alone any more: the children suffered with her. (60-1)

Not Walter Morel but only the *sense* of him, at once an image of him and some awareness and understanding that comes from it, is available. Presumably unfolding elsewhere at the same time, the participles – sitting, drinking, not coming home, and so on – describe the probable scene of his getting drunk; the narration then zooms out to the result of her participial sensing – "made Mrs. Morel unable to bear herself." The narrative provides not the actual scene of Morel at the bar but situates us in the kitchen wherein Mrs. Morel sits at the table doing other unrelated tasks, lighting a candle and brooding. Though we are not quite privy to the monologue that races through Mrs. Morel's head or whatever emotional or psychological state she might be in (anger, disappointment), we do hear her account through the series of present and continuous participles that keep score of Walter's after work habit; these actions keep happening, and they happen in the present moment. She experiences his current doings (drinking, getting drunk) by registering their negatives (not coming home, not eating, not washing). This is an unhappy example of perspection. What Mrs. Morel is feeling may be the opposite of pleasure, but there is affect and experience, "sense," created through contemplating and imagining the actions of another.

As the description of the absent figure takes place through Mrs. Morel, the narration enacts the way in which intuition and perception move us even as we sit still. Twice we are told that Morel is sitting, an inactive non-action that affects her so much. And not only her but, "From her the feeling was transmitted" to the children, and "she never suffered alone any more: the children suffered with her." "Sense," in its active play of imagined actions, moves beyond Mrs. Morel's consciousness to produce a tactile experience that the children partake in, as if existing materially. Actions that count occur not in medias res, but in moments of reflection, in narrativized accounts – the stories characters tell themselves quietly inside their heads. On the one hand, the present moment falls within the limits of Mrs. Morel's imagination; on the other, Morel's actions, accessed through Mrs. Morel's imagination, have overshadowed whatever habitual actions the children and Mrs. Morel might have been doing here and now. Actions, even when they are not present, take effect in one's presence through what Lawrence refers to as the "tremulations upon the ether"[53] in sensing them. The Morels' participles reverberate together. Not utterance but the descriptions of actions modify the sense of reality in the act of visual

recitation. As the sense she feels condenses into a gerundive – "the feeling" – solid enough to produce an atmosphere, the last sentence of the paragraph closes another uneventful day, the mother and the children sitting and co-habiting the sense of *his* sitting elsewhere.

Noting Lawrence's compositional continuity, David Lodge notes that whereas modernists like Joyce or Eliot saw the text as a kind of "*space*, a verbal object the components of which might be juggled about, replaced, added to and subtracted from, Lawrence seems to have regarded [text] as a kind of *sound*, a 'tremulation on the ether': an utterance that, like the oral epic, could be modified in the act of recitation."[54] Such prose rhythm is especially prevalent in *Women in Love*, Lawrence's more critically acclaimed novel, through which Lodge unpacks his argument. Lodge's emphasis on sound makes sense for a novel that fully eschews plot in place of speech acts to convey psychology. (And as I elaborate in the last chapter, Lessing picks up on precisely the Lawrentian tempo of psychology unfolding in and through conversation). His observation applies partly to *Sons*, with the key difference that what Lodge attributes to a discourse spoken by the characters themselves, emerges here as a visualized narrative discourse. We might think in terms of the orality of utterance (*Women*) versus the eye in perspection (*Sons*). As the dialogue moves in the former, it is "forwarded by continuity" of its own phrasal energy. The progression doesn't provide new facts but unfolds the "deeper significance of the same facts."[55] With each word or phrase, the sentence moves farther away from the context and even its original reference, continuously elaborating on its own metaphoric meaning. The psychological depth of *Women* ripples through each discursive act. The characters in *Sons*, however, lack such mastery over discourse. They are either not in full control of their words or choose not to articulate their thoughts and feelings through utterance. Rather, the narrative eye conveys, almost intuitively, such tremulations. No conscious recitation by character or by direct narratorial commentary quite permeates into the spatial and emotional depth as fully as narrative perspection does.

It is not only Walter Morel's habitual drinking that upsets Mrs. Morel but also the mundane, irksome fact that Morel would get drunk "on an empty stomach." That Morel gets drunk matters for the plot and the establishment of a character; the caveat that he gets drunk *on an empty stomach* – in an unconscious elevation of an otherwise inconsequential detail – matters greatly only to Mrs. Morel. One could hear her, in the fictional world, carping on the great, double offense of drinking without eating. The detail is offered not from the point view of the narrator who tells the story at large, nor from the subject about whom the detail applies. Rather, Walter Morel, absent from the room, is enclosed in the observation made by another in her imagination. What is being presented in this moment is not interiority per se but the orientation of her imagination, in an intimate proximity to the kinds of judgment she would make, as opposed to the inner workings of her mind. Narrative doesn't produce the observation so much as stay close to it, accessing not Mrs. Morel's mind itself but everything outside of and near it, approximating without penetrating the psyche, looking on behalf of the character. Perspection, the looking that becomes a telling, reverses here as her account of (Morel's) actions produces an image (of him). The layers of observation, the narrative eye seeing through a character looking at another character, underscoring the very indirectness of discourse.

What perspection forces us to think about, then, is how we read senses and possibilities that are neither articulated nor even consciously understood. It is a way to understand a sub-surface feature of the narration that isn't quite focalized or worked through an omniscient narrator, yet still emanates from somewhere between the character and the narrator. To better grasp such purposiveness without consciousness, we might borrow E.P. Shrubb's phrase,

"unintentional but unaccidental."[56] Focusing on the markers of industrialization in the *Sons and Lovers*, Shrubb argues that the "sense of life" in names and settings ripples beyond the author's control. In the novel's domestic and industrial life, "there does seem to be something unconscious about them, that they do not give the impression of being the product of an accidental or contingent intention, but rather the product of an interest or concern that Lawrence didn't make the book out of but rather made the book out of Lawrence."[57] Shrubb makes an interesting case for the unconscious construction of realism that complicates the question of intention. Thus, the mere name of a site in the novel, Greenhill Lane, strikes Shrubb as being "quite Worthworthian" in character, while Bottoms, which refers to the residential area at the mouth of the pit, or Hell Row, the alleyway of houses, amuses him with their "wry jocundity." These references are unconscious precisely because they are no accidents, Shrubb insists, but colloquial nicknames that reflect the culture of the place and its people; it is less that the readers now understand a thing or two about the cultural milieu than that the context serves to give a personality to the descriptive language of the novel. Lawrentian direct importation from life is both purposive *and* unconscious. Aspects of reality in *Sons* are unintentional and unaccidental in that what is purposive and intentional gestures beyond the author's ability to construct: Lawrence can know something familiarly through seeing and describing without understanding it. Shrubb's phrase helps us locate the life-based details in the novel somewhere between the craft of realism and pastiche, looser than the former and deeper, more subjectively inflected than the latter. As the phrase, "made the book out of Lawrence" suggests, the novel makes remarkable use of passive agency in the way it produces a sense of purposiveness that doesn't necessarily adhere to anyone. To whom is perspection purposive, and who is conscious of it? Paul is in the frame of consciousness, but the framework of purposiveness is legible only through the narrative straining to develop itself – which Paul cannot judge. As explored further in the next section, the coexistence of a lack of intention and the surprising purposiveness literalizes the transformation of life-gestures into words.[58]

2.7 Assessing Pale Agency: Narrative Ventriloquy of Character

Three months after his mother's death, Lawrence, in a desperate and anguished letter to Louie Burrows, to whom he was engaged at the time, unleashed both an intense commitment to his work and his frustration at the lonely quest:

> I have begun Paul Morel again. I am afraid it will be a terrible novel. […] Oh dear, I am a cursed nuisance. I must pluck the very concentrated heart out of each of my mysteries and desires. I go straight, like a bullet, towards my aim. I cannot loiter by the way. I cannot slowly gather flowers as I saunter. I wish to heaven I could. I cut straight through like a knife to what I want. I cannot, cannot slowly enjoy watching the rose open […][59]

In typical Lawrentian fashion, the idiosyncratic description outlines two different modes of action: on the one hand is action with determination and objective, to go straight like a bullet, to cut straight through like a knife; on the other is a slow, non-instrumentalized action of pleasure and pure means, to loiter and saunter, to gather flowers and enjoy watching the roses open – a mode he claims to be incapable of inhabiting. While these behavioral descriptions allude to his relationship with Burrows to an extent, they're ultimately concerned with gestures of

interpretation and reflection involved in writing, of plucking the heart out of his life's mysteries and desires for his novel. In that sense, the two modes of action speak to the tension between different discursive and compositional acts. As if to work out the compositional polarity through the characters, the idiom of going straight versus enjoying the flower makes a peculiar return in an interaction between Paul and Miriam. During one of their walks, Miriam, happening upon that quintessentially Romantic object – daffodils – buries herself in them:

> He watched her crouching, sipping the flowers with fervid kisses.
>
> "Why must you always be fondling things?" He said irritably.
>
> "But I love to touch them," she replied, hurt.
>
> "Can you never like things without clutching them as if you wanted to pull the heart out of them? Why don't you have a bit more restraint, or reserve or something?"
>
> She looked up at him full of pain, then continued slowly to stroke her lips against a ruffled flower. Their scent, as she smelled it, was so much kinder than he; it almost made her cry.
>
> "You *wheedle* the soul out of things," he said. "I would never wheedle—at any rate, I'd *go straight*."
>
> He scarcely knew what he was saying. These things came from him mechanically. She looked at him. His body seemed one weapon, firm and hard against her. (218, emphasis mine)

What about Miriam's action so irritates Paul? Kissing flowers, sentimental and childish as it may be, hardly contains the violence that Paul ascribes to Miriam's actions. Touching is read at first as fondling, then as clutching, then finally as pulling the heart out. With each description, Miriam's unconscious habit accretes an aggressive intent, as if in the act of touching, she is possessed by a demonic force of will unbeknownst to her. But it is Paul who is possessed by the operations of his own inner turmoil, over which he has no control, as he "mechanically" expels his words. If we understand the exchange to be an expression of "an underneath feeling" (217) – a phrase introduced elsewhere – the point is obvious: Paul projects himself onto the flowers, describing her affections toward him as suffocating. He vents to let her know that he feels smothered by her in the same way she smothers the flowers. He makes the mistake of seeing different actions as an extension of a single tendency to smother and cannot take a singular action for what it is – touching as touching.

Paul's overreaction, however, is more than a figuration in service of the plot. The episode is told through Miriam's point of view, which sees Paul as hostile. The dialogue and the descriptions of their minute actions (she looked up at him) within the reality of the scene are read through Miriam's sense-perceptions, which are constructed in the indirect discourse. In discussing the multiple consciousness that pervade Lawrence's writings, Rick Rylance points to the swift alterations in point of view and the use of free indirect speech in his earlier works as the means by which Lawrence conveys the detached and separate worlds of each party involved in a relationship.[60] Desire is solipsistic, Rylance asserts, and beyond erotic desire, so too interpersonal experience at large. *Sons and Lovers* banks on the manipulation of the point of view and free indirect discourse rather than narrative commentary, according to Rylance, as the chief narrative method to unfold the conscious – and, as he demonstrates in the episode when Paul looks for his first job (89-90), the unconscious – realizations of its characters through the details picked up in the indirect discourse. Walking us through the dense, slow-moving passage, Rylance argues that despite the semblance of an objective third-person narration, the

consciousness is Paul's, visible in the descriptions of the community only as an alienated, self-pitying thirteen year old would see it, the anxious descriptions inflecting moreover Paul's internalization of that community's values. Such seamless transfer of voice and perspective stems less from technique per se as from an internalization of other people's attitudes, as if the narrative excels at being weak, readily susceptible to the voice of the characters. If we take seriously Rylance's suggestion not to limit our discussion of point of view narration to a matter of technical achievement but to consider it "a subtle account of how identity is formed interpersonally,"[61] we must take the narration as a presence beyond that of an employable device, as he seems to suggest that narration narrates, accounts for, something besides the narrative – i.e. characters. If we consider perspection as a type of indirect discourse, as underscored in section 2.5, such an indirect discourse not only shows how a character thinks or internalizes the attitude of another but also generates that intention, embodying the character in its discursive style.

If Paul sees himself in the things that Miriam handles, for Miriam, the kind-smelling flowers and the weapon-like Paul – cutting straight through like a bullet or a knife as Lawrence describes himself to Burrows – couldn't be more different. If Paul's dialogue shows him conflating actions, Miriam's indirect discourse shows her conflating agencies. The passivity of an object (flower) can emote a human personality, kindness, while the mechanics of speech renders Paul into a thing, a weapon. Her reading of the exchange tints the characterization of both the flowers and Paul. Miriam can distinguish between different things, but she discerns them through her own emotional response to them, a reader prone to affective fallacy. If indirect discourse is what enables her to read affectively, by implication, the indirect discourse emerges as an enabling presence, not only manipulating readerly sympathies but thereby asserting itself. Elsewhere, we are told that Miriam "never realized in a flash. Over everything she brooded and brooded," and here, too, the indirect discourse broods with her, making sense out of the things around her by buttressing them with her perception. To the extent that the daffodils smell the way they treat Miriam – kindly – the smell does not belong to the flowers. To the extent that Paul's mechanistic cruelty is presented alongside the way he "seemed" to Miriam, the unknowingness in which Paul "scarcely knew what he was saying," does not belong to his subjectivity.

Perhaps Paul's feeling of being smothered comes from this lack of direct exchange wherein every action is averted. Possibly, it is a more general complaint against a narrative that doesn't make him do, touch or experience but restrains him. Miriam imbues objects with a subjectivity that is in fact her own perception, and what we hear in the narration is how they exist as objects of her thought and her response: perspectional indirect discourse annexes interpretation into its purview. Subjected to the indirect discourse of Miriam's perception, Paul could no longer be subjective himself, which is to say, bear qualities intrinsic to him. Taken thus, Paul's irascibility toward Miriam could be read as a protagonist's complaint against the narrative commentary that presents the character-object through an interpretative perception, always wheedling the soul out of things. Paul's complaint, then, seems two fold. As he complains of Miriam, must one always tend to an object? "Must you always fondle," put generally, asks whether one must *do* things to show affection for it. Secondly – and this takes a bit of a metaphorical overlay – he seems to protest the violence built into interpretation: the sauntering and loitering through texts, the act of "wheedling the soul" out of things and reading their inner consciousness through indirect discourse. Paul at once differentiates the degrees of actions (fondling versus going straight) and challenges the very necessity of actions (must you always?).

To narrate becoming through constraint, the verb function particular to this novel not only presents what the characters do and say but also subsumes what the characters cannot do and say themselves, substituting their intransitivity with its own. Sections 2.4 and 2.5 showed Mrs. Morel garnering a negative capability of sorts through the intransitive mode, and we half-celebrated what intransitivity promised through the Saidian framework of beginnings. Yet the passage above adds an important caveat to the surrogate function of the narrative. As Paul complains of Miriam, there is indeed something invasive about such narrative tending. Discourse wheedles and coaxes the soul out of the characters in order to address the sexual dynamic that dumbfounds them or to bring to the surface the self-recognition lying beyond their grasp. Narrative ventriloquy is both necessary and transformative, if not a bit softly murderous. In predicating them, the verbs in the narrative end up exchanging the subjective and objective positions of the characters. Miriam's action toward the flower is self-indulgent at most, but there is also violence in her dispossession, however meek – or perhaps, as Paul seems to be objecting, precisely in its meek pose, "wheedling" as opposed to "going straight."

In a way then, the constraining narrative, which traps its characters in an embrace, is the perfect narrative mode for characters who are themselves trapped in the mores of their town and in the familial relationships that bind them. Whatever actions are sanctioned are defanged. The humility of minimalist actions – watching a son go off to work or smelling the flowers on a walk – seems proportionate to the characters who are designated to living within themselves and to a work concerned with "the triviality which forms common human intercourse" – yet the kind of intercourse in which "it could never be mentioned that the mare was in foal" (162). Characters like Miriam tell self-effacing stories that deplete their agency even more. Too shy to even tell, Miriam writes diaries of her inner life as composition homework for her French lessons with Paul. She offers up the diary entries like a love letter, and though they are both acutely conscious of some force of yearning in the entries, Paul only comments, "The past participle conjugated with *avoir* agrees with the direct object when it precedes" (208). To make the obvious pun, verb-object agreement is much easier to address on paper than it is in living. Miriam can speak but without necessarily acknowledging herself as an agent of speech, painfully conscious of her inarticulacy and marked by "that over-sensitiveness and hanging-back" (149).

The novel tracks much of Paul's growth through the way he relates to Miriam, positioning a bulk of the central chapters through her: "Lad-and-Girl Love," "Strife in Love," "Defeat of Miriam" and "The Test on Miriam." In recoiling against Miriam, a figure of "proud humility, living within herself" (147), Paul objects to the force of static inwardness out of which his interiority is constructed. That the subjects are constrained contextually means in terms of narrative strategy that very little suffices to catalyze an inward experience in the narrative. The slightest action taken by another brings about an intense self-reckoning. Happy to "listen when [Paul] thought only horses could hear," to the no-sound of his caressing a horse, Miriam's pleasure in sneak-hearing is destroyed the second her self-consciousness, the "serpent in her Eden," appears, forcing her to confront her desires: "She searched earnestly in herself to see if she wanted Paul Morel […] She shrank within herself in a coil of torture […] What a subtle infamy upon her" (171). Miriam is verbally restrained in several senses. She doesn't verbalize because to verbalize is synonymous with the self-searching that is torturous and painful. She doesn't articulate because she hasn't decided for herself what her own desires are. If infamy resides in public declaration, she cannot make herself known, even to herself, as an agent of desire. The verb "listen" is intransitive both grammatically and figuratively, denoting how her inaction does not allow her feelings to manifest in any way.

Despite its gentle suffocation, what Miriam thus offers is the profound pleasure in mutually experiencing such an indirect averting of action – for in pleasure is found agency, namely the weak agency of perspection. We would be remiss to overlook how Miriam relishes being in the passive co-presence of Paul, despite the demands of self-reckoning. As if by a "tacit agreement," neither lad nor girl recognizes what is actual, and the "real living, they almost ignored." But they are not willing to negotiate each other solely at the level of intimated gestures, either. The other's interiority is unavailable but faithfully expected, and in an attempt to make each interaction meaningful for themselves, Paul and Miriam allegorize it: "it was communion she wanted," while for him, "the intimacy between them had been kept so abstract." Whether religious or intellectual, both transubstantiate their experience of each other. In passive co-presence, even the barely audible sound of "the rope run[ning] through the hole as the horse lifted its head from the lad's caress," becomes visceral. Miriam's broodings add an adverbial force to verbs, transforming "hearing" to "listening" ("hear attentively," according to the OED). Telling, in other words, takes on a transitive force after it has objectified its characters through their discursive interpretations of each other.

If wheedling is so insufferable, then what would it look like to take Paul's suggestion when encountering an object and to "go straight?" After all, Lawrence himself seems to lament his tendency to do just that. Paul learned of the transitive force of intransitive actions from his mother and comes to grips with its problems through Miriam. To abandon perspection means to relinquish what little weak agency it affords. How would he otherwise do, say, or speak?

2.8 *Bildungs* Built on Weak Grammar

To recount, sentiment lies not so much in conscious articulation, but is rather produced by the sustained engagement with shared observation on the part of the characters. As we in turn keep looking in on such acts of looking via narrative shepherding, we learn through the same mechanism as do the characters: not only through interaction but through the witnessing of interaction and witnessing at different levels. We effectively find ourselves wrapped in and committed to this same grammatical epistemology of intranstivity and perspection. By representing the acts of looking, the text both performs perspection and stresses the novelistic function of ministering mediation. The "triviality which forms common human interaction" manifests through countless scenes of a character watching another tell something. Like the nightly ritual of Mrs. Morel listening to her son's daily prattling of the mundane events at work, the pleasure of being in a passive presence of the other – be it in telling, listening, looking, or reading – comes not from the contents of the story or the objects partaken but from the incantatory act itself, the gestural acceptance of cohabitation. Familial love-making is thus suggested through the empty contents, the verbal nothings of the exchange, since the novel attempts to flesh out the impossibility of direct expression, to capture the moments of verbal and experiential gap coming into formation.

Despite Paul's agony over the absence of material and maternal grounding at the end of the novel, as it turns out, he, too, was formed though a gap, introduced to the reader through a narration that absents him. " 'Ag-gie—Ag-gie!'" Mrs. Morel's neighbor calls for help as Mrs. Morel goes into labor. We're given something like a real-time account of the women puttering around in preparation for childbirth. When Mrs. Morel asks Mrs. Bower to leave out some food for Walter, Mrs. Bower answers, "He may go without pudding *this* day" (30). Mrs. Bower's

dismissal of the man's need serves as a trigger for the narrative to switch scenes in the next sentence, from the domicile to the pit where Morel is finishing up. We now follow him in real time as he banters with his coworkers. The patient and detailed catalogue of his end-of-day activities – throwing his tools down, pulling on his coat, blowing out the candle, taking his lamp, getting his umbrella, and in quiet enjoyment of the kind the novel revels in, "[taking] pleasure from the peppering of the drops thereon" – makes for a leisurely narrative pace for the reader sauntering and seeing alongside Morel. As Morel trudges along the dripping trees, the raindrops trigger a shift back to a scene with Mrs. Morel who "lay in bed, listening to the rain, and the feet of the colliers from Minton, their voices, and the bang, bang of the gates as they went through the stile up the field"(31). As we watch her reaction to these sounds, at once asking one of the women to leave out some beer for Morel and feeling "sick to death," Walter Morel, "thinking nothing, dragged his way up the garden path." Actions syncopated in time are now synchronized in the same space, fulfilling our expectation that different characters and their individual actions line up along the same timeline. As Mrs. Bower lays out some dinner for him, she tells with much scorn, " 'She's about as bad as she can be. It's a boy childt.'" (33); this is how we, too, find out about Paul. The baby, it is assumed, has been born in the meantime as we were following Morel's actions, the scene of the birth missing from our narrative view as Morel had missed it. Morel provides a narrative counter-effect of perspection, say the choice or narrative partiality demanded by synchronicity. If time matches up, space cannot be. We are shown plenty, but the chapter shields what it announces to show, "The Birth of Paul Morel." As if to anticipate the challenge posed in the last chapter – why Paul Morel should be in the first place – the supposed origin of his being, the scene of the birth, is never actually presented to us.

In the ur-*bildungsroman*, the novel begins from a performative utterance that assumes a character, followed by the narrative: let there be the protagonist (Jane Eyre, Pip), declares the prior voice of the author, allowing for example David Copperfield to declare in the very first sentence, "I am born." Lawrence writes *Sons* in reverse, for the narrative does not derive from the assumption of a character but exists prior to and around Paul. Paul appears in medias res, under unremarkable circumstances and clouded by the narration of another set of actions by Morel. In the earlier chapters, Lawrence does not so much tell the reader what Paul is like as he describes the surrounding into which he is born or the attitude his mother and father have about him. As each beginning speaks to a style and style to the author's intent as Said claims, the language phenomenon of describing around absence is produced by and producing a problem in the world, that of the missing origin. The way a series of realist actions like Morel's end of day activities surround Paul the un-described object sheds light on Paul's quandary over the absence of the raison d'être of things, as he cries in the last moments of the novel, that "There seemed no reason why these things should occupy the space, instead of leaving it empty." Paul's birth is negatively constructed in the text through the arrangement of simultaneous actions. Put differently, his agony – that textual, existential nexus of establishing the first person subjectivity – over the disconnection between the describable world and the absence of its cause is a problem produced in and by narrative syntax.

Paul's awareness that phenomena cannot be reasoned and explained through a logical structure or causality works not unlike Wittgenstein's move of posing a conventional question to expose the point it misses.[62] To return to Paul's ontological perplexity I identified at the beginning of this chapter (that there is no reason why things should *be*), yet another way to address Paul's 'why' would be to turn the question around by abandoning the category of material existence altogether and calling it out as a superstition rooted in grammar, the

"bewitchment," Wittgenstein points out, "of our intelligence by means of language."[63] For Wittgenstein, Paul's questions are irrelevant. His search for the essential reason behind the particular referent – why house, why noise – comes from a false urge, Wittgenstein might say, to understand the basis of empirical experiences in a wild goose-chase of something that is "already in plain view,"[64] namely the operations of language. For Wittgenstein, any understanding, and thus the possibility of an empathetic connection, is possible only within language-games, the practice and habit learned in the life-long play of making and breaking the imprecise rules governing a system of relationships.[65] Perspection, from Mrs. Morel or Miriam's point of view creates a shared language game for the participants for their community. The handling of phenomena has little to do with explanation but with the character of its description. Houses occupy and noises are heard, accordingly, because that is how Paul finds himself seeing the phenomena, i.e., describing the relationship in language. "What we call '*descriptions'* are instruments for particular uses," Wittgenstein notes, distinguishing description-as-method from description-as-representation, namely the illusion that a description is a word-picture of facts.[66] Wittgenstein's distinction opens up the possibility that realism, the pursuit of representing the world, isn't obliged to a representational description of it; no longer must description be in service of something. Things *are* because they always have been in the way Paul understands what it means to be, Wittgenstein might admonish, or else they never did as such outside of the veil of his linguistic understanding: his surface-seeing, the shimmeriness that preoccupies him so much (if only he could real-ize and apply his aesthetic principle onto himself!). Paul's crisis is thus not a crisis in which reality ceases to make sense but a crisis in which he has lost a particular paradigm that he associates with his mother – objects having an intrinsic function and being an original reference for their names – and with the loss of that paradigm of predication, he can no longer play the game as he has.

The loss of paradigm motivates *Sons and Lovers* in multiple ways and as a motif patterns the novel by anticipating insolvency through a series of events that didn't matriculate or by reference to what is no longer there: the eldest son who dies, the marriage borne unhappily, Paul's early relationships that fail. Lawrence writes through and toward losses as if attempting to solve the problem of absence through the novel. As a thematic problem, the loss of the mother barely rises above the traumatic event with which the narrative ends. As a formal problem, however, loss pervades the novel from the beginning, and Lawrence engineers the narrative in order to account for that "tear in the veil" that creates a gap between theme and narrative form. Loss as a theme (e.g. trauma) and loss as a formal problem pose distinct narrative challenges: trauma may be described or narrated, but a simple formal absence is just that – a gap. For description at a basic level assumes an object that serves as the reference point, setting forth in words the particular features of what is present, or brings something into a cognitive presence through it. The missing object – in Paul's case, his mother – as a bare fact of absence/loss demands a different discursive solution, another way to operate from absence. Object here refers more broadly to materials of the senses to which our actions are imputed and in the apperception of which arises subjectivity.[67] The novel therefore homes in on the sense of perception as the screen upon which the discursive textures are applied to flesh out the extent of the characters' knowledge and agency. If, for Wittgenstein, losing one game is but another starting point for making up the rules as we go, it presents something of a dramatically self-defeating challenge for Lawrence. The game as he knows it – as he has been writing it – is gone, but he is left still with only the obsolete pieces of that game of confident realism in which things are there to occupy spaces and people to move. We might understand the experimental spirit of Modernism, on the

other hand, as bearing its own brand of confidence to play a different game altogether with a new set of rules. The novel's treatment of loss and the thickening of absence spatializes the turning point from realism to modernism. Rather than declare Lawrence on one side or another, we might understand the two as coterminous, synthetic processes with *Sons* testifying to their stylistic interpolation of each other.

2.9 Conclusion: Beginning with the Ending

We return once again to the final scenes of the mother's death, as does Paul, "his soul oscillat[ing] first on the side of death, then on the side of life, doggedly" in the weeks that follow. The purgatory of someone else's mortality keeps Paul "always alone," segregated from the rest of the world. "The real agony," that began our discussion,

> […] was that he had nowhere to go, nothing to do, nothing to say, and *was* nothing himself. Sometimes he ran down the streets as if he were mad: sometimes he was mad; things weren't there, things were there. It made him pant. Sometimes he stood before the bar of the public-house where he called for a drink. Everything suddenly stood back away from him. He saw the face of the barmaid, the gabbing drinkers, his own glass on the slopped, mahogany board, in the distance. There was something between him and them. He could not get into touch. He did not want them; he did not want his drink. Turning abruptly, he went out. On the threshold he stood and looked at the lighted street. But he was not of it or in it. Something separated him. Everything went on there below those lamps, shut away from him. He could not get at them. He felt he couldn't touch the lampposts, not if he reached. Where could he go? There was nowhere to go, neither back into the inn, or forward anywhere. He felt stifled. There was nowhere for him. The stress grew inside him; he felt he could smash. (412)

The narrative voice states that Paul has nowhere to go and nothing to do, while, in contradistinction, it also shows him trying to do a lot at this particular moment. Switching from the infinitive, the verbal substantive that has yet been activated, into the past tense, the tense of definite occurrence and thus that which should confirm the existence and the impact of specific actions having happened, what follows in the narrative expunges any action Paul takes through the force of uncertainty. Paul "ran" but "things were there, things weren't there"; he "stood" before the bar but "everything suddenly stood back away from him"; he "saw" the face of the barmaid and the drinkers but "there was something between him and them." Each effort is pushed back upon him in equal strength. "Away," "between," "he was not of it or in it," "he could not get into touch"[68]: the prepositions that should complement the verb by pointing to its temporal and local signification, especially used so heavily and noticeably, serve only to underscore the feeling of separation, layering the ever-increasing boundary between what lies outside and what Paul feels to be inside of him – the "stress" he calls it – that literally pressurizes him outwards without being able to move him. In particular, the odd phrase, "into touch," shows the preposition turning a verbal function into a noun. The verbal abstraction in place of a noun reifies the action, which is the modus operandi of expressing temporality (becoming, passing, growing). It is not just that Paul founders in the time marked by action, but that the impossibility of time becomes a spatialized experience. The harder Paul tries in action and movement, the farther he gets away from a progressive existence, unable to occupy a specific place in time but

only the vast space of nowhere itself: "He could not get at them," whatever these ambiguous "them" things may be.

To begin, one needs the adverbial mode. Paul's restlessness is neither behavioral nor characteristic but rather the permanent condition that encapsulates the impossibility of a subject's entrance into time under these linguistic circumstances. In the very last passage of the novel, Paul stands in the dark, overlooking the town:

> Beyond the town the country, little smouldering spots for more towns—the sea—the night—on and on! And he had no place in it! Whatever spot he stood on, there he stood alone. From his breast, from his mouth, sprang the endless space, and it was there behind him, everywhere. […] Everywhere the vastness and terror of the immense night which is roused and stirred for a brief while by the day, but which returns, and will remain at last eternal, holding everything in its silence and its living gloom. There was no Time, only Space. (419-20)

The little town of stuff becomes a vacuous expanse, and Paul finds himself in a void of aloneness. Alienation, however, is not a matter of not belonging somewhere, for the "no place" seems to have crept inside as well, permeating through his body, turning nowhere everywhere. He has no place to be released into, because "no place" has thoroughly filled up everywhere, even within him, bleeding away the demarcation. Expressions of synesthesia such as "dark silence" do not produce the effect of combining sensory experience so much as meld the different categories of experience into one large fungibility. The narrative voice strikes down in ominous declaration of the all-encompassing darkness, underscoring its massive presence with a capital S.

The inability to touch is more than a metaphor for Paul's sense of homelessness and alienation after the loss of the maternal presence. He literally cannot touch the lamppost standing near him, hold a pencil after a few strokes, or enter the public house. The sensorial dilemma packed into the verb "touching" makes actual Paul's negative relationship to the environment, or more precisely, actualizes the state of being negated. He looks at the trams running along the street and wonders why they should shuffle back and forth as they do, for "It seems they just as well might *not* be as be."

To suggest that the verb literalizes Paul's psychic state entails gauging the second layer of labor being enacted by the verb. In a simpler sense, the verb, "not get into touch" makes physical the reality of Paul's anguish: he is emotionally disconnected, and he cannot touch any-*thing.* But literalizing connotes not only actuality but also its partial antithesis, of putting into letters. Literalizing a text takes the word in its customary meaning and produces a reality out of their grammatical relations. As a noun that bears the preposition "into," "touch" takes on a spatial, object-like opacity, a dense and reified noun-act, a realm from which he is shut out. The verb, the possibility of doing something as an agent, gives way to its aspect as a noun, affixed to a state.

Paul, in the last passages, finally sees and understands the slow atrophy of the verb into the noun, of doing into being. Not only does he understand how closed-off he is as a subject who can neither act nor beget direct objects through his action, but he sees to what extent he is an object at the mercy of other things. The stuff that is necessary to do onto is out of reach, for "everything," *they* "suddenly stood back away from him." Everything else has agency over him, and "everything went on there below those lamps shut away from him," while "he could not get at them." There was not time, only space, in which Paul is positioned. The question that follows the passage above isn't wholly Paul's, either: "Who could say his mother had lived and did not

live?" Paul may be too fixated on her death to question the very fact of her existence in time; nor could grief sufficiently account for temporal, existential confusion. In short, she is the present continuous, *from whom* her feeling was transmitted, *with whom* they suffered. With her death, Paul is stuck in the vast space of the present tense without its maternal and material reality to grasp at.

Yet, the novel ends on the dogged will posed by the present conditional that "he would not give in." Not giving in is a formal principle in Lawrence. "I can't forgive Conrad for being so sad and giving in," Lawrence wrote to Aldus Huxley in 1912 after finishing *Sons*.[69] In George Levine's explication of this statement, "In Lawrence, to give in is to accept the reality of the realist's novel, or Conrad-like, to accept the despairing consequences of discovering the banality and emptiness of the realist's world."[70] Lawrence would not give in, even if it means contorting grammar to its point of exhaustion, truncating the object-taking preposition into its adjectival form ('to give into X' becomes 'giving in'). As the statement of possible existence, what *could be* as opposed to what *is,* verbs, even when negated into their can't do and can't say alterity, both refute their status as phenomena words and affirm, build up, the condition of immobility into something. "Nothing to do, nothing to say, and *was* nothing himself": the negative relationship that the character has to the verb, one that fails to beget a direct object and leaves a gap in narrative reference – if we are to take that emphasis on "was" as an affirmative predicate – renders Paul not only into a negated object, but, as the vast expanse of the constellation fills him from within, a part, too, of the night and darkness and everything else. He is pressed into extinction, "on every side the immense dark silence seemed pressing him, so tiny a spark, into extinction, and yet almost nothing, he could not be extinct" (420). Because he is incorporated into infinity, the narrative affirms, the darkness "So much, and himself, infinitesimal, at the core a nothingness, and yet not nothing."[71] The tenuous tendons of those "and yet" conjunctions leave room for persistence and deferral into a future possibility. "But no, he would not give in," begins the last paragraph of the novel, declaring Paul's resolution through the future conditional and through the negative. Paul need not lament the utter lack of agency that he has allowed himself to experience. Narration of action has become impossible; only the narration of mere existence remains, unfolding here subtly but surely. But what would it look like to imagine a full dissolution of subjectivity in a form that nevertheless runs, watches, and, like Paul in the very last sentence of the novel, "walked towards the faintly humming, glowing town, quickly"? We end on an adverb. Paul must act beyond his intentions and knowledge and trust the purposiveness of actions in their unconscious and latent potential – the potential to constitute narrative from some vantage point that has not yet come. Narrative persists in another form.

We're given the same panoramic view of the town as in the very opening of the novel, except that all the named, descriptive contents of "The Bottoms" and "The Hell Row" – the pit, the fields, the meadows, the colliers – shown during the daylight in the opening scene are now emptied out in the darkness. The town is a whole composite of everything animate and inanimate there, taking on participle descriptors that signify movement and life. No longer Carston, Waite & Co., Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, the generic "town" hums and glows, albeit faintly. Paul, absorbed into the vast nothingness that stems from within as from without, may not be much more than an object, but he can nonetheless occupy a mode, a behavioral bearing – "quickly" – that relays his resolve. Unlike, say, a quickly walking Paul, wherein Paul the subject would be given primacy of meaning, Paul walking quickly – the very last adverbial word of the novel – gives primacy to the action itself. The adverbial possibility in the presence of the missing description is exactly that something produced into being by narrative capability. In dissolving

agency – literally, the rights to a grammatical subject-position – Paul has earned the renamed present tense for himself, to be "yet not nothing." Since, theoretically speaking, the present 'here' and 'now' is nothing more than the boundary between the past and the future, the present always contains parts of what belongs to the past and the future (grammatically speaking, in a statement like "I eat a lot"). The present condition eats away at both ends, expanding out like the vastness of the "night, in which everything was lost" to underscore the indefinite nature of the present tense.

Earlier in the novel, Paul, a dewy young man in a mystical mode, claims pompously to meek Miriam, "To be rid of our individuality, which is our will, which is our effort— to live effortless, a kind of curious sleep— that is very beautiful, I think; that is our after-life— our immortality" (288). It is only at the very end of the novel after "the tear in the veil," when Paul cannot will any of his actions and is robbed of his individuality as a subject-agent, that he gives way to his actions, resolved but effortless in the adverbial entrance into life after melting into unreality.[72] With the adverbial step toward the town, Paul begins again. Derelict, the last chapter is called: forsaken, abandoned, left alone. But the word also connotes a verbal, transitive sense: leave behind, withdraw from land, to be freed from duty.

We looked at the problem of action faced by a subject, Paul's *I*, the constraints of the first person. In the next chapter, we'll look at the expressive gridlock around the second person, Stephen's *you* (a minor character named Cranly) and the problem of the dialogical being worked out by James Joyce in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.*

CHAPTER 3

CRANLY'S FIGSEEDS: THE ELISION OF THE SECOND PERSON FROM *STEPHEN HERO* TO *ULYSSES*

3.1 Chapter Introduction: Objectivity

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man ends with Stephen's diary entries, as if to amplify the sense of unmediated voice that accompanies his artistic imperative. Declarations are best sold in the first person perspective and in the simple present, the presumptive first person capable of performing what can only be said of the third. Stephen's declaration in the penultimate sentence of the novel, "I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race" (V. 2788-90)[1] thus sounds out the authenticity and the singularity of his vision through an unfettered construction of the subject and his action: "I go." Stephen departs, gloriously alone, complemented by no one but the world of solitude itself, which substitutes for and enacts the human bodies he leaves behind: "the white arms of roads, their promise of close embraces and the black arms of tall ships against the moon, their tale of distant nations. They are held out to say: We are alone. Come" (V. 2778-81). Stephen's singular voice emerges out of "the voices" of collectivity larger than a human tribe, circumscribing claims of Irish nationality to a potential "uncreated conscience" within his own soul and melding the familial claims that have been made upon him with the environment[2]: "We are your kinsmen. And the air is thick with their company as they call to me, their kinsman" (V. 2782-3). Voice – the mode of expression tantamount to the individual himself[3] – now extends to the things of the world that have their own narrative to share, "*their* tale of distant nations," and with the attribution of voice to the material realm, potential interlocutors for Stephen mushroom into everything seeable, hearable and touchable. There's little need for that traditional interlocutor, the human other, now that the panoramic address to and from the material world supplants a sociality formed from dialogue.

Envisioning the imminent voyage down the white arm of roads and the black arm of ships, Stephen believes himself to have successfully replaced another pair of arms, the "strong resolute arm" of his friend Cranly:

> He [Cranly] felt then the sufferings of women, the weaknesses of their bodies and souls: and would shield them with a strong resolute arm and bow his mind to them.
>
> Away then: it is time to go. A voice spoke softly to Stephen's lonely heart, bidding him go and telling him that his friendship was coming to an end. Yes: he would go. He could not strive against another. He knew his part. (V. 2511-2517)

Stephen's departure is inextricably linked to the ending of his friendship with Cranly. To be more exact, the collective, phenomenal voice acts as an agent from within, "bidding" and "telling" Stephen to leave this other against whom he had strived. My inquiry starts with this correlation, between the sundering of Stephen's ties to Cranly and the new mode of seeing and registering the world vocalized in the final moments of the novel. This new mode – intensely receptive yet private, worldly yet asocial – alters the grammatical status of the objects around the verb; the actor does not strive against the other, standing remotely and in a passive relationship to the recipient of his action. Or, if Stephen takes any action, it is to go. It is to knows his part,

namely *to part from* the other, to disuse the dialogic object and render intransitive the communicative field. My inquiry, then, is also about the effect that the mode of seeing and vocalizing has on the position reserved for the object and the object pronoun, how it mediates and shifts the case of objects from direct to indirect; it is about what drops out, and what narratively emerges from the syntactical gap.

As a shorthand for the mode that gathers phenomena into Stephen's singular vision and voice, let us borrow a term, Objectivity, broadly fleshed out by Hugh Kenner as a modern literary trend towards ordering the world through observed particulars as opposed to myths.[4] Dubbed "Enlightened empiricism" by Kenner, Objectivity conceives the world as "a sequence of reports" to someone's sense – and evidenced by the stress on reportage, ushers in an era of indirect speech. It is the comically faithful scientism of Lemuel Gulliver and the dumb fascination with which Charles Bovary notices Emma's parasol without noticing the vanity of an unlikely parasol on the farm. It is the relentless hostage of experience to the observer's field of vision, as large as his ego and as his limited as his sight. Objectivity, we might conclude, is in fact a radically subjective form of seeing, and Stephen, doubly corroborated by his actual nearsightedness, is arguably the very incarnation of the rhetorical and perspectival nearsightedness built into Objectivity.

Above and beyond the concept of Objectivism itself or its usefulness as a comprehensive term for certain phenomenological bearings of modernism, Kenner's discussion offers germane insights into the narrative effects of Objectivity, namely that the narrative idiom need not be beholden to the narrator. In Joyce's elaboration of Flaubert's free indirect discourse, a seemingly neutral third-person narration is infused with idioms and syntax typical of the character under observation so that his sentences function as a sensitive apparatus that can "detect the gravitational field of the nearest person."[5] Conversely put, a persona can be reconstructed from the particulars of narrative syntax. For narration displaces and embodies a figure not actually present to the narrative (as a narrating consciousness), counterbalancing syntax and diction, which mimetically pull the narrative voice towards the observed character, with a detachment that pushes the sentence back towards the superior voice of the narrator. We scuttle between a character's mind and narrative omniscience rapidly and seamlessly, mid-phrase as well as mid-sentence, yet with enough distance to prevent the sentences from becoming a full, dramatic representation, i.e. sounding out the character only with her speech or non-speech in itself. Even when we access Gerty McDowell in her own vocabulary, we "hear" her in silence as she sits watching her siblings. Joycean narration prefers to ventriloquize, leaving that slight distance between the characters' mouth and the narration of their thoughts couched in the observing eye and the reported speech of the third-person narrator. Depending on the situation, we don't always hear characters speak, but we usually access how and what they think. Voice – the one for example bidding Stephen to do away with the human interlocutor – is a cognition of sorts. Under the aegis of "voice," Stephen's Objectivist cognition in the final scenes thus opts out of the second person, eliding the panoptical world of third persons into the first. A negative interlocution of sorts, the distance created by the third person narration calibrates Stephen's characterological elements by delimiting him from the cognitive and communicative field. At the same time, in Stephen's prolix capacity to perform the part of a commentating and narrating subject as a first person speaker, he assimilates the narrative voice to his own, replacing the existential, mimetic matters of personal identity with the interpretive matters of his own thoughts.

The discourse created by Objectivity thus implies an obsolescence of the second person, since a character can make himself heard without there being a hearer. By examining what Joyce does with the obviated second person, we may in turn understand more exactly how he develops his own brand of free indirect discourse. To clarify the relationship between the second person (the spoken to, most often in the form of its abstracted sign, "you") and the direct object (that which is taken by the verb, i.e. that which the verb needs in order to complete its action) – they each name a distinct grammatical function yet occupy the same place in the sentence with respect to the verb and the doer of the verb. "You" is in essence implicit in every voiced utterance: "(I'm telling you) I did my work." Joyce in essence reinforces the wooly slippage between the two, eliding one function to the other as he moves stylistically from *Stephen Hero* to *Ulysses*.

This chapter argues that the narrative distance registered in Stephen Dedalus in both *Portrait* and *Ulysses*[6] is in fact an aggregate formed from the characterological voice of the second person, specifically the dialogic and critical elements of an understudied minor character Cranly. Increasingly, Cranly becomes an object of interpretation for Stephen, internalized into Stephen's self-narrating discourse to the extent that Stephen's exposition of aesthetic autonomy at the end of *Portrait* would not be possible without this coded figure. By tracking Cranly, we can track the process by which the voice, the speech and the mannerisms of this character crystalize into exegetical objects of Stephen's intellection. Cranly is one of the central personages in the earlier draft *Stephen Hero*,[7] and I examine the gradual excision of this figure as Joyce's discursive program develops from *Stephen Hero* to *Portrait* and from *Portrait* to the Telemachiad chapters of *Ulysses*, where Cranly's words and ideas persist even as his role in the plot effectively vanishes. Cranly's erratic, ghostly presence throughout *Ulysses* attests to the persistence of an association that has long lost its material visibility, one that has left narrative consciousness except as an uncanny interruption. Joyce displaces Stephen Dedalus's prolix and hyper-interpretative narration by stitching it through this minor character Cranly, whose characteristic way of observing and talking provide an alternate model of reading and relating to the world. Narration absorbs Cranly's most recognizable traits like fig-seeds while eliding their bearer, who in fact speaks habitually in ellipses. This practice of "elision," I suggest, lingers in *Ulysses's* Telemachiad, where Stephen repeatedly conjures Cranly from the things he sees; fusing things and person, these indirect objects allude ironically to the claims of autonomy Stephen makes in *Portrait*.

My treatment of Stephen Dedalus assumes a continuity of subjectivity throughout the three texts in so far as a singular cognition underscores the different positions that objects and figures occupy in each: Stephen is the narrative constant vis-à-vis variations in the perspective expressive of each grammatical person. The third person voice presumes Stephen's choice to distance himself from the other by constructing the other through narrative means. Yet passages in *Ulysses*, as the following section demonstrates, attest to the irrepressible presence of the second person, whose traits and value cannot be disembodied into the third person voice. The intentional inarticulacy or the habit of observing without a declared purpose characteristic of Cranly stands for a narrative need that isn't met by Stephen's narrative paradigm – the Objectivist focalization of an omnipresent materiality, the surfeit of thirds into the first person. Over and against the options of first or third person voices, the displacement of narration around Cranly tells us that there remains in narrative a problem of sociality – the absence of an addressee that would otherwise be occupied by the second person – that has been repressed by Stephen's seeming objectivity and continues to besiege it. The elision of the second person

shows too why Joyce's narrative adopts the procedural form of indirection, for this problem can take expression not hermeneutically but only elliptically, with placeholders.

The final section sets these issues in the context of current Joyce scholarship. Queer readings (spearheaded by Joseph Valente) identify Cranly as a source of homosexual anxiety that Stephen must sublimate into a heteroerotic ideal of aesthetic vocation. In view of a comprehensive turn throughout the past two decades of Joyce criticism towards issues of nation and empire (most recently recapitulated by Jed Esty), *Portrait*'s diary ending, according to this line of argument, encapsulates the unfinished temporality of Ireland's colonial modernity. Both approaches locate a troubled operation of the *Bildungsroman* at work, the one pointing to a homoerotic subtext disruptive of the genre's reproductive and regulatory norms, the other to a national allegory in superimposing an inward, open-ended form onto a linear, closed form. Yet the same tension lurks in both diagnoses of a deformed *Bildungsroman*: at heightened moments of discovery definitive of the *Bildungs* trope, I show, Cranly cryptically comes to the fore.

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3.2. Arms, Horses and Boots: The Allusive, Elusive Forms of Cranly in *Ulysses*

Cordoned off within the *I* of the diary entries, it is easy to credit *Portrait*'s epiphany of aloneness to Stephen alone. But it is an idea brought into being through a dialogic mode rather than procured by a monologic interior reflection, rebounding off a critique of the exilic pose presented by the other. The penultimate section before the diary entries is conducted almost entirely in a dialogue between Stephen and his classmate Cranly, prompted by Cranly's favorite pidgin phrase, "Let us eke go" after Stephen solicits Cranly for a private conversation – a phrase, we are told in the earlier draft, Cranly "always intended as an old English expression inviting departure" (*SH* 216). For about ten pages (*P*, V.2276-2608), Cranly responds as Stephen slowly unfolds his plan to leave Dublin and propounds his theory of exile as a matriculation of the aesthetic life. Cranly's oppositional presence and the dialogic pressure he puts on Stephen's theories seem all the more surprising, given that this is the crowning moment of Stephen's self-narration and thus a profoundly focalized, even solipsistically predicative, event that the novel has been building up to.

The narrative arc of this passage begins with Stephen telling Cranly that he has had an argument with his mother. Ever the faithful interlocutor, Cranly withholds judgment, asking only questions of clarification: "—About religion?" (V.2288); "—What age is your mother?" (V.2291); "—Has your mother had a happy life?" (V.2361); "—How many children had she?" (V. 2363). Elsewhere, Stephen refers to their conversation as an "interview," conveying a Socratic dimension to Cranly's impersonal, serial questioning that anticipates the tone and style of "Ithaca's" catechism.[8] Questioning not only helps Stephen articulate his own position but serves too as the process by which "Their minds, lately estranged, seemed suddenly to have been drawn closer, one to the other" (V. 2307-8). (As I show shortly, the relationship of "one to the other" will crystallize into a phrase, *Nebeneinander*, in *Ulysses*'s "Proteus."). Tit for tat, they debate the Judgment, happiness and love, Cranly deflating each one of Stephen's rhetorical maneuvers:

> —And were you happier then [when Stephen was a believer]? Cranly asked softly.
> Happier than you are now, for instance.
> —Often happy, Stephen said, and often unhappy. I was someone else then.

—How someone else? What do you mean by that statement?
—I mean, said Stephen, that I was not myself as I am now, as I had to become.
—Not as you are now, not as you had to become, Cranly repeated. Let me ask you a question. Do you love your mother?

Stephen shook his head slowly.

—I don't know what your words mean, he said simply.
—Have you never loved anyone? Cranly asked.
—Do you mean women?
—I am not speaking of that, Cranly said in a colder tone. I ask you if you ever felt love towards anyone or anything.

Stephen walked on beside his friend, staring gloomily at the footpath. (V.2339-2355)

There is nothing tremendously prescient about Cranly's questions, but they remind Stephen of the surprising hold sentiment has on him and his inability to respond to it adequately. A failure of understanding abounds from Stephen's headshakes and Cranly's re-inquiries ("What do you mean by that"; "Do you mean"). After a detailed inquiry into the circumstances of Stephen's family, Cranly gives words to the problem, voicing what will be termed "agenbite of inwit" (remorse of conscience) and will adumbrate Stephen's actions throughout *Ulysses*: "Your mother must have gone through a good deal of suffering […] Would you not try to save her from suffering more even if… or would you?" (V. 2388-2390). Stephen remains silent, to which Cranly adds:

> —Whatever else is unsure in this stinking dunghill of a world a mother's love is not […] But whatever she feels, it, at best, must be real. It must be. What are our ideas and ambitions? Play. Ideas! Why, that bloodly bleating goat Temple has ideas. MacCann has ideas, too. Every jackass going the roads thinks he has ideas. (V. 2398-2404)

Everything for which Stephen will point a finger at himself in *Ulysses* – the illusoriness of aesthetic and intellectual liberation, the callowness and callousness of idealism at the expense of his mother – is here articulated by Cranly, harsh and raw. Cranly's question, "Would you not… or would you?" will echo in Stephen's mind – "Would you or would you not?" (*U* 3. 321-2) – posed as a hypothetical dilemma of whether or not Stephen would try to save a drowning man as Buck has, a thought presumably triggered by the man drowned off Maiden's Rock nine days prior. As Stephen frantically works out the logic behind his improbable attempt – "I would want to. I would try" – it quickly becomes clear who in Stephen's mind actually is drowning and in need of being saved: "With him together down …. I could not save *her*" (*U* 3. 329-30, emphasis mine). Though Cranly does not appear as a character in *Ulysses*, his sentiment about the singularity of a mother's love will come to haunt Stephen. Stephen will not consciously attribute it to Cranly, who merely hovers as a spectral surrogate for the mother throughout (until Stephen confronts her in a drunken phantasmagoria).

Notwithstanding the proud declaration *Non serviam* throughout *Ulysses* – an answer to Cranly's question, if a false one – regarding his mother, Stephen will come to regret sorely the earlier, prideful declaration of aloneness from human others, and aloneness will sound out an anomic, ineluctably guilty chant rather than a chorus of earthly spirits. If the declarative aloneness prays to the paternal in the last sentence of *Portrait* – "Old father, old artificier, stand me now and ever in good stead" – the anomic aloneness repents to the maternal throughout *Ulysses*. Being alone will have shifted purpose by then, serving to expose the narcissism and futility of exile: "You were going to do wonders, what? Missionary to Europe after fiery

Columbanus […] Pretending to speak broken English as you dragged your valise, porter threepence, across the slimy pier at Newhaven" (*U,* 3. 192-6) – in short, another "jackass going the road." Coming home is as much a defeat, it turns out, as leaving home was a pyrrhic victory. The chapters of the *Telemachiad* are awash with such self-accusatory moments in which Stephen paints himself a pathetic cultural charlatan, the very antithesis of an artist.

Buck Mulligan, too, upbraids Stephen, though in a more glib spirit: "You could have knelt down, damn it, Kinch, when your dying mother asked you" (*U,* 1. 91-2). Several months have passed since the end of *Portrait*, and Stephen finds himself back in Dublin after an abortive exile in Paris, appropriately mooching off the usurper in a tower he rents. Stephen endures Mulligan's lighthearted banter as Mulligan takes his arm and drags him around the tower. We hear "Cranly's arm. His arm" (*U,* 1. 159), perhaps a mere association between Buck's linking of his arm to Stephen's and Cranly's habitual action throughout the earlier texts: "They promenaded miles of the streets together, arm-in-arm" (*SH* 125); "Cranly seized his arm and steered him round so as to lead him back towards Leeson Park. He laughed almost slily and pressed Stephen's arm with an elder's affection" (*P*, V. 2581-3). But Cranly is no Buck, stately and plump, and Cranly's physical body is nowhere to be found in *Ulysses.*

More than a gestural echo, Cranly's arms are tied to a sense of pervasive guilt – "No, mother! Let me be and let me live" (*U,* 1. 279) – first pressed into Stephen by Cranly's embrace, now oppressing Stephen in the usurper's embrace. In *Stephen Hero,* Cranly is the priest to Stephen's confessionals on family conflicts, the one who alone can elicit and bear witness to Stephen's denunciation of the church and the maternal. After a long bout with his mother about his loss of faith followed by flippant remarks to his heartbroken mother, "What is the crying for? ... It's too silly…" (*SH* 135), Stephen immediately goes to the library "*expressly* to see Cranly and narrate his latest conflict with orthodoxy" (*SH* 136, emphasis mine). The Stephen of *Stephen Hero* constantly draws Cranly aside from a group to lay bare his soul. In what must have been an early plotting of the conversation that takes place in *Portrait* V. 2285-2469, Cranly in *Stephen Hero* tries to convince Stephen to "be more diplomatic" and to "conform out of contempt," suggesting even that Jesus himself may have been a "conscious impostor." Following Cranly, we see the process by which emblematic word-objects mutate throughout the texts: from "Would you not eat a piece of ordinary bread to avoid causing your mother pain?" (*SH* 138); to "But why do you fear a piece of bread? I imagine, Stephen said, that there is a malevolent reality behind those things I say I fear" (*P,* V. 2451-3); to, addressing Mr. Deasy, "I fear those big words, Stephen said, which make us so unhappy" (*U,* 2. 264). The notion of the tyranny of the symbolic order has undergone a set of permutations. The vehicular object of fear, and thus the object to be resisted, itself undergoes transubstantiation from "bread" to the "reality behind" the things one fears to "words" themselves. Cranly's dialogue midwifes the causal order of the narrative – bread, mother, commitment and submission – to deliver an epiphany occasioned by Deasy's comment. Not one to shy away from big words himself (evoking "chrysotomos" to refer to the glint in Buck's gold teeth), the Stephen of *Portrait* and *Ulysses* has been trained into a mode of linguistic skepticism through Cranly's reticence in the earlier text. The three, short "Yes"s and a "Bah" that interject Stephen's lengthy diatribe about the hollow theatricality of Holy Week masses (*SH* 116-7), for example, typify their dialogic contrast: Stephen's relentless paragraphs of speech punctuated by Cranly's determined use of small words.

Soon after Stephen utters the aforementioned obsession in "Nestor" about big words making us so unhappy – one of his many "idée fixes," as Haines mocks Stephen's contemplative habits to Buck (*U.* 10. 1068) – the specter of Cranly emerges again as Stephen suffers through

Deasy's admonitions about personal economy while receiving his weekly salary ("Money is power," said as baldly as could be expected of someone who doesn't distinguish Iago's opinion from Shakespeare's). Deasy asks Stephen to wait while he types a letter to be delivered to the press, on that literary matter of the prevention of foot and mouth disease. As Stephen looks about the room, his eyes catch the frames hanging on the wall, paintings of gallantly named prize-horses: Lord Hastings' *Repulse*, the Duke of Westminster's *Shotover*, the Duke of Beaufort's *Ceylon, prix de Paris*, 1866 (2. 301-2). With the sound of Deasy drumming at his typewriter behind him, Stephen's thoughts wander off to Cranly:

> Where Cranly led me to get rich quick, hunting his winners among the mudsplashed brakes, amid the bawls of bookies on their pitches and reek of the canteen, over the motley slush. *Fair Rebel! Fair Rebel!* Even money the favourite: ten to one the field. Dicers and thimbleriggers we hurried by after the hoofs, the vying caps and jackets and past the meatfaced woman, a butcher's dame, nuzzling thirstily her clove of orange. (*U,* 2. 307-312)

Fair Rebel, certainly not the pusillanimous Deasy who claims to have a pan-Irish "rebel blood in me too," nor the self-oppressed "dogsbody" Stephen – as it is the horse Cranly would have bet on at the racetrack. Cranly in *Stephen Hero* is something of a mild rebel, a "bad influence" (208) who flunks his university exams, a slacker who theorizes "how it was possible to live with the least amount of labour" (128), an obsessive handball player and a frequenter of the billiards room.

Just then, in this reverie that takes Stephen back to the racetrack and all its bright stimuli, shouts from the schoolboys playing in the field outside Deasy's office shift Stephen's thoughts to another reverie: "Again a goal. I am among them, among their battling bodies in a medley, the joust of life. You mean that knockkneed mother's darling who seems to be slightly crawsick? Jousts" (2. 314-6). The "crawsick," "knockkneed mother's darling" is how the boy Stephen in the early pages of *Portrait* would have heard himself described whenever the Conglowes boys played rugby. Their shouts "All in! All in!" would shrink the boy Dedalus who instead "kept on the fringe of his line […] out of the reach of the rude feet, feigning to run now and then. He felt his body small and weak amid the throng of players and his *eyes were weak and watery*" (*P,* I. 46-9, emphasis mine). Earlier in "Nestor," Stephen had walked into Deasy's office already mired in this schoolboy longing for his mother:

> Yet someone had loved him, borne him in her arms and in her heart. But for her the race of the world would have trampled him underfoot, a squashed boneless snail. She had loved *his weak watery blood* drained from her own. Was that then real? The only true thing in life? (*U,* 2. 140-3, emphasis mine)

Whatever else is unsure, as Cranly put it in their last conversation in *Portrait*, a mother's love is not. Cranly's insistence that her feeling above all "must be real" returns here to interrupt Stephen: her love for their mutual weak and watery blood, trouncing any ideas or ambition Stephen may have had, was that then real, the only true thing? *Portrait's* Stephen, abundantly awash in the feeling of his own weakness and wateriness, could not feel the weakness of his mother or his sister (in *SH)* as they lay dying. It is what distinguishes him from Cranly and why Stephen thinks he has outgrown Cranly and, as Stephen sees it, the paternalism he represents:

> Yes. His face was handsome: and his body was strong and hard. He had spoken of a mother's love. He felt then the sufferings of women, the weaknesses of their bodies and

souls: and would shield them with a strong resolute arm and bow his mind to them. (*P,* V. 2509-2513)

Cranly's sensitivity to the weakness of women finally registers in the Stephen of *Ulysses.* More precisely, *Ulysses* has absorbed the conscious and emotional gravitational field around Cranly even without its characterological nucleus: Cranly's arms, the recurring element in Stephen's blazon of the virtues he does not possess; Fair Rebel, precisely what Cranly's iconography of guilt reminds him he is not. "I have a rebel blood in me, too," prates Deasy (never mind his English sympathies); Deasy confusedly stakes his claims to a rebelliousness after the fashion of his ancestor Sir John Blackwood, who voted (for the union, Deasy believes) according to his motto *per vias rectas* (by right means) and who had "put on his topboots to ride to Dublin from the Ards of down to do so" (2. 282-3). Deasy has the facts wrong,[9] but the erroneous combination of horse and boots is nevertheless firmly connected in Stephen's mind through Cranly at the racetracks, the horseman of apocalyptic mother-guilt. Cranly's arms appear in "Telemachus," Cranly's horse in "Nestor," and lastly and most revealingly, Cranly's boots in "Proteus." Of the various things Stephen focalizes – in Genette's more precise way of formulating 'perspective' or 'point of view,' to select narrative information relative to the knowledge and experience of the narrator or the character[10] – the boots most revealingly stand in for Cranly, conveying the extent to which Stephensian Objectivity is ultimately searching for and materially reconstructing the missing second person.

Portrait's siren call of the world, "We are alone. Come," has utterly changed faces. In "Proteus," thick in the ruminations of loneliness – "I am quite here alone. Sad too. Touch me, touch me" (3.435-6) – Stephen is stuck in the ineluctable modality of the visible, thinking through the things he sees, everything a sign of his oppressive condition: "Signatures of all things I am here to read, seaspawn and seawrack, the nearing tide, the rusty boot" (3. 2-3). We have seen an image of the boots before. It is the pair Buck Mulligan took off before going for a swim (1.687), his plump body plunging (1.729) into the nearing tide after he, the seawrack of persecution and retribution, asks Stephen, the humiliated sea-spawn/sea's-pawn, for keys and two pence back (1. 721, 4) as Stephen had expected all along of the usurper: "He wants that key" – imagining Buck's voice here – "It is mine. I paid the rent" – and back to his own – "Now I eat his salt bread. Give him the key too. All. He will ask for it. That was in his eyes" (1. 630-2). Whether the actual pair on his feet are those Buck took off or another pair borrowed earlier, boots have become for Stephen a signature of all things he owes others.

Ruminating upon his lonely, indentured state, Stephen asks, "What is that word known to all men?" (3.435). This question, unanswered here, will be asked again in "Circe,"[11] this time posed directly to his mother, who is trailed by Buck Mulligan ("Kinch dogsbody killed her bitchbody"), as if in an inebriated invocation to the muse:

STEPHEN

(*choking with fright, remorse and horror*) They say I killed you, mother. He offended your memory. Cancer did it, not I. Destiny.

THE MOTHER

(*a green rill of bile trickling from a side of her mouth*) You sang that song to me. *Love's bitter mystery.*

STEPHEN

> (*eagerly*) Tell me the word, mother, if you know now. The word known to all men. (*U,* 15. 4185-4193)

The word Stephen receives from this phantasmagoric mother is not *love* but only an imperative, "Repent!" But if the effect of "Circe" is to hyperbolically implode the signatures of all things, "Proteus" attenuates the legibility of all things to their maximal, affective capacity. Posed to himself, the question in "Proteus" underscores only its unrequitedness, casting him out of that word known to all but himself. In this uncharacteristically candid and vulnerable moment ("Sad too") of desperately wanting connection ("Touch, touch me"),[12] the Protean Stephen lies down stretching over the rocks, the sun penetrating through his "peacocktwittering lashes" (could he be so vulnerable as to be blinking rapidly to push back the tears?), feeling himself "caught in the burning scene at Pan's hour" (noon). Horizontally oriented, his eyes settle on his boots:

> His gaze brooded on his broadtoed boots, a buck's castoffs, *nebeneinander*. He counted the creases of rucked leather wherein another's foot has nested warm. The foot that beat the ground in tripudium, foot I dislove. But you were delighted when Ester Osvalt's shoe went on you: girl I knew in Paris. *Tiens, quell petit pied!* Staunch friend, a brother soul: Wilde's love that dare not speak its name. His arm: Cranly's arm. He now will leave me. And the blame? As I am. As I am. All or not at all. (*U,* 3. 446-452)

In Paris, Stephen had tried on a girl's shoes, Ester Osvalt's, and was delighted they fit him. What small feet Stephen must have, as someone there squealed as well. Perhaps a bit oversized then are these boots Stephen now wears, that too must be on loan from Buck, one of his many castoffs such as his secondhand breeks (1. 114) or the promised shirt and noserags to replace the snotgreen ones Stephen carries around – "a new art colour for our Irish poets," Buck swipes (*U,* 1. 73). Internally listing many items owed to many individuals vis-à-vis Deasy's proud echo of that proudest English boast *I paid my way*, Stephen counts "Mulligan, nine pounds, three pairs of socks, one pair of brogues, ties" (2. 255). A bitter feeling of indebtedness accompanies Stephen, an ineluctable condition visible in others' castoffs. He once left Dublin with "new secondhand clothes" (*P,* V. 2785) his mother had put together, as he records in his diary entry. Now, and without her, he dons second-hand goods merely borrowed and owed. Such economic and relational exigency evokes an earlier epiphany, *nebeneinander*.

Nebeneinander[13] – side by side, walking abreast – is the movement that opens "Proteus" as Stephen walks along Sandymount Strand, his boots crackling against the shells underneath in an elision of poetic and physical feet:

> I am, a stride at a time. A very short space of time through very short times of space. Five, six: the *Nacheinander*. Exactly: and that is the ineluctable modality of the audible. Open your eyes. No. Jesus! If I fell over a cliff that beetles o'er his base, fell through the *Nebeneinander* ineluctably! I am getting on nicely in the dark. My ash sword hangs at my side. Tap with it: they do. My two feet in his boots are at the end of his legs, *nebeneinander.* (*U,* 3. 11-17)

The incessant, rhythm-creating force of the sonic world, the "ineluctable modality of the audible" that presents itself back-to-back, one after another (*Nacheinander*), gives way to a spatial sense of contiguity (*Nebeneinander*). The temporally, serially organized sound of his footsteps, the rhythm he can hear with his eyes closed – and sonically embedded within *nacheiander* is *Nacht* (night) the shut-eyed state itself – would falter in spatial terms as a pair of feet susceptible to stumbling in the dark. He must, as he dictates to himself, "open your eyes."

Only much later does Stephen mention he is without his glasses – "Lynx eye. Must get glasses. Broke them yesterday. Sixteen years ago" (15.3628), also referring to the incident sixteen years ago in Conglowes when Father Dolan unjustly struck Stephen for not doing his classwork on account of broken glasses (*P*, I.1500-68). The image of the blind man – which will return with Bloom in *Lestrygonians*, the chapter of willful unseeing, whether the possible sighting of Boylan in the street ("O! / Eh? / No…No." 8.103-5) or the creeping memories of early years with Molly and, more troublingly, the stillborn Rudy (8.389-90) – is thus feigned at a metaphoric register in "Proteus," and a phrase like "Shut your eyes and see" (3. 9) here strikes the reader as a poet's thought experiment rather than what a myope does from the fatigue of having to squint so much.

"Proteus" weaves Conglowes throughout, and from the start we are in a familiar Stephen territory in which we experience sights and sounds through his habit of defamiliarizing them by isolating individual senses. Recall one of the earliest *Portrait* episodes in which Stephen, sitting in the refectory with his elbows on the table, shuts and opens the flap of his ears to pulsate the mealtime clamor and commotion. Comparing the staggered noise of the refectory to a train ride through sound-muting tunnels at Dalkey, Stephen "closed his eyes and the train went on, roaring and then stopping; roaring again, stopping. It was nice to hear it roar and stop and then roar out of the tunnel again and then stop" (*P*, I. 231-2). If the boy simply enjoyed the intermittency of sound, that "it was nice to hear it," the young man cannot experience novel sights and sounds without a readerly objective. Indeed, Stephen's habits are now dictated to him as an imperative – "Shut your eyes and see" – and the objective of eye-shutting darkness reaches an existential, almost mystical register: "Am I walking into eternity along Sandymount strand?" (3. 18-9). By means of *nebeneinander,* Stephen tests the extent to which subjective experience determines the objective reality of things, tapping with his cane (ash sword) as if it is his wizardry that affirms material ontology: "Sounds solid: made by the mallet of Los *demiurgos*" (3. 17-8).[14] Further risking a stumble, Stephen delays having to open his eyes ("One moment") because in the shut-eyed state, subjectivity feels like an omnipotent force of negation: "Has all vanished since? If I open and am for ever in the black adiaphane" (3. 25-6). Might not black adiaphane be preferable to the open-eyed state in which vision provides mere "Limits of the diaphane," a middling world colored by snotgreen, bluesilver, rust (3.7)? *Nebeneinander* names the kind of experience enabled by a myope's fantasy of obscurity as a mysterium, a vacuum for a creation through the senses. Ideally speaking, the side by side movement of *nebeneinander* could lead to an alchemy of metaphysical proportions, transforming contingency into a poetics.

Darkness shifts Stephen from *Nacheinander* to *Nebeneinander*, the experience of things following each other to the experience of things next to each other, temporal to spatial. Ostensibly, Stephen is contemplating the two modes of poetic organization, poetry being "a very short space of time through very short times of space" (3.12), but they are also the modes by which his feet move and by which they are positioned. Advancing to pan's hour again, we see that in the associative link from Buck's castoff boots to *nebeneinander* to the "rucked leather wherein another's foot has nested warm," the word *nebeneinander* functions sonically as a rucked leather boot of sorts, placing within it a half-rhyme with "where*in*." Upon gazing at the broadtoed boots splayed next to one another (*ein* to *ander*), *nebeneinander* thus strikes Stephen as an iteration of encasement as much as of beside-ness – the slippage between one's proximity to another and the conflation of the self into another. Stephen claims in effect that the proximity of sound is enough to collapse the distance of meaning. Only a literal "acatalectic tetrameter of iambs marching" (3. 23), the ineluctable modality of an audibly absent rhythm – a catalectic verse is a line missing a foot – could be sounded out by legs and feet owed to the possessions of

others, that cannot be fully Stephen's to claim. The rusty boot Stephen is "here to read," then, is both a signature of his debt and of the absence (foot) it holds. Feet and legs, the agents disembodied from his mind, thump a poetic rhythm that keeps missing a beat, or to be more precise, keeps sounding out an absent meter of something.

As Stephen thinks on another's foot and his own, beating a foot which he "disloves," a foot that is as small as Ester Osvalt's – the metonymic vehicle for the *petit pied*, the "broadtoed boots," suddenly morphs its associative matrix from Buck to a different, Wildean object of affection ("Wilde's love that dare not speak its name"). A "Staunch friend, a brother soul" Buck most certainly is not. Stephen's reference to Lord Alfred Douglas's poem – "The debate of Two Lovers" with the line, "I am the love that dare not speak its name" – before jumping to "His arm. Cranly's arm," hints at homoeroticism at work, deepening and complicating our sense of their relationship.

Yet in a way, the hint is made all too self-consciously, insisting on a fixed significance for Cranly and how he is to be reckoned in Stephen's mind. It might be more correct to say that allusions to Wilde sit comfortably within Stephen's usual hermeneutic apparatus, especially in this moment, fresh from Paris where Wilde has recently died. Earlier, for example, Stephen muses on Wilde's short poem "Requiescat" upon seeing his uncle's bald head slouched under a wooden shelf, configured as a coffin encasing his uncle who is buried under a heap of bills and consent forms (3. 83).[15] Likewise, the Hellenism of attenuating a relationship to its intellectual, spiritual and affective Eros is Stephen's modus operandi. Stephen's homoerotic reference here typifies the kind of set-up – self and reader conscious, inculcating interpretation – finessed by Stephen's narrative mind. We must be vigilant not to take his vocabulary to heart, since with Stephen we are always compelled to confine our reading to his consciousness. He rarely gives us an experience that isn't already adulterated by his own reading; his reading is always *nebeneinander*. In explicitly positioning Cranly as an ineffable object of homosexual desire, Stephen sets up a red herring as if to skirt the initial flash of insight triggered by the boots – qualifying, though not altogether precluding, the operations of homoeroticism. Stephen and Cranly used to be paired, *nebeneinander*, and now they are sundered. Stephen persists in reading the problem at a thematic level – of friendship regrettably lost, a longing for the other unanswered – as if to account for the anomalous presence of Cranly in *Ulysses* as motivated by an unfulfilled desire. Yet Cranly's expression has a simpler and more impersonal reality: the circumstantial fact of the other who is no longer available in discourse. Stephen (as Joyce's surrogate), as it turns out, needs the second person more than he anticipated, more than Objectivity could deliver.

In fact, it makes perfect sense that the broadtoed boots would conjure up Cranly, if we hark back to the representation of the figure in *Stephen Hero*: "Cranly's undue skepticism and his heavy feet moved Maurice to hit the rustic in him with a name. He called him Thomas Squaretoes and he would not even admit that Cranly had to a certain extent the grand manner" (145). One of Cranly's many eclectic features detailed in *Stephen Hero* is his literal heavy-footedness alongside his verbal gravitas. Splashing cold water on Stephen's overenthusiastic description of Cranly as "daringly commonplace," his suspicious brother Maurice rebuffs Stephen's estimations with a more mundane nickname. Alongside a petit pied fit for a Parisian girl is a staunch brother Thomas Squaretoes the podiatric Other, the contrast between their feet and their boots unmistakable in many of their "usual aimless walking and talking," *nebeneinander.* The elision of the second person takes a particular shape as the *Nebeneinander* of concomitance and parallax, preserving Cranly and the problem of Cranly in a way that the

novel has to work out. "Foot" thus functions both literally and literarily, and as noted previously, *nebeneinander* is precisely the convenient elision between these two: between the physical (feet on legs and inside boots) and the figurative (poetic feet); between the rhetorical figure ("foot" and "boot" as vehicles throughout these passages) and the individual (the implied persons Stephen and Buck, Stephen and Cranly). Feet to feet, "They promenaded miles of the streets together, arm-in-arm" (*SH* 125).

In *Stephen Hero,* Maurice plays the first confidant in walking-and-talking, a role soon taken over by Cranly as their friendship quickly progresses. In a strange prophetic tone, Maurice later warns Stephen:

> He will grow to dislike you […] He will give you nothing in exchange for what you give him […] He cannot possibly understand half of what you say to him and yet would like to be thought the only one who could understand you. He wants to become more and more necessary to you until he can have you in his power. Be careful never to show any weakness to him when you are together. (*SH* 145)

Cranly has in this moment left for his hometown Wicklow ("Wickla," as Stephen transcribes his pronunciation), leaving the lonely Stephen in search of "another auditor." Less a betrayed Cassandra than a jealous brother, Maurice ascribes a fetishistic power dynamic to Cranly and Stephen's friendship. Whatever has transpired of the friendship Stephen so dearly defended to his brother in *SH*, Stephen in "Proteus" channels Maurice's portentous reading, repeating the unmistakable realization that in his weakness, he is without Cranly: "He now will leave me. And the blame? As I am. As I am. All or not at all."[16] If only I could have been more of a conscious impostor, Stephen may be thinking, less insistent on the way I am, my "as"-ness, I, too, may utter the word known to all men. Cranly, as their *Portrait* dialogue shows, has little hesitation in saying and inquiring after the word love. The more Stephen tries and produces volumes of interpretation, the only replies returned to him are vague and repetitive questions of clarification, first from Cranly, and now from himself: "Whom were you trying to walk like" (3.184), Stephen demands, conjuring up a figure of marked walking. The elision of Cranly does not entail his disappearance but rather his persistence in an altered form, i.e. *nebeneinander*. The force of the elision, in other words, travels well into "Proteus," but we can trace Stephen's negotiation of the problem all the way back to *Stephen Hero.*

Cranly, then, is not only a figure or an idea (of the maternal, homoeroticism, friendship and sociality, etc.) but a fact of language (poetic elision, *Nebeneinander*), a peculiar manifestation of stylistic focalization in which narrative and thematic vortices orbit around the absent second person. The advantage of focalizing around Cranly is that as a linguistic form, *Nebeneinander,* Cranly can smuggle in a mutuality that isn't available with Cranly as a characterological being. To recall, Stephen at the end of *Portrait* welcomes a chance to commune with Cranly in private, and "Their minds, lately estranged, seemed suddenly to have been drawn closer, one to the other" (V. 2307-8). The acknowledgement of closeness in this moment shares with *Nebeneinander* a kernel of expression, "one another" – a unit of English grammar that Jespersen calls the "reciprocal pronoun" (the other one being 'each other'). Jesperson speculates that the reflexive pronoun and the reciprocal pronoun developed in order to obviate certain ambiguities in language. Reciprocal pronouns in particular bind to the action a mutuality of intention and outcome that may not necessarily be implied in the meaning of the verb: *Jack marries Jill* is verbally mutual while *Jack hates Jill* is not necessarily so, as Jill might very well feel fondly about Jack; it becomes mutual when *Jack and Jill hate one another*. More

intensely, the reciprocal pronoun could also suggest that the subject and the object are reversible, and Stephen in a sense exploits this mutuality- and reversibility- granting function of *ein-ander*. After all, who left whom? Not each other. "He will now leave me," if anything, is a sentiment more justified from Cranly's point of view regarding Stephen's departure (as their last conversation in Portrait will make clear in section 3.3), than from Stephen toward Cranly, who is now simply there no more. Stephen's narration picks and chooses, focalizes, the objects available in reality and constructs linguistic objects out of them (*nebeneinander*/boots), as if to forge a mutual, reciprocal relationship with an absent second person through those secondary, indirect objects.

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3.3. The Alchemy of Figseeds: Incipient Forms of Cranly in *Stephen Hero*

Just why is Stephen so conscious of Cranly? Who is Cranly to him, and he to Cranly? The early text has much to tell us about Stephen's Cranly-complex, as Cranly's presence is quite prominent throughout *SH*, especially in the second half where their friendship dynamic takes the center stage. An unfinished and incomplete manuscript, *Stephen Hero* was first published in 1944 by Theodore Spencer, whose introduction and fifty or so footnotes to the New Directions edition have more or less remained as the textual mainstay until the recent advent of genetic criticism in Joyce studies.[17] One of the most interesting and tacit claims made by genetic research has to do with its democratic attitude towards various iterations of a text (whether notes, draft, manuscript, letter, publication) – an approach that ameliorates the usual treatment of *Stephen Hero* as a failure, even if a useful one, through which Joyce learned to be a modernist.[18] Without then overcompensating for what is clearly a less controlled and less concentrated text by elevating it as either a chef-d'oeuvre in its own right or as Joyce's textual unconscious (a pitfall common to overly biographical readings[19]), I propose to mine *Stephen Hero* for clues as to how Joyce discovers in the mouth of his early characters and tests out through their reactions to each other – exagminates, as it were – different stylistic possibilities.

The manuscript *Stephen Hero* was entrusted to Joyce's brother Stanislaus when Joyce left Trieste for Paris in 1920, then turned over to Sylvia Beach, the publisher of *Ulysses* and the proprietor of Shakespeare and Company, who sold it to Harvard College in 1938. It was later edited and printed by Spencer. Beach's catalogue dates the manuscript to 1903, noting that a part of it was burnt; apparently Joyce considered *Stephen Hero* "a schoolboy's production" written when he was 19 or 20. Whether this is the case (which would date the writing of the manuscript to 1901-2) or not (the publisher Grant Richard remembers a letter in which Joyce describes a half-written autobiographical novel, and this would date the writing to 1904-6), several facts do seem certain about the alleged early draft of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*: it is unfinished and missing parts, perhaps closer to the status of 'notes' than to a novel; Joyce didn't care much for it later on. It began as a Wordsworthian project, according to John Gorman, a "personal history" charting "the growth of his mind" (*SH* 8). Yet the mind in *SH* is isolated to that of a university student, tracking Stephen Daedalus's (original *a* retained in this version) intellectual pursuits and disappointments, especially regarding his presentation of a paper on aesthetic theory. If these 383 manuscript pages are to be considered an earlier version of *Portrait*, then the connection pertains only to Book V spanning Stephen's university years; as far as the plot is concerned, there are no more than a handful of similar episodes, most notable among them the Tundish episode.

Thematically, the narrative focuses the growing superiority and isolation Stephen feels toward his peers, a sense of distinction that does not receive an ironic treatment as is the case in *Portrait*. The dramatic and figural "monster in Stephen" that "on least provocation was ready for bloodshed" (*SH* 29) for example, is allegorically named in *Portrait* as the teenage Stephen's medieval "pride in his own sin," which is an ill side-effect of reflexive thinking: a "cold indifferent knowledge of himself" in contrast to which a classmate's blundering answer "stirred the embers of his contempt of his fellows" (III. 68). When *Portrait* dramatizes the growth of Stephen's mind, it does so as stages of philosophical tropes, here for example a kind of Nietzschean *ressentiment*. What is more sincerely postulated as the older Stephen's theoretical product in *SH* – "isolation [as] the first product of artistic economy" (*SH* 33) – must, in being repurposed in *Portrait* as part of a comic exposé of its protagonist, be tied to an earlier phase of consciousness. *SH* adheres to the intentions of the character, *Portrait* to the intentions or the designs of the narrative. Joyce comes to segregate in *Portrait* what was initially an undifferentiated notion of isolation and distinction in *SH*, the other-contemptuous, monstrous self-isolation of the schoolboy in chapter III from the declarative, necessary self-exile of the emerging artist in chapter V – though the latter, too, turns out to be a vainglorious illusion in *Ulysses*. For Joyce, no epiphany can retain its claim to truth beyond the initial textual occurrence, each depiction anticipating an iconoclasm of its own.

Rather than take *SH* as an earlier draft version of *Portrait*, we ought to read them as two different approaches to the same actors, a remake say, distinct in style and goal. Indirect discourse narrates *Stephen Hero*'s Daedalus omnisciently, while Dedalus is narrated from within *Portrait*. Along with the letter *a* being dropped, two corollaries come with *Portrait*'s narrative interiorization: the articulation of silence and the objectification of the character Cranly. The excision of much of the *SH* material tells us of different narrative priorities that govern each book. *Portrait* self-consciously contains its narrative to Stephen's perspective, reveling in the sensations and affective experiences particular to him, expressed through his language: the warm and cold feeling of wetting the bed; the "murmuring" of blood in a moment of self-loathing; the sluggish oozing of sins during a confessional. However more sophisticated the indirect discourse becomes alongside Stephen's consciousness, *Portrait* is in principle bound to what Stephen sees, hears, feels and thinks. The entire stuff of *Portrait*, whatever is said about Newman or Swedenborg, is in one sense comprised by a rigorous and detailed character study of a unique mind called Stephen Dedalus.

A more "traditional" text, i.e. following the narrational codes of realism to a greater deal, *SH* in contradistinction narrates Stephen from the outside. Though less expressively skillful (with clunky phrases like "the acme of unconvincingness" or eyes "lulled by the mere extension of so many variations executed with a certain amoeboid instinct"), *SH* is an intellectual project that works out various competing aesthetic theories of Aquinas and Ibsen, or defines concepts like "epiphanies" – "sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture of in a memorable phrase of the mind itself" (211) – that will become central to Joycean vocabulary. It is the narrator in *SH* who explains the logic behind the young man's feat of linguistic transubstantiation:

> As he walked thus through the ways of the city he had his ears and eyes ever prompt to receive impressions. It was not only in Skeat that he found words for his treasure-house, he found them also at haphazard in the shops, on advertisements, in the mouths of the plodding public. He kept repeating them to himself till the lost all instantaneous meaning for him and became wonderful vocables. (*SH* 30)

This process, in which Stephen extracts the sonic and incidental aura of words (vocables) defamiliarized from their referential environment through repetition, will become habitual in *Portrait* (as in the refractory-train tunnel), performed rather than explained:

> --We all know why you speak. You are McGlade's suck.
> Suck was a queer word. The fellow called Simon Moonan that name because Simon Moonan used to tie the prefect's false sleeves behind his back and the prefect used to let on to be angry. But the sound was ugly. Once he had washed his hands in the lavatory of the Wicklow Hotel and his father pulled the stopper up by the chain after the dirty water went down through the hold in the basin. And when it had all gone down slowly the hole in the basin had made a sound like that: suck. Only louder. (*P*, I. 149-158)

Or, take Stephen's aside in *SH*:

> In this house it was the custom to call a young visitor by his Christian name a little too soon and though Stephen was spared the compliment, McCann was never spoken of as anything but 'Phil.' Stephen used to call him 'Bonny Dundee' nonsensically associating his brisk name and his brisk manners with the sound of the line:
> Come fill up my cup, come fill up my can. (*SH* 44)

We could imagine how this snippet might play out in *Finnegans Wake*, the associations retaining only the aural meat with little contextual connective tissue: 'Bonny Dundee, Come fill up my cup, come fill up McCann.' With each text, Joyce will come to have less and less need for diegesis, asserting a lexical reality principle in which the thingness of words will perform themselves, independent of and without arbitrating their interpretive possibilities.

On the issue of stylistic evolution throughout the earlier texts, John Paul Riquelme has argued that neither *Stephen Hero* nor *Portrait* has much of the self-mockery so characteristic of Stephen in *Ulysses*, especially in the way the earlier texts present Stephen's enthusiasm for Pater and for aesthetic, mystical writings "with much less (if any) irony," while the latter mercilessly parodies Paterian style (i.e. the Germanic, impersonal narration) part and parcel with Stephen's past self as an aspiring artist[20]: "Books you were going to write with letters for titles [...] Someone was to read them there after a few thousand years, a mahamanvantara. Pico della Mirandola like. [...] When one reads these strange pages of one long gone one feels that one is at one with one who once..." (3. 138, 143-6). And if the stark realism of *Dubliners* (1904-7, written only slightly after *Stephen Hero* and well before *Portrait*) bears little relevance to Pater, it would indicate that Joyce has moved on from Pater and Yeats though his character has yet to do so. In the usual way of stacking up the early texts, Riquelme concludes that the antagonism between *Dubliners*'s grim reality and *Stephen Hero*/*Portrait*'s visionary modes dissolves, merging to prepare the way for *Ulysses*.

Or, in an attempt to answer Kenner's befuddlement over why *Ulysses* abandons its adherence to naturalism (Objectivity) two-thirds way through the text – and "disorients readers by deserting them, for reasons that have never been satisfactorily explained"[21] – Hannah Sullivan argues that Joyce's accretive, "self-begetting compositional process" must have unleashed a logic of its own, that his additions to the typescript "might have begun as an attempt to leave nothing out, rendering Dublin of 1904 in the most fine-grained mimetic detail possible, but at some point the accretions began to produce a different kind of aesthetic pattern: a realism that is too informed, too fulsome, to seem any longer quite true."[22] These accounts of stylistic change seem true enough from a distance; but the notion that style is a matter of textual triangulation or of

textual unconscious – which is what the claims essentially come down to – does not address why any stylistic strand should be kept, changed or passed over in the first place. Why at that point, and in that way? Given Joyce's own protean tendencies, his lack of allegiance to contemporary ideas or his aesthetic mercantilism even towards his own works,[23] formal motivation has overwhelmingly more to do with an investigative feedback loop than with facts of psychology or biography, calibrated more sharply and extensively than a general development of skill or mastery of each style. After all, it took Joyce a little over a year to write out *Dubliners* in contrast to the decade he spent working out *Portrait*. The differential must lie with the scale and the complexity of the problem of indirect discourse Joyce is trying to solve through each text, that Stephen's narrating consciousness and his narrated character hyper-sensitize, and in so doing, repel each other.

If diegetic description is in the process of becoming obsolete in Joycean thinking, then in *Portrait* Stephen's knee-jerk impulse to interpret and explain everything presents a peculiar problem for the development of the principle of Objectivity. That is to say, the discursive drive of the character is at odds with the narrational drive that tends away from discursive diegesis. The persistent specter of Cranly throughout the Telemachiad has to do with this unresolved problem of description (affect) that flouts explanation or narrative solution.[24] Eliding description into perception, *Portrait* surrenders its explication in order to thicken the kinship between the grammatical subject and object. As Joyce revised *Stephen Hero* into *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, he converted much of the dialogue into interior monologue and assimilated Cranly's speech and mannerisms to Stephen's point of view. An over-determined figure of provincialism and patrimony in *Portrait*, Cranly reappears as uncanny metonyms (his arms, boots) registered in Stephen's vision throughout the Telemachiad chapters of *Ulysses*. Cranly's reduced yet enduring presence – from utterance to discourse to object – arbitrates Stephen's hermeneutic mode with Bloom's more dominant Objectivist mode; the "elision" of *Portrait*'s indirect discourse to *Ulysses*'s indirect objects insinuates the unease of having internalized the other's critical voice, a challenge to the very freedom Stephen seeks through language as a means of self-realization.

Hence, even before Stephen receives the tragicomically misspelled telegram in Paris he recounts in "Proteus," "—Nother dying come home father," even before he leaves Dublin for Paris, and though unacknowledged by Stephen himself, the declarative aloneness of *Portrait* was already dampened at the edges:

> —You made me confess the fears that I have. But I will tell you also what I do not fear. I do not fear to be alone or to be spurned for another or to leave whatever I have to leave. And I am not afraid to make a mistake, even a great mistake, a lifelong mistake and perhaps as long as eternity too.
>
> Cranly, now grave again, slowed his pace and said:
>
> —Alone, quite alone. You have no fear of that. And you know what that word means? Not only to be separate from all others but to have not even one friend.
>
> —I will take the risk, said Stephen.
>
> —And not to have any one person, Cranly said, who would be more than a friend, more even than the noblest and truest friend a man ever had.
>
> His words seemed to have struck some deep chord in his own nature. Had he spoken of himself, of himself as he was or wished to be? Stephen watched his face for some moments in silence. A cold sadness was there. He had spoken of himself, of his own loneliness which he feared.
>
> —Of whom are you speaking? Stephen asked at length.

Cranly did not answer.

♦ ♦ ♦ (*P*, V. 2589-2608)

There is no resolving the tension between the "disempowerment of submission" and the "disempowerment of isolation," as Robert Unger pithily describes the modernist relationship between subjectivity and context. If we must choose, buying into *Portrait* Stephen's triumphant view of the isolated artist and the tentative resolution it provides, we may tip the scale toward the latter. The strange asterisks that abruptly curtail this passage before Stephen's *I* takes over in the diary entries, however, affect a different tone. The episode ends just as Stephen abuts the limits of his perception, sensing in the moment a self-doubt that cannot be registered consciously.[25] The resolution of aesthetic independence does not readily yield an affirmation. Stephen may declare, "using for my defence the only arms I allow myself to use, silence, exile and cunning […] I do not fear to be alone," but when reminded by his best friend Cranly what "alone" implies, emphatically and repeatedly, Stephen is stumped into silence against the other's silence. Meekly, Stephen attributes the anxiety of loneliness to the other though it is he who will be suffused by a cold sadness throughout the Telemachiad. With the confusion of the possessor of loneliness intact – the "of whom" that is left unanswered – there's nothing more to be said but for the episode to end. The awkward "silence" of the scene is matched by a narrative aporia that underlies the changing status of exile. In puncturing Stephen's inwardness, Joyce throws into doubt Stephen's resolution to engender a subjectivity extricated from social desires.

In the aftermath of speech, silence prevents the work from descending into an endless world of objectivity, making its claim when the attributive voices, the personalities of the first and the third, are peeled off, pared as it were, inconspicuously and solely visible in the asterisks. The asterisks are typographical objects standing in for the absence of a resolution, functioning structurally as the ellipses do for the sentence to mark that which is implied or crossed out. Both signs, the asterisk as a mode of narrative omission and the ellipses as mode of syntactical, linguistic omission, converge under Cranly, the figure of an intentional inarticulacy. His speech mannerisms are most explicitly featured in *Stephen Hero* with statements that tend to be brief, staggered and in ellipses: "It's not…too bloody bad…of a hat…D'ye know" (*SH* 113). Cranly's ellipses critique Stephen's verbosity; the early text also makes more visible the verbal contestation between the two characters, as when Cranly would "all but formulat[e] serious charges against him, calling up" (127) Stephen's actions and thoughts, accusing Stephen of knowing "next to nothing about human nature" (175). Yet Stephen fiercely defends Cranly as "daringly commonplace" with "a certain perverse genius" (145), willingly submitting to Cranly's "aggressive criticism" with even a "delicately insistent flattery" for putting up with his admittedly "whole-heartedly young egoist" (124-5) self. The dialogic character of *Stephen Hero* underscores Stephen's dependence on Cranly and the critical role the latter serves in sculpting the former's theories and words.

In *Portrait*, it is Stephen who has learned to critique. Stephen now plays the judge of speech and shows us how to read spoken words. "Cranly's speech," we are told after hearing a snippet of his dialogue, "unlike that of Davin, had neither rare phrases of Elizabethan English nor quaintly turned version of Irish idioms" (V. 767-69). We are given a negative-philological history of Cranly's speech along with a scrupulous, aesthetic evaluation of it (V. 761-772): its low bass tone as the "heavy lumpish phrase sank slowly out of hearing like a stone through a quagmire"; its affective quality for Stephen who "feel[s] its heaviness depress his heart"; its geographic leitmotif with "its drawl […] an echo of the quays of Dublin given back by a bleak decaying seaport, its energy an echo of the sacred eloquence of Dublin given back flatly by a

Wicklow pulpit." In Stephen's composition, Cranly's Wickla hits heavy, slow alto notes, a requiem of sorts that answers Dublin's lighter, choral sounds. If Cranly's interjection, "A flaming bloody sugar, that's what he is!" can engender such a metaphorically sumptuous and musical analysis of linguistic personality, there is nothing free about speech that is always in an oblique relationship to someone else understanding (and misunderstanding) it, yet all there is to understand another. Stephen's aggressively interpretive tendency reveals the extent to which he yearns to access – and in a way does – Cranly's language, whose cool reticence keeps Stephen of *Stephen Hero* trying to "loo[k] at the world with Cranly's eyes" (*SH* 195). Cranly's is an alternate narrative and linguistic consciousness which cannot be fully accounted for through Stephen's subjectivity, a being whose essential property is self-consciousness and reflexivity.

Concerning Cranly, Stephen frantically tries to impose a hermeneutic reign on things, and the diary entries are written in effect to work out the problem of Cranly which, as Stephen sees it, has to do with Cranly's dissenting opinion "on the subject of my revolt." Deflecting his mother-guilt, Stephen imagines Cranly's mother and father, who Cranly once mentioned ("in a moment of thoughtlessness," as if one must always be on guard not give away any incriminating information to a friend) was sixty-one when he was born: "Strong farmer type […] square feet […] his mother? Old then. Probably: and neglected. Hence Cranly's despair of soul: the child of exhausted loins" (*P*.V. 2613-2620). In the next entry, Stephen elaborates on this scenario:

> The exhausted loins are those of Elizabeth and Zachary. Then is he the precursor. Item: he eats chiefly belly bacon and dried figs […] Also, when thinking of him, always saw a stern severed head or deathmask as if outlined on a grey curtain or veronica. Decollation they call it in the fold. Puzzled for the moment by saint John at the Latin Gate. What do I see? A decollated precursor trying to pick the lock. (V. 2622-2629)

A morbid blazon of anti-love, Stephen's reading catalogues Cranly's characterological body parts in which previously observed details are reconceived as pieces composing his interpretive system. Whenever Stephen thought of Cranly, "he could never raise before his mind the entire image of his body but only the image of the head and face" (V. 146-8), Stephen remarks earlier on, and Cranly is indeed read metonymically only, particularized and frozen into a static image. Rather than an interactive person or even a character, Cranly becomes for Stephen a poetic object, an icon of "the face of a severed head or deathmask, crowned on the brows" (V.150), reiterated here as "a stern severed head or a deathmask" – a surface loaded with biblical allusions that is, nevertheless, ultimately impenetrable and unyielding: "he had told Cranly of all the tumults and unrest and longings in his soul, day after day and night after night only to be answered by his friend's listening silence" (V. 155-8).

The decollated precursor John the Baptist may have figuratively picked the lock of the Latin Gate for "saint John" the Apostle,[26] but Cranly's precursory action of picking at things does not sit well with Stephen. "Don't please. You cannot discuss this question with your mouth full of chewed fig" (V. 2318-9), he pleads as they begin their long talk, for the figs inevitably lead to Cranly's boorish habit: "Cranly came out through the door of the entrance hall, his hat thrust back on the nape of his neck and picking his teeth with care" (V. 1966-1968); "— Baldhead, Cranly repeated, sucking at a crevice in his teeth" (V.1988); "He produced his match and began to clean the crevice between two teeth" (V. 2564-5). Stephen consequently elevates Cranly's habit to a sign of exegetical mystery, conflating teeth-picking with the precursor's picking of the lock: "Old phrases," Stephen says of the Elizabethan words he conjures up in an attempt to dress up E_C_ in his mind to little avail, "sweet only with a disinterred sweetness like

the figseeds Cranly rooted out of his gleaming teeth" (V. 2102). Cranly's figseeds have become the object in a simile about "disinterred sweetness," a phrase which itself describes the inadequate aura of old phrases that are capable of recovering only a lukewarm imaginative pleasure after being disinterred or exhumed from their death of un-use. Disinterment in turn recalls the decollated head that personifies Cranly-as-John the Baptist. The figseeds elide the possibility of recovering an old language and the bathetic pleasures it affords; a mere detail in *Stephen Hero*, Cranly's habit of eating figs becomes in *Portrait* a figure of hermeneutic desire and its limitations. If *Ulysses*'s *nebeneinander* gives form to the elision of the second person, *Portrait*'s figseeds give form to the elision of the interlocutor's speech, to his silence and the ineffability it denotes. Literally, chewed figs prevent any question from discussed as Stephen complains; then their residue, the seeds, prevails cumbersomely and conspicuously, noticeable and to be picked at. The figseeds perform the same function as Cranly's speech itself: not answering questions, occasioning Stephen's hermeneutic operation and, in tasting faintly sweet at best, encapsulating the remainder that eludes recovery. The discursive drive of the character and its narratorial antithesis comes to a head at the end of *Portrait* in the strange object figseeds, rooted out of Cranly's gleaming teeth, sweet only with a disinterred sweetness.

The Elizabethan words are in fact summoned by Stephen to purify and restore the image of his unnamed mistress, suddenly tainted by the rustic's bodily interjection in raising his hat to greet her as well: "She passed out from the porch of the library and bowed across Stephen in reply to Cranly's greeting. He also? […] Did that explain his friend's listless silence?" (2050-4, 7). Between a "listening silence" and a "listless silence," nothing but some teeth-picking has been perpetrated by Cranly. Stephen, presumably a hypersensitive reader capable of such paranoid interpretation, guides us, presumably less paranoid, to read in the same way. In facilitating the multiple exchanges of figuration, Cranly sets in motion Stephen's interpretive machine, culling together accidents as insignias of language's own generative power. Obsessed with Cranly's teeth-picking, Stephen sees it as figuring a mode of reading: unlock the crevice between Cranly's teeth, and there may be an escape from a vat of boiling oil to a future writing a book of revelations. This, finally, is what fascinates Stephen with Cranly, the way Cranly reads the world the same way he picks seeds out of his teeth.

We can cobble together a figseed-picking methodology of sorts from the naturalist descriptions in *SH* (all emphasis mine):

> He was picking his teeth with a match, very *deliberately and scrupulously*, occasionally halting to insert his tongue carefully into some crevice before continuing the process of picking. He spat out what he dislodged. His straw hat rested mainly on the nape of his neck and his feet were planted apart. After a considerable pause he returned to his last phase, as if he had been *inwardly reviewing* it. (*SH* 219-20)
>
> Cranly produced a little grey ball from one of his pockets and began to *examine it carefully*, indenting the surface at many points. (*SH* 114)
>
> Cranly accompanied Stephen part of the way home and *explained very minutely*, using his large hands for the purpose, all the merits of Wicklow bacon." (*SH* 118)
>
> In the station Cranly spent a great deal of time reading the time-tables and making abstruse calculation. Then he went up to the platform and *watched for a long time* the shunting of the engine of a goods trains on to a passenger train. (*SH* 138)

These acts of scrutiny – deliberate, enduring, scrupulous, attentive to the surface, and oriented towards everyday minutiae – do not however yield meaning. Or rather, whatever meaning might be yielded is neither stated by Cranly nor recognized by Stephen. By contrast, Stephen may have "felt that he was looking at the world with Cranly's eyes" as he gazes at a footpath, but his watching never comes untaxed with abstruse exegesis: "Stephen watched the feet pass along the polished surface: he wondered if it was his moments of excessive vitality which cast back by revulsion on such hours of despair" (*SH* 195). A telling sentence that was slashed out even in the manuscript version notes Cranly's "defiant manner of using technical and foreign terms as if he wished to suggest that for him they were mere conventions of language" (124). Stephen keeps trying to formalize, i.e. conventionalize, what he sees as Cranly's anti-conventionality, a "rustic" who insists on the "prosaic things," who signals an old unexamined wholeness to which Stephen secretly desires to submit. Stephen's amplified interpretation neither resolves nor satisfies, and reading thus strains to access things not for meaning but simply to propel the act of examining.

Frustrated by observation without philosophy, Stephen finally vents: "What mysterious purpose is concealed under your impossible prosiness? […] Have you anything in your mind's eye?" (*SH* 220). Cranly, of course, simply shrugs off. Always having to account for things, Stephen chalks up Cranly's world-conforming, interiority-repudiating, surface and particle-loving tendency to a version of materialism, conceiving its connection to a certain quality of prose:

> He [Cranly] had a struggling regiment of words at his command he was thus able to express himself: but he spoke flatly and frequently made childish errors […] His receptiveness was not troubled by nausea; he received everything that came in his way and it was purely instinctive of Stephen to perceive any special affinity in so indiscriminate a vessel. He was fond of leading a philosophical argument back to the machinery of intellectual faculty itself and in mundane matters he did likewise, testing everything by its food value. (124)

> Cranly's method in argument was to reduce all things to their food values […] Stephen held the test of food values an extreme one and one which in its utter materialism suggested a declination from the heights of romanticism. He knew that Cranly's materialism was only skin-deep and he surmised that Cranly chose to express himself in language and conduct of direct ugliness simply because his fear of ridicule and more than diplomatic wish to be well with men urged him to refrain from beauty of any kind. (208-9)

A simple receptivity to everything, a flattening of value registered only in matter, a fascination with the surface of things, a lack of interest in beauty in the traditional sense – Cranly's prosiness anticipates the linguistic sensibilities of that other connoisseur of the unclean animal: Bloom. He, too, reduces things to their food values; or rather, food confers value onto the experiences that Bloom cannot otherwise grasp. A sudden mention of Blazes Boylan by Nosey Flynn in the pub, for example, "hanche[s]" his heart as a "warm shock of air heat of mustard" (8.789), then dissipates into a gentle ache as "His midriff yearned then upward, sank with him, yearned more longly, longingly" (8.792-3). A mere vessel that registers discourse through the affects of its digestive process, Bloom suggests a "declination" of the person to a materialism little more than skin-deep, perhaps organ-deep.

To clarify, Cranly does not give rise to Bloom as a persona; nor could the soft desolation of that peeping Tom, kaleidoscopic and imperceptibly brilliant, be mapped onto an oblique

character seen in bits. Rather, Cranly's presence identifies the narrative need around which Bloom is constructed and which thus calls Bloom into being. By "Bloom," then, I mean not so much who he is as the kinds of things this character is able to notice and report on behalf of the narrative. Cranly and Bloom are not similar as characters. But they perform a correlative linguistic function that can stage what Stephen is not able to narrate or account for. This function, moreover, generates a voice – voice describing both a cognition of sorts as defined above and the grammatical relationship between a state/action and its participant (passive/active) – that can insinuate through silence. Indeed, how adept is Bloom at the rhetoric of avoidance and keeping mum, armed with silence, cunning and exile without ever admitting to any of these things?

One aspect of this linguistic function has to do with its ability to provide an addressee, to occupy the second person role of being spoken to: talked at by the Citizen (in "Cyclops"), a Jew contemplating Moses (in "Aeolus"), Bloom makes for a passive interlocutor honed to a consciousness of "See[ing] ourselves as others see us" (8.662). Another has to do with seeing, reading and receiving the world that isn't bound to interpretation or myopic interiority as parodied in Telemachiad's Stephen. Such perception is not only materially oriented as Stephen complains of, but even more particular and quotidian: the impossible prosiness of Bloom carefully laying his recently bathed thigh on a mildewed, crumb-sprinkled leather of the cramped, rented carriage (6.100-5); a mind's eye that yields to "A warm human plumpness" (perfume, but also memories of early courtship) "settl[ing] down on his brain" (8.637). Theirs, Cranly and Bloom's, is a prose that registers the world without explaining it, narrating it without mastering or knowing it in a particular way.

Why Bloom should *be* – if it was an existential problem for the first person Paul Morel, a problem of becoming a speaker and asserting oneself into being – is something like a conversational problem, a problem first incurred by Stephen who, though drawn by the "spell of arms and voices," could not encounter the reality of that discursive experience outside of his nearsighted cognition. It is solved by Bloom who can perform the second person comfortably, submitting to all the ways in which he is being spoken to or shown of, whether by a cat Mrkrgnao-ing (not meowing) or a dog eating its own vomit (8.1031-3). It's not just that Cranly sends us to Bloom through objective cues; it is that Bloom is, in one sense among others, the product of the problem of the second person as I have been developing it through Cranly. The general critical consensus regarding Bloom's entrance in "Calypso" and his overtaking of Stephen in the narrative seems to be that Joyce was done with Stephen and found in Bloom a way to express a wholly new sensibility. But as evidenced by the Homeric rubric itself, nothing comes without a pretext – a point Eliot had made in his 1923 review when he argued that it was precisely *Ulysses*'s mythic order that made the modern world possible for art.[27] This is a book about prior existences in their modern form. Bloom isn't new; he is developing and replacing something that was there already.

There is in fact a factual, biographical way to understand the link between Cranly and Bloom. FS Byrne, Joyce's classmate at Belvedere and the model for Cranly (as noted in Joyce's notebook) is also, Ellman asserts, the model for Bloom in many ways; both were residents of 7 Eccles Street, for example. In fact, Ellmann kept up a long correspondence with Byrne during the years he was putting together the Joyce biography. The compositional history leaves behind several surprising and poignant anecdotes (see note), those curious intersections of lives in the aftermath of their fictionalization best left to rest.[28] For our purposes here, the biographical adaptation is more or less contingent to the developmental arc of narrational techniques that

become legible with each permutation of the character Cranly. The narrative absorbs his characteristics by mimicking his habits, his textual traits, above and beyond his biographical ones.

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3.4. *Nebeneinander Bildungsroman*: Criticism and Its Elision

I have argued throughout that *Bildung* lies with the progression of style through characters rather than within them. Through Cranly, we made the discovery that Bloom is figuring the problem of the second person, that Cranly, especially in the diary ending of *Portrait*, sets up the stylistic *Bildung* to be completed in the Telemachiad. I turn to critics who provide important commentary on the textual crux at hand, the character Cranly and *Portrait*'s diary ending: Joseph Valente's account of Stephen's homosexual anxiety towards Cranly and Jed Esty's account of the diary form as disrupting the national, historical continuity of the novelistic convention. Few critics have unpacked Cranly, certainly not in terms of the character as a narrative sign. Given the minimal role he plays in the plot, there is perhaps a greater compulsion to attach theoretical currency to Cranly, almost in an attempt to justify one's attention on such an insignificant character. When critics have addressed Cranly, the interest generally converges on questions of relationality and homoeroticism, either through the lens of queer studies or socio-historically in terms of nationalism bound up in masculinist institutions like the school and the church.[29] As plausible and compelling as these arguments are, to approach Stephen-Cranly relationship psychologically, as a matter of closeted homosexuality for example, assumes existence and motivation. It is not that psychology shouldn't be availed at all, and there are perfectly convincing arguments to be made about the critical practice of "resignification"; rather, psychological reading does not fit the characters because any legible signs of psychology are preemptively glossed and engineered into narrative association by Stephen. Psychologism, a siren call novels excel at, is especially treacherous in *Portrait* and *Ulysses*, since with Stephen we are always compelled to confine our reading to his consciousness. He rarely give us an experience that isn't already adulterated by his reading. Criticism dealing with the interpersonal relationship between the two characters would therefore better suit our inquiry if translated into Stephen's perceptual framework of objectivity, a method of cultivating distance that can be narratively registered between individuals both absent and present.

Joseph Valente's formative reading of Joyce and homosexuality identifies the pivotal role Cranly plays in motivating Stephen's self-exile.[30] Valente describes the "open secret" of homoeroticism in the boarding schools along the lines of what Jonathan Dollimore calls "the proximate," defined by Dollimore as the ability make distinctions from the self precisely because it is identifiable and adjacent to the self: "the near-me can only be the not-me," Valente explains.[31] To rehearse Valente's account, Stephen is Joyce's surrogate in his will to artistry, not at the level of autobiographical identification but through a substitutive textual operation. By providing Stephen's linguistic unconscious with "unmistakable psychosymbolic associations" – Valente's examples include the episode with Simon Moonan's "smogging," Stephen noting Lynch rubbing his groin or the child Stephen recalling the "queer" sound of the word "suck" as the "two cocks" (though the referential association may be anachronistic given the first documented use of "queer" as a reference to homosexuality is geographically and temporally removed from Joyce's drafting of the text[32]) – Joyce grounds Stephen's aesthetic impulse in Stephen's uneasiness toward the proximate presence of homosexuality as well as his subsequent

inability to articulate the ensuing anxiety and desire.[33] Valente's account thus alters the implications of aesthetic freedom that the novel is generally thought to epitomize, reading Stephen's exile as an anxious opting out of homosocial relations and homosexual exposure that religious life presents, opting instead for the aesthetic vocation in which homosocial ties are sublimated through heteroerotic ideals, e.g. the fetishized bird-girl. In this light, the *Künstlerroman* aspect of the narrative "serves as a kind of supplement" to the heterosexual imperative, which is normative and repressive in the context of Valente's argument, aesthetic transformation being a "mediating agency" to hold homosocial bonds at bay.[34] Stephen's obsession with Cranly's physical attributes shows Cranly to be Stephen's real object of sexual preeminence, especially as E__C__ seems much too insubstantial to provide the heteroerotic ideal necessary to sublimate Stephen's homoerotic ambivalence; the heterosexual mission of the aesthetic vocation, if it is to succeed, is contingent on Stephen separating himself from Cranly.[35] According to Valente, Stephen's last unanswered question to Cranly – "Of whom are you speaking?" – "epitomizes homosexual panic as a neurotic obsession with the identity, status and location of homo-hetero difference and virtually defines Stephen as its captive."[36] Reading the uneasy dynamics of proximate distance in which the very shape and site of normative power relations make homosexuality both inevitable and dangerous, Valente argues that Joyce communicates this "panicky mode" explicitly through Stephen and moreover channels his "phobic denial or denegation" of his own homoerotic energy into a "*fundamental determinant* of its basic narrative structure and hence of Stephen's destiny."[37]

The structural consequences implied by Valente's argument are interesting. To home in on his last point, we might deduce that narratively speaking, such panicky, proximate relationship (i.e. the queer presence in Valente's reading) skews the arc of the *Bildungsroman,* in which the biological necessities of the person are supposed to function in unison with the reproductive and regulatory norms of the social. Gregory Castle's work on *Portrait*'s homoerotic interventions into the *Bildungsroman*, along this vein, anticipates more recent accounts of *Portrait* as a colonial *Bilungsroman* by putting interpersonal, relational analysis modeled after Sedgwick (on homophobia) and Dollimore (on proximity) in line with theories of mimicry and colonial resistance formulated by Bhabha and Memmi.[38]

Concerning critical narratives of modernity at large, the deformation of the *Bildungroman* imperative is a theme that has gained much traction as of late – no doubt owing in part to a wholesale renegotiation with the very notion of progress and its ontology demanded by current political and economic climate. Reflections on the *Bildungsroman*, principally influenced by Franco Moretti's work on nineteenth-century *Bildungsroman* and European bourgeois culture,[39] hang on creating an analogy between nation-building and the formation of national identity on the one hand and adulthood and the formation of the citizen-subject on the other. We may consider the direction Joyce criticism has taken over the past two decades or so towards issues of nation and empire as part and parcel of this critical reorientation towards questions of *Bildungs*.[40] Most recently and notably, Jed Esty has addressed *Portrait*'s structure in terms of postcolonial temporality and the problem of simultaneous but uneven development in late capitalism.[41]

Esty analogizes the dialectical tension between youth and maturity intrinsic to the *Bildungsroman* to the dialectic tension between global capitalism and the binds of national identity intrinsic to the concept of modernity. The soul-nation allegory is a model indebted to Lukácsian thinking, here with the twist that the breakdown of the realist, *Bildung* form (rather than its achievement as is the case for Lukács) reveals the breakdown of nineteenth-century positivist thinking and the strains of imperial expansion. Contrary to Edward Said's portrayal of

Western imperialism as an ideologically purposeful, secular triumphalism, Esty expands on recent sociological readings to emphasize a more inwardly troubled and self-doubting West.[42] Whereas dominant readings of modernism see it as a critical movement from within, as a dissonant voice within Europe that was suspicious of the projected narratives of western pride and a sense of superiority at bourgeois progress and rational thinking, Esty wonders whether modernist works critique the values of imperialism or "renovate Western art by exploiting the cultural and epistemological privileges that Raymond Williams has memorably described as 'metropolitan perception.'"[43] In other words, the problem of uneven development, the conflict between the metropole and the province, becomes both more conspicuous and more encoded throughout 1880 to 1920.[44] It is the modernist *Bildungsroman* in the formally realist tradition that is in fact, Esty shows, anti-developmental in plot and feature "recalcitrant youths" of arrested development, thus literalizing colonialism as a failed project of western modernity.

Portrait thus gives form to the "collapse of progressive historicism as an organizing idea of European modernity and therefore of the European novel."[45] It exposes the contradictions of what David Lloyd calls "developmental historicism"[46] by drawing out the contradictions intrinsic to the *Bildungsroman* form. Specifically, it does so, according to Esty, by superimposing linear and circular forms on top of each other, the telos of the *Bildungs* structure with the open-endedness of the diary ending – the one articulating the obsolescence of nation-state formation and the other the endlessness present tense of global temporality.[47] It is an excitingly counterintuitive, dazzlingly wrought account of the novel. Stephen's exit from a national context implies a textual shift from a closed to an open genre, his life both no longer a narrative (linear) and only a narrative (infinite). *Portrait* is thus a prime case of "metabildungsroman," Esty claims, in which the genre's central device – developmental time – splinters into two, as if an excess of development is an absence of one. Nor is this a "narrative ruse or modernist gimmick," Esty reassures us, but "a deep, if deeply oblique, commentary of the colonial nation whose self-fulfillment is itself perpetually deferred because it is perpetually under development." Hence, Stephen's coming of age is on-going yet never quite complete, and "corresponds quite exactly to Joyce's vision of Ireland as a "radically unfinished project."[48]

The Habermasian ring is unmistakable. Joyce's Ireland stands in for the fissile logic of modernity itself, Stephen's staggered youth for the staggered development of the postcolonial state (putting aside for a moment Stephen's explicit rejection of the soul-nation complex and my own quibble as to whether any nation, including ex-colonial Western ones, could ever be sufficiently developed from a capitalistic point of view). It follows then that one of *Portrait*'s gambits would lie in charming its readers into relying on a structure of substitution. In other words, undergirding Esty's readings is allegory as an argumentative structure, and in particular the allegory of the nation assigned to portraiture/*Bildungs* form (doubly harkening to the medieval, Germanic denotation of "*Bild*" as a picture). As evidenced by his earlier work on Lukács, Esty's thinking is largely motivated by a desire to update Lukácian precepts to elucidate postcolonial and global development of the novel, and in so doing, understand modernism as critical realism of the twentieth-century.[49] He thus in principle theorizes by means of allegory as Lukács does, analyzing narrative form with and through the dynamics of modernity. While the classical correspondence between soul and nation implicit in the form is analyzed as deformed, ironized or re-functionalized, the argument nevertheless takes the correspondence process itself, allegorization, to be a mechanism natural to *Portrait*. Presumably, Stephen cannot escape the problem of the nation as an epistemological precondition despite his claims to do so – notwithstanding the fact that what is actually experienced is the maternal rather than the national

– while the arbitrary closure of the anti-developmental plot subjects the reader to the existential and global time of Hegelian world history.[50]

Yet throughout *Portrait* Stephen already recoils against the skin-felt acknowledgement of the fact of one's historical being and its formal condition. What else is the Tundish episode if not a dialectical rejoinder to the dichotomous bind between assimilation and origin? Having trained himself on reading Cranly, Stephen masters by the end of *Portrait* the skill of allegorizing, which is for him a cognitive mechanism to encode existential dilemmas into objects and thereby elevate contingency into necessity. As I have demonstrated with Stephen's treatment of fig-seeds or boots, objects are picked up along the way, sculpted through diegetic displacement and, pressured by the need to account for them, given religious, allegorical significance. Both Valente and Esty's arguments depend not only on distinguishing Stephen's perception from that of the author so fraught in the *Bildungsroman* genre itself but on stressing the blindness built into Stephen's perception that the reader is asked to recognize. The salient point of Valente or Esty's criticism most relevant to this essay has to do with the indistinguishable line between the object and the self (what Valente calls proximity and I identify in *nebeneinander*) that Stephen can only assert his sense of self by objectifying the other, i.e. turning him into an allegorical object – objectification as a kind of allegorization, with the caveat that what is being allegorically turned over is Cranly, not Stephen himself as Esty's reading would suggest. Allegory, in other words, may only be a matter of distance. The uneasy dynamic between Stephen and Cranly is writ into the problem of interpretation, of the dynamic between one's proximity of expression to the thing and an inarticulacy in confronting it.

The distance, as I've discussed, is a grammatical distance, or the distance between the 1st and the 2nd person when the interlocutor is dropped out. Valente imputes the strange textual figuration of Cranly to homosexuality, a move that essentially looks at character formation from the point view of psychic interiority. Esty accounts for the diary ending – which I've argued is a production of hermeneutic operation to solve Cranly and the problem of an inaccessible second person – as an allegorical expression of postcolonial temporality, belated and always out of synch. Fundamentally speaking, what is creating the structural and socio-personal deformation that both critics have pointed to within the textual constellation – namely, Stephen himself, his characterological being amounting simply to the mass of referential, affective, intellectual consciousness depicted throughout *Portrait* – is a gravitational collapse of sorts caused by one side of the grammatical equilibrium (the objective case/the ander next to ein) pulling out. What Stephen thinks he no longer needs, the dialogic address formalized by the second person, was holding up, predicating and fabricating altogether, the space of the object pronoun. For Stephen's actions – which more or less comprise some variation of interpretation, of reading and being receptive to sights and sounds – cannot be completed unless he takes an object, i.e. unless he interprets *something*. Cranly is an epiphenomenon, if a weak one (as is gravity, the weakest of nature's fundamental forces), governing the textual dynamics described by Valente and Esty. Whatever is observed around Cranly is a byproduct, the formal effects of the problem he points to, namely the need for a second person.

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Cranly models a form of readerly receptivity unavailable to Stephen, and Joyce can graduate from Stephen into Bloom only once he masters through Stephen a technique of narrative omission in the exchanges that take place between Cranly and Stephen. With Cranly, Language is absolved of its signifying function but charged as a surrogate for this form of seeing. The formal

procedure of Stephen Dedalus's exile, in other words, outlines a discursive breakdown en route to Leopold Bloom's "weak pleasure" and "weak joy" – modes shored up by a way of doing, seeing and being that find their prototype in Cranly and his "prosaic things."

Inside its world, the Joycean system is absolutely consistent. Since Stephen's romanticism cannot allow him to assimilate Cranly's characteristics beyond making a caricature that projects his own anxieties, the narrative ultimately absorbs Cranly's constellation of materialism and prosiness into its own practice in order to move away from *Portrait*'s interiority into *Ulysses*'s objectivity. Linguistically, *Stephen Hero*'s Cranly is a silencing presence whose "blunt actuality" always interjects and punctures Stephens's theories. While still there, the silencing function is manifestly omitted in the latter, crafted novel. The uneasiness that Stephen experiences through Cranly nevertheless abounds in the scenes that involve him, encapsulated in *Portrait* in the awkward pauses between dialogues and in the abrupt asterisks – the minimal traces that undermine Stephen's self-purported existence as a Romantic, ironic subject. Far from achieving a self-actualized *I* through his aesthetic attempts at individuation (as evidenced in his soliloquies), Stephen falters in the presence of this un-interpreting, un-interpretable other; Cranly's selfhood eludes Stephen, becoming a purely discursive experiment to the reader who is the third man out in Stephen's elaborate personal reckoning with an irresolvable alienation from the other and a parallel, narrativized struggle for his aesthetic independence.

If Stephen extracts a model of reading from Cranly, Cranly himself refuses to advance an alternate mode of narrative beyond a dialectic resistance. To say that Cranly is both a wrench that interrupts and a cog that mobilizes the *Bildungsroman* operation is not so much about the textual unconscious (along the lines of historicist argumentation) or even about the resistance internal to a literary text (along the lines of the Literary Absolute). In Stephen's inability to answer Cranly's charge that aloneness is the want of even one noblest and truest friend, Joyce postulates that the structural inwardness of the *Bildungroman*, in its inextricable ties to hermeneutics, is in fact dependent on the presence of others. So long as Stephen interprets, he cannot claim an autonomy of existence and meaning-making. If its claims of freedom and independence are founded on denying even the possibility that there could exist sociality authentic enough to be on par with singularity, the subject of such a narrative can constitute nothing but its own narration. Cranly's subjectivity, if it can be called that, is one of narrative displacement itself. As Cranly's presence dwindles in *Portrait*, and his role is taken over by the narrative, the direct critique that was placed within the dialogue in the earlier draft is displaced into the indirect discourse that reads Stephen from somewhere above, both doubling up on and contesting the experiential narrative from Stephen's perspective. While there is a linguistic staging of Cranly's absence in *Ulysses* through metonymic figuration, the effect is not ironic as Stephen would have it. *Ulysses* itself is formally predicated on the mode of elision articulated through Cranly, inviting Bloom to step into the space created by the ellipses.

In following how Joyce develops the problem of the second person, we've seen how a dialogic clash crystalizes into objects of Stephen's intellection, or conversely how focalized objects in the narrative open up the exchanges in the past to recalibrate the present. The second person unfurled for Joyce how to work out the issue of sociality and the issue of a radically different modes of seeing. In short, I've shown how Joyce makes use of a character in service of narration so that another character can come into being occasioned by the narrational insight. The next chapter unfolds such a dynamic between character development – which, as I've stressed all along is not ontological but formal, the procedure by which something can begin to exist – and narrative stalemate from the perspective of the third person: the spoken about, with

its troubling potential to include everyone besides the speaker and the spoken to, constructing a narrative range troublingly close to infinity.

CHAPTER 4

THE "THINNING OF LANGUAGE" AND THE COMPOSITION OF THIRD PERSONS IN *THE GOLDEN NOTEBOOK*

4.1 Chapter Introduction: The Shadow of the Third

Here is a fact of English grammar: we read syntax from left to right, gathering meaning as the sentences move down the page. Pages collect, one after another, numbered then bound together. The order created by a successive numbering of the page is a function of the publishing and reading convention, one that has inured readers to what may in fact be a chronology formed through pagination. Paginal order is generally considered extraneous to the textual content, that is to say, irrelevant to the experience of narrative time that is measured instead by the pace in which the mimetic world unfolds within the reader's imagination. Especially concerning "absorptive reading," we understand narrative achievement to reside in the work's ability to suspend the reader from the temporality of her world or the speed of her reading, which is more often a matter of cultural training than anything else.[1] (Being on page 315 *Of Human Bondage*, for example, implies neither that Philip Carey has gained half the insight he would by the end of the story nor that the reader is half aware of the outcome, though it may be the half-point of the book). That this material fact of reading is curiously overlooked in our understanding of literary and aesthetic experience may be a sign of some Cartesian habit at work, refusing to understand the contents of the mind in material terms. As reinforced by grammar, the wisdom or knowledge gained is as uncountable as pages of a book are countable, lending the implied experience its fungibility to myriad encounters with reality on a daily basis. That encounters do in fact add up, one must trust somehow.

If, in a generic sense, a novel narrates an experience (of a character, say) and therefore represents the time implied by that experience – about twenty years it takes for Paul Morel to come to adulthood, the bursts of events that plot Stephen Dedalus's arrival at the turning point of his aesthetic calling, even the most illuminating yet typical day from the time Bloom gets out of bed to his return to it – *The Golden Notebook*[2] attempts to represent the experience of narrative time itself. Narration, the act of recounting, becomes the event proper and a full character in itself; its writer-personality (the first person speaker), from whom the story ostensibly derives, merely serves as a placeholder for the machinery of the "ordering, commenting memory" to which the writer is held a prisoner (as a reader, the second person spoken to). Why then should the experiencing of narrative time (the time it takes to tell something) be worthwhile or even preferable over the experience created by its emplotment, i.e. a representation of the protagonist's time? What is at stake in alerting us to the sheer fact of the pages adding up – which inevitably happens with this relentlessly uneventful, repetitive book – moreover instilling in us a doubt as to whether the adding up of the pages will add up to anything.

The duration of reading, narration and character take a radically different dimension in *The Golden Notebook* as it deals with a unique problem of the grammatical person, namely the idea of collectivity incorporated into the third person. To begin with, the very use of the word "person" to designate its grammatical function is "to be regretted," Jespersen notes, since personhood is irrelevant to the substance designated by grammatical persons.[3] The Latin grammarians are to be blamed for adopting and routinizing Greek terminology (*prosopon*), one

of those "many inconveniences of traditional grammatical terminology which are too firmly rooted to be now abolished."[4] But as we will consider in greater detail throughout the chapter, the seeming empty formalism of convention is as salient and revealing as it is inconvenient, for genuine historical insight finds a way to exploit, to use Fredric Jameson's description of Sartre's analytic process (further explored in 4.6 and 4.7),

> the inertia of the very language and ideas we use, which have in them, to anticipate the terminology of the *Critique*, a kind of counter-finality of their own, and which alienate our own thoughts and works to the degree that our original intention is deflected by this resistance and the previous history of the material itself.[5]

As old Liddell and Scott tell us, *prosopon* has little in the way of person or being (*anthropos* more closely entails the total entity of a person) as it does with "face" or "countenance" to get at some orientation of the surface, used idiomatically to describe what comes before or is in front of.[6] A grammatical person, we may deduce, is essentially that which is before (us), and in the case of texts, that which is facing the reader. In this light, it is significant that Jespersen revises James Murray's (the late 19th-century lexicographer and the editor of the OED) definition of the grammatical person in *New English Dictionary* (1884). As we have considered throughout the chapters, when we speak of persons in grammar, we mean to classify and distinguish between the speaker (first person), the spoken to (the second person) and, in Murray's definition, the person or the thing spoken of (third person). Jespersen finds the last definition to be incorrect, or at least imprecise, since it is actually *I* and *you* that is being spoken *of* in statements like "I am ill" or "you must go."[7] In to Jespersen's more careful deduction, the third person should really be "neither speaker not spoken to." In other words, the third person simply designates the negation of speech relation in which the first or the second participates, shut out of it though somehow registered in the configurations of language.

The "neither nor" aspect of the grammatical third person poses all kinds of cognitive, enumerative problems. To a large extent in fact, the first and the second do presuppose a person, unless we imagine an anthropomorphic situation in which a rabbit speaks to a card, addressing each other in the first and second person cases. Jespersen's complaint about the archaism of *prosopon*/person best pertains to the third person whose "it" or "they" function can apply to just about any person, thing or idea, and in so doing, smuggles in a property of endlessness. It may not participate in speech, but the third person encompasses every other point of reference including impersonal phenomena (it is raining). Strictly speaking, then, the first person is located only in the singular, since "we" is really *I* + someone else/some others; as Jespersen notes, certain Amerindian languages may be more correct in using ½ or $^1/_3$ figures to designate "we" given that others added to "I" are the second or third persons. Likewise, "you" in the plural is really *you* + someone else. Except for that tiny minority that has the privilege to speak or be directly addressed, the third person is and is in everything else.

The Golden Notebook is a work concerned with the all-else-ness of the third person, and in trying to index the infinite points at which the third makes itself visible, finds itself (the *Notebook*) unable to speak as or address anyone in particular. I begin with paginal order as a prime example of an "everything else," one of those extraneous taxonomic details that the novel even bothers to notice. It is one of those many inert matters that retains in it the history of the material itself, which is a history of everything that went unnoticed. *Notebook* exerts much of its formal energy to prevent its persons from speaking or being spoken to directly, submitting characters to the weathering effects of narrative duration. The two elements of Lawrentian and

Joycean rhetoric discussed in the previous chapters – inactive, verbal perspection and an objectification of indirect discourse, respectively – are thus combined in *The Golden Notebook*, which aims to replace the modes of subjectivity (action and speech) with perceptual impersonality (not authorial impersonality as the moderns would have it, but), a function of reading that gathers the forms of knowledge implied throughout the book as an aggregate of their narrative breadth. Insight thus comes from a narrative that is larger than life and from the duration of time spent occupying the novel's observing eye which literalizes – naturalizes into a literary effect – the temporality of experience. Narration is noticing, recording and remembering, and in working itself out through retrospection, shows how observation turns the mere accumulated experience of time into a labor-intensive one of endurance, held captive to its own perception but with an accompanying sense of duress and patience.

In the first half of this chapter (4.2 – 4.5), I dissect the cogs and wheels of this narrational machinery. To re-cap, the story centers on two middle-aged women friends, still tangentially part of what were once vociferous left circles in London. We follow the first-person narrator Anna, the author of a mildly successful "novel of the colour bar" who has officially stopped writing since then, and are presented with journals she keeps in secret. As the chapter will go on to prove, the familiar tropes of the postwar condition Anna rails about in the journals – a total commercialization of writing and other arts, a loss of youthful idealism, an "intellectual collapse" of the left and the ensuing political cynicism, the banality of everyday life and an uncomfortable feeling of nostalgia, a partial liberation of female sexuality accompanied by more traps of gender performance, and so on – are red herrings, intended to perform the fragmentation of experience doubly upon reflection. At stake for Lessing is the viability of narrative as "the whole," as she claims in her 1971 introduction, an ambition to recuperate the "novel of ideas" vis-à-vis the "parochialism of our culture." Such an attempt to work out the problem of a part to whole relationship only increases the tension between the structural organization of the novel and its thematic vortices.

The second half of the chapter (4.6 -4.8) examines the product of the narrational machine, "the thinning of language" as Lessing terms it, situated against the historical predicament she calls "the density of experience." This linguistic phenomenon is crystalized in a key passage in the penultimate, "golden" notebook. A close reading of this strange and empty passage sits at the heart of this chapter (4.6), identifying how Lessing works out the inverse relationship between language and history that is also the failure of the former to represent the latter. There is no content to the sentences in this passage, and I demonstrate the stylistic means by which the passage sets up a referential system of pure form in order to solve the problem of an absent social totality. The passage performs, I argue, the way in which a language could *be* without having to stand in for, identity or select particular sets of experience. It is an oblique recovery of everything outside the named aspects of history; such a dynamic of circumambulatory narrative sheds light on dialectical methods offered by Sartre, and I compare the effects of thin language to Sartre's seriality, mapping *Notebook*'s mediating structures onto Sartre's problematization of history as a problem of everyone else in his reconceptualization of Kierkegaard's Singular Universal. In light of thin language's serializing operation, I examine what happens to the raw, now residual, material that feeds it – character. Lukács's model of character function becomes impossible once the thinning of language has been recognized, yet character remains, if only to underscore the determinate quality of literary conventions; the penultimate section (4.8), then, reflects on the sheer survival of a literary character, namely as a formal idea that is produced and sustained by the novel's need to engage its historical period.

Lessing's vision of a subjectivity-immolating, narrational machinery in thin language should not scare us. Lessing insists that a prison in language-recognition is a necessary one if we are to have even a passing chance at freeing ourselves from the "prisons we choose to live inside," and the concluding section of this chapter discusses how we might be receptive to the negative capability of thin language in light of Lessing's later, retrospective writings about this period in which *The Golden Notebook* was conceived and written.

4.2. Editorial Diegesis and the Tense of Contemporaneity

Two obsessions drive the plot of *The Golden Notebook*: an obsession with countables – dates, editorial tags and paginal specificity – and with calibrating and recalibrating knowledge. An unidentified editor of the notebooks who speaks in brackets reports factual information about the notebooks: "[From this point on in the diary, or chronicle, Anna had marked certain points in it with asterisks, and numbered the asterisks.]" (526); "[The page was divided down the middle by a neat black line, and the subdivision headed:]" (55). The notebook writer Anna herself incessantly qualifies prior statements, correcting what is stated as "knowing" in one passage as "what I didn't know then" in a later one, as if in faithful accodance with her insight that "Literature is analysis after the event" (216). According to this dictum, literature is but self-correction. The editor's brackets and Anna's self-adjudicating statements are two modes of textual intellection competing for a claim to literary knowledge and wisdom: the one taxonomic and objectively observed, the other abstract and subjectively reflected upon. Within the novelistic conceit, the editor tells us that pasted into the notebook are published reviews of Anna's commercially successful first novel *Frontiers of War*, while Anna as a narrator of the notebook makes up scathing reviews of the book that she as a critic might have written in 1951 when the book is supposed to have been published. There are many such examples in which the narrative loops statically in an accumulation of versions of the same, the thematic obsession with reviewing and self-correction on the part of the writer-character Anna and formal repetition found in the notebooks (as presented by the editor) aligning the narrative with the paginal progression.

Yet the impersonal editorial presence throughout the notebooks poses two challenges for the reader. First, as a means of organization, submitting Anna's "knowing" at any given moment to the possibility of being subsumed under a "knowing" that is newly cognized at another moment, do the editorial notes manage the paradoxical task of stratifying, and thus measuring to some degree, abstractions such as knowledge and wisdom? Secondly, given Lessing's style of repetition and narrative redirection which destabilizes the numerical order of the pages, how does countability (dates, pages) used to mark historical time and the material existence of things hold up to being narratively transcribed? Countability, which takes for granted a formal separation between the objects being counted, is put to test by the editor. Borrowing the force of quantification intrinsic to pagination, the editor presents different characters and different notebooks in different parts of the book, with characters who nonetheless resemble each other across "the four notebooks [which] were identical, about eighteen inches square, with shiny covers, like the texture of a cheap watered silk" (53). Both measurable and countable, material details are in service of contradictory possibilities, confirming either the sameness or the distinction of things.

In fact, the two knowledge forms, categorical empiricism of the editorial and the recursive epistemology of the authorial (Anna) are not dialectically related or set up on the same plane; rather, the key interpretive knot is rooted in a tectonic shift between divergent and arguably incompatible narrative orders to which the two knowledge-forms belong. A simple diagram of the novel's structure is necessary before unpacking further. One enters the book from two angles, either through the framing narrative, titled "Free Women" and revolving around two friends Anna and Molly and their relations (Anna's lover Saul and her daughter Janet, Molly's ex-husband Richard and their son Tommy), or through what I will broadly call 'the monologues.' Within the framework of "Free Women," we are presented with "The Notebooks" that Anna the author-character keeps in her private study, presumably undisclosed to anyone else. As Anna is at pains to cordon off the scene of her reading and writing and divide it up into four notebooks, so too the book's structure collaborates in cleaving and compounding the private and public realms.

The monologues and the framing narratives do not map neatly into the notebooks and the free women episodes. The first set of designations (monologue, framing narrative) describes the quality of the prose having to do with the consistency of voice – whether in the perspective of the first person "I" or the third person free indirect discourse – while the second set (the notebooks, free women) refers strictly to the nominal, structural divisions named by the book. The organization of the novel is as follows (CAPS typescript retained as in the text):

FREE WOMEN: 1, pages 3-53	→ THE NOTEBOOKS begin on page 53
FREE WOMEN: 2, pages 245-269	→ THE NOTEBOOKS begin on page 269
FREE WOMEN: 3, pages 355-392	→ THE NOTEBOOKS begin on page 393
FREE WOMEN: 4, pages 485-501	→ THE NOTEBOOKS begin on page 501
	→→ THE GOLDEN NOTEBOOK begins on page 583
FREE WOMEN: 5, pages 617-635	

In the free women episodes, Anna is a character narrated in the traditional realist modes of free indirect discourse and dialogue. (The notebook prose contains passages of free indirect discourse as well, but as fragmentary excerpts included in the notebooks, adumbrated by Anna the narrator's monologic reading eye and marked up by the editorial – free indirect discourse pastiched within the *I* within the indirect discourse of the narrative.) Perhaps at the level of plot, it is possible to read the editor and Anna as the same figure, given that it is Anna who is rereading and correcting the notebooks. In such an account, the editorial gloss that immediately follows the indirect discourse describing Anna at her desk in the very first presentation of the notebooks is presumably Anna's notation:

> She used an old-fashioned music stool for this occupation, and she now spun it high, almost as high as the table itself, and sat, looking down at the four notebooks as if she were a general on the top of a mountain, watching her armies deploy in the valley below.
>
> THE NOTEBOOKS
>
> [The four notebooks were identical, about eighteen inches square…]. (53)

On the one hand, "THE NOTEBOOKS" comprise the story (whatever Anna once wrote in the notebooks) placed within the narrative frame of "Free Women" in which Anna reads the notebooks. What follows the brackets refers to an action (writing in the notebooks) that took

place prior to the scene of reading in which the omniscient narrator watches Anna from the outside – "She used an old-fashioned music stool for this occupation" – and places us inside her present – "and she now spun it high, almost as high as the table itself." On the other hand, "THE NOTEBOOKS" are also the synchronic objects to which the frame narrator ascribes metaphors. Described as a militaristic strike for which Anna is preparing herself, rereading is an aggressive and confrontational action, engaging in a battle with one's armies (the words of the notebook), uncertain of the outcome and most certainly anticipating loss. The notebooks, the tenor of the brackets and a vehicle within the FID narration (notebook words as armies), are at once a signpost of narrative ordering and a piece of realist dramatization, simultaneously conceptual and concrete.[8] This perceptual dual status of the notebooks only begins to flesh out the different orders of objects and ideas nested into a named thing.

To conflate the editor with Anna within the same narrative dimension poses several issues since the editorial, too, exhibits an omniscience distinct from the FID narrator watching over Anna. A floating eye overlooking the notebooks, the editor registers textual and characterological intention in the writing – "[The black notebook now abandoned its original intention to be divided into two parts]" (501); [The entries on the left began again opposite a typed manifesto-like sheet gummed to the page, which was a synopsis of *Frontiers of War*, now changed to *Forbidden Love*, written by Anna with her tongue in her cheek, and approved by the synopsis desk in her agent's office:]" (55) – that assumes a level of a priori narrative awareness lacking in the first person narrator Anna who functions to register an on-going, readerly self-corrections. "I read this over today, for the first time since I wrote it. It's full of nostalgia, every word loaded with it" (145), Anna reflects for example, while this response is itself tagged by an editorial comment directly preceding it, "[A date, some months later.]" Anna's reflective monologues unfold throughout the notebook prose, becoming part and parcel of the object that is being organized by the brackets. Anna observes in order to make judgements about the text in front of her, an imperative that is inapplicable to the editor who merely sees the text "in the diary or a chronicle," whatever it is. The editorial, in other words, has no stake in interpretation, even less in a metaphoric meaning of the kind suggested by the narrator of the free indirect discourse (e.g. the militarism of reading). The editorial exists outside the generic realist world of Anna the self-reflective *Bildungsroman* character and the notebook prose she writes. In contradistinction to Anna's narration spoken from the point of view of the "I" or the indirect discourse that describes her as a "she" in the framing narrative, the editorial brackets, physically segregated from the framing narrative, envisions objects (Anna, the notebooks, their text) without a point of view. The brackets can't be said to represent a voice of any character, nor quite the author as a person since they come specifically garbed in the stylization of literary-technical production, mechanically assessing the text in contrast to readerly or authorial judgments of reflection.

At the level of textual presentation, then, the editorial brackets operate as a secondary meta-narration. Anna's consciousness typifies the reflective form of the novel genre; the editorial typifies the self-consciousness of fictionality broadcasting how a novelistic reflection is put together. Pointing to metafictional devices of authorial narrations that are "all-pervasive" in postmodernist fiction, David Lodge argues that such frame-breaking exposure of the fictitiousness of narrative is different in kind from the unmaskings of modernism: "such exposure [e.g. authorial footnotes in Beckett's *Watt* or the blurb that overflows into the bookjacket in Nabakov's *Ada*] foregrounds the existence of the author, the source of the novel's diegesis, in a way which ran counter to the modernist pursuit of impersonality and mimesis of consciousness."[9] Metafictional devices depend on the author function, and more importantly for

Lodge's investigation into a Bakhtinian heterogeneity of styles and voices in novels, on something like the function of traditional forms: "metafiction has been particularly useful as a way of continuing to exploit the resources of realism while acknowledging their conventionality."[10] Given that the character Anna is the author, the metafictional voice that comes through the editorial brackets is at once more dramatized in its ventriloquization of the author function and bypasses the actual author (Lessing) as its source. The editorial functions in the authorial mode of diegesis, while the authorial performance is represented by Anna the author-character who analyzes only and refuses to write, an author who presumably does not fulfill her function from the very beginning to the last page:

> [Molly] said accusing: "And have you written anything since I've been away?"
> "No." (6).
>
> "You mean you're not going to write?"
> "No." (635).

Of course, this book is written through the very refusal to write. How, then, do such modes of negation (disavowal, refusal) produce work, and moreover why have negative modes become the sole guarantor of work? Though the techniques of editing (e.g. the use of brackets) are conventions of the contemporary literary marketplace, Lodge is right to point out that as concerns the literary history of forms, these types of fictive reportage tend backward toward diegesis – albeit a diegesis in which narration apparently comes from no one in particular. [11]

What may indeed be an aesthetic failure of *The Golden Notebook* in one sense, the homogeneous tone of dry and earnest plain speech throughout that makes everything (the characters and the framing narrative) sound alike, may in fact stem from a strict adherence to the diegetic principle at work: to narrate the stratified voices of nobody. No authority resides in the author's voice or other realist figurations, these being mere rhetorical constructs kept around to be utilized as objects of interpretation. To exist solely to be interpreted – it is a notion that gives a troubling pause to the ego, and we will consider toward the end of this chapter the particularly cynical character of post-war formal conservatism (e.g. the Movement, the midcentury revival of the novel of class and manners) in which things were kept around to watch them demolished, hand in hand with a formal exhaustion in the aftermath of modernist breakthroughs in which the mere possibility of the new would smack of ideology.

For the purposes of understanding why a recognizible narrational mode is still at work, the most salient point to be extracted from Lodge has to do with the distinction he makes between the mimetic impluse of modernist fictions and the diegetic impulse of postmodernist fictions – stipulating for the time being that the ragbag terminology modern/postmodern is a shorthand for the poles of narrational presence towards which fictions gravitate. Lodge's interest in "the revival of diegesis" lies mainly in analyzing its prose poetics rather than in reasoning why this may have been the case in the first place. He does conjecture that a Bloomian rivalry against the modernist legacy is at work, whereby the Joycean stream of consciousness turns into a Beckettian "stream of narration." (Lodge's reading here presumes Beckett on the side of the postmodern – one that many readers would disagree with). The other implicit reasoning given the methodological preeminence of Bakhtin – both in the works of many critics in the 70s and 80s and for Lodge trying to take stock of the interests of his generation[12] – would understand postmodern diegesis from the 1930s on as an attempt to prioritize social and verbal interaction, in search of what Lodge at one point defines as the "ideological freedom that variety

embodies."[13] Both explanations, however, assume a spirit of literary innovation, or at least reinvention, somewhat at odds with the formal conservatism and affective disenchantment of the postwar period.[14] The monotonous polyphony of Lessing's style suggests little in the way of liberatory heteroglossia, and I propose two alternate answers to why Lessing pivots toward diegesis. The first is that diegesis "tells" the failure of mimesis to "show," and thus the mimetic content of *The Golden Notebook* is recycled out of the same thematic and characterological tropes while the diegetic modes keep proliferating. Narrative continues in the absence of a referential mode. The second is that Lessing's chronic commitment to a collective subjectivity – notwithstanding the utter bankruptcy of personhood – pushes her to keep imagining the possibility of insight generated by an authorial voice, though tied to no one in particular. The hope, it seems, is that if conventions enable even a possibility of postulating indeterminacy, they may bespeak of an ironic wisdom latent in an impersonal, collective subjectivity.

4.3. Voice, the Narrative Situation of Nobodies

Gérard Genette's more nuanced grammar of diegesis in *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* expands upon the classical understanding of the word "narration" (diegesis), which distinguishes the narrator's voice from the speech of others.[15] Adopting Todorov's differentiation between the chronological story and its narrative arrangement, Genette supplies narrative discourse with three dimensions of the verb to specify the relationship between story, narrative and narration.[16] "Tense" is the temporal relationship between narrative and story, "mood" the modalities (forms and degrees) of narrative representation, "voice" the narrative situation or the way that narrat*ing* is implicated in the narrative.[17] Effectively a deontologized person, Genette's "voice" is a useful term to understand the narrating action's relationship with the subjects involved, such as the audience/reader or the narrator. Even subtracting the extra-diegetical figure of "the reader," the narrating situation of *The Golden Notebook* is striated by a cacophany of such voice-occasioning subjects: the first set includes both the reader Anna and another reader-surrogate character Tommy who, we are told, sneaks into Anna's study to snoop through the notebooks; while the second set includes both the free indirect discourse narrator of "Free Women" and the first person narrator Anna. Besides the fact that Anna as a character plays multiple narrational roles, narrating instances themselves exist at several levels: the first order of voice comes from the frame narrative, while the brackets, as we've noted, are the metafictional device of the narrating voice identifying its own narrative situation – the latent, unpublished status of notebooks. The brackets thus extend narrative situation even into the future. The simpler the idea of subjectivity becomes, the more conflated the voice (narrating situation) becomes.

In considering voice, "the mode of action of the verb considered for its relations to the subject," Genette takes the subject to be situated anywhere within the gamut of persons (the same or multiple) who carry out an action, submit to it, report it, and "if needs be, all those people who participate, even though passively, in this narrating activity."[18] In underscoring the possible passivity of the subject and the fictive nature of the narrator's role whether linked directly to the author or not, Genette broadly designates as subjectivity any diegetic site involved in enunciation. Subjectivity in Genette, much like Lodge's rhetorical figures of postmodernist novels, is an analytic impetus first and foremost, a strategic move, it might be inferred, to extend subjectivity beyond a "point of view" or to bypass having to identify the narrating instance with

the instance of writing. To loosely conclude, the evacuation of subjectivity recuperates method, or at least salvages its possibility; in lieu of meaning, the means.

Unconcerned with an agent of telling, Genette's analysis of voice focuses on elements that determine narrating instances, unpacking the spatial and temporal relationship between narrating acts. In thus comparing the temporal plane of the story to the spatial plane of the text, Genette identifies a peculiar problem of duration: "comparing the 'duration' of a narrative to that of the story it tells is a trickier operation, for the simple reason that no one can measure the duration of a narrative."[19] As we've noted from the start, the time needed for reading, for example, is too fickle a yardstick. In search of a rigorous measurement of narrative duration, Genette measures instead the variations in duration, defining speed as a relationship between the temporality of the story (days, months, years) and the length of the narrative (lines, pages of text). Genette's solution, in other words, is duration as narrative pacing, providing us for example with Proust's rhythmic system measured in pages, e.g. "*Combray:* 140 pages for about ten years," while "*Matinée Guermantes*: 150 pages for two or three hours."[20] Putting aside Genette's insight into the changes in *Recherche*'s compositional rhythm, least of which has to do with the way description is absorbed into the narration, it would seem that duration precipitates from a weakness of the text relative to time, or the inadequacy of textual measurement relative to temporal measurement. In other words, narrative necessarily depends on the story, almost as a constant variable, despite a radical expunging of the teller.

What Genette does as a critic of *Recherche* is a project internal to the *The Golden Notebook.* Lessing too attempts to measure the time-giving function of the story to the space-giving function of the narrative, constructing "voices" (narrating situations) in order to analyze the contradictory nature of duration. Its editorial construct measures the duration of the narrative ("[At this point…]"). and its central character assesses the durable quality of the story (Anna compulsively wonders whether the writing is honest or dishonest, worth preserving or not.) As if to put the ratio to test, the last notebook entry before the third "Free Women" chapter performs two different narrative durations of the same story. There are two entries dated "15th September, 1954," the first a thirty-five page entry continuing into the 17th to fulfill a task Anna sets for herself "to write down, as truthfully as I can, every stage of a day," the second a ten line summary following an editorial bracket:

> [The whole of the above was scored through—cancelled out and scribbled underneath: No, it didn't come off. A failure as usual. Underneath was written, in different hand-writing, more neat and orderly than the long entry, which was flowing and untidy:]
>
> 15th September, 1954
>
> A normal day. During the course of a discussion with John Butte and Jack decided to leave the party. I must now be careful not to start hating the party in the way we do hate stages of our life we have outgrown. Noted signs of it already: moments of disliking Jack which were quite irrational. Janet as usual, no problems. Molly worried, I think with reason, over Tommy. She has a hunch she will marry his new girl. Well, her hunches usually come off. I realized that Michael had finally decided to break it off. I must pull myself together (352).

Temporally in terms of the story, we are at the same point on page 352 as we were on page 316, dictated by the editorial to imagine those thirty-five pages expunged from the narrative. Each topic in this short entry stands for extensive and at times satirical monologues of reflection in the longer entry: about the "intellectual collapse" and the "self-deceptive myths of the Communist

Party"; the "dead literature" of the "communist cloud-cuckoo spit" churned out by the left publishing firm at which Anna works; the nightmarish thought during a debate with an older generation of ideologues that "I, 'Comrade Anna' […] keep Comrade Butte in existence, feed him, and in due course will become him"; the excruciatingly tender interactions with her daughter in which "I shrink, in affection, to Janet's size, and become Janet"; the descriptions of cooking in the morning and throwing away "nearly everything" by the end of the night after being jilted by a lover; the crying promise that "tomorrow—I'll be responsible, face my future, and refuse to be miserable" and so on.

What "didn't come off" was the stuff of interiority and emotion. The affair is ending. Anna resolves to write everything as a strategy "to recover myself," to recuperate from the feeling of "unreality, as if the substance of my self [*sic*] were thinning and dissolving" (316). As the self diminishes, the prose expands. Yet the inverse relationship between subjectivity and prose, between the experience of reality (the substance of self) and a secondary production of it (writing it down), has the consequence of generating another complication in the "truthfulness" of narrating events. Mechanically listing the activities of the morning, Anna notes the start of her period and the accompanying feelings of irritation. Immediately she wonders whether it wouldn't be better to ignore such minutiae but decides against a "dishonest" modesty unfit for a writer. Two negatives in fact make a positive. Merely to not censor something creates a false emphasis: "Because, whereas to me, the fact that I am having a period is no more than an entrance into an emotional state, recurring regularly, that is of no particular importance; I know that as soon as I write the word 'blood' it will be giving a wrong emphasis, and even to me when I come to read what I've written" (325). "Emphasis" names a flaw in the stream of consciousness narrative, the matter of choice intrinsic to consciousness, "this business of being conscious of everything so as to write it down." Moreover, emphasis is inextricable from a readerly judgment that would interpret a detail as having a particular significance or not. That is, Anna's concern has not only to do with the overdetermined quality of details (period = writing about feminist issues, etc.)[21] but with the fact that, having already internalized the readerly eye, there is no such thing as a private, unprocessed recording.

Anna then turns her thoughts about the value of recording into a discussion of "a major problem of literary style, of tact." Her example is James Joyce and the way he intended to rob words of their power to shock by presenting a man in the act of defecating. According to Anna, the Joycean problem of literary style is that "the idea that I will have to write it down" changes "the balance, destroying the truth," focalization creating a structure of meaningfulness and emphasis, whether new or old. Writing makes nothing into something. Writing reifies. Yet in working out the Joyce example, Anna "realize[s] it's not basically a literary problem at all," but one of taste, or distaste as the case may be, that what she doesn't want to see literarily represented is what she doesn't want to bring up to the surface of consciousness.[22] Writing not only turns everything into fiction; it introduces everything into a conscious reality, even "something I deal with, without thinking about it particularly, or rather I think of it with a part of my mind that deals with routine problems." In thinking of the problem of "tact" and "my reaction to Molly, I forget about my problems of being truthful in writing (which is being truthful about oneself), and I begin to worry: Am I smelling?" (325).

Recording observations a posteriori has associative tendencies in which Anna's description of events becomes indistinguishable from her thoughts about those events. Likewise, the order of the events' significance transmutes with each "I realize" reflection, with each attempt Anna makes to identify the interpretive problem which underlies a particular narrative

strand. A failed relationship beckons a search for the truth, which becomes an ideological problem that has to do with a writer's ethical position, which is a literary problem, all trumped by the wrought sensitivity to one's own body odor. The closer she gets to the center, the more the center shifts; and if there was a center there at all, it may have been a trivial one all along. With the irresolution of the prose, the self dissolves even further into the "new Twentieth Century Anon at work," and the entire endeavor to write truthfully fails immanently, independent of execution. The multiple visits to the bathroom to wash herself between the legs sit narratively alongside the discussion of bad faith among the Party H.Q. administrators, Anna's consciousness of her period smell alongside her consciousness of alienation, not as an elevation of the viscera or feminine corporeality over political ideology, but only in confirmation of the fact that "They" – whatever the points of comparison may be – "are part of the same experience" without recourse as to how or why. Hence, "words lose their meaning," less as a linguistic problem per se, but as the breakdown of the machine that produces it, the evacuation of a meaning-giving, organizing subject: "it seems the words come out from inside me, from some anonymous place – but they don't mean anything" (337). There may be multiple voices, but an utter failure of *the* voice. What doesn't come off, then, is a narrative duration, presented to us as a failure of diegesis by the editor whose role is not to create the text but to tell the reader to understand it as such, i.e. failed, as struck through.

"Telling takes time (Scheherazade's life hangs by that one thread)," Genette reminds us, a fact no novelist could fail to take into account, especially when she stages narration in the second degree. But even if it took Proust more than ten years to write *Recherche*, even if that story's *now*s span from 1909 to 1922, Marcel's act of narrating is present on every page, bearing no mark of such temporal distribution. Hence, "this is finally very odd," Genette observes:

> —the fictive narrating of that narrative [*Madame Bovary*, which took Flaubert five years], as with almost all the novels in the world except *Tristram Shandy*, is considered to have no duration; or, more exactly, everything takes place as if the question of its duration had no relevance. One of the fictions of literary narrating—perhaps the most powerful one, because it passes unnoticed, so to speak, is that the narrating involves an instantaneous action, without a temporal dimension. Sometimes it is dated, but it is never measured: we know that M. Homais has just received the cross of the Legion of Honor at the moment when the narrator writes that last sentence, but we do not know what was happening while the narrator was writing his first one.[23]

As his study of Proustian compositional rhythm shows, Genette's "duration" is more a matter of spatiality than of temporality, the interval that can "maintain the gap between the Hero and the Narrator, a gap that cannot be bridged" until the very last sentence. The narrator brings the hero's story to the point at which the hero "*is beginning to become* the narrator," that is to say, when the hero starts in on the narrator's writing, the latter's last sentence being the former's first. *Recherche* stays in the *Bildungsroman* tradition for Genette in the sense that – following Hegel's statement that continuation no longer has anything novelistic about it – what is novelistic is the quest that ends at the discovery of vocation: "The interval between the end of the story and the moment of the narrating is therefore the time it takes the hero to write this book, which is and is not the book the narrator, in his turn, reveals to us in a moment brief as a flash of lightning."[24] Duration comprises the sentences that engender the subject and is imagined to be instantaneous. Genette's insight is crucial to understand how and why modes of negation guarantee work, namely that what is hidden within narration – the immeasurable duration of the writing time –

collapses into narrating time that is ever present and ongoing. Via its invisibility, duration makes *Bildung* possible again.

"Who is that Anna who will read what I will write?" (335) asks Anna the novelist character writing what is to be the expunged entry on 17th September, 1954. This question provides us with several clues that anticipate the role of the editor constructed out of Anna's subjectivity, though distinct from it. First, the deferral of a possible action in the present to the future; despite being in the scene of writing, Anna implies that neither writing not reading proper has been done, putting a strange premium on the imagined version of these acts distinct from those currently being practiced. Second, the writing voice striated by differently imaged selves; the voice presenting this question differentiates the "I" who will be writing in another moment and the reading-self pushed farther into the future and further alienated as a named but ultimately unknowable third person ("that Anna"). Finally, the overarching investment in the subjectivity that will arise out of the acts of writing and reading – the "who" – over and above the acts themselves or even the condition necessary for them to take place. What seems like a matter of temporality in the verb tenses, namely the sense of "then" and "now" that accompanies moments of insight, is largely about differentiation as such, a means to frame the unknowable self. *Who* is that Anna who will read what I will write? Volition (will) makes the future tense possible. There is no illusion of contemporaneity as a given; to be present requires that duration catch up to the future. For Genette, *Bildung* is only possible with the closure of duration to narration; here, *Bildung* keeps getting posited as a representational matter yet to be shown, duration yet to be narrated.

4.4. An Alternate Account of Contemporaneity as an Ethical Relation

To underscore the value-precluding function of Lessing's duration – a necessary phenomenon which we will study more closely in the next section (4.5) – I will briefly gloss an alternate, redemptive version of narrative duration which finds in the mediatory, time-aligning function of texts or artworks a means to recuperate historical agency. To stress, this is an account of duration and being-in-contemporaneity that Lessing's duration (which happens in secondary act of reading) deems impossible and argues against. The fact that telling takes time carries a political dimension if we consider duration to be an offshoot of, or even a more specific substitute for, modernity's project of contemporaneity at large. According to Linda Nochlin, realism worked under the pressure of contemporaneity, "to be of one's time" (Daumier's *'il faut être son temps'*), as early as the seventeenth century and above all in the nineteenth century, driven by the progressive, innovative spirit of Romantic thought. (Nochlin's broad account of realism, which centers on nineteenth century French painting, encompasses romanticism as well, though they are usually opposed.) Historically speaking, the injunction for contemporaneity has dictated the aesthetic and political choice an artist makes in various ways, contemporaneity in this context having to with the manipulation of the condition in which the reader/viewer experiences the historic situation of the work of art contemporaneously in it, in the time of the work itself.[25] Nochlin defines contemporaneity as a legible pose (though not necessarily thematic) by which the work configures itself to its audience. Such a historical, and more fundamentally, sociological thesis on the cultural spirit of contemporaneity echoes Foucault's emphasis on "ethos" to define the Enlightenment reflection on the contemporary status of its own enterprise. In "What is Enlightenment?" Foucault underscores Kant's negative definition of

Aufläkrung in the original essay of the same title, in which contemporary reality is a matter of difference, a possible condition of release (*Ausgang)* from historical immaturity by the use of reason, rather than the present in totality or how it services the future. Enlightenment as difference paves the ground, Foucault argues, for the grand task of critique Kant sets for himself since a keen reflection on contemporaneity is a necessary prior condition for any critical activity to come about. Foucault considers the weight Kant places on the present to be "the attitude of modernity." The attitude of modernity refers not to an epoch or a set of features but to Foucault's distinct definition of modernity as "a mode of relating to contemporary reality," an "ironic will" "to 'heroize' the present" and "to face the task of producing himself."[26]

Given *The Golden Notebook*'s frequent use of "irony" to indicate some sort of a social mood – e.g., Anna's observation that "a terrible, understanding irony" abounds – it is possible to see in it Foucault's ironic will to contemporaneity, or to see Lessing's overarching investment in the "who" as stockpiling these Kantian-Foucaultian interpretive problems of the present. But this sense of reflexivity as a historical attitude is precisely where Lessing splits off from ethical thinking (and as we will see in the last section, Lessing's explicit stress on commitment throughout her career has led her in fact to contravene into each ethical and political position she had once taken up, essentially undoing the ontological consistency of action or habit foundational to moral thought). In the attitudinal model of contemporaneity, the question of how to relate to the present is framed by the question of what one's historical mode of being might be, conflating duration with identity and furthermore with agency (via self-forming activities). For Foucault, under the aegis of Enlightenment, the project of constituting an autonomous subjectivity triggers this "permanent reactivation of an attitude" in which one is sensitive to the extent of historical determination and the possibility of transgressing it, to "separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think." The constrained freedom espoused by what Foucault calls a "limit attitude" of Enlightenment-as-modernity therefore explicitly rejects programmatic changes of a total kind, and is instead hinged on a "critical ontology of ourselves" that is partial, limited, and determined: "we have to give up hope of ever acceding to a point of view that could give us access to any complete and definitive knowledge of what may constitute our historical limits."

Such austere stakes – though blessed in turn by Foucault with the potential to be, do or think again precisely given the experimental and uncertain character of contemporaneity – depicts the kind of rigorous condition that may please the author-character Anna. It may even be the case that Lessing, like Foucault, does not wants to give up fully on the possibility of historical change and insists on the category of the novel (even adopting the tenets of the autobiography and the *Bildungsroman* that necessarily imply a project of becoming) despite using it to enumerate all the ways in which the tropes of change are rigged. Yet as section (4.7) describes in greater detail, *The Golden Notebook* postulates a number of recurring figures like the Camusian "boulder-pushers" who embody such a "limit attitude," articulating, lamenting and working over the promise of philosophical comportment. Precisely in its repetitive, characterological treatment, then, ontological modalities begin to look like one of the novel's many formal compulsions. The thin language passage will give us some evacuated version of what Foucault postulates as our imperative in the present to make conditions possible for the future, i.e. "we *have to* give up hope of ever acceding to a point of view that *could* give us access to any complete and definitive knowledge of what *may* constitute our historical limits." An analysis of thin language's treatment of "have to" will show that ethical imperatives, as it turns

out, banks on the mere elisional character intrinsic to the grammar of the future conditional, having to do something becoming what could or would be.

Anna may be mimetic of Lessing in the sense that both are "authors," but Anna is a character first and foremost, that is to say, an actor of a grammar that predates her. Attempting to write the novel that she has written – for there are multiple statements to the effect of, "It was as if the story were already written somewhere, inside herself, and she [Ella] was transcribing it" (166), "If I were to write this novel, the main theme, or motif would be …" (196), "It is as if this novel were already written and I [Anna] were reading it" (200), and so on – Anna the author-character tries to thread experience into history, the conditional "if I were to" into the future "would." As conveyed by the repetition of "as if," Anna's efforts to combine the antinomic poles of contemporaneity, representing it in time and creating a literal experience, feels more compulsive than hopeful. This automatic writing of sorts stands in counterpart to the idea of self-forming agency associated with Foucault. Anna, we might conclude, seeks agentive writing but finds herself writing automatically, identifying in the process of reading the uncontrollable impulses that have produced the text in front of her. "It struck me that my doing this—" Anna writes in her notebook, "turning everything into fiction—must be an evasion. Why not write down, simply, what happens?" In reading at least, she discovers that the Foucaultian idea (that attitude matters in the time of action) is wrong. For the "simple" task of writing down what happens unleashes the diegetic chaos that we observed above, the entry in which the Communist Party problem occurs while washing off smells between the legs (a Beckettian moment, unfortunately without its comic relish). The fictive experience of *The Golden Notebook* lies in the performance of literary construction in medias res in which the writer struggles with representation – namely, how to write what happens *without* turning it into fiction and which thus requires the abandonment of the whole premise of attitude. Already before it has even begun, "fiction" assumes a bad faith for Anna, in its drive for what she calls "emphasis," a synonym for false disclosure.

4.5. Diegetic Function Replaces Mimetic Function: Parody as Representation

The Golden Notebook's diegetic problem arises from its attempt to line up the paradoxical duality of contemporaneity, to be of its time (1962) and to be of *its* (the book's own) time – the time of its reading that thus extends into *our* time. In light of the diegetic narration's failure to "come off," the editor's role begins to look more reliable – or at the least more effective in giving us factual information to hold on to (that is to say, imagine). By giving us an ethos without a speaker and without imposing interpretive knowledge or a structure of signification onto the textual records of events, the editor offers an alternate technique for handling, as a narrated matter, subjective experience and its limits. The reading time – the time it takes for the reader to move through the text's volume – cuts into and coincides with the narrative time by putting the diegetical order in conflict with the extra-diegetical order.[27] The filmic iteration of extra-diegesis befits the narrator's keen assessment of newly emergent social genres such as journalistic writing and film; a sensitivity to their techniques informs the book's reconfiguration of the narrator's role from a storyteller to an editor who stands outside the narrative digesis to quantify, physically amend and prepare the available content. One way to see this is to say that the editor's extradiegetic role updates the diegetic narrator, though it does so by driving a wedge into any mollifying conclusion. The last passage examined in this part will

exhibit the unbearable lightness of a narrative crowded and awash with functionaries of the literary marketplace.

Nochlin claims that the imperative to be contemporaneous accounts for particular styles of particular epochs, e.g. the realist styles of nineteenth-century aesthetics. Yet in broader terms of mimesis, the historical imperatives of modern realism may have permanently changed the idea of style itself. In *Mimesis,* Auerbach identifies a "sharp break" that occurs sometime between 1780 and 1830 in French and, less noticeably, English novels, fundamentally changing from then on the very question posed regarding literary effects: what they are supposed to *do* as opposed to what they were/are. Referring to the motif of material exhaustion and depraved living conditions in Zola's novels, Auerbach writes:

> They are unreservedly translated into sensory terms, with no hesitation before the most unambiguous words and the ugliest scenes. The art of style has wholly renounced producing pleasing effects in the conventional sense of the term. Instead it serves unpleasant, depressing, desolate truth. But this truth is at the same time a summons to action in terms of a social reform. It is no longer, as it still was with Goncourts, a matter of the sensory fascination of ugliness; what we have here is, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the core of the social problem of the age, the struggle between individual capital and labor. The principle of *l'art pour l'art* has outlived its usefulness.[28]

The "sensory power of suggestion," Auerbach's definition of realist style, works above all in service of social and historical truth. Style is now tantamount to function, i.e. to be in service of something, to present truth that summons action and social reform. If this function is what distinguishes naturalism from classical realism for Zola, in Auerbach's larger schema, it marks an irrevocable pivot in the development of realism. *Function* by definition is the mode of action, the activities proper to something. To say that style is function is to say that style must now in one way or another insinuate a particular mode of action. What is the style of writerly inaction, then, of a depressed novelist who repeats, "I have decided never to write another novel" (59)? Anna's resolution stems from an inability to satisfy what she identifies as "a new sensibility, a half-conscious attempt toward a new imaginative comprehension," an "inability to enter those areas of life my way of living, education, sex, politics, class bar me from" (59): an inability to fulfill what has traditionally been considered the novel's special political function to enter into lives unlike one's own, the inability to fulfill what Auerbach describes as the new (nineteenth-century) stylistic impulse of mimesis to access the core of the social problem of the age. Anna's failure to produce a style is not a mere symptom but the very mechanism of a failed sympathetic imagination definitive of her age. Still, Anna's realization may even suggest that sympathetic imagination was always a failure, that its Smithian origins in the need to "become in some measure the same person" with the sufferer through the imaginative powers of our sensory impressions were never adequate to begin with.[29] Perhaps too it is the record of such a failure and inadequacy that best speaks to the new sensibility. Function is the ultimate demand made by literary style, yet its other demand, contemporaneity, is defined by the foreclosure of function.

Anna's queries about writing, "Why a story at all" is always followed by "Why not, simply, the truth?" In Auerbach's Zola, "story" – the mimetic stuff encapsulated by the art of style – is in sync with the "desolate truth" of social reality. In Lessing, "story" is that which is at odds with truth. To make out Lessing's style is thus to reflect on a mode that actively expresses how form and function negate each other in an attempt to fulfill its own imperative. The

deceptively plain prose of *The Golden Notebook* – its conspicuous absence of stylization – is in other words a mode of self-reflective judgment that acknowledges the limits of imaginative literature. Anna's thoughts in real time make up the content of the notebooks, unshaped by fiction. The editor's bare denotation of the facts of structure provides the closest thing to a "form" and thus its "truth." With the failure of mimesis, there is no aesthetic wholeness of form and content, only the constant demand of function that they line up.

Function is at the crux of *The Golden Notebook*'s plot in which Anna struggles to figure out activities proper to her multiple, conflicting roles as a writer, a politically committed individual, a mother and a "free woman." Putting these transitive properties together, we might thus articulate the pressure placed on the plot in the following way: how Anna as a character goes about these activities (function as theme) must correspond to the narrative mode of action (style as function). Literally treated as a diegetic issue facing the character Anna – the writer who "decides [she was] defeated; that something had happened in the world which made parody impossible" (421) and the reader who decides that a story "could be read as parody, irony or seriously" (288) – style reflects the characterological and narrative impasse. Under the demands of contemporaneity, style is literally mimetic: the narrative structure of *The Golden Notebook* enacts what the character Anna does (and cannot do) throughout it.

Anna has good reasons to name "parody," or its impossibility and indeterminacy, at the heart of this crisis of function. Parody is defined by disruptions in the norms and objectives assumed of a style, its very stuff a network of references. Linda Hutcheon takes parody to be a structural and functional relationship of critical revision – "repetition with critical difference," or an "artistic recycling," to use a phrase she borrows from Peter Rabinowitz – above and beyond a general practice of quotation or a mere convention of mockery.[30] Parody is thus a more specific form of imitation but without the moral and social injunction of the satire, which she claims is ultimately ameliorative.[31] The critical subtext here – theorizing the "postindustrial," "postmodern world" at large by bringing parody's inverted formalism to bear on the historical self-reflexivity of postmodern aesthetics[32] – inevitably feels dated but illuminatingly so, telling us about the late-twentieth century obsession with postmodernism as a concept and the kinds of generalizations that had to be made in order to make itself understood to itself (Jameson's reflections on this phenomenon is of course the seminal place to turn, as I do in sections 4.5 and 4.6). Modern parody, like any number of literary figurations, comes to stand for a crisis of subjectivity, its ironic distance the loss of faith in cultural continuity. For our purposes, the so-called postmodern take on parody is useful in the very fact of its centrality to discourse, its similarity to Anna's diagnosis of her contemporary condition as arbitrated by the status of parody, i.e., a condition in which parody is both impossible and undecidable. If we follow Jameson's association of postmodernism with the loss of parody and the triumph of pastiche in its stead, then Anna has just outed herself as an early claimant of the postmodern condition.

Despite adopting widely circulated definitions of parody as modalities of self-reflexivity[33] or of intertextuality as theorized by Genette, who transhistorically categorizes one text's relations to another one rather like a family resemblance theory,[34] Hutcheon's "pragmatism of reading" takes a more vested interest in the hermeneutical dimensions of parody – namely, the artist's intentions and the reader's ability to pick up on those intentions.[35] More closely allied to the Russian formalist concept of parody as something that "refunctions," this account of parody emphasizes the artist's creation of a *dialogue*, often ironic, with a past work or a codified form.[36] Given the kind of double-consciousness required to make a dialogue stick, parody demands a formal analysis beyond the structural, requiring an acknowledgment of the

enunciative context.[37] Bakhtin hovers over this account – as Lodge has shown of Bakhtin's centrality to postmodern literary theory in general – but with the crucial suspension of the utopian vision integral to Bakhtin's account of "deep" parody. In Bakhtin, parody is a form of the "grotesque realism" he celebrates in the Rabelaisian carnival; medieval parody is a cosmic force of regeneration that "degrades" (in a good way) the official culture into the popular and "universalizes" the private and egotistical spirit into the earthly and material.[38] In disrupting the apparent unity of a form, what is parodied in the grotesque "discloses the potentiality of an entirely different world, of another order, another way of life."[39]

In contrast, Hutcheon's postmodern parody as a dialectical synthesis of forms stresses only "the dual drives of conservative and revolutionary forces that are inherent in [parody's] nature as authorized transgression," as an "affirmation of limited being."[40] We are thus presented with two elements integral to parody – those which make something a parody rather than satire, plagiarism, burlesque, and so on – that have been thoroughly extradited by postmodern thinking itself: the legibility of intention on the one hand and faith/hope/utopianism on the other. Parody defines the modern world, but it is impossible in it. It functions, presumably, but how seriously or ironically?

If the paradox of parody is formally emblematic of the crisis of function, perhaps the solution for one can be found through the solution for the other. Parody, "the mocking imitation of one author of another author's style" as Wayne Booth puts it more directly, most acutely challenges a reader, for "no kind of irony dramatizes more painfully the difference between experienced and inexperienced readers."[41] At least rhetorically, parody can be determined, its interpretive triangulation made possible with a reader competently trained in culture. Hence, what Anna the writer primarily does is to read. According to the conceit of the novel, we are reading the same document that the author-character/partial-narrator Anna is reading within the plot, our reading enabled by Anna's reading of her notebooks. Before it is a figure that meta-critically embodies what we the readers do, reading – including its speed, subsequent responses of the reader Anna and her redactions – must be imagined as part of the narrative action. If the emphasis on the materiality of the text – the notebook conceit, editorial cues, visual elements like typographical changes – orients our reading of the book towards modes of literary production, the production and consumption of the text in front of us appear first as a literal device internal to the book, as a narrative conflict driving the character.

The very plot that unfolds tells of the degradation – Bakhtin's definition of what a parody does – of "production" in the full Marxian sense into production merely as a reference to material book forms, the degradation of ideological vanguardism to the praxis of commodity. A letter, for example "from Mr Reginald Tarbrucke, Amalgamated Vision, to Miss Anna Wulf: Last week, I read—by chance, I must confess! –your delightful book, *Frontiers of War*" (269). Reginald's duck soup of a reader response, "I was immediately struck by its freshness and sincerity. We are, of course, on the lookout for suitable themes for television plays. I would so much like to discuss this with you" (269-70), forces Anna to go through a series of actions that are scrupulously recorded in her notebooks "under the heading *Money*." We overhear a pitiful, comical exchange between a relatively new literary character, the media relations manager with his hyperbolic friendliness, and a more familiar one, the disinterested writer with her cool scorn toward the marketplace of art:

> Well, Miss Wulf—may I call you Anna—what are you writing now? "I am living off the royalties from *Frontiers of War*." […] "Tell me Reggie, do you propose to take the team out to Central Africa to make *Frontiers of War*?" His face, for one second, freezes; then

> sets into charm. "Well, I'm glad you ask me that, because, of course, that is the problem." "The landscape plays quite a part in that novel?" "Oh, essential, I agree. Marvellous. What a feeling for landscape you have. Really, I could smell the place, quite marvelous. […] Tell me, Anna, what would you say, if you were asked, what is the central theme of your lovely book? Simply, of course, because television is essentially a simple medium?" "It is, *simply,* about the colour bar." "Oh, I do so agree, a terrible thing, of course I've never experienced it myself, but when I read your book—terrifying! But I wonder if you'll see my point (271)

Reggie's "marvellous" colloquialism is as banal as the "vision" he pitches – for, as he reminds Anna, "television is a question of *vision,* isn't it? Can one *see* it? That is always the point and I do feel some of our writers do tend to forget that" – of a "moving love story" relocated in England between a young pilot and a local village girl. Yet only the dull banality of the situation is acute enough to trigger "a sort of minor hysteria," she records in her notebook, "a moment when I know I can either stop myself, or if not, I'll be propelled into speech which I can't stop." If Reggie has been anticipating Anna's aversion to the commodification of her narrative, he isn't prepared for the one-upmanship of commercial production in which she suggests they make a comedy out of it.[42] After delivering an even more clichéd version than Reggie's TV pitch while a newsboy in the street-corner outside the restaurant shouts the headline, "War in Quemoy," Anna declares angrily, "let's make a comedy about useless heroism. Let's parody that damned story where twenty-five young men in the flower of their youth, etc., go out to die leaving a wreckage of teddy bears and football trophies and a woman standing at a gate looking stoically at the sky where another wave of aircraft are passing on their way to Germany…" And as she hears "War in Quemoy" once more, "suddenly I feel as if I am standing in the middle of a scene from a play that is the parody of something" (275).

Thematic banality and prosaic style do not conflate covertly. The process of literalization is an aggressive one, painstakingly captured in the vernaculars and mannerisms of commercial media. Reggie's speech, Hugh Kenner shows us, comes from a long line of the weekly tabloid *Tit-Bits* idiom, an English "tropism toward the noun," its bourgeois love of Gallicism and "tushery." "To eradicate the distinction by which one mind is known from another, thus keeping the world of letters companionably homogenous," Kenner gibes, "was the bookmen's paid task."[43] Everyone speaks in descriptive short-hands, 'something's and 'etc's strewn throughout the book. And if parody usually whittles out the most striking features of its object, what is parodied here is an objectless feeling, a vague impression without characteristics. We are given scenes of telling and retelling, bad ones and worse ones. We see this event unfold only as Anna remarks on it as a narrator of her notebook, contemporaneous not with this event but with her ruminations and feelings operated through a process of diegetic-mimetic reversal. The parodic spirit of her vision manifests her reality, rendering her into a character in a play like the one she has just described. Reversing the logic of mimesis, the cheap rendition literalizes itself and turns her reality into another parodic version of itself. The mode in which Anna imagines her book reproduced becomes the mode in which reality is performed.

Production is the central thematic problem confronting the character both in the sense that the author Anna is pursued by various "producers" interested in capitalizing on the commodity value of her work and in the sense that the generic indeterminacy of her work's aesthetic value erupts onto the generic indeterminacy of her reality – a scene from of a play that is a parody of the indefinite *something.* After all, what good is a parody that cannot identify what it parodies? Anna asserts again a keen awareness of functionality, of the function-driven

existence of everything, yet coupled with an ignorance as to exactly what function is being served – not quite the marvelous landscape, not simply the color bar, but certainly *something*. The production of language and its narrative form is driven by the objectlessness of parody. The object of narrative content is a play with the confines of the mimetic world in the physical order of reading (pagination, layout, sequence) and in the modes of cultural production (filmic remakes, publishing deals), while the events that occur within the mimetic world (War in Quemoy, conversation with Reggie in the street corner) are experienced as parodies.

There is, of course, an actual war in Quemoy (Jinmen). Yet despite what can only be reckoned as a very real terror of lives and villages destroyed by bombings, the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis, according to the historian Szonyi, has been figured from the get-go as a metonymic vehicle for the diffuse and intangible force of global geopolitics: "a formal and explicit construction […] as a symbol in a larger international struggle," "a beacon of freedom for the enslaved masses of Asia," "a metaphor for the determination of the Republic of China to resist the People's Republic; the commitment of the US-led Cold War alliance to resist Communism, and even of course, human progress."[44] Never mind that the crisis was in actuality a series of *ad hoc* militarizations triggered by an unexpected outcome of an unexpected battle. Symbolism precedes event, outcome precedes what happens. Well outside the novel, "War in Quemoy" was not an event that was represented as one thing or another after its occurrence; it was born in order to bear its figural meaning on its back and arbitrate the militaristic reconfiguration of Asia in the (Western) postwar period. Szonyi notes that Truman's "neutralization" order of the Taiwan Strait after Chiang Kai-shek's retreat and the immediate outbreak of the Korean War – an order issued to prevent subsequent attacks either of the People's Republic of China on Taiwan or of the Republic of China on the mainland (and one suspects, to spare a further diffusion of US military energies) – "meant that the unresolved aspects of the Chinese civil war were now internationalized, becoming part of the global Cold War."[45] Indeed, as demonstrated in the historiography, the militaristic crisis gave the state (ROC, under the blessings of US) a full license to carry out a self-consciously modernizing agenda that Szonyi calls "militarized utopian modernism."[46] Whatever the intentions of the historian, it is hard not to read in such descriptions the formal effects of history unfolding in the spirit of parody.[47]

Parody is not only a mode of aesthetic production or a mode of experiencing reality but a starting point – the only available starting point – from which events occur. In chapter 1, I discussed Paul Morel's loss and dereliction at the end of *Sons and Lovers* as offering up the possibility of Said's beginnings in lieu of an origin. Here, too, we might take the "parody of something" to be another kind of beginning that has lost an origin or a reference point. The modalities of a work – the determinate possibilities of its form, whether it is to be read ironically or sincerely – can only be suggested negatively, by limited versions of reality voiced in parody: that which isn't the versions of *Frontiers of War* presented by Reggie or recounted in the black notebooks then dismissed because a "terrible lying nostalgia lights every sentence" (61). If language is a source of frustration, unable to adjudicate the weight of an experience, the very ambiguities of linguistic intention may free Anna from having to submit to determinant conventions.

The only trouble, it would seem, is the very inkling of the *something* that parody points to. The "useless heroism" of young men in the flower of their youth going out to die leaving a wreckage is as much a trope – again, trope being the only means of experience available to Anna the modern subject – as it is a reminder of the actuality that is utterly inaccessible, has been lost yet must have been the case somewhere else for someone else: the young did die. So much, then

– both the work of recovery and the acknowledgement of its likely failure – rides on parody's demand for reading and the promise its convention makes to unveil its intention rhetorically. Readerly ability may be the last holdout, and one near abeyance at that, to render the significance of the event "Quemoy." Who indeed is that Anna who will read what "I" will write? Readerly ability lies with the ability to identify and subtract all the conventions being parodied – allowing the reader to approach (negatively) an experience that cannot be repeated without falsifying it.

Reading the story sent to her by a Leeds comrade, Anna is confused by its intentional bearing, that "it could be read as parody, irony or seriously." It strikes her that, this fact, the confusion and indeterminacy of formal intention, "this fact is another expression of the fragmentation of everything, the painful disintegration of something that is linked with what I feel to be true about language, the *thinning of language against the density of our experience*" (288, my emphasis). To experience reality as a dramatic parody may be a testament to Anna's skills as an experienced reader.[48] As Derrida states, echoing Saussure, differences confer a special status on language – "difference as the source of linguistic value." Yet for Anna, to experience reading is to experience the dissolution of legible difference. Hence, the consciousness that events are mediated, e.g. by points of view, is coupled with an equally devastating awareness that mediation, too, is subject to historical processes, fragmenting, multiplying, disintegrating. At least from the point view of the Western bourgeois subject in the corner of London (for it is indeed her distance from Quemoy, the parallax of what ought to be a singular historical moment, that troubles Anna), reality is accessible only through language, itself a quicksand. Not depth but different surfaces recycle the same content (in this case, Quemoy), though each attempt at a narrative convention merely confirms Anna's suspicion that "when I write it down it looks dramatic and awful," which is "just because I write it down," for "I keep trying to write down truth and realizing it's not true" (261).

Quemoy is indeed experienced, tested and practiced more than once. When Quemoy, a spectral contingency of the world hanging over the scene of private exchange, is taken up again in a different notebook, it returns as a world-historic crisis that frightens Anna with the possibility that "this will be the beginning of a new war" (283). Taken up again in her dream, Quemoy is some force of the unconscious that triggers a phantasm of Cold War and postcolonial development:

> There were many subtle and fantastic colours, but the overall feeling this expanse of fabric gave was of redness, a sort of variegated glowing red. In my dream I handled and felt this material and wept with joy. I looked again and saw that the material was shaped like a map of the Soviet Union. I began to grow: it spread out, lapped outwards like a soft glittering sea. It included now the countries around the Soviet Union, like Poland, Hungary, etc., but at the edges it was transparent and thin. […] I stood in a blue mist of space while the globe turned, wearing shades of red for the communist countries, and a patchwork of colours for the rest of the world. Africa was black, but a deep, luminous, exciting black, like a night when the moon is just below the horizon and will soon rise…

Signification is undetermined because it can come back, reproduced as anything. A private reader is, in the scale of things, one of the smaller units represented in the book. Yet it is the reader who can slip into the role of the producer who brings in more and more elements into the book as part of its narrative – or the same elements in more and more different configurations. In generating text from and about Quemoy, Anna incorporates the cognitive activities of the reader,

expounding, seeing, intuiting – Lessing in short presenting the perspections of her character Anna – over and over. The construction of contemporaneity, the correlative structure that holds up what Anderson calls "imagined community"[49] is a matter of subjecting one's consciousness, transforming the self into a character articulated through and brought into relief by various permutations of the mimetic, readerly figures. With each textual repetition denoting yet another layer in the dense sphere of experience, the word (Quemoy) loses allegiance to the particular.

For Lessing, to experience the contemporary world is to experience it subjectively (in a trivial conversation at a street corner), while subjective experience is essentially an experience of the mediations of language (the experience of a parody of something). Brought into existence by the way language is deployed, the subject is decentered and multiple, shifting with each new deployment of language. As language does not express a stable subject or represent a world outside itself (by naming a referent), it is endlessly generative but sequentially flat; language is *thin*. Parody – the stylistic imitation of one author (of *Frontiers of War*) by another author (of the notebooks) – impersonalizes Anna's experience, objectifying it into an experience of a reader. The density of her experience, now measured by her readerly skills, weighs upon language, whittling it down thinner and, thinner.

4.6. Inside the Notebooks: Structure, Repetition, and the Stuff of Thin Language

The notebooks comprise a collection of materials – to name a few, clippings from the news, records of events, abandoned drafts of short stories and scripts, transcription of reviews, a grocery list, and of course, Anna's commentary throughout. Roughly speaking, the black notebooks contain materials from and about *Frontiers of War,* Anna's commercially successful novel that is currently being solicited for a film remake. The red notebooks record political events of relevance to the Communist Party of Great Britain of which Anna is a member (on the electrocution of the Rosenbergs, Stalin's death, election campaigns in London) and the conversations that take place during the Party meetings. Incidentally, these conversations recycle bits and pieces of ideological debates recorded in the black notebooks among a group of white liberal friends in South Africa during WWII who are, we are told by Anna in the black notebooks, the models for *Frontiers of War.* On the other hand, the most obvious source of the ideologically-inflected prose in the red notebooks is the densely rendered and appropriately pedantic speeches made by the members of South African Communist Party that comprise a bulk of *Landlocked*, the third book in Lessing's *Bildungsroman* pentalogy *Children of Violence.*[50] What comes up most frequently in the red notebooks, however, are Anna's private musings about her discontent with the party members and her disingenuous resolution to quit the party – disingenuous in that she never does. The yellow notebooks consist of manuscripts of the novel *Shadow of the Third,* in which the affair and the breakup of its central characters, writer Ella and psychoanalyst Paul, apparently based on Anna's relationship with one Michael, indubitably comes to resemble as well another affair between Anna and the American Saul in the two pairs' critique of each other's work, sexual dynamics and the feeling of resentment towards each other. (Outside the scope of this book, the descriptive language of these manuscripts is very similar to the relationship that takes place between the protagonist Martha Quest and other South African expats, her second husband/German comrade Anton and Thomas the Zionist-Marxist in the penultimate volume of *Children of Violence* series). The blue notebooks include what are presumably Anna's personal diary entries about the people and the events of the Cold War era

that she observes on a daily basis, both far and near her: interactions with Tommy and Janet, news about the H-bomb project, Korean War, Mau-Mau uprising, and so on.

This is of course a tremendously reduced account and hardly touches on numerous other thematic and rhetorical resonances between the contents of the notebooks and between Lessing's novels up to and through *The Golden Notebook*. What a summary allows us to see on the other hand is the book's obsession on the whole with the nature of connections both disparate and desperate, between the events of a private life and those of world-historic import, between the events referenced in one text and those Lessing returns to throughout her oeuvre. It is in the private form of the diary entries that the most apparently public material appears, excerpts of headlines in global news: "12th March, 51 A-BOMBS BY EISENHOWER. I would use them at once if I thought it would bring sufficient destruction to the enemy. *Express*"; "Oct. 17, 51 MOSLEM WORLD FLARES. More troops for Suez. *Express*" (229, 230) – while the records of the party meetings read like gossip columns. At every level, things repeat: as diegetic content, literary reviews in the black notebook repeat the popular media; as meta-diegetic content, Anna recaps her past publications and what she has just read in the notebooks; certain formulations like "free women" repeat throughout *The Golden Notebook* and in Lessing's earlier works, a phrase first used sardonically in *A Proper Marriage* (1954), the second volume of the *Children of Violence* series; an isolated passage in the last golden notebook reverberates with syntactical construction and diction throughout the rest of the book.

Formal recurrence helps us isolate the principle of resemblance guiding the narrative system. Repetitions are not only episodic and thematic but phrasal and syntactical, with a set of words that are used over and over again throughout the book: *pattern, form, order, honest(y), "name," parody.* To examine the purpose of a limited, repetitive diction and a simple syntax – sentences in the book are generally kept to one or two clauses – that characterize the prose of *The Golden Notebook*, I turn to a key passage that I will refer to as "the thin language passage." It is a dream sequence Anna records in the golden notebook (the penultimate chapter of the book) in which she has a panic attack of sorts, "as if a hundred enemies were waiting for my attention to be deflected so that they might creep up behind me and attack me." If, in the first presentation of the notebooks, the words were an army under Anna's command awaiting deployment before the task of reading, they have now turned against her in a *coup du texte*, so to speak. In another literalization of cognitive anxiety into a material one, the objective world becomes defamiliarized through signs of use over time: "A door-knob that needed polishing, a trace of dust across white paint, a yellowish streak where the red of the curtains had faded, the table where my old notebooks lie concealed—these assaulted me, claimed me, with hot waves of rocking nausea" (604). Such a scene of *unheimlich* is not an uncommon sighting, but the phenomenology of alienation pushed to its fullest aesthetic parameter in modernist works earlier on is here, again, short-handed into a recognizable trope.[51]

She crawls to bed, knowing as she falls asleep that "the projectionist was in wait for me." The projectionist, "a sort of inner conscience or critic" described elsewhere, is a recurring super-ego figure of her dreams who wears the garb of various characters like her lover Saul and her analyst Mother Sugar and who appeared initially as "the invisible projectionist" running a film that is both her dream and a cinematic manifestation of *Shadow of the Third* and *Frontiers of War* narratives – schematically as if Anna sold the rights of the novels to be made into films, though of course not at all streamlined or fashioned in Reggie's facile "vision" of a romance plot. Like Quemoy, the contingency of reality experienced cognitively as a dramatic parody, persons of the external world take part in Anna's psychomachy. Experience is tethered to a

relentless subjectification of reality.[52] It is the very problem of bad faith – "dishonesty" – that compels Anna to impersonalize the diary entries of the blue notebook by pasting and dating newspaper cuttings, yet in another catch-22 her analyst points out: "You have been cutting all the bad things out of the newspapers and sticking them in your diary of this experience, as an instruction to yourself of how to dream?" (240).

By the fifth presentation of the notebooks leading up to the golden notebook, we are to imagine a set of diegetic actions in which Anna has physically repudiated almost all of the previous entries we have read thus far. The editorial notes state, "[The black notebook… Its pages were covered with newspaper cuttings pasted in and dated, covering the years 1955, 56, 57. Every one of these news items referred to violence, death, rioting, hatred, in some part of Africa. There was only one entry in Anna's handwriting, dated September 1956:]," and "[The red notebook, like the black notebook, had been taken over by newspaper clippings, for the years 1956 and 1957. These referred to events in Europe, the Soviet Union, China the United States…]" (501-2). According to this conceit, all accounts of the private are encased in historical events. Anna's re-reading and editing act is a textual performance of a second order that enables her to *impersonalize* her writing (records of her quotidian experience): to negate the personal by historicizing it, that is, literally superimposing the narratives of concurrent violence.[53] The obliteration of the personal by the magnitude of historical events (or the sheer surface area to be covered by all the bad things in the papers) may be the repetitive mode par excellence.

Textual appropriation in multiple directions, the news composing Anna's dream for example, is the reigning logic of the prose. The golden notebook consists of the dream-plays that are a mimesis of the narratives in the yellow and black notebooks, while the following dream sequence within the golden notebook consists specially of sentences that stylistically imitate sentences in the preceding narratives:

> I also knew what I was going to be told. Knowing was an "illumination." During the last weeks of craziness and timelessness I've had these moments of "knowing" one after another, yet there is no way of putting this sort of knowledge into words. Yet these moments have been so powerful, like the rapid illuminations of a dream that remain with one waking, that what I have learned will be part of how I experience life until I die. Words. Words. I play with words, hoping that some combination, even a chance combination will say what I want. Perhaps better with music? But music attacks my inner ear like an antagonist, it's not my world. The fact is, the real experience can't be described. I think, bitterly that a row of asterisk, like an old-fashioned novel, might be better. Or a symbol of some kind, a circle perhaps, or a square.[54] Anything at all, but not words. The people who have been there, in the place in themselves where words, patterns, order, dissolve, will know what I mean and the others won't. But once having been there, there's a terrible irony, a terrible shrug of the shoulders, and it's not a question of fighting it, or disowning it, or of right or wrong, but simply knowing it is there, always. It's a question of bowing to it, so to speak, with a kind of courtesy, as to an ancient enemy: All right, I know you are there, but we have to preserve the form, don't we? And perhaps the condition of your existing at all is precisely that we preserve the form, create the patterns—have you thought of that?
>
> So all I can say is that before going to sleep I "understood" why I had to sleep, and what the projectionist would say, and what I would have to learn. Though I knew it already; so that the dreaming itself already had the quality of words spoken after the event, or a summing-up, for emphasis' sake, of something learned. (604)

The passage is identified as a dream sequence, though it ought not to be taken as a stream of consciousness; its syntax is intact and its voice consistent. In itself, the passage is gnomic in its abstraction. "Knowing," "form," "patterns," "the people" and "the place" are vague notions, further obscured with unidentified pronouns and demonstratives *it*-s and *there*-s that seem to refer to different things. "There" is at once "the place in themselves where words, patterns, order, dissolve" and generically serves the expletive construction, e.g. "there's a terrible irony." "It," too, has that dual grammatical status, the figure who is "there, always" to be bowed to like an ancient enemy and at service of the expletive construction, e.g. "it's not a question of." The equivocation between an abstraction of the most generic kind (expletive construction) and of the most inwardly-specific kind, albeit unidentified (*the* place there and *the* it who is there, always) is most dramatized in an anadiplosis of pure signifiers, the near-deictic repetition of the phrase, "having been there, there's a terrible irony." One would not say of this passage, "There is no there there."

Denotatively dependent on context, a deictic word like "there" would generally function as a technique of modulation, to sort out *this* apple from *that* one – assuming, of course, each referent apple is identified and agreed upon. The irreducible generality of words like "this" or "here," then, inevitably bares the linguistic dysfunction at the heart of deixis, Fredric Jameson asserts, that go on to serve as "a philosophical space" in which "we find rehearsed the most fundamental doubts as to the capacity of language itself to resolve the fundamental philosophical opposition between the universal and the particular, the general and the specific."[55] In Jameson's account, deixis, or such failure of language to coordinate the universal and the particular, is the starting point for philosophical systems like Hegel's dialectics or Lévi-Strauss's structuralism. To state the obvious, failure is the mother of thought. Words gather the fundamental universality of language and the fundamental particularity of sensuous content (individual, subjective experience), so that with each word, as Jameson puts it, the universal is what we utter, the sensuous is what we mean. Faced with this gulf, we can either opt for a more felicitous, contractual understanding, e.g. Wittgenstein's language games as I explored in chapter 2, or revel in the happy fall as Jameson's Hegel does, prompted by the failure of language to redirect philosophical thought toward a new form of the universal. A whole history of dialectical thinking, we might infer with a bit of license, summarily comes crashing down on the terrible irony formed somewhere en route from "having been there" to "there is." Of course, for Hegel dexis is a conceptual form of immediacy (the authority of which is repeatable), providing empirical knowledge with a sense certainty; no such certitude or abridgement to immediacy exists in Anna's deixis – only perhaps the sheer fact of the repeatability of words.

The passage, then, distills a synthetic, transformative process of language through a repetition of plain, grammatically multifunctional words, "it" or "there" in terms of place and convention, "have" in terms of time and obligation. The monomaniacal narration pivots around the simultaneous temporality of the present perfect tense, the completed actions that are close enough to be visible yet from the vantage point of the immediate present: "I have had these moments"; "these moments have been so powerful"; "what I have learned will be." The present perfect describes the conditions that circumscribe Anna and lends an air of completion to her subsequent realizations. Once the perfect tense establishes the empiricism of knowledge that comes from "having been there," "have" becomes a collective imperative – "we *have to* preserve the form" – and makes a direct demand upon the other: "*have you* thought of that?" In other words, the perfect tense "have" changes into the obligation "have to," and once the question demands a calibration of the two – "have you thought of that?" – Anna is able to anticipate the

epistemological action to be perfected in the future: what she "*would have to* learn." The fact of knowing is irrelevant (she "knew it already") to the future conditional, the possibility that learning could take place again.

Microcosmically, repetition is the means by which we see changes in a word's function throughout the passage; macrocosmically, repetition names a kind of empirical knowledge of how the text preserves certain forms and continually creates patterns. The passage is built on a contrapposto of abstraction between universal references (e.g. the grammar of expletive) and references *in situ* wherein words, phrases, syntactical structures and figurations are recycled from the rest of the book in slightly altered ways, as if the thin language passage is a formal parody of the notebooks. The following is a list of phrases from the thin language passage that resonate particularly strongly with phrases found throughout the notebooks' prose.

- *Knowing was an illumination*: "The feeling of banality, the disgust of banality, mingled with my fear; and then suddenly I moved forward into a new knowledge, a new understanding […] I felt this, like a vision, in a new kind of knowing" (562)
- *During the last weeks of craziness and timelessness I've had these moments of "knowing" one after another*: "Then there was a moment of knowledge. I understood I'd gone (*18) right inside his craziness" (561); "about my refusal to write again, put into sharp focus, where I must look at it, day after day" (334).
- *Yet there is no way of putting these sorts of knowledge into words*: "Ella holds on fast to this knowledge, and thinks: every time in life go through a dry time, a period of deadness, I always do this: hold on to a set of words, the phrases of a kind of knowledge, even while they are dead and meaningless, but knowing that life will come back and make them live too"(436); "I *knew*, but of course the word, written, cannot convey the quality of this knowing, that whatever already is has its logic and its force" (562).
- *Perhaps better with music? But music attacks my inner ear like an antagonist*: "She tried various passages of music, some jazz, some bits of Bach, some Stravinsky, thinking that perhaps music might say what words could not; but this was one of the times, increasingly frequent, when music seemed to irritate her, seemed to attack the membranes of her inner ear, which repulsed sounds as if they were enemies" (622).
- *I think, bitterly, that a row of asterisks, like an old-fashioned novel, might be better. Or a symbol of some kind, a circle perhaps, or a square*: "Their life together becomes full of phrases, and symbols" (199).
- *in the place in themselves where words, patterns, order dissolve:* "The trouble with this story is that it is written in terms of analysis of the laws of dissolution of the relationship between Paul and Ella. I don't see any other way to write it. As soon as one has lived through something, it falls into a pattern" (216).
- *But once having been there, there's a terrible irony, a terrible shrug of the shoulders:* "They are brothers in that smile. The smile holds a terrible truth that I want to evade. […] And in this man's smile at the six innocent soldiers there is a terrible understanding irony. This is the nightmare" (330)

- *It's a question of bowing to it, so to speak, with a kind of courtesy, as to an ancient enemy*: "And the 'Anna' of that time is like an enemy, or like an old friend one has known too well and doesn't want to see" (145).
- *All right, I know you are there, but*: "The Rosenbergs electrocuted […] I feel responsible for what happens in the West, but not at all for what happens over there. And yet I am in the Party. I said something to Molly, and she replied, very brisk and efficient (she's in the middle of a hard organising job), 'All right, I know, but I am busy.'" (152); " 'All right, everything has two faces, etc., but for all that, whenever anything happens anywhere that is terrible, I dream about it, as if I were involved in it personally'" (240); "The first words he said—and they were all there to hear them—were: 'You're there, aren't you? Well, I can't see you.'" (356); "The dream that kept recurring was myself with the old dwarfed malicious man. In my dream I even nodded a sort of recognition—so there you are, I knew you'd turn up some time" (537).
- *but we have to preserve the forms, don't we? And perhaps the condition of your existing at all is precisely that we preserve the forms*: " 'No, but let's preserve the forms, the *forms* at least of…' He was gone, with a wave of his hand" (633).
- *create the patterns—have you thought of that?:* "Two young men are in the Red Square, and their tractor has broken down […] The burly man points with the stem of his pipe at some part of the machinery: 'Have you thought of *that*?' The young men try—the tractor roars into life. They turn to thank the stranger who is standing and watching them with a fatherly twinkle in his eyes. They realize it is Stalin" (291-2).

Almost like slant-rhymes internalized at the level of prose syntax, these repetitions are imperfect but recognizable. The plain, dry vernacular that is typical of Lessing's writing loops around certain structures and phrases into a critical combination of words, perhaps "even a chance combination." Diegetically in the context of the golden notebook, the abstract nouns of the thin language passage have no referent from which to deduce the overall meaning of the passage. We are given fragments of some cognitive processing or a response to something – as conveyed by the declarative tone at beginning of the first paragraph, but of what? Who is "you," what is "it" and where is "there"? What is this "understanding" that both must be learned through dreaming and is known already? To say that the passage alludes to the state of madness as an interpretation of "there" or that Anna is addressing herself as an interpretation of "you" as critics have done,[56] in fact to identify the nouns in any way amounts to no more than a conjecture, puttying a hole, that nonetheless still does not address the particular significance of the repetitive, impenetrably abstract diction. In so far as style is tantamount to function, the thin language is functionally non-referential, or obliquely so. To give it a content is to miss the point.

Rather than a diegetic sequence of events, the narrative established in the passage is a sequence of textual events woven into a network of linguistic and syntactical allusions to sentences throughout the rest of the book. Formal referentiality encompasses the totality of the book in lieu of local, narrative referents. What Anna has learned in order to write this passage is not merely the specific points that were made in the previous passages – the banality of Stalinist myth-making, for example – but their pattern of expression. The thin language passage turns on a negative and transitive logic in order to abstract through a pastiche of textual self-imitation, "of a bit of rescue-work, so to speak, rescuing the formless into form" (450). The phrasal and syntactical resonance throughout the thin language passage is not the repetition of sameness but

the repetition of isolation and pattern-recognition: "Another bit of chaos rescued and 'named.'" In being "rescued into form" from the chaos of particular narrative contexts into the abstract, general form of the thin language, words in the passage cease to belong to the referent – even as they still allude to some structure of referentiality. It is impossible to conceive of totality as the sum of all parts, but totality may nevertheless be intelligible in the pattern that emerges.

It is worth considering, then, the inexplicable faith that Ella (Ann's alter-ego character in the manuscript in the yellow notebooks) has in sentences – why she would "hold onto a set of words, the phrases of a kind of knowledge, even while they are dead and meaningless" – in light of the future conditional whittled out of the repetitive structure of the sentences. Though sentences are useless in terms of their referential content, their syntactical apparatus preserves and anticipates some cognitive function. If Jameson were to read *The Golden Notebook,* would he also recover utopian elements in the capacity of syntax to collapse the particular and the general onto another? Jameson's reflections on dexis that I adopted earlier in fact pertain to a broader analysis of the sentences in Claude Simon's *nouveau roman Conducting Bodies* which, in Jameson's account, resolves a particularly postmodern predicament of referentiality. Turning to the *nouveau roman*, which is contemporary to *The Golden Notebook*, from a vantage point at which such experimental high literature is already extinct (the eighties), Jameson is keenly sensitive to the surfeit of forms in late capitalism: vestigial, outdated but also simply *there* (and there, and there, ad infinitum). His discussion thus centers on Simon's pastiche – like parody, another mongrel-child of mimesis that projects an absence of value and intention[57] – of the two distinct narrative matrices that are available, the belated modernism of perception and the postmodern evacuation of just such perceptual, phenomenological experience into a practice of textualization. Jameson believes both are present and imitated, so that what's dialectical about Simon's sentences is the irresolvable function of words to attribute specificity to objects, except that the abstract and generic words now point to the universal rather than the particular. The *nouveau roman*'s handling of the failure of language results in a "Taylorization" of the text tending toward "recursivity" and "differentiation into sub-systems," a provisional space in which we repeatedly experience a breakdown between the habitual onset of linguistic expectation and the inevitable degradation of the signified into its material signifier. In a striking echo of Lessing's objectless parody or a "terrible irony" or "the painful irony that is the mark of our kind now" (460), Jameson identifies "a new kind of blank irony" in Simon, irony as a mere "juxtaposition" from which the "older ironic conclusions are, for whatever reason, no longer drawn." It is an irony that refuses to yield meaning, effect or even a sense of distance. Ideological dispute is drawn inside the text as part of the flat surface on which all else are displayed, so that:

> Perhaps, indeed, this is how ideology ends, on some postmodern replay of the fifties end-of-ideology theses—not by evaporating in the general wallowing around in free elections and consumers' goods but rather by being inscribed on the Mobius strip of the media in such a way that what used to be virulent, subversive, or at least offensive ideas have now been transformed into so many material signifiers at which you gaze for a moment and then pass on.[58]

In rehashing Jameson's argument, I am less interested in drawing an analogy between Simon and Lessing. Rather, I am interested in Jameson's lingering utopianism of form despite what seems like, for all intents and purposes, an observation of textual nihilism: stereotypes pre-consumed, efforts to express sense-data on the sentence detectable only as residues of failure, the

presence of the referent felt outside a closed door. Is it right to put an optimistic spin on Kafka's hope that isn't for us? For Simon is ultimately Jameson's means of talking about the possibilities of reading procedures opened up by what he calls the "image culture of the postmodern,"[59] the utterly weightless and sterile visibility of signs outlined above. Jameson's diagnosis of the aesthetic ideology of the postmodern textualization, explicated upon Niklas Luhman's procedure of "the reading of reading," brings us to the strange insight that if automation accompanies de-skilling, so too democratization – or "plebeianization," as Jameson also calls it. Over and above the Adornian/high-modernist repudiation of nominalism, Jameson argues that there is now another distinction to be made between the "symptomacity" of modernist high aesthetics and the "residual elite culture in our own postmodern age, in which, owing in part to the democratization of culture generally, these two modes (high and low) have begun to fold back into one another." Unlike a body without organs (a Deleuzian metaphor), the body with organs, still yet a disemboweled one as Simon's or Lessing's texts might figure in his model, serves as the space to register pain as such. The rudimentary labor of reading, even such a specialized and technical artifact as *The Conducting Bodies*, interpellates us, Jameson hopes, into sentences with their ghostly referent. Sentences neither model the reality of modern experience nor necessarily register the modes in which the sense-data comes, but merely tell of "contradiction as such, which constitute the deepest form of social reality in our prehistory and must stand in for the 'referent' for a long time to come."[60]

Lessing's future conditional, read along the lines of this eighties Jameson, meets the realist pressures of contemporaneity (to be of its own time) by just this standing in, by pointing to the contradiction as such: "perhaps the condition of your existing at all is precisely that we preserve the form, create the patterns," Anna conjectures. The postmodern feeling that we're tired of the subject and "want to live on the surface for a while," as Jameson presciently notices for example, is itself fundamental in the development of modern and postmodern narrative. There is no need to read contradiction as a new aesthetic, indeed to postulate a new aesthetic in the first place. The inscription of the symptom is merely registered after the fact "as the result of a failure or a deflection of a real project with content," Jameson states, eerily echoing Anna's sense that "dreaming itself already had the quality of words spoken after the event, or a summing-up, for emphasis' sake, of something learned."

Such sentences "as a stand-in for the real itself," according to Jameson, could yet again offer a figure for non-alienated labor and a utopian experience of an alternate society, especially given that the traditional argument from German idealism about art's cultivation of non-alienated labor no longer sticks (the production of both high and mass art is specialized and inaccessible for many whose aesthetic experience is "sheer reception" for the most part, "and in any case [the whole elaborate machinery of contemporary culture] inspire very little optimism about the potential control or mastery over processes, oneself, and nature and collective destiny, which nonalienated labor necessarily includes and projects"[61]). Simon's non-masterable (because there is nothing to master), non-allusive, opaque sentences offer resistance to matters of the culture industry, opening up a readerly experience of production without an official abstract name. Presumably less susceptible to production or at least deferring it indefinitely, reading replaces every other action in the new, plebeianized utopian map of praxis. It is truly tempting to think of the thinness of Lessing' prose as an earlier version of the willful plebeianization of language and, especially given Lessing's stress on the readerly function of the character Anna, to confer onto the book's duration the spatial fulfillment of this alternate praxis.

Despite it all, however, Jameson ends on a cautionary note about the very response enabled through literary criticism: "it must remain an open question whether, in literature, the thematization of such a process—its transformation into a symbol and a meaning, a representation—does not, by way of some mysterious Heisenberg principle of literary language as such, end up transforming it to something else."[62] Never mind art, but if you can get yourself to read it, whatever it is, you may find yourself dodging the machinery of culture – provided you don't yourself produce your own brouhaha about it. Notoriously hostile to the academic culture industry, as it represents a hereditary authority of sorts (and as an autodidact who dropped out of school at fourteen), Lessing herself puts it more bluntly to the aspiring theses-writers of her own works: "Dear Student. You are mad. Why spend months and years writing thousands of words about one book, or even one writer, when there are hundreds of books waiting to be *read*"[63] (emphasis mine).

As it turns out, Anna finds suspect exactly the kind of dialectical tension Simon's sentences maintain by a pastiche of modernist perception and postmodern textualization: "If I've gone back to pastiche, then it's time to stop," she notes (517). Imitation is dishonest; parody is impossible; pastiche must be curtailed. When Anna confronts a facetious young writer who performs "naivety as a protection" as an antidote to having to be, in his dismissive description, "the honest young artist with built-in integrity," he quips back, "Well, Anna, and how do you describe all this pastiching about? What's the difference between you and me?" (418). No longer isolated to an aesthetic device, "pastiching" happens to be just one piece of the entire ontological topography in which one's existence works according to the laws of literary stylization, e.g. the juxtaposition in which Anna finds Quemoy next to Reggie. The transformation of a formal process into symbol, meaning and representation red-flagged by Jameson – much like Anna's uneasy feelings about laws, patterns and rescuing the formless into form – specifically and ultimately restitutes the problem of individual existence, of self-construction in which "the cruelty and the spite and the I, I, I, I of Saul and of Anna were the logic of war" (562), observes Anna lying on the floor next to the newspapers strewn around the room: the scene of "illumination" rendered as an non-perspectival collage. Is it enough, in the end, to assuage oneself with a sense of "something learned" when the something can never amount to anything – especially when the unsettled feeling of "dishonesty" or "failure as usual" doggedly compels further acts of reading?

4.7 The Boulder-Pushers and the Problem of Individuals

I noted in Part I that the meta-narrative elements like the editorial brackets are already written into *The Golden Notebook*, that the structural quagmire represented by narrative voicing/broadcasting also comprises Anna's reflections on the parodic nature of experience. Narration and narrative conflate with the result that what's being told is a threadbare texture of telling, a constant shift in the point of reference. Jameson suggests two ways to reach the site of reference, either by pointing to things, i.e. deixis (as the previous section demonstrates, thin language gains much traction from the ambiguity built into deixis), or by naming things. Naming may be considered the primary and possibly the purest function of language since the proper noun aspires to match a unique word to a unique object. Only, how many 'Anna's and 'Ella's abound in the world? Indeed, structuralist findings – the apex of postmodern tendencies in Jameson's account – have exposed even the proper name as a misnomer. Individual proper names are also components of larger linguistic systems that vary according to their generic objects

(dogs, horses, people), Jameson explains through Lévi-Strauss, "so that even this seemingly more concrete linguistic possibility—in which words reach a level of specificity denied to them as mere general nouns—vanishes in advance like a mirage."[64] Perhaps revealing then is Lessing's penchant throughout her career for employing common, pragmatic English names often without a surname: Molly Martha, Mary, Marion, Julie, Ella, Anna are properly named characters who are versions of each other and versions of each other at her most anonymous self, that "twentieth-century Anon at work."[65] As part of the linguistic accoutrement, characters, Lessing underscores, have a paradoxical demand put upon them to be both a nameable, particularized thing and a representative function of a collective.

"We are both boulder-pushers," states Paul to Ella (characters in *The Shadow of the Third* in the yellow notebook), who observes that this is Paul's phrase for what he sees as his own failure. His social commitment, which ties him to the practical and to the everyday, overtakes his idealism, any ambition for upward mobility or a distinguishing achievement. Being a boulder-pusher is a left hamartia, both his "defect" and his best quality in which "his abiding, tireless compassion for the poor, the ignorant, the sick" makes him choose the weak "when he should have chosen the library or the laboratory" (199). As a boulder-pusher, he condemns both himself and Ella:

> You and I, Ella, we are the failures. We spend our lives fighting to get people very slightly more stupid than ourselves to accept truths that the great men have always known. […] They have known it. We know it. But do the great enlightened mass of the British people know it? No, it is our task, Ella, yours and mine, to tell them. Because the great men are too great to be bothered. They are already discovering how to colonise Venus and to irrigate the moon. That is what is important for our time. You and I are the boulder-pushers. All our lives, you and I, we'll put all our energies, all our talents, into pushing a great boulder up a mountain. The boulder is the truth that the great men know by instinct, and the mountain is the stupidity of mankind. We push the boulder (199-200).

In another context, Saul Green, Anna's American lover, declares, "I'm going to be a boulder-pusher." When Anna asks what it is, he describes:

> There's a great black mountain. It's human stupidity. There are a group of people who push a boulder up the mountain. When they've got a few feet up, there's a war, or the wrong sort of revolution, and the boulder rolls down—not to the bottom, it always manages to end a few inches higher than when it started. So the group of people put their shoulders to the boulder and start pushing again. Meanwhile at the top of the mountain stand a few good men. Sometimes they look down and nod and say: Good, the boulder-pushers are still on duty. But meanwhile we are meditating about the nature of space, or what it will be like when the world is full of people who don't hate and fear and murder (599).

Like Paul, Saul regrets the pair's fate: "Bad luck for both of us, we are both boulder-pushers." There are the vanguards who "know," and then there are those, knowing well the different possibilities that are out there for them, who task themselves "to tell," keeping pace with the rest and dooming themselves to a life of patient frustration and suicidal unhappiness – inculcating "death in the form of energy," a "furious angry compassion," as Ella describes it. Diegetically understood, "boulder-pushing" describes the characters' ideological conflict, a "Communist

Party problem that intellectuals suffer from" between the labor of thinking utopia ("what it will be like when the world is full of people who don't hate and fear and murder") and the praxis of social commitment, an incommensurate pair of demands that inevitably dissolve into a set of banal activities then eventually into a nigglingly pathetic thanatos:

> How do I spend my time? Telling Dr Shackerly, a frightened little man from Birmingham who bullies his wife because he doesn't know how to love a woman, that he must open the doors of his hospital […] And treating illness that is caused by a society so stupid that…And you, Ella. You tell the wives of workmen […] And you tell poor women who are slaves of everyone's stupidity to go out and join a social club or to take up a healthful hobby of some kind, to take their minds off the fact they are unloved. And if the healthful hobby doesn't work, and why should it, they end up in my out-patients…I wish I had died, Ella. I wish I had died (200).

Paul's rant is depressingly familiar, even romantic in its fervor. The allusion to the boulder-pusher is blunt enough, accompanied as it were by Ella's absurd hope in witnessing and admiring the figure who accepts the ceaseless labor in full consciousness, the figure whose fidelity to choosing human action over that of a higher destiny in Albert Camus's words, "silences all the idols" as a "myriad wondering little voices of the earth rise up."[66]

So why does Lessing never "name" this figure? Lessing has certainly read Camus, whose *Myth of Sisyphus* essays were published in 1942. Even if Paul and Saul cannot yet bask in the triumphant happiness of a humanized fate-in-ceaseless-boulder-pushing, don't they deserve to be interpellated into the philosophy of the absurd, existential man by their observers (as Kierkegaard does with the supposed ineffability of the un-witness-able knight of faith)? The men's world-weariness aside, the obvious reference to Sisyphus is never actually articulated anywhere in the book. Ella alludes more directly to Sisyphus and his subsequent philosophical, narrative treatments when she complains, "I feel as if I had been born with a weight of fatigue on me, and I've been carrying it all my life. The only time I wasn't rolling a heavy weight up hill was when I was with Paul" (303). If the boulder-pusher is an allusion to the mythic figure, it is one that is never acknowledged as such. Explicitly obvious and explicitly unarticulated, this figure is somewhere in the vicinity, only to be prohibited from functioning metaphorically. Lessing, it seems, adopts an entire philosophical system without its referent, or more specifically, through the omission of the referent. The analogous relationship between the figural content and its active form is not Sisyphus to boulder-pushing but the emptiness of the referent – a sign so familiar and clichéd to the point of becoming a meme – and its expressed absence.

" 'Do you know how you smile when I "name" something? It's as if you'd just saved someone from drowning,' " Anna acerbically points out the professional self-satisfaction of analysis in her physician-confidante Mrs. Marks (450). To "name" is to indulge in "the pleasure of recognition," to "rescue the formless into form," according to Anna. If to name is to recognize patterns through a process of abstraction, it is also, she suspects, a means of managing chaos. Observing the "self-aware, self-parodying humor" of the English at a bohemian gathering, Anna notes: "They were, I understood, above all self-conscious people, aware of themselves all the time; and it was from the awareness, a self-disguised awareness, that the humour came. The humour was not at all the verbal play, harmless and intellectualized, that the English use; but a sort of disinfection, a making-harmless, a 'naming' to save themselves from pain" (468). Naming here refers to a process of self-exposure in which the fact of being aware of what one is, assuages

the veritable fact of what one is. Identification cuts two ways, a sophisticated form of disavowal through a seemingly detached stance of avowal.

But it is not merely a scorn toward the safety-valve effect of "naming" that drives Lessing's refusal to identify the referent Sisyphus as the primordial boulder-pusher. For one thing, it is highly unlikely that a reader would not supply that name even if the novel won't speak it. Lessing resists allegorizing or naming a master-code, yet entertains, it seems, some active function that naming has to a referent. "Naming," Anna's lexicon for the various forms of determination, gets at two ideological productions of narrative being worked out through the notebooks: naming as putting on a false emphasis (as we saw in the two entries dated 15th September 1954) and as a creative, constructive principle. Watching Janet, Anna goes back to a state of mind from her childhood when she would play "the game":

> First I created the room I sat in, object by object, "naming" everything, bed, chair, curtains, till it was whole in my mind, then move out of the room, creating the house, then out of the house, slowly creating the street, then rise into the air […] slowly, slowly, I would create the world, continent by continent, ocean by ocean (but the point of "the game" was to create this vastness while holding the bedroom, the house, the street in their littleness in my mind at the same time) […] Sometimes I could reach what I wanted, a simultaneous knowledge of vastness and of smallness. Or I would concentrate on a single creature, a small coloured fish in a pool, or a single flower, or a moth, and try to create, to "name" the being of the flower, the moth, the fish, slowly creating around it the forest, or the sea-pool or the space of blowing night air that tilted my wings. And then, out, suddenly, from the smallness into space (523-4).

Where deixis attempts an immediate, simultaneous coordination of the universal and the particular, naming dilates their coordination indefinitely. Names, as a mode of specification and individualization (*the* flower, *the* moth, *the* fish), slowly and gradually mediate the dialectical gap between smallness and vastness by expanding upon the world of each small object.[67] The golden notebook, more specifically named in contradistinction to others collectively termed [The Notebooks], is not necessarily privileged above others in the content it has to offer. The same themes crop up: disintegration of the self, anxiety, shape of death, the crowding of others in the self, the violence of the bomb, sexual affinity and repellence between two figures. But this last notebook, and the penultimate section of the book before it ends on a conventional framing narrative of the free women, stands in for the totality of division, repetition and sameness that is the notebooks that have preceded it, the smallness of the lower-case golden notebook naming the book *The Golden Notebook* into space. Lessing's commitment to be in the vastness of the global world and history can only be expressed through naming, presupposed in the act of writing as part of a deliberate and constant reexamination procedure. 1952 isn't ever going to be experienced again, but it can be constructed and reconstructed in writing. The act of reading is mimetically experienced rather than brought into the reader's action.

To not name, then, disburdens Lessing of the task of having to hold the small and the vast, a slackening of the dialectical tension that already feels overwhelming in the postwar world about to nose-dive into late capitalism. If the Sisyphus figure is not useful for Lessing in its name value as a cache of existential significations, she nevertheless draws our attention to the dynamic that the figure entails: the action of boulder-pushing. The boulder-pusher embodies the style of writerly inaction, his/her mode of action – infinite repetition of her task – identifying a new

narrative function served by Paul-like, Saul-like, Anna-like individuals, their existence legible, if at all, solely in terms of the mountainous structure upon which they act.

For all that, the pure functionality of thin language, from the point view of the individual actor, is as horrifying as it is liberating. A liberating alienation from the identity of meaning, the structure of parataxis denotes a coming together of sentences that do not necessitate a causal relationship, like the boulder pushers' actions that never add up. The negative logic of the thin language passage formalizes Anna's psychoanalytic definition of "individuation," which she formulates when she is called out for her contradiction, as a communist who "want[s] to go alone":

> The individual recognises one part after another of his earlier life as an aspect of the general human experience. When he can say: What I did then, what I felt then, is only the reflection of that great archetypal dream, or epic story, or stage in history, then he is free, because he has separated himself from the experience, or fitted it like a piece of mosaic into a very old pattern, and by the act of setting it into place, is *free* of the individual pain of it (451, emphasis mine).

"Free" conveys a deep ambivalence. Anna's sense of "Individuation," the process of rendering into an individual entity, runs counter to its oft-related theoretical double "subjectivity," as both the consciousness of a thinking agent and a more developed expression for the personal/inner being. In order to reach a Jungian integrative state of sorts that Anna refers to ("that great archetypal dream," the "epic story"), individuation requires one to leave the accoutrements of identity ("the individual pain" and experience) until one is reduced to a bare kernel of the pattern of existence. Individuation conveniently spools together two different ontological valences that don't quite merge, taking one's place in an archetypal state and taking one's place in an empty linguistic pattern-making machine – also like holding together the small and the vast, simultaneously imagining one's room and the cosmos.

It is worth attending to Lessing's choice not to use the language of the subject, replacing the classically modernist, Kierkegaardian diction with its more modern, mechanistic incarnation "individual." Though critical of Satre's works,[68] Lessing, perhaps inadvertently, picks up on Sartre's articulation of "individuation" and his reasoning behind the adaptation of Kierkegaard's truth-in-subjectivity (*Concluding Unscientific Postscript*) to the "Singular Universal" individual (within material history that he terms "individualized universals").[69] Broadly speaking, all three thinkers are profoundly invested in the alchemy of contingency into something valuable.[70] Sartre, of course, names the utopian payoff of individuation. Putting the "organic individual" (a possible agent of change) in a dialectical relationship to the "common individual" (a generic member of a group), Sartre speaks of his "pledge" to "lose himself" to the latter so that he may find himself again in a relationship of "concrete praxis" to others. This process of losing and finding oneself is a strictly functional procedure for Sartre: "by 'organic individual', here, I do not mean some given individuality which distinguishes everyone from everyone else (individualities, as we have seen, are historical individualizations of material conditions; and in any case they do not concern us here); I mean free constituent *praxis* in so far as it is finally only signified by function."[71] Thus, to say that the common individual is a function, though mostly undetermined, is to say that our limitations – the potentially "enriching limitations" of historical conditions and social roles to which every common individual is born – can become the practical source of finding ourselves as organic individuals differentiated in a "history of [our] technical choices

as free dialectical agents." Technical choice entails the recognition of the form everyone participates in. If so, an empty ensemble "series," conditioned by a mutual impotence that everyone shares with each other,[72] can be activated into an ensemble defined by reciprocity, "group," when the alienating reality of the Other becomes a unifying ground for common action:

> What is required, meanwhile, is to transcend the pure inertia of common-being by some action (if action is still possible) […] thus, in function, the practical individual (as a constituent dialectic) reasserts himself by transcending common inertia in a *praxis* which preserves it by using it (which, as I have said, amount to transcending the inertia of the instrument.). The individual as organic *praxis* is *below* the common individual in so far as he is his practical individualisation.[73]

There is a rather thin difference between action and function, the latter designating a modality to the former. Painstakingly taking care to avoid attribute-giving language, Sartre basically suggests that various forms of mediations (inert, "perimated signs") are required to pass between function and action, though such passing through amounts to a mere survival of the mediatory system (preserving praxis by using it) as well as the individual, albeit her survival accented with a modality-giving intention. This account is both impossible to accept (nothing changes, since action is not about manifesting something) and absurdly simple (all it takes is a recognition, however deep). It is not difference but the imperative function that determines present capacity for praxis. In a most dignified understanding of our generic function as laborers in relation to others in the social sphere, Sartre insists that limitations have the potential to be constitutive because, in alienating our thoughts from ourselves, the inert legacy of mediatory forms (conventions, internalized ideas etc.) keeps countering the foreclosure of argument.[74] That we sustain ourselves by thinking through alienation (and think through alienation just to be able to exist), it seems, is the maximal payoff of enduring duration.

In modern works, style is tantamount to function, according to Auerbach. In modernity, an individual is tantamount to function, according to Sartre. Having been named, the "enriching limitation" simply looks more brightly colored than the empty formalism of pure abstraction in Lessing's pattern language. But the suggestion made by thin language is just as filled with dearth as Sartre's seriality, perhaps more terrifying than what the then-Marxist Lessing may have intended. Thin language is a version of seriality, and Lessing offers us an even blunter, cheaper way to realize this solution (and this economy of an un-dearness will prove to be quite appropriate). According to Anna's archetypal dream, the totality of the pattern is achieved through the process of individuation – to free oneself from one's private experience – in the following way: stripped of the subjective styles, the Auerbachian truth that remains is not ontological in nature but the sheer space of function. What shapes this book, the formal problem that won't go away and to which it keeps coming back, is the absence or perhaps the insufficiency of a narrative category: the search for the mediating space, which may or may not entertain characters. Formation is no longer about character development as such, nor even about cultivating an alternate position for further embodiment for seeing, hearing, etc., to happen (as was the case still with Lawrence and Joyce); rather, narration strains to construct itself, to perform its function of forming a mediatory system. In the space of the novel, that system is nothing but the collection of persons, the totality visible in the pattern created by those that were, are or could be. The formal necessity of *The Golden Notebook* is the absence of necessity. In lieu of a rhetorical means of conceiving this problem, Lessing alludes to the near-physical way in

which necessity and its absence are experienced by the subject, the repetition of narrative indeterminacy registered by her nerves:

> I made tea, and then I remembered a story that was sent to me last week. By a comrade living somewhere near Leeds. When I first read it, I thought it was an exercise in irony. Then a very skillful parody of a certain attitude. Then I realised it was serious—it was at the moment I searched my memories and rooted out certain fantasies of my own. But what seemed to me important was that it could be read as a parody, irony, or seriously. It seems to me this fact is another expression of the fragmentation of everything, the painful distintegration of something that is linked with what I feel to be true about language, *the thinning of language against the density of our experience* (288, emphasis mine).

If the joke is on the reader who thinks *A Modest Proposal* is literal, it is equally on the reader who thinks it is figurative. The fact that something could be read as a parody, irony or seriously goes beyond the intentions of the comrade author or the success of the text to pull of its tone; in all likelihood, its effects are probably quite obvious. The indeterminacy of reading itself is the definitive condition of Anna finds herself in, a fragmentation of everything – whether social, political or linguistic. There is no difference between the reader and writer, both contributing to the accumulation of "our experience." Neither intention nor reception has relevance to the basic fact of the thinning of language that forms collective consciousness. Collective praxis lies somewhere between thinning language and indeterminate reading.

"Literature is analysis after the event" (216), declares Anna in the yellow notebook. What are the means of this analysis, and how universal is the category, "literature"? Analyzing her own manuscripts, Anna aims to figure out "the law of dissolution," "the pattern," "an order," an "original intention" of style. Her inquiries are directed at unpacking the language that organizes the ties between people and communities, what might be considered an "adverbial problem" of how one thing, person or an event relates to another.[75] The notebooks thus explore through different characters and events the very problem of thinking through relationality. The formal structure Anna seeks – a law, a pattern, an order – cannot be deduced from a few examples (of sexual parity, violence, ideology, the inadequacy of writing) but encompass the inextricable connection between them all, an abstraction of all things in their particularity. A law is neither a thing nor a condition of being beholden to any one thing but an expression of a principle that applies to all, a classical problem of cases and rules, of the paradoxical reconciliation between the singular and the universal. When this problem comes back with the force of an acute historical imperative in 1962, Lessing engineers a text that contains the analysis of the literature it seeks – while missing the actual literature – a pattern of relationships enacted through events and then reviewed from several different pairs of eyes that are nonetheless mere versions of each other. Character – including Anna, who is merely a more frequently iterated sequence of narrated events in the repeating series that make up the book – is only the means (and the only means in the novel genre) to think through the problem of relationality. For Lessing, a character is therefore not so much a representation of individual persons as it is a device that sets up nodal points to draw out a pattern, a law, an order.

Lessing's characters are thus caricatures, generally named and indistinguishable, identifiable only in their social roles within this community:

> Writer's group meeting last night. Five of us—to discuss Stalin on Linguistics. Rex, literary critic, proposes to take this pamphlet sentence by sentence. George 'proletarian writer' from the 'thirties, pipe-smoking and bluff, says: 'Good, God, have we got to? Never was a chap for theory.' Clive, communist pamphleteer and journalist, says: 'Yes, we must discuss it seriously.' Dick, the socialist-realist novelist, says: 'We ought to get hold of the main points, at least' (286).

Lessing flattens out the characters as types, the proletarian writer, the socialist-realist novelist etc., in order to flesh out the different ideological positions at work in this moment of collective reading. They are "characters" in the strong sense, possessors of abstract qualities to serve a generic function, particulars as necessitated by the plot. Their specificity lies in the actions they take within the novel and Anna's reading of them, not as objects of verisimilitude or in descriptive details about individual idiosyncrasies. Lessing employs the most recognizable tropes of characterization to describe the relationship between the ideological position articulated through a character and the type of reading that she is capable of. George, Dick and Rex are representatives rather than representations.[76]

The loss of substantive, authentic content of character parallels the loss of the referential content of words, and Anna's observations about the writer's group turns into an observation about the language they use:

> I am in a mood that gets more and more familiar: words lose their meaning suddenly. I find myself listening to a sentence, a phrase, a group of words, as if they are in a foreign language—the gap between what they are supposed to mean, and what in fact they say seem unbridgeable. I have been thinking of the novels about the break-down of language, like *Finnegans Wake*. And the preoccupation with semantics. The fact that Stalin bothers to write a pamphlet on this subject at all is just a sign of a general uneasiness about language. But what right have I to criticize anything when sentences from the most beautiful novel can seem idiotic to me? (287).

The uneasiness with Stalinist writing, Anna argues, has to do with the way its language can repress its critique, so that "many of us come to such meetings determined to express our uneasiness, out disgust, and find ourselves silenced by this extraordinary prohibition once the meeting starts." She examines how a collective comes to a tacit agreement to silence its uneasiness, the "phenomenon—that when two of us meet, our discussions are on a totally different level than when there are three people present. Two people, and it is two persons, from a critical tradition, discussing politics as people not communists would discuss them. (By people not communists I mean that they wouldn't be recognized as communists, except for the jargon, by an outsider listening in.)" Three is a magic number that transforms persons into collectives. When a pair becomes a group, persons become Communists. As soon as she moves into the realm of praxis, an individual is her function, a character. Praxis is, in other words, the space of the third person. The transformation is effectively grammatical, in so far as the first and second person becomes a collective third, but it also implies a dangerous debasement of the subjective modes of pronouns (I, you, we, people) into an undifferentiated plurality (they, communists). Thin language doubles down on Sartre's seriality, but as it turns out, Anna is troubled by precisely the phenomenon prescribed by Sartre, a systemic description of capital's organization of the social into a space of the thirds that absorbs into oblivion the first and the second, no one in particular speaking or spoken to. The agentive problem of the first and the dialogic problem of

the second have now all flattened out into a collective, impersonal existence of individuals. The collective life of the thirds ipso facto precludes the possibility of authentic agency or sociality, everything becoming everything else.

4.8. Character Unmade by Dual Functions

In narrative terms, the act of boulder-pushing translates to a mode of repetition. What differentiates the common individual from the organic individual is not some human quality unique to the individual but a conscious commitment to the sheer functional quality of the self, the choice of anonymity.[77] There is no central object which mimesis represents, and repetition is visible in so far as each character is derivative of each other, trapped in similar situations or contending with the same set of problems. Without a differentiation between the role of the character and that of the author, the one who writes cannot claim to be any more of a producer than others. In fact, it may be more correct to describe these figures, including Lessing, as editors (Ella is indeed an "editoress"), the labor of the written word to be located in the editing and compiling rather than writing. For one works, always, in a language that preexists the persons rather than originating in the person. In this moment of reality in which common praxis has yet to be actualized, Lessing hesitates to endorse or conceptually formulate the Sisyphian figure; for the absurdity of the boulder-pusher cannot be outwitted by virtue of commitment only. The promise of a philosophical heroics fails to ameliorate the individual, embodied experience of boulder-pushing, the boulder-pusher like Paul and Saul fast plummeting to nihilism. The activity is simply not sustainable. Anna, too, unconvinced by the boulder-pusher's inwardly confirmed martyrdom as Ella seems to be, sees through the suspension of disbelief required to admire the boulder-pusher: "And now I see it whole, I see another theme, of which I was not conscious when I began it," Anna notes as she rereads the manuscript of *The Shadow of the Third,* "The theme is, naivety." The predicament Anna finds herself in is that the habit of the mind that can think collectivity has to, categorically speaking, throw individual conscience out the window. As we will see in the conclusion, by the mid-80s, Lessing has dogmatically turned against the postulation of the third, owing in large part to Stalinist legacy and what she saw as the collective thinking condoned or even stoked by the Western Left. Ironically enough, we will see that this flip produces a peculiar effect in which Lessing effectively champions the collective function explored by Lukács over Sartre's diagnosis of it.

The larger social question of an individual's function can be formalized specifically as a question of a character's function.[78] Angling in on Auerbach's lesson that mimetic style has become a matter of function first and foremost, both Lessing and Lukács fundamentally prioritize the function of realism in reflecting popular historical consciousness. As explained more bluntly in *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism*:

> The dividing line [between realist works and anti-realist, modernist works] is often blurred, if only because all writing must contain a certain degree of realism. Indeed, there is a fundamental truth at stake here: realism is not one style among others, it is the basis of literature; all styles (even those seemingly most opposed to realism) originate in it or are significantly related to it. […] The inevitability of realism is most obvious, of course, where descriptive detail is concerned. We have only to think of Kafka, where the most improbably, fantastic statements appear real through force of descriptive detail. Without this realism in detail Kafka's evocation of the spectral

> nature of human existence would be no more than a sermon, not the inexorable nightmare that it is. Realistic detail is a precondition for the communication of a sense of absurdity.[79]

Realism is a principle, not an aesthetic style (again, style is tantamount to function), a precondition even in a work like Kafka's that seeks to express absurdity. Hence, "Even with the most abstruse anti-realistic writers, stylistic experiment is not the willful twisting of reality according to the subjective whim: it is a consequence of conditions prevailing in the modern world," distortion as the modus operandi of modernist realism.[80] In a Lukácian sense, experimentation, or its stylistic distance from or closeness to realism, is itself reflective of reality. Literary reality is the measure of the distance from the ground of mimetic realism, the experimental style of modernism being a newer (and for Lukács, a lesser useful) realism.

Channeling Lukacs, Lessing explicitly sets out to do this, to produce the English analogue for Tolstoy's Russia or Stendhal's France, for, she declares in her 1971 introduction, such "a very useful Victorian novel never got itself written"[81]– a bold claim that surely avails itself for much debate. What is pivotal to note besides the ambition to write *the* great English novel, however, is that Lessing the writer fundamentally believes the novel to be the vehicle not only of a broad historical scope but also one that reflects the spirit of the era. Nor is her sentiment a mere reflection of her Marxist affiliations, an admiration for its attempt to conceive a "world-mind, a world ethic" (xix). In her usual understated vocabulary, Lessing implies that a novel is potentially "useful" when it gestures at the whole, not submitting itself to the "dividing and subdividing" culture. Of course, she has thrown herself into a deadlock: if the defining spirit of her culture as she sees it is one of endlessly atomizing ideologies, which much of the *Children of the Violence* series devotes itself to contextualizing, then the very shape and nature of the whole must be one of fragmentation. The crescendo of *I*'s linguistic meltdown in *The Golden Notebook* takes the container that is supposedly most individuated and externalizes it into an abstract totality shared by everyone.

Two problems make it impossible for Lessing to satisfy the novel's historical function. First, the realist logic befitting the world she is trying to represent – of individuals in postwar, late modernity – is structurally paradoxical, demanding a totality through narrating particulars, as Jameson argues. Given the number of links and shifts in focus available with even a single set of data from any given moment, *The Golden Notebook*'s structure is dense yet sprawling, built and diffused by patterns – certainly reflexive of some reality, but indicating failure in the Lukácian scheme. In interpellating every actor into a set of relationships diegetically visible or otherwise (Anna to Molly or to Martha, etc.), no individual action can sustain a consistent set of consequence and meaning, and actions crumble all too easily into relativism. No reading remains stable, and to act means too many things to mean anything. Actions fail to define the person, and without action, a noun-object is no subject. The dialectical force of the realist, Lukácian action comes undone by "some action (if action is still possible)" taken by individuals in the Sartrean praxis (collective third persons). In a way, both of their descriptions foreground the transformative process of history, only radically different aspects of it, the Lukacsian world-historic individual standing out against the backdrop composed of all the unnoticed singular universals of Sartre. For Anna, the difficulty of coordinating between the two types, unable to tell what throws what into relief, begins with predication – asserting something, anything, about the subject – and the simplest form that enables it, *is/was*.

Action defines the nature of the relationship between two entities, the extent to which one exerts itself onto another. The verb's role of distinguishing the subject from the object becomes

most complicated with the simplest form of the strong verb *to be*, capable of defining only the gap between names/nouns and their characterization (adjectives). Even an account of a single person fails in the moment of evaluation:

> […] Willi, however, was not weak. On the contrary he was the most ruthless person I have ever known.
>
> Having written that, I am astounded. What do I mean? […] And now I remember that all those years ago, I discovered that no matter what adjective I applied to Willi, I could always use the opposite. Yes. I have looked in my old papers. I find a list, headed *Willi*:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | Ruthless | Kind |
> | Cold | Warm |
> | Sentimental | Realistic |
>
> And so on, down the page; and underneath I wrote: "From the process of writing these words about Willi I have discovered I know nothing about him. About someone one understands, one doesn't have to make lists of words (68).

Is this to acknowledge that "Willi" is singular and unknowable—and therefore an Other who cannot be made into a character? Is the narrative, in other words, describing a failure of language to be adequate to the person—or a triumph of the person who exceeds language? There is an inverse relationship between experience and language, the increase (density) of one decreasing (thinning) the other. The social logic of this linguistic phenomenon contradicts the pure logic of grammar: the determinate capability of "is" and the implicit equation it sets up: A is B. Yet A (Willi) identifies one of several possibilities B (the predicate). There is a fundamental breakdown in the requirement of logical consistency that A equal A. "To be" is not a matter of being alike or equal to something but of multiplicity and simultaneous opposition. The social function attributed to language, which thin language performs, is incompatible with the pure function of grammar, which Sartrean praxis echoes. And if the breakdown of a Lukácsian social order, in which the object Willi can no longer be observed steadily enough to be reintegrated and characterized, was itself a discovery that Anna once made ("underneath I wrote…"), that insight too is now being recalled and reexamined as an old problem of writing a character, disintegrating someone one understands into someone one knows nothing about. The moment of repetition gives way to the re-discovery of the nullity of opposition; and it is this valence of repetition couched in "understanding" that prompts Lessing to move outside the realm of knowing, evaluating, articulating.

Lukács discerned in classic, nineteenth-century historical novels a realist function specifically predicated on typology: the character functions as a character because he is representative of a larger idea, be it a class, social order, or a historical moment of transition. The larger realist function has less to do with realistic portraiture or verisimilitude per se, than with the capacity of the individual to stand in for the general or the universal. Realism is hegemonic in the nineteenth century in the sense that its form had once achieved its function, whereas in the twentieth century, realist function demands a different or refurbished set of forms. Rejecting a modernism that broke away from this typological function of realism, Lukács finds it necessary to develop an account of twentieth-century analogue for the typological function in genres of socialist or critical realism.

Lessing's intention to write the historical novel thus splits along these dual allegiances, to function or form. The passage continues as Anna evaluates a past evaluation she had made:

> But really what I discovered, though I didn't know it then, was that in describing any personality all these words are meaningless. […] But the point is, and it is the point that obsesses me (and how odd this obsession should be showing itself, so long ago, in helpless lists of opposing words, not knowing what it would develop into), once I say that words like good/bad, strong/weak, are irrelevant, I am accepting amorality, and I do accept it the moment I start to write "a story," "a novel," because I simply don't care. All I care about is that I should describe Willi and Maryrose so that a reader can feel their reality. And after twenty years of living in and around the left, which means twenty years' preoccupation with this question of morality in art, this is all I am left with. So what I am saying is, in fact, that the human personality, that unique flame, is so sacred to me, that everything else becomes unimportant? Is that what I am saying? And if so, what does it mean? (68-9)

The commitment to either morality or to aesthetic mimesis dictates whether to prioritize archetypal schematics or individuated personality. The either/or dilemma of realism between narration and description returns, and Anna cannot answer her own question. She abruptly ends this musing and returns to her account of Willi. Lessing, too, does not resolve this tension because she cannot: her individual knowledge cannot exceed the totality gestured at by the book, nor should she conclude the irresolvable paradox that composes totality. The simultaneous allegiance to aesthetic rigor, namely mimetic precision, and to ideological commitment ("years of living in and around the left") is the central contradiction that drives the book, yet it is driven only to repeat the discovery of past illusions. Anna had once discovered, after attempting to write about Willi, that she knew nothing about him. This discovery was itself recorded, to be remembered and re-read in the context of Anna's more recent attempts to describe Willi. And in this recent context, the discovery of linguistic failure she had recorded provides her with another, more salient understanding of writerly purposes at conflict with each other. Willi objectifies the tension between the realist function ("this question of morality in art") and its form (character as a representation of "the human personality, that unique flame"). Anna's notes about him in turn provide her with a timeline of what she comes to know via attempting to write him. Willi the character thus signposts a moment in the history of Anna's writerly knowledge.

In her textual neurosis, Anna may recognize the very old pattern into which her experience fits, but the sheer volume in which she reiterates her individual pain speaks to the fact that she is far from being freed of them. There is some understanding contained in the thin language passage, but only as we see the procedure enacted literally, by the words that individuate from their narrative existence (what is told as part of Anna's experience) fitted into a pattern of thin language. Pattern-making achieves form out of experience – both Anna's experience given as an account and that of the reader paging through the notebook – without turning its part into a story as Anna problematizes. What is so painful for the subject to undergo – "unreality, as if the substance of my self were thinning and dissolving" – may be tolerable when registered as a phenomenon unfolding in language. The only conceivable experience of subjectivity, in other words, exists within the duration of language. Lessing therefore transfers the problem of subjectivity to a problem of language, mimed in narration rather than described by it. This is a pathetically weak return on our investment in the novel – and explains in part why Lessing abandons the realist novel to test the possibilities of describing collective consciousness available in speculative fiction. Lessing's political commitment of the 50s and 60s, as it turns out, was all along a commitment to subjectivity and the subject in history.

4.9 Conclusion: To Read is to See is to Write

We have seen that the empirical predicament of contemporaneity in modernity – how to experience the reality of Quemoy within the reality of a street corner in London – converges in the reader-writer character and becomes structurally visible as a narrative deadlock. In which of its many permutations in the book does the significance of an event win out or take on more weight? We have seen that the cul-de-sac mapping of narratives reproduces itself stylistically as a pattern of expression through a procedure of an a-contentual citation most visible in the thin language passage. We have seen that the inverse relationship between the thinness of language and the density of experience provides a linguistic shape to the Sartrean organic individual whittled out of his function within the density of common individuals. We have begun to detect Lessing's unease at the persistent investment in subjectivity that the organic individual might still have en route to a Sartrean collectivity, the individual's misgiving at having to run through alienation over and over again (who can blame him?). To that effect, we looked at the recurring figure of the boulder-pusher who embodies the efforts of the organic individual and conjectured as to why this figure might necessarily be anonymous and unremittingly bleak in Lessing's presentation. This figure knows his existence in time perfectly well, yet looks to the repetitive and the timeless, whose subjective deadlock narratively embody the dual demands of realism.

Lessing herself attempts to be a singular universal by inverting the role demanded of her, increasingly after the success of *The Golden Notebook*, to be a public intellectual – by definition a singular embodiment of an exceptional and inimitable thinking. In for example *Prisons We Choose to Live Inside*, the five lectures Lessing delivered on air in 1985 for Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Lessing redefines what it means to be engaged with social problems, what it means to be an intellectual and what it means to foster a public culture.[82] Arguing for the horizon of public intellectualism, or the public's intellectualism, she stresses a habit of seeing required of everyone in the collective, effectively morphing intellectualism into intellection and putting a greater emphasis on the individual and her choice to exercise it. Written at the apparent end of Cold War and in the thick of Thatcherite/Reaganite muscle-flexing, *Prisons* casts commitment and social function in a different light than her writings throughout the 60s and 70s. For if in the earlier writings, Lessing saw some possibility in solving the problem of the subjective, isolated individual by making the personal general, that process has lost its use by the 80s when the collective constantly capsizes the individual into oblivion.

Of course, Lessing herself writes through generalizations, to the point of cementing what would otherwise be considered gross rhetorical failures into a style; her essayistic pieces are built on anecdotal illustration, reductive (even clichéd) statements, speculation, colloquial speech, and unresolved conclusions. Precisely in her rhetorical generalization, however, Lessing finds a curious way to marry Communism and capitalism, whose opposition, she thinks, fundamentally shares in the militarism of the twentieth-century, "the Age of Belief" as she dubs it. She stresses: "I am not only discussing Socialism, capitalism, Marxism and so on but belief—structures of belief."[83] In both *Prisons* and another talk she delivered at Rutgers in 1992, "Unexamined Mental Attitudes Left Behind by Communism," the "heritage" or the "pattern" of tyranny she refers to – and it is always the "pattern" that concerns Lessing – is essentially doctrinal mindset. It is dogma and its accompanying righteousness, a blinding fidelity to one's intellectual community. Every one of us would succumb to brain-washing, she charges (and by that she's lumping together conscious and unconscious manipulators, from state surveillance to media and marketing, from Born Again Christianity to Thatcher's employment of the advertisement firm Saatchi & Saatchi to handle her campaign). Collectivity is thus a double-edged sword; by

exempting no one, Lessing inculcates everyone to the task of recognizing a universal pattern of behavior and thought.

Lessing's charge that none of us could boast of being immune from psycho-social manipulation-- that we're never past jingoism/patriotism/evangelism – follows acutely from her generation's experience of being swept up en masse into different camps even after the lessons of fascism. She contends that the '84 miner's strike in Britain made obvious a process of extreme political polarization that began with the collapse and the fragmentation of the Left. Indeed, J.M. Coetzee sees Lessing's capacity to maintain a "wary distance," especially from academia, as a peculiar consequence of a leftist reckoning with her own fraught legacy. In Coetzee's account, *Walking in the Shade*, Lessing's second autobiography published in 1992, is written partly to work through her own complicity with an oppressive regime as a higher up member of the Party, one who gave allegiance to it, served on its committees, even visited Russia as a delegation of British intellectuals. Responding to her comment that *Stalin was a thousand times worse that Hitler,* Coetzee wonders, channeling Lessing:

> If intellectuals like Martin Heidegger and Paul de Man have deserved to be investigated and denounced for the support they gave to Nazism, what do those intellectuals deserve who supported Stalin and the Stalinist system, who chose to believe Soviet lies against the evidence of their own eyes? This is the huge question that exercises Lessing's moral conscience, coupled with a second and equally troubling question: Why does no one any longer care?[84]

If revelations about Stalin or postwar expressions of disenchantment with the possibilities for left politics consume Lessing's writings as early as *Children of Violence* series from the late 50s on or *The Golden Notebook* in the 60s, the distinctly post-Communist trait in the 80s and 90s essays is a thoroughgoing skepticism towards almost all values that are collectively and contemporarily endorsed, a marked emphasis on detachment as an antidote to groupthink irrespective of the side the coin falls on.

The paradox, then, is that such pessimism is founded on a moral injunction for the possibility of a radically different collective life, and a vigilance for the present not to repeat the patterns of the past. The verb *to be* returns to bear the full brunt of Lessing's own brand of oppressive moralism when she states, "Nothing can be done until we have reached that point where we can say that this *is* so, it will always be so, unless there are safeguards" – the "is" being a recognition that an unjust mechanism pervades every order of thought.[85] All of us must accept some amount of determinism about our behaviors if we are to have a passing chance at imagining ourselves out of cycle of self-deception and other-oppression.

It makes sense then that Lessing shifts footing in the mid-80s *and* remains exactly the same, given: 1). At least a regimented form of socialist theories of realism that Lessing is trying to dissociate from; and 2.) Lessing's new penchant for speculative fiction with its creation of an alternate world as the means to develop the skill she has always emphasized, to look at our world impassively "as a visitor from another planet might see us." Speculative fiction is a new metaphor for an old skill, for "see us" is one of innumerable instances in which Lessing stresses "examining," "observing," etc., throughout her works. Critical detachment follows specifically from a clarity of vision, attaining "this other eye, this detached manner of seeing ourselves."

A version of a lament that appears early on in *Prisons*, "If we were to put into practice what we know…" serves as a refrain throughout — the point being that we do not and her inquiry being concerned with the reasons as to why we fail to practice what we know. The

problem is not knowledge per se but rather the activation of it – or even before that, our dwindling awareness of the forces that suppress our knowledge of ourselves. The ability to *practice* what we already know, what we know about our susceptibility to collective tendencies, rides on the power of observation dependent on little but one's own pair of eyes. Seeing replaces knowing. Vision is not altogether replaced with doubt but is rather put into a more sober, shaper focus, straining back towards the objective world rather than projecting and imaging the internal onto it.

If no one any longer cares about Stalin and the fraught legacies of the left, it is because our seeing is inundated by a culture of consumable images. We lose our sensitivity in a random and unpredictable way, Lessing remarks, as an "almost haphazard result of our technology." More than a physical receptivity to phenomena, to see/observe/examine is to cultivate a minority voice that can "ask cool, serious questions," that can "talk in the cool, quiet, sensible low-keyed tone."[86] Observing, in this sense, brings us down a notch instead of heightening us. Rather than upheavals and reactions as the engine for social change, Lessing reminds us of the lasting power of a "quiet revolution." Wise to the passage of time, quiet revolution knows that "There is no such thing as … my side being in the right, because within a generation or two, my present way of thinking is bound to be found …faintly ludicrous, perhaps …outmoded…at best, something that has been changed, all passion spent, into a small part of a great process, a development" (16). Seeing the ephemerality of one's conviction is a form of ego-dissolution and more pointedly, a dissolution of the institutional ego.

Though the personal is not made general, in a paradoxical move, the individual *is* upheld as the means to resist collective, institutional forces: "It is always the individual in the long run," Lessing concludes, "who will set the tone, provide the real development in society" (72); the one "who, conforming no more than is necessary to group pressures, quietly preserves individual thinking and development" (74). Lessing wonders whether it would change things if the unfashionable term emphasized throughout the talks, "elite," were replaced with "the vanguard of the proletariat." The pack-resisting minority that Lessing holds up is not the role of a renegade or an eccentric, the tropes familiar in films. Beyond diction, Lessing is ultimately after a certain tone and comportment found in this "quietly preserving" minority— contemplative, disinterested, admittedly at times, boring. This is a mercurial mode that gets maps onto multiple figures throughout her novels and lectures, to "writers everywhere," the dissenter who abnegates absolutes on either left or right, the heretic who laughs, especially at herself (44). Finally, as Lessing's emphasis on rigorous scrutiny and minority position suggests, it seems we have come full circle to find Lessing upholding, without even caring to, Leavis's terms and attitude.

Lessing implodes the exceptionalism built into a "public intellectual" by positing the minority position implied by the term as a mode of detached self-reflection that can and should be entertained by everyone in society. Everyone is challenged with the injunction to take up what seems to be a near-impossible task of becoming a public intellectual – for everyone is a member of the body politic and thus comprise the public. By translating the novelistic function of world-perception into a practical mechanism of social change, Lessing effectively raises the stakes for everyone to rise to the task of the writer. Put differently, revolutionary agency lies our collective capacity to write – in so far as Lessing defines the writer as an organism that has, in a brilliant turn of passive agency, "been evolved by society as a means of examining itself." It is not enough that *I* look, for we must look collectively; to be more exact, for the latter phrase reeks of group-think Lessing ardently critiques, we must be a collection of each looking, each "using our freedoms" without being bound to it, precisely putting pressure on paradigms like freedom.

NOTES

Chapter One

1. Otto Jespersen, *The Philosophy of Grammar* (1924) (Chicago: U Chicago Press 1992), 155.
2. At the lowest level of simplication, explains Paul Cobley, "narrative is a sequence that is narrated" (7). While this sounds like a tautology, Cobley attempts to define the narrative presence common in radically different media, whether a sitcom on television, a documentary film or a novel. Abstracted, narrative has to do with some way of showing or telling events (as opposed to the events themselves) and, by showing and telling, the relationship created between things and the overall orientation from beginning to end. Paul Cobley, *Narrative*, The New Critical Idiom (New York: Routledge, 2001).
3. Otto Jespersen, *Essentials of English Grammar* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1933), 107.
4. Jespersen refers to this as a "nexus," his name for how an action, process or a state gets asserted, in contrast to the more "stiff and rigid" elements of the "junction," which is how a referent becomes particularized (Philosophy of Grammar, 116).
5. Jespersen, *Essentials of English Grammar*, 113.
6. The example Jespersen gives of the subject as an elliptical element is: "To know her is to love her." Technically, the subject is the infinitive gerund, but the understood subject.
7. Jespersen, *Essentials*, 106, emphasis original.
8. Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own (1929) (New York: Harcourt, 1981), 77.
9. Gyorg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel* (1914) (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971), 56.
10. Gyorg Lukács, "On the Nature and Form of the Essay," written 1910, in *Soul and Form*, trans. Anna Bostock, eds. John T. Sanders and Katie Terezakis, (New York: Columbia UP, 2010), 22.
11. Lukács, *Theory*, 18.
12. Ibid, 21.
13. Lukács, *Soul*, 23.
14. Joyce, *Portrait* (V. 553-4).
15. "My Naughty Book," D.H. Lawrence, Complete Poems (New York: Penguin Books, 1993), 492. The poem was originally published in *Pansies* (1929).
16. Jespersen, *Philosophy*, 345.
17. Ibid.
18. Jespersen, *Essentials*, 374.
19. In 1928, Jespersen launched the artificial language Novio through his publication *An International Language* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1928); Novio followed up on a previous, collective effort of five authors including Jespersen, to creating an international language in *International Language and Science: Considerations on the Introduction of an International Language into Science* (London: Constable and Company, 1910). A passage from International Language is parodied in Joyce's Finnegans Wake, book 1, chapter 4 (83.4).

20. Winfred P. Lehmann, ed. and trans., "Jakob Grimm" and "August Schleicher" in *A Reader in Nineteenth Century Historical Indo-European Linguistics* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1967), online at UT Austin's Linguistic Research Center http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/lrc/books/readT.html.
21. Adapting Hegel and Humboldt for linguistic studies, Schleicher "discovers" the Indo-European language and invents the family-tree as a way to chart the development of languages; these ideas and methods give rise to genealogical scholarship.
22. Paul Christophersen, "Otto Jespersen" in *Otto Jespersen: Facts of his Life and Work,* eds. Arne Juul and Hans Nielsen, Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science III. Vol. 52 (Philadelphia: J. Benjamins, 1989), 4.
23. Jespersen, *Essentials*, 100.
24. Jespersen cites a statistical study of word-order in major nineteenth-century writers that found S-V-O was used 82-97 percent, in contrast to Beowolf's 16 percent. This for him signals a great growth of regularity in a span of thousand years.
25. Jespersen, *Essentials*, 16.
26. Ibid, 17.
27. Ibid, 20.
28. J.A. Hobson, "The Task of Realism," *The English Review*, vol. 3, no. 11 (October, 1909), 543-554.
29. Lenin borrows heftily from Hobson in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, crediting Hobson with a more reliable analysis then other leading Marxist theorists of the time.
30. Hobson, "The Task," 543.
31. Ibid, 544.
32. Where Schiller and Kant sought to articulate what they perceived to be an increasing division of faculties in modernity and consequently the state's responsibility to form the individual and vice versa, Hobson revamps the German Romantic diagnosis by specifying it as an economic problem, i.e. the management of intellectual resources. Evolutionary thinking substitutes revolutionary thinking, Hobson writes, shifting the entire economy of progress to one in which "progress must be slow. […] Related to this doctrine of progress was another, viz., that progress can only be rigorous division of labor."
33. Ibid, 544
34. Hobson, "The Task," 547.
35. Ibid, 548.
36. Hobson, "The Task," 550.
37. Ibid, 551.
38. Ibid, 552.
39. Ibid, 554.
40. Scottish socialist politician and a leader of the Independent Labour Party in various posts throughout the late 1890s up to his death in 1920.

Chapter Two

1. Anne Fernihough, introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to D.H. Lawrence,* ed. Anne Fernihough (New York: Cambridge UP, 2001), 5.
2. Linda Ruth Williams, *DH Lawrence*, (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1997), 3.

3. Chris Baldick, "Post-Mortem: Lawrence's Critical and Cultural Legacy" in *The Cambridge Companion*, ed. Anne Fernihough, 255.

4. See, for example, Gary Adelman, *Reclaiming D.H. Lawrence: Contemporary Writers Speak Out* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell UP, 2002), especially the chapter, "What Lawrence Means to Today's Readers," in which Adelman surveys a group of writers and students about Lawrence's relevance. While the reader-friendly, pedagogy-minded attempt to rehabilitate Lawrence is admirable, one wonders why such attempts must always replicate a structure of sympathy on the one hand and stereotypes about different reading sensibilities on the other, between critic and writer, student and professional, etc. After all, wasn't Lawrence both a writer and a critic, a student and a teacher?

5. Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (Urbana, IL: Univ. Illinois Press, 1970).

6. Fernihough, *Cambridge*, 5.

7. Raymond Williams, *The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence* (New York: Oxford UP, 1970), 11.

8. Ibid, 17.

9. D.H. Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers* (1913): Text Background and Criticism ed. Julian Moynahan (New York: Viking Press, 1968). I am using the Viking critical edition throughout the chapter, referred to as *Sons.*

10. As I glossed briefly in the introductory chapter, Wallace Stevens excels in the poetics of negative presence. In a way, Paul Morel has to become the listener in Stevens' "The Snowman" who, "nothing himself, beholds/ Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is." Barbara Johnson makes a similar point in her brief, double-reading of Auden's line, "Poetry makes nothing happen": Poetry both fails to making anything happen, and poetry realizes (makes happen) nothingness. Of course, the "nothing" in Johnson's Auden, and really Johnson's Mallarmé –for he is really the poet at hand – has explicitly to do with political efficacy, expressive of a poet's desire "to have it both ways. Barbara Johnson, *A World of Difference* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 1987), 30.

11. This dynamic is well captured by the sense that "Poetry is a satisfying of the desire for resemblance," as Wallace Stevens puts it in *The Necessary Angel*, comparing the ambiguity offered by poetry as analogous to the ambiguity offered by resemblance (or the "intensification of reality by resemblance"). In *Wallace Stevens and the Demands of Modernity: Towards a Phenomenology of Value*, Charles Altieri provides a philosophy of value in the way Stevens makes a grammatical shift from "is" to "as," from poetic of assertion to poetics of resemblance. However, what is a fertile ground for reality-production in poetry, the as-if-ness of things, is a swampy mess for the mimetic impulse of prose. I'll pick up again on in poetry turned a gift of death in the novelistic project in the last section. For a continued comparison between the surprising affinity between Stevens' poetry and Lawrence's prose – but with dramatically different implications – see note 71 below.

12. In contrast to the emphasis description tends to put on what is there, the idea of describing around vacuity is also found in Barthes' subtractive thinking: "I write because I do not want the words I find: by subtraction." Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975), 40.

13. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscome (1953), (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1958), 89.

14. "Facing" implies a confronting of something, but it also contains the etymological meaning of prosopopoeia, "giving face to" (OED).

15. Harry Ransom Center at UT Austin holds a collection of Lawrence's painting, which I examined while conducting archival research there. Like, Miriam, Lawrence seems to have a fondness for flowers and watercolors. Suffice to say, they are middling.

16. MS1, apparently about a hundred pages, is lost. Roughly 350 pages of MS2 at UT Austin have been published as *Paul Morel* by Cambridge Press and edited by Helen Baron, as part of a larger collection of *The Letters and Works of D. H. Lawrence*. MS3, held at the Bancroft Library, was scrupulously studied by Mark Schorer, the mid-century editor and early commentator of Lawrence's works. Schorer compiled MS3, the parts that weren't rewritten and absorbed into the final version of the novel, and published it as "Fragments" preceding the facsimile of the final manuscript, *DHL: Sons and Lovers: Facsimile*, ed. Mark Schorer (Berkeley: UC Press 1977). Though similar in content, MS4, too, was completely "rewritten," as Lawrence insisted on a process of literally re-writing MS3 onto new paper as the means to transfer and revise simultaneously.

17. Jesse Chambers greatly intervened in editing the second and third drafts. Her comments to Lawrence were pointed, questioning the credibility of characters when Lawrence over-intellectualized them or had them touting philosophy, and elucidating the mother-son tension that lay dormant in the earlier drafts. She probably pulled the novel toward a more faithful autobiographic and psychological representation of their experience in Nottingham and as first lovers. But if she was responsible for imposing a reality principle onto Lawrence's writing, she was also responsible for the more sophisticated and less artificial realism of the novel. One of Lawrence's strengths, after all, seems to lies in his absorptive power, subsuming collaboration into his own process. For an extensive treatment of Jesse Chambers-as-Miriam, see Louis Martz's essay, "A Portrait of Miriam: A Study in the Design on *Sons and Lovers*" (1968), reprinted in *Sons and Lovers: A New Casebook*, ed. Rick Rylance (London: Macmillan, 1996), 49-73.

18. Lawrence, *Paul Morel*, ed. Helen Baron.

19. *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence: Edited with an Introduction by Aldous Huxley* (New York: Viking Press, 1936), 7. Letter sent to Sidney Pawling (editor at Heinemann's), sent October 18, 1910.

20. Ibid, 48. Letter sent to Edward Garnett (at Duckworth), August 4, 1912.

21. In a letter to A.D. McLeod, sometime early in the fall of 1912, he says of *Paul Morel*, "I 'm inwardly very proud of it, though I haven't licked it into form"; later in November, he writes to Garnett to tell him that he has been "pruning it and shaping it and filling it in. I tell you it has got form—*form:* haven't I made it patiently, our [sic] of sweat as well as blood." *The Letters*, 62.

22. Ibid, 78. To Garnett, November 14, 1912.

23. There's no proof that he read through the English translation of *On Dreams* (translated by David Eder, a London psychoanalyst at the time) that came out in 1914, but he was certainly familiar with it given his acquaintance and correspondence with Eder. He probably began compiling notes for *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* (1921) and *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (1922) around then.

24. *Psychoanalytic Review,* iii no 3 (July 1916), 295-317. For a complete account of the context surrounding the review, see Bruce Steele's introduction in the Cambridge edition of *D.H. Lawrence: Psychoanalysis and The Unconscious and Fantasia of the Unconscious.*

25. *The Letters*, 87. In a letter to S.A. Hopkins, December 23, 1912, Lawrence writes: "My poems are coming out in January, my novel, *Sons and Lovers*—autobiography—in February. They're both good—particularly second."

26. Anonymous review of *Sons and Lovers* in *The Athenaeum: Journal of Literature, Science, the Fine Arts Music and the Drama,* No. 4469 June 21, 1913 (London: Athenaeum Press, 1913), 668.

27. "Unknowing" is a phrase I borrow from Philip Weinstein, *Unknowing: The Work of Modernist Fiction* (Cornell UP, 2005) in which Weinstein argues through Proust, Kafka, Faulkner and Freud that a "poetics of knowing cedes to one of unknowing" in modernity as the fictional subject's once-deemed reliable negotiation with space and time founders.

28. *The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, Vol. 115 (London, 1913). Accessed on babel.hathitrust.org.

29. Ibid.

30. *The Letters*, 174. To Edward Garnett, sent December 30, 1913.

31. Archival research conducted at Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley. In a letter to Louie Burrows, Lawrence admits that *Paul Morel* is "rather foolish." The single-page chapter plan for *Paul Morel*, probably written in October 1910, is a shorthand outline, plotting out events with private cues: "Fred in office--horse manuring--Mabel—painting." This note, for example, signals what is to become four significant events in chapter 4. The notes reveal that the *Paul Morel* was conceived as a series of episodes, short pantomime pieces woven together by keywords for the author. Most of these episodes either disappear or are significantly changed by the time Lawrence writes the fourth manuscript, *Sons and Lovers*. Plot empties out, characters are reduced to the essential players, and yet the episodic feel of the novel remains consistent. It is as if Lawrence decided to reduce the number of scales, while increasing the range of melodic variations within the scale.

32. *Paul Morel*, at least the second manuscript, ends around the time Paul starts working at Jordan's factory and meets Polly (who becomes Clara Dawes in *Sons and Lovers*). Much of the focus in *Paul Morel* has to do with the kinds of interactions he has with his siblings, the activities he would join in, how he came to meet Miriam, etc. Narrative is straightforward, and Lawrence has yet to develop a narratorial personality, what becomes the typical commentator who steps out the narrative to addresses the audience. In *Sons*, in contrast, the narrator constantly alerts us to the act of seeing, overseeing and under-seeing; the extraneous narratorial seeing is also the driving force behind the plot.

33. Three episodes that are not in *Sons* show that *Paul Morel* is interesting in its own way, but different. First, the sister Annie, who is relatively excised in *Sons*, leads a "tale-telling circle" formed by the children in the neighborhood (*PM* 19.5). *PM* underscores the bonds that telling forges and the dark intimacy of an Andersen tale, while Sons only describes telling is as such – not actually telling the stories. Yet *PM* also primes *Sons* for seeing, so that with each draft, the narrative as a whole becomes more adept at seeing, e.g. the beautiful description of the coal mines (*PM* 20.31). In 20.40, [seeing] on ice bank is described as a cataract – a truly wonderful phrase. In 22. 5, the narrative [sees] the boys look at the mine. In the description, the boys become part of the visual tapestry of the landscape (line 22-23). Finally, the passage about Paul's illness, which appears relatively early in *Sons* (60) and leads to a discursive meditation on sleep, is in *PM* prompted by a long episode in which Paul meets Miriam and falls off the skate (excised in *Sons*). In *Sons* the happenings are exorcised their while impressions remain. What remains constant between the two drafts, or what Lawrence preserved, is the sense-impression of the sick boy watching his mother iron.

34. Edward Said, *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (New York: Columbia UP, 1975), 254.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid, 13.

37. Ibid, 78.

38. Simon Gunn and James Vernon argue that British modernity is characterized by a persistent atavism and reform, shaped by need to accomode the traditional and new. Simon Gunn and James Vernon, introduction to *The Peculiarities of Liberal Modernity in Imperial Britiain*, ed. Simon Gunn and James Vernon, The Berkeley Series in British Studies (Berkeley: UC Press, 2011).

39. Said's anthropological and political thoughts consist first and foremost in his reflections on style. From *Beginnings* to *Late Style*, style, as measure of seeing and articulating reality continued to occupied Said's mind. Said attributes his sense of style as "earthly-figuration" to Auerbach's approach to literature. Auerbachian mimesis addresses how the troubles of the modern world affects the transformation of reality and consequently of style, and thus for Said expresses "a very particular kind of sympathy" toward texts in different period, to different cultures. See Edward Said, "Erich Auerbach, Critic of the Earthly World," *Boundary 2: an International Journal of Literature and Culture* 31, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 11-34.

40. Thomas Pfau, "From Mediation to Medium: Aesthetics and Anthropolgical Dimensions of the Image (Bild) and the Crisis of *Bildung* in German Modernism," *Modernist Cultures* 1, no 2 (2005): 141-180.

41. Said, *Beginnings*, 73.

42. The idea that Mrs. Morel's actions could be both bound yet gratuitously performed was learned from Anne-Lise François' account of "recessive action" in *Open Secrets: The Literature of Uncounted Experience* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2003). In her account, gratuitous and recessive action are taken by characters who take themselves out of the equation of self-representation by asserting only reticence, treading lightly, comfortably and nearly missing revelatory experience. Her admiration for the Dickinsonian characters' "commitment to walking away from experience empty-handed" (François, 132) is itself admirable for the way it side-steps what might be a particularly modern and critical fetish over a hermeneutic disclosure, a disclosure that anticipates mastery and fulfills the bourgeois injunction to know fully and reach continually. Recessive action challenges the reader to consider an action that isn't, to use François's idiom, "counted" and to give nod to the ability to resist the (reified) ethical demands to realize something as a differential action in its own merit, the gratuity of the given situation through quiet contentment – what François holds up as living in "grace."

43. This is exactly the strategy in Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier*, with a narrator that continually shrugs his own shoulders to undermine his own authority and declares not only his own uncertainty but the futility of the

narrative itself; whatever confusion the reader may have, "I cannot help it," the narrator tells us. In any case, unreliable narrator becomes a fixture of postmodernist work reveling in fiction's own exposure of its fictionality.

44. Bell, Michael. "'A Restrained, *Somewhat* Impersonal Novel'" in *D.H. Lawrence's* Sons and Lovers: *A Casebook*, eds. John Worthen and Andrew Harrison, (New York: Oxford UP, 2005), 48.
45. D.H. Lawrence, "Giovanni Verga," Selected Essays (New York: Penguin Books, 1950) 267-285. The essay was originally written in 1922 as "Notes on Giovani Verga" in his translation of Verga's works, titled *Little Novels of Sicily*, published by Thomas Seltzer in 1925.
46. Bell, "Restrained," 49.
47. Lukács, Georg. *Writer and Critic and Other Essays*, trans. Arthur Kahn (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1970), 127.
48. Ibid.
49. Williams, *English Novel*, 173.
50. Lukács, *Writer*, 130.
51. A prime example would be Zola's Jacques Lantier.
52. Digitized images available at the University of Oklahoma Libraries' History of Science Collections: http://hos.ou.edu/galleries//17thCentury/Bulwer/1653/
53. D.H. Lawrence, "Why the Novel Matters" in *Selected Literary Criticism: D.H. Lawrence*, ed. Anthony Beal (New York: Viking Press, 1966), 103.
54. David Lodge, *The Modes of Modern Writing* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1977), 161.
55. Ibid, 163.
56. E.P. Shrubb, "Reading Sons and Lovers," *D.H. Lawrence's Sons and Lovers*, ed. Harold Bloom, Modern Critical Interpretations (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1988).
57. Ibid, 111.
58. And, in my opinion, expresses vitality more poignantly than does the organicism and visionary fervor of Lawrence's later prose and experimental novels.
59. Introduction to *Paul Morel* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2003), xxx.
60. Rick Rylance, "Ideas, Historic Generalities and Beliefs," *Cambridge Companion*. Rylance contextualizes the early work to the evolutionary theories of Lawrence's times, from William James's secularism to Darwin to progressive Christianity. Rylance states that more than any particular take on numerous scientific theories of the day, Lawrence is "imagining a complex, polarized interaction, which is above all, unfinished" and is "committed to this kind of multi-aspected, exploratory understanding (25). Louis Martz (note 17 above) also discusses the novel in this way, evaluating the perspectival consciousness as its main technique.
61. Ibid, 27.
62. An example of such a question (¶ 139-140): "What really comes before our mind when we *understand* a word? –isn't it something like a picture? Can't it *be* a picture?" The sense that the picture fits the name, of course, is a matter of application : "we are at most under a psychological, not a logical compulsion" (*Investigations*, 55).
63. Wittgenstein, *Investigations* (¶ 109), 47.
64. Wittgenstein, *Investigations* (¶ 89), 42.
65. To "mean" does not entail a similar process as "to imagine" and the like, Wittgenstein clarifies, for "it is only in a language that I can mean something by something." He asks, for example, whether he could say "bububu" and mean "If it doesn't rain I shall go for a walk" (¶38, *Investigations*, 18). The absurdly comic and rightly child-like example brings out the fact that to mean something by something (a word, an expression) and to convey it as such has less to do with the correspondence between a word and a thing (a word might *bear* a thing, but

that's not necessarily to say it *means* it; dodos are extinct as a species but the name dodo means what it does), still less with intention or interpretation, but with *use*, the means of representation.

66. Wittgenstein's wittily concrete example in ¶ 293 is very useful: "Suppose everyone had a box with something in it: we call it a "beetle". No one can look inside anyone else's box, and everyone says he knows what a beetle is only by looking at *his* beetle. Here it would be quite possible for everyone to have something different in his box. One might even imagine such a thing constantly changing. But suppose the word "beetle" had a use in these people's language? If so, it would not be used as the name of a thing. The thing in the box has no place in the language-game at all; not even as *something:* for the box might even be empty. No, one can 'divide through' by the thing in the box; it cancels out, whatever it is" (*Investigations*, 100).

67. This is a loosely drawn definition from Howard Caygill's explication of "object" in Kantian philosophy. Howard Caygill, A Kant Dictionary (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1995), 304-6.

68. There may be a rugby reference, or at least a speech patter, lurking here since "get into touch(line)" is a relatively common phrase. I find that possibility unlikely, if comically wonderful, in which grounding a suspended existence equals scoring a goal in a rugby match.

69. The Letters, 68. Levine is mistaken; he attributes the addressee of the letter to Huxley, and I've kept to that reference since I first derived the information from Levine. However, the letter is actually addressed to Edward Garnett (sent October 30, 1912). Lawrence greatly admires Conrad but finds him too susceptible to the dissipated spirit of other European moderns like Strindberg and Ibsen: "…the stories are so good. But why this giving in before you start, that pervades all Conrad and such folks—Writers among the Ruins. I can't forgive Conrad for being so sad and for giving in."

70. George Levine, *The Realist Imagination: English Fiction from Frankenstein to Lady Chatterley* (Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press, 1983), 319.

71. The Stevens connection, as promised in note 11. The strings of negation here work not unlike the last stanza from Wallace Stevens's poem "The Snow Man": "For the listener, who listens in the snow, / And, nothing himself, beholds / Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is." The paradox of nothing beholding nothing, both affirmed and negated, not only confirms the fullness of vacuity but points to the force that the listener must yield to in contending with blank, white form – form, which, as the depiction of phenomenon, outlining and sculpting – always abstracts what *is*. Far from negating, nothingness operates to illuminate the bare resolution that the listener and Paul must hold do. Referring to another poem by Stevens, "Le Monocle de Mon Oncle," whose protagonist, like Paul, exhorts with a bit much overwroughtness, "There is not nothing, no, no, never nothing," Helen Vendler points to the poem's lively in-betweeness. She notes that the poem is "not yet resigned, not yet posthumous, not yet wise," and that it sees "a dreadful paralysis on the horizon but has not yet succumbed to it" Helen Vendler, *On Extended Wings: Wallace Stevens' Longer Poems*, (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1969) 58. Like the protagonist of this poem musing on "death-in-life," Paul, still with much self-seriousness that the young Lawrence can't quite rid his voice of the way the elder Stevens can, departs from this last scene in negative affirmation: "But no, he would not give in." Negation, that is, makes further life possible.

72. "There was one place in the world that stood solid and did not melt into reality" (222): Marx's phrase to describe the bourgeois life here turns into the maternal.

Chapter Three

1. James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), ed. John Paul Riquelme (New York: Norton, 2007). Further references cited parenthetically, noted with *P* and/or chapters in Roman numerals.

2. For an exemplar postcolonial historiography of Ireland, see David Lloyd, *Irish Times: Temporalities of Modernity* (Dublin: Field Day, 2008), on the contradictory processes of aggressive development and ruin built into the Irish experience. Joyce, in Lloyd's account, expresses sensibilities of the medieval, heterogeneous, earthbound and laborious. In particular, Lloyd isolates a line from *Stephen Hero*, "Is the mind of boyhood medieval…?" arguing that the individual development of Stephen Dedalus assumes a parallel development of history, least of which has to do with Stephen's own preoccupation with Aquinas and with the relationship between the microcosmic and the cosmological. In addition to what Lloyd presents as the linguistic parables

consciously proffered by Stephen (e.g. the colonizer's projection of "Tundish" onto Irish language, linguistic authenticity demanded by Haynes), it may be possible to draw another parallel structure between Irish history and a Joycean articulation of development, namely at the level of style. *Stephen Hero* is largely naturalistic in contrast to *Portrait*'s aesthetic extravagance that, as Lloyd suggests, feels medieval.

3. Richard Lanham argues that voice means personality, that it is "the inevitable *literary* ingredient in all prose. Even when you leave personality out, as in unvoiced prose, you have contrived a literary effect by the act of omission." *Analyzing Prose*, second edition (New York: Continuum, 2003), 110. The subsequent chapter of my dissertation on Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* centers on the question of "voice" to a greater degree, turning to Gérard Genette's definition of voice as the narrative situation (the way narrat*ing* is implicated in the narrative) to work out the diegetic structure of the novel.

4. Hugh Kenner, *Joyces Voices* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1978), 4. Unfortunately, it is impossible not to conjure up the other, famous way in which the word was mobilized, i.e. Ayn Rand's "Objectivism." A thinly veiled expression for an aggressive and particularly mercantile character of egotism, Rand's doctrine of Objectivism misses the insight offered by the concept of the ego, the dialectic relationship it forges with others and the world by extension. For a baleful and fascinating comparison between Rand and Joyce's articulation of the ego, see Jean-Michel Rabaté, *James Joyce and the Politics of Egoism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

5. Ibid, 16. Kenner calls this the "Uncle Charles Principle."

6. James Joyce, *Ulysses* (1922), the Gabler Edition (New York: Vintage 1986). Further references cited parenthetically, noted with *U* and/or with chapters in numerals.

7. James Joyce, *Stephen Hero*, ed. Theodore Spencer (1944) (New York: New Directions, 1959). Further references cited parenthetically, noted with *SH*.

8. This exchange has been read as staging a Catholic confessional of sorts in which Cranly presumably plays the part of a priest absolving Stephen of his sins while Stephen reiterates the illocutionary power of the Eucharist through his discussion. See Kathleen O'Gorman, "The Performativity of Utterance in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*," *James Joyce Quarterly* 30 (1993): 419-426. Interestingly enough, Cranly in this moment flings a half-eaten fig into the gutter upon Stephen's entreaty to concentrate on the discussion at hand, mock-ceremoniously denouncing, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!"

9. For Deasy's claims to a rebel blood and to the fact that "We are all Irish" would be incompatible with his admiration for his ancestor John Blackwood (1721-99), if Sir Joh had indeed voted for the union as Deasy believes. In fact, Sir John is said to have rushed from Ards with the intention to vote *against* the union, though there are speculations that his son James Blackwood took a bribe of baronetcy and voted for the union later on. Richard Ellmann contextualizes this episode to Joyce's stay in Galway Island in 1912, a scanty period of "pastoral solitude." A Trieste acquaintance, Henry Blackwood Prince, had asked Joyce to make contact with a cattle trader, William Field, over the prevalence of hoof and mouth disease in Irish cattle. In his letters, Price pesters Joyce over the task by comparing its gravity to his ancestor Sir John Blackwood who died in the act of putting on his topboots to get to Dublin to vote against the Union. Joyce in fact helps Price publish his letter, himself writing an editorial about the disease in the *Freeman's Journal.* Both Henry Blackwood Prince and Mr. Field, M.P. appear in "Nestor" in a direct pastiche of the event (2. 340, 415), putting Deasy, oddly enough, in Joyce's shoes. Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce*, revised 1959 edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 326-7. Indeed, Ellmann claims that Joyce parodies not only Blackwood Price but himself in this moment, in particular the two essays on Galway, "The Mirage of the Fisherman of Aran: England's Safety Valve in Case of War," and "Politics and Cattle Disease." James Joyce, *Occasional, Critical, and Political Writing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 201-8.

10. Gérard Genette, Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method (1972) (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1980).

11. And elsewhere, e.g. "Do you know what you are talking about? Love, yes. Word known to all men. *Amor vero aliquid alicui bonum vult unde et ea quae concupiscimus*…" (9. 429-31).

12. It is possible to read Stephen's "touch me" more literally as a masturbatory moment, consequently creating a parallel with Bloom's (possible) masturbation in "Nausicaa." Both take place in Sandymount Strand, though of course Stephen has no object of the gaze as Bloom does in Gerty. Critical fascination with Gerty aside – notable among many, Suzette Heneke, ed. *Women in Joyce* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982) – Bloom's sensuality stands in marked contrast to Stephen's gloomy, thanatic inwardness. The affinity seems to me much

more to do with linguistic and sonorous effects, resonating with "Sirens" rather than "Nausicaa": "Soft eyes. Soft soft soft hand. I am lonely here" (3. 435) anticipating "Bloom, soft Bloom, I feel so lonely Bloom" (11. 1136-7).

13. Stephen derives the keywords "*Nebeneinander*" and "*Nacheinander*" from G. E. Lessing's *Laokoon* (1776). Noting that the *Laocoön* sculpture from antiquity is not screaming as Virgil's poetry describes the figure, Lessing accounts for the discrepancy between the two representations by identifying distinct proprietary rules that govern each medium. Lessing refers to *nebeneinander* the arts that follow spatial decorum such as painting, sculpture and architecture, *nacheinander* those that follow temporal decorum such as poetry and music. Time and space, then, are separate domains for Lessing, while Stephen tries to combine them under the sign of poetry. The information on Lessing has been extracted from Daniel Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent: Modernism in Music, Literature and Other Arts* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000).

14. The allusion here is to Blake's Los and his hammer, "Book of Los" chapter IV. Ellmann details Joyce's lecture on Blake and Defoe (1912). Joyce positions Crusoe as the archetypal Englishman in contrast to Albion's pan-humanism, which, Ellmann claims, he tried to capture in HCE's everyman character and Bloom's passive receptivity (Ellmann, 318-9). As for Los himself, I find a curious and serendipitous connection to between Los and Cranly in light of my discussion. Describing *The Book of Los* as the most opaque of Blake's works in 1790s that reworks *The Book of Urizen* and *The Book of Ahania* into a concentration of the struggle between Los and Urizen, Jon Mee argues that "Prophetic elision is the basis of the narrative strategy of *The Book of Los.*" Stylized through ellipses and brevity, history gains its force to become "an extreme manifestation of the prophetic discourse." One of the many things Joyce admires about Blake may be Blake's capacity capitalize on elision, one speculates. Jon Mee, *Dangerous Enthusiasm: William Blake and the Culture of Radicalism in the 1790s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 201.

15. Wilde wrote the short poem after the death of his sister. Stephen is probably thinking of the lines 13-4, "Coffin-board, heavy stone, / Lie on her breast;" and 19-20, "All my life's buried here, / Heap earth upon it."

16. Cited by Weldon Thornton, John Z. Bennett suggests that this, too, is an allusion to Wilde, recalling the following lines spoken by Dorian to Basil in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*: "Don't leave me, Basil, and don't quarrel with me. I am what I am. There is nothing more to be said." Weldon Thornton, *Allusions in* Ulysses*: an Annotated List*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 64-5.

17. Marc Mamigonian and John Turner have recently taken to the task of providing a much-needed, thorough annotation of *Stephen Hero*, missing since Spencer's edition. Marc A. Mamigonian and John Noel Turner, "Annotations for *Stephen Hero," James Joyce Quarterly* 40 (2003): 347-505, 507-518.

18. For most recent and useful introduction both to the (new) rise of textual criticism/importation of French genetic criticism at large and to the influence of genetic criticism on Joyce studies, see Hannah Sullivan's *Work of Revision* (Cambridge: Harvard UP 2013). Sullivan's broader thesis emphasizes the processes of revision by which modernists sculpted their writings, even that revision *is* how modernists wrote and that contemporary ideas of composition stem directly from the modernist legacy of revision-as-writing. It is a provocative and ambitious argument, telegraphing from Henry James to Marc McGurl and landing on Pound, Eliot, Woolf and many more along the way. As concerns Joyce, Sullivan's central argument is that his revising practice is characterized by parataxis (in contrast to James's "accretive" or Pound's "radical excision"), switching up from his earlier procedure, say in *Dubliners*, of taking away. This is perhaps not the most dramatic argument to be made, but her chapter on Joyce, "Joyce and the Illogic of Addition" (147-192) is extremely illustrative of Joyce's compositional process throughout *Ulysses*.

19. As discussed in Sullivan's chapter on autobiography, one way to give weight to *Stephen Hero* has been to read it as an autobiography as well as a fiction, as Susan Friedman has done. (Susan Stanford Friedman, *Joyce: The Return of the Repressed*). Following Friedman's reading, Sullivan argues that the form-fraying ending of *Portrait* results from an unresolved problem of writing an autobiography rather than, as Moretti has argued, because it is caught in a weak form, the late *Bildungsroman*. I am much more partial to Moretti's argument both in principle and as concerns Joyce. The ending will be discussed more fully in 3.4. Suffice to say two things here, first that Joyce is much too sophisticated on theories of impersonality to be undone by the problem of autobiography, or to confuse Stephen's predicament with his own. Secondly, an earlier text means not only less aesthetic finesse but less life experience for the author; earlier works tend toward autobiography as a matter of fact rather than intention.

20. John Paul Riqueleme, "Stephen Hero, Dubliners, and a Portriat of the Artist as a Young Man: styles of realism and fantasy," in Derek Attridge ed., *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1990), 103-30.

21. Kenner, *Joyce's Voices*, xii.

22. Sullivan, *Work of Revision*, 192.

23. Christopher Butler has outlined Joyce's resistance to many contemporary ideas in fashion, especially Nietzsche and avant-garde manifestos, vis-à-vis his allegiance to pre-modern thinking in figures like Aquinas. He makes an excellent points that Joyce's modernism is stylistic first and foremost, and indeed, the contemporaries he was attracted to (Flaubert, Ibsen, Hauptmann) suggest where his interests lie. See "Joyce, modernism and post-modernism," later revised into "Joyce the Modernist" in the second edition of Attridge ed. *Cambridge Companion to James Joyce.*

24. Description and affect are not the same, but they belong to the same camp in the dialectic charge of realism. In Jameson's antinomies, description is one of the modes of "affect," all those present- and presence-making sensation, bodily and spatial matter, in contrast to realism's diachronic, narrative impulse. Jameson, *The Antinomies of Realism* (New York: Verso, 2013).

25. Asterisks mark the end of each scene in *Portrait*, punctuating before any definitive affect or lesson of the episode can settle in. On the notion of asterisks as a dampening silence or silence as drawing out the limits of interpretation, I must credit Andrew Gibson's postmodern theory of narrative (which in turn adopts Ranciere's attention to the spectral force of silence). Gibson stresses that text's language out-performs and antithetically performs voice, and this seems to be the general attitude taken by contemporary narratology. I am not interested in theorizing silence beyond identifying its formal manifestation in asterisks, especially as I don't see why voice and text should be segregated in the first place. For this line of thought, see Andrew Gibson, *Towards a Postmodern Theory of Narrative* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996) or "'And the Wind Wheezing Through That Organ Once in a While': Voice, Narrative Film," *New Literary History* 32 (2001): 639-657.

26. John the Baptist is the precursor of Jesus and "saint John at the Latin gate" is John the Apostle. In this editorial footnote, Riqueleme remarks that besides their names, the two Johns are linked by the fact that the Lateran Church (at the Latin Gate), where John the Apostle miraculously escaped from the Romans (and a vat of boiling oil), is consecrated to John the Baptist. Figuratively, then, John the Baptist both opened the door for Jesus and picked the lock of the Latin gate for John the Apostle.

27. T.S. Eliot, "Ulysses, order and myth," Dial 75 (November 1923), 480-3.

28. J.F. Byrne and Richard Ellmann keep up a correspondence from the end of 1953 through 1956, at times as frequent as bimonthly. At this point, Byrne is almost 70, remembering events from over fifty years ago. Ellmann writes from Illinois, where he teaches (Northwestern), and Byrne lives in Brooklyn. Given that their letters are on a first-name basis, it seems that an epistolary friendship developed over the three years began when Ellmann solicited Byrne while working on his biography of Joyce and Byrne dutifully answered Ellmann's questions, at times fiercely guarding Joyce's dignity and refusing to answer Ellmann's prying questions about Nora's affair with Cosgrove and so on. (Ellmann, in contrast, never complied with Byrne's one request to that he read and respond to Byrne's memoir *Silent Years*). The saddest discovery I made while reading through these correspondences was in Byrne's unsent letter to Ellmann in which he expressed deep hurt upon finding out that Joyce made belittling comments about him after their reunion in Paris in 1927. Through Ellmann's unscrupulous relaying, memories of a friendship were tarnished three decades after the fact. The correspondences between Joyce and Byrne (nineteen envelopes) were kept in National Library in Dublin until 1991; both Joyce-Byrne letters and Byrne-Ellman letter are currently at Harry Ransom Collection at UT Austin, where I conducted my archival work on the letters.

29. For critics who have addressed passages dealing with Cranly in the context of Irish nationalism, see Scott Klein, "National Histories, National Fiction: Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and Scott's *Bride of Lammermoor*," *ELH* 65 (1998): 1017-1038, or Michael Patrick Lapointe, "Irish Homosocial Sacrifices in *Ulysses*," *Joyce Studies Annual* (2008): 172-202. Lapointe's article in particular imbues Joyce with a political imperative in which he attempts an "exposure of interweaving of nationalism's repressed constitutive homoeros toward ideology, affective appeal, and interpellation of ideal object." If a normative subjectivity of a young man is supposed to be constructed out of the ideals of national, patriarchal, and other regulatory functions, Joyce's

portrait is exposing all those repressive elements. This seems to be a straightforward account of how Stephen sees his exile, rather than how Joyce presents it.

30. Joseph Valente, "Thrilled by His Touch: Homosexual Panic and the Will to Artistry in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*," *James Joyce Quarterly* 31 (1994): 167-188. Valente edited this special issue of *JJQ*, "Joyce and Homosexuality," eventually developing the articles into a collected volume *Quare Joyce* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998).

31. Both Dollimore and Valente's notion of proximity derives from Eve Sedgwick's definition of "homosexual panic" that there is not clear line separating homosocial affects and intimacies from homosexual ones.

32. According to the OED the first documented use of "queer" as a reference to homosexuality is in Los Angles 1914. Much more common and likely is the Irish and Scottish use of queer/quare as an intensifier – though of course, usage often bears a history before being recorded.

33. C.f. Joyce's Use of the Word "Pervert" in Julian B. Kaye *James Joyce Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Spring, 1975), pp. 309-310.

34. For a classical account of *Portrait*'s generic coding as a *Künsterroman*, see Maurice Beebe, *Ivory Towers and Sacred Fonts.*

35. Cp. the more popular reading by Ellmann that the "homosexual implications" emanate largely from Cranly.

36. Valente, *Quare* 67.

37. Valente, *JJQ* 169.

38. See Gregory Castle's "Confessing Oneself: Homoeros and Colonial Bildung in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man"* (*Quare*, 157-180), as well as Gregory Castle, *Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman* (Gainsville: University Press of Florida, 2006).

39. Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World: The* Bildungsroman *In European Culture* (New York: Verso 1987).

40. These recent trends in Joyce studies, both towards queer theory and in revisiting the master narratives from an angle, are couched in a larger move towards political readings, the first wave in the 80s (Deane, Mangaiello, MacCabe) extending into second, recent postcolonial approaches (Attridge, Howes, Castle, Kiberd, Cheng, Valente). In contrast, one may question whether it is altogether appropriate to apply colonial and imperial discourses to Ireland and its relationship to Britain. For an opposing, skeptical view of "the postcolonial Joyce," see Stephen Howe, *Ireland and Empire: Colonial Legacies in Irish History and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

41. Jed Esty, *Unseasonable Youth: Modernism, Colonialism, and the Fiction of Development* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

42. Esty is working from Gikandi and Baucom, also deeply influenced by Said. Their studies show how canonical, western literary consciousness of the other and the self-consciousness that arises from this imaginary reconfigures Englishness itself. Esty refers directly to Simon Gikandi's work, *Maps of Englishness: Writing Identity in the Culture of Colonialism* (New York: Columbia UP, 1996).

43. Ibid 128.

44. Esty's periodization follows Hobsbawm's model of the "age of capital" (1848-75) and the "age of empire" (1875-1914). Describing the replete expansion of the 1880s, Esty argues that this period could be conceived not only as a fin de siècle but as a "fin du globe in which imperial growth, which had become by then the spatial confirmation of Western progress, reached its earthly limits" (22).

45. Ibid 19.

46. Lloyd, *Irish Times* 75.

47. Esty's claims are built on Pericles Lewis and Michael Levenson, who describes the serialized, repetitive form of the diary ending. See Michael Levenson, "Stephen's Diary in Joyce's *Portrait* – The Shape of Life" *ELH* 52 (1985): 1017-1035. Responding to complaints about the ending from early publishers to Hugh Kenner and Wayne Booth, Levenson argues that the diary is a genre in its own right, one that actively resists closure and

invites ambiguities, which are formative to the novel's expression of Stephen's subjectivity. *Portrait* is "preeminently an ironic novel" given the fraying possibilities of the ending. For a different account of the diary form itself, c.f. Philippe Lejeune's distinction between the diary as on-going, without closure or intention to finish, and the autobiography. "Autogenesis: Genetic Studies of Autobiographical texts" in Deppman et al eds., *Genetic Criticism: Texts and Avant-Texts*, 193-217.

48. Esty 146-7.

49. Jed Esty, "Global Lukacs," *Novel: A Forum on Fiction.* Fall 2009. 42:3, 366-372.

50. These heterochronic and dilated time-scheme of modernist novels, Esty argues, made for "a more critical and more dialectical rejoinder to the Hegelian developmental imperative than did the experimental modes of the historical avant-garde, whose counterdiscursive strikes against the ideology of progress have been, in the long run, more easily assimilated and commodified or dismissed as an encapsulated radical burst" (201).

Chapter Four

1. On the issue of reading as cultural training, see John Guillory's essay "The Ethical Practice of Modernity: The Example of Reading" in *The Turn to Ethics*, eds. Garber et al. (New York: Routledge, 2000). Guillory distinguishes the reading practices of the professional reader from that of the "lay reader," following Bourdieu that reading and the skill involved are more or less institutionally determined. As the last section argues, Doris Lessing's postulation of a universal standard of reexamination required of every individual abnegates the sociological forces at work in a readership.

2. Doris Lessing, *The Golden Notebook* (1962) (New York: Harper Collins, 1994). Subsequent references will be made as *Notebook*.

3. Otto Jespersen, *The System of Grammar* (London: G. Allen & Unwin LTD, 1933), 29.

4. Otto Jespersen, *The Philosophy of Grammar* (1924) (Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press, 1992), 212.

5. Fredric Jameson, *Marxism and Form: Twentieth-Century Dialectical Theories of Literature* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1971), 219.

6. Liddell and Scotts, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*, 7th edition (1889) (New York: Oxford UP, 2000), 701.

7. Jespersen, *Philosophy*, 212.

8. The general definition of tenor/vehicle derived from I.A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1936) (New York: Routeledge, 2001).

9. Lodge, *After Bakhtin: Essays on Fiction and Criticism* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 43.

10. Ibid.

11. As Ian Watt says, realism is formal in so far as the term refers not to a doctrine but to a set of narrative procedures commonly found in the novel and not in other genres. While it is impossible to pin down a causational relationship between the realist tradition in philosophy and novelistic realism, they must be seen as "parallel manifestations" of the vast civilizational change from a unified world view to an aggregate of particular individuals having particular experience at particular times. Formal realism narratively embodies the world view that early eighteenth-century novelists accepted, that the novel is a "full and authentic report of human experience." Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1957), 32. It is easy to find echoes of the broader thesis about paradigmatic changes in Western Civilization from coherent cosmos to individuation in the tradition of Marxist thought, from Habermas's *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* or, as I will go on to show, Bakhtin. Watt's unique and enduring contribution, then, has to do with identifying the novel's reportage function within the structural view of the changing world of the individual and her experience.

12. It is possible to understand Lodge's claim about postmodern works and reportage – his investment in Bakhtin's idea of the liberating, "illocutionary force" of the literary – as a more specifically historicized, contemporary diagnosis that in essence rehearses Watt's argument. Along the lines of Lodge's argument, Robert Alter makes an interesting distinction between "artful novels" whose narration is driven by artifice (Conrad, Madox Ford) and the "self-conscious novel" (Cervantes, Sterne, Diderot, Gide, Nabokov) whose narrator seeks to expose artifice. See Robert Alter, *Partial Magic: The Novel as a Self-Conscious Genre* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1975). Alter's analysis focuses on this latter set, which has a vested interest in laying out the typical "novelistic" devices. The other point to note is that the kind of stylistic polemics established by, say, Philip Larkin between vanguard and traditional looks at literature vertically in a single line of dominant moves and recessive reactions. In contradistinction, Lodge (especially as he revises his thesis on metaphoric/metonymic periods into a more nuanced account of metonymic narrative types in the Bakhtin book) and Alter's readings identify the twin impulses governing literature at all times, offering a transhistoric or even historically multiple accounts of style.

13. Lodge, *After Bakhtin*, 58.

14. For a recent reading of the affects of postwar disenchantment, see Susan Brooks, *Literature and Cultural Criticism in the 1950s: The Feeling Male Body* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). For a more general and contemporaneous introduction to the period, see James Gindin, *Postwar British Fiction: New Accents and Attitudes* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1962). For a reading of urban culture in literatures of this period, see Peter J. Kalliney, *Cities of Affluence and Anger: A Literary Geography of Modern Englishness* (Charlottesville, VA: UVA Press, 2006). See also Brian W. Shaffer, *The Blinding Torch: Modern British Fiction and the Discourse of Civilization* (Amherst, U Mass Press, 1993). For a broader historical account, see *The Peculiarities of Liberal Modernity in Imperial Britain*, eds. Simon Gunn and James Vernon (Berkeley: UC Press: 2011). For a fascinating read of the development of historical thinking in England after the war, see Dennis Dworkin, *Cultural Marxism in Postwar Britain: History, the New Left, and the Origins of Cultural Studies* (Durham: Duke UP, 1997). There's no shortage of contemporary British reflections on its own inward turn.

15. The word "Diegesis" traces back to Book 3 of Plato's *Republic*. For a useful introduction that maps Aristotle-Plato-later use of their discursive terms, see John T. Kirby, "Mimesis and Diegesis: Foundations of Aesthetic Theory in Plato and Aristotle," Helios, 18, no. 2 (1991): 113-127. See also the entry "diegesis" in *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory: Approaches, Scholars, Terms*, ed. Irena R. Makaryk (Toronto: U Toronto Press, 1993), 533-4. For an interesting revision of Genette's use of the term, see Remigius Bunia, "Diegesis and Representation: Beyond the Fictional World, on the Margins of Story and Narrative," *Poetics Today* 31, no. 4 (Winter 2010): 679- 720.

16. Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (1972), trans. Jane Lewin, Ithaca, NY: Cornell U Press, 1980, page 29. Todorov defines the story as the chronological events that occur, while plot/narrative is their arrangement. Tzvetan Todorov, "The Categories of Literary Narrative" (1966) trans. Joseph Kestner, *Papers on Language and Literature* 16:3-36.

17. In Genette's schema of narrative discourse, *analepsis* is a function of tense. He defines these mechanisms more or less only in terms of Proust's narratives, so the particular taxonomies are not too applicable. But the dynamic movement between the taxonomies, Genette's definition of how one set of operative unit relates to another, translate well.

18. Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 213.

19. Ibid, 86.

20. Ibid, 92.

21. For feminist treatments of Lessing's work, see: Patricia Waugh, *Feminine Fictions: Revisiting the Postmodern (*London: Routledge, 1989); Rita Felski, *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change* (Cambridge: Harvard UP 1989); Lee T. Lemon, *Portraits of Artists in Contemporary Fiction* (Lincoln: Univ. Nebraska Press, 1985). Lessing is notorious for her rejection of feminist labeling of her work, e.g. stated unambiguously in her 1971 introduction: "this novel was not a trumpet for Women's Liberation." It is not that she rejects second-wave feminism, to which much of her reputation is indebted; she worries rather that the larger ambition of her work can be eclipsed by being pigeon-holed.

22. It wouldn't be too hard to make the leap to an elemental psychoanalytic thinking here, and indeed Lessing was heavily influenced by psychoanalysis before she moved onto Sufism.

23. Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 222.

24. Ibid, 227.

25. Linda Nochlin, *Realism* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 104. She writes, "For Romantics, 'being of one's time' implied a broad spectrum of far-from-consistent values […] a relativist position, which, as George Boas pointed out, found its ultimate ideological sanction in the periodicity of history itself." In so far as conscious aesthetic strategies are concerned, Nochlin broadly identifies three means by which realist artists and writers produce a form that reflects the self-consciousness of its age: using the rhetoric of traditional art or literature to express the aspirations and attitudes of the age; insisting on an un-idealized, concrete experiences of the epoch as a fitting subject matter; conceiving artistic contemporaneity as actually implying being in advance of its own time. These are familiar paradigms, analogous to the classicist approach, the high realist approach and the avant-garde approach to being in one's time. Indeed, much of literary criticism speaks to fierce debates on the salience of each take on contemporaneity, be it Wordsworth's language of every man, Arnold's culture, Hulme's classicism versus romanticism, or Eliot's tradition.

26. Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Book, 1984), 32-50.

27. Christian Metz popularized the term for film theory. Earlier iteration comes from Etienne Souriau, "Preface" *Lumieres Filmique* (Paris: Flammarion, 1951), 5-10.

28. Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (1953) (Princeton: Princeton UP 2003), 512.

29. Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), ed. Knud Haakonssen (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2002), 12. From Part I "Of the Propriety of Action."

30. Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: the Teachings of Twentieth-century Art Forms* (New York: Methuen, 1985).

31. Hutcheon's is a rather cheery view of satire. Plus, it's unclear whether satire is ameliorative in her account because of its morally-driven character – as if with a Nietzschean distaste for satire ultimately upholding of a belief system – *or* because Hutcheon thinks satire as a form performs critique weakly.

32. Linda Hutcheon, A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory Fiction (New York: Routledge, 1988), 22.

33. For an informative late-70s, critical-studies approach to parody as an auto-referential, textually self-mirroring device, see Margaret Rose, *Parody/Metafiction* (1979). Hutcheon considers Rose's approach as limiting parody to a relationship of art to reality and omitting that of art to art.

34. C.f. Gérard Genette, *Palimpsestes* (Lincoln: Univ Nebraska Press, 1982).

35. Though it may seem strange to consider "intention" with this postmodern generic trait parody, Hutcheon explains, "the ironic distance of modern parody might well come from a loss of that earlier humanist faith in cultural continuity and stability that ensured the sharing of codes necessary to the comprehension of such doubly coded works" (10).

36. Hutceon, *Parody*, 16.

37. Ibid, 23.

38. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (1940), trans. Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968). Periodization is a crucial element of Bakhtin's celebration of parody: "medieval laughter is not a subjective, individual and biological consciousness of the uninterrupted flow of time. It is the social consciousness of all the people" (92), while "the purely formalist literary parody modern times" is negative in character, and thus deprived of the earlier form's regenerating ambivalence. Starting with the renaissance and Cervantes, the bodily begins to take on a private, individual nature, "petty and homely." For Bakhtin, parody's impotence is most acute in the "terrifying world" of the Romantic grotesque: "All that is ordinary, commonplace, belonging to everyday life, and recognized by all suddenly becomes meaningless, dubious and hostile. Our own world becomes an alien world. Something frightening is revealing in that which was habitual and secure[…] If a reconciliation with the world occurs, it takes place in a subjective, lyric or even mystic sphere" (39). As in Bonaventura's "Night

Watches," behind the mask now lurks only "a terrible vacuum, a nothingness." If, in the earlier folk culture, terror was embodied in comic monsters defeated by laughter, the "abstract and spiritual mystery sought by Romanticism" expresses fear of the world and seeks to inspire the reader with the fear. Still, the grotesque of all kinds, even the Romantic subjective form, discloses the "potentiality of an entirely different world."

39. Ibid, 48.

40. Hutcheon, 26.

41. Booth, Wayne. *Rhetoric of Irony* (Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press, 1974), 72.

42. Lessing's first novel, *Grass is Singing*, is made into movie, and Lessing was very familiar with commercial ventures as wrote several scripts for radio plays.

43. Hugh Kenner, *The Sinking Island: The Modern English Writers* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1988), 112.

44. Michael Szonyi, *Cold War Island: Quemoy on the Front Line* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2008), 4. Szonyi's book is unique in compiling an oral history of the daily life of the individuals who lived through the ordeal in Jinmen in terms of agricultural practice, military service, brothels, etc. For a more straightforward account of the timeline and the accompanying policy decisions, see Willem van Kemenade's "Taiwan: Domestic Gridlock, Cross-Strait Deadlock" in *The Washington Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (2001): 55-70, or Zhihua Shen's "Sino-Sovient Relations and the Origins of the Korean War: Stalin's Strategic Goals in the Far East," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 2, no. 2 (2000): 44-68.

45. Ibid, 25.

46. Ibid, 244

47. Lessing identifies a particularly paradoxical nature of contemporary global events, narratively explored much before Baudrillard's *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place* (1995).

48. Anna's experience of events as serious and pardic, both, seems to be channeling Marx's famous claim in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* that history happens twice, first as a tragedy then as a farce.

49. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections of the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983, revised edition reprinted 1991). Particular relevant are chapters 5 and 7 on print culture.

50. Here's what Lessing has to say about the *Bildungsroman* in the "Author's Notes" appended to *Four Gated City*, the last book of the series and published, seventeen years after the first, in 1969: "This book is what the Germans call a *Bildungsroman*. This kind of novel has been out of fashion for some time: which does not mean that there is anything wrong with this kind of novel." That's all there is to it; one has to bow to Lessing's deadpan assertions of fact.

51. As a prime example, consider "die Angst" passage from Rilke's *The Notebooks to Malte Laurids Brigge* and the expression of uncanny unfolding through defamiliarized objects: the fear that the thread at the hem of the blanket may be as sharp as needle, that breadcrumb might turn to glass and shatter, etc.

52. By "subjectification" I mean Lacanian subjectivation, not a kind of egoism, i.e. an acceptance of the ideological and violent premises that condition one's choice.

53. With the caveat that this impersonal construction is of Anna's own subjective doing. C.f. TS Eliot's sense that only those burdened by a personality know what it means to want to escape into impersonality.

54. Of course, this is exactly what *Finnegans Wake* does, assigning pictoral symbols to its characters (⏃ for HCE, △ for ALP, etc.) What Joyce actually does, Anna the author only make banal indicative statements expressing the desire to do so. Aesthetic execution is not possible, though the wishful thinking about its ideal purpose (what a form is supposed to achieve) remains.

55. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism: Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (New York: Verso, 1991), 138. Jameson bases this point on Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which opens with a discussion of "this" and "meaning" of sense certainty.

56. In an interview with Studs Turkel conducted in 1969, Lessing discusses her involvement with social work and psychiatry, outlining her thoughts on the development of drug treatments and the increase in the diagnosis of

schizophrenia; her interest are much medical and sociological than psychological. Studs Turkel, "Learning to Put the Questions Differently" in *Doris Lessing: Conversations*, ed. Earl G. Ingersoll (Princeton: Ontario Review Press, 1994), 19-32.

57. It's important to distinguish Hutcheon's celebratory take on parody at the heart of postmodernism from Jameson's. For Jameson, parody embodies a stylistic heterogeneity while maintaining the norm from which it deviates; parody is thus more descriptive of modernist, polyglot internationalism vis-à-vis national languages, rather than the "postliteracy of the late capitalist world" whose economic strategies can constrain us without imposing speech in the first place. In the latter situation, parody "finds itself without a vocation" and "that strange new thing pastiche slowly comes to take its place." If pastiche, like parody, imitates the surface mask of speech, it practices its mimicry neutrally, without any of parody's ulterior motives: "amputated of the satiric impulse, devoid of laughter and of any conviction that alongside the abnormal tongue you have momentarily borrowed, some healthy linguistic normality still exists. Pastiche is thus blank parody, a statue with blind eyeballs: it is to parody what that other interesting and historically original modern thing, the practice of a kind of blank irony, is to what Wayne Booth calls the 'stable ironies' of the 18th century." This article is later expanded into the seminal book of the same title, published seven years later. Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," *New Left Review* I, no. 146 (July-August 1984): 53-92.

58. Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 150.

59. To elaborate on the "image-culture of the postmodern," narrative (the content as referent) turns out of have been an image all along (materialization of the signified). Like craft-oriented activities whose labor fragmented throughout the industrial revolution, "reading" as an act, Jameson argues, now (in the *nouveau roman*) undergoes "a remarkable specialization," dissociated into distinct processes and made autonomous, albeit in a perverse way. The Luhman-esque textualist aesthetic ideology of the postmodern fine-combs through procedures and patterns produced by the *nouveau roman* (reproduction of external environment – context or referent – within the text-system, replication of internal environment for each subsystem). The signified degrades into its material signifier, no longer able to provide an illusion of transparency. Meaning transforms or "deconceals" into an object, into something already reified and opaque, e.g. the signified event deconcealed into a text that is read, then into a mere typographical space of letters on newsprint: "Here, then, the materialization of the signified by quotation, described above, is replicated diegetically or narratively on the level of the sign as a whole, with new and unexpected results: these passages now lift us from the realm of linguistic problematics and linguistic philosophy into that of image society and the media" (*Postmodernism*, 141).

60. Ibid, 151.

61. Ibid, 147.

62. Ibid, 149.

63. Doris Lessing, *A Small Personal Voice: Essays, Reviews, Interviews*, ed. Paul Schlueter (New York: Knopf, 1974), 37. It is worth quoting it in full: "Dear Student. You are mad. Why spend months and years writing thousands of words about one book, or even one writer, when there are hundreds of books waiting to be read. You don't see that you are a victim of a pernicious system. And if you have yourself chosen my work as your subject, and if you have to write a thesis—and believe me I am very grateful that what I've written is being found useful by you—then why don't you read what I have written and make up your own mind about what you think, testing it against your own life, your own experience. Never mind about Professors White and Black."

64. Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 138.

65. This may be a direct allusion to one of Woolf's last essays written in 1940, "Anon." It is an introductory piece to an incomplete book on "reading at random." See Brenda Silver's introduction and commentary to this work. Brenda R. Silver, "'Anon' and 'The Reader': Virginia Woolf's Last Essays," *Twentieth Century Literature* 25, no. 3/4 (Autumn-Winter, 1989): 356-441.

66. Albert Camus, *Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*, trans. Justin O'Brien (New York: Vintage, 1991, first published by Knopf in 1955), 123.

67. This account of name closel follows Jesperson's description of adjuncts in the *Philosophy of Grammar*, 109.

68. In *The Small Personal Voice*, Lessing writes, "the best and most vital works of Western literature have been despairing elements of emotional anarchy […] the novel or play which one sees or reads with a shudder of horrified pity for all humanity. If writers like Camus, Sartre, Genet, Beckett feel anything but a tired pity for human beings, then it is not evident from their work. I believe the pleasurable luxury of despair, the acceptance of disgust, is as much a betrayal of what a writer should be as the acceptance of the simple economic view of man; both are aspects of cowardice, both of fallings-away from a central vision, the two easy escapes of our time into false innocence" (11-12).

69. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason Volume 1: Theory of Practical Ensembles* (1960), trans. Alan Seridan-Smith (New York: Verso, 2004), 49.

70. On Kierkegaard's treatment of contingency, see David Wood, "Thinking God in the Wake of Kiekegaard" in *Kierkegaard: A Critical Reader*, eds. Rée and Chamberlain (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998), 53-74.

71. Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, 454.

72. Ibid, 276. To expand on how the "alterity of content" informs seriality, alterity is the formula that make a series and is thus a constituent force of it all: "for in everyone, the Other is no longer mere formal difference in identity; in everyone, the Other is a different reaction, other behavior, and everyone is conditioned in the fleeting unity of alterity be these different kinds of behavior of the Other *in so far* as he cannot modify them in the Other. Thus everyone is as effective in his action of the Other as if he had established human relations with him (either direct and reciprocal, or organized), but his passive, indirect action derives from *his very impotence*, in so far as the Other lives it in himself as his own impotence as Other."

73. Ibid, 455.

74. We may even consider this heroic, save for the little caveat that follows: "But in this new moment of his reality (still abstract, because we have not yet run through the moments of alienation and of the practico-insert in the reverse order), he is no more than the common praxis, in so far as it has to be actualised through individual acts which transcend it."

75. This is modeled after Altieri's suggestion that we treat emotions "in adverbialrather than in adjectival terms," as "modifiers of how people act rather than of states people enter" (108). See Charles Altieri, *The Particulars of rapture: an Aesthetics of the Affects* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2003).

76. On aesthetics of alterity as a conflict between novelistic design and characterological autonomy, see Dorothy J. Hale, "Aesthetics and the New Ethics: Theorizing the Novel in the Twenty-First Century," *PMLA* 124, no. 3 (May 2009): 896–905.

77. Jacques Khalip provides a fascinating account of anonymity as a means to retain autonomy and expression of subjectlessness in romanticism. See Jacques Khalip, *Anonymous Life: Romanticism and Dispossession* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2009).

78. Alex Woloch provides an elaborate account of major/minor characters as, say, differentials in the surface area of the narrative space. He theorizes what a character is (the zones and thus the narrative means to distribute attention) and what an individual means in this context (that which emerges out of a cultivating that character-space). Though it is not acknowledged, I believe Woloch shares with Genette and Sartre an interest in thinking the individual as a relationship between structure the allotted position within it. Alex Woloch, *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2003).

79. Gyorg Lukács, *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism*, trans. John and Necke Mander (London: Merlin Press, 1963), 41.

80. Lukaács's point here is not unlike the argument Adorno makes in "Lyric Poetry and Society."

81. In the 1971 introduction to *The Golden Notebook* after a successful first printing, Lessing discloses one of the thematic pressures shaping her novel: "One was that it was not possible to find a novel which described the intellectual and moral climate of a hundred years ago, in the middle of the last century, in Britain, in the way Tolstoy did it for Russia, Stendhal for France. (At this point it is necessary to make the obligatory disclaimers.) To read *The Red and the Black*, and *Lucien Lewen* is to know that France as if one were living there, to read *Anna Karenina* is to know that Russia. *But a very useful Victorian novel never got itself written.* Hardy tells us what it was like to be poor, to have an imagination larger than the possibilities of a very narrow time, to be a

victim. George Eliot is good as far as she goes. But I think the penalty she paid for being a Victorian woman was that she had to be shown to be a good woman even when she wasn't according to the hypocrisies of the time—there is a great deal she does not understand because she is moral. Meredith, that astonishingly underrated writer, is perhaps nearest. Trollope tried the subject but lacked the scope. There isn't one novel that has the vigour and conflict of ideas in action that is in a good biography of William Morris" (xv, emphasis mine).

82. CBC radio has since 1961 commissioned annual lecture series called the Massey Lectures, with notable speakers like MLK ('67) and Willi Brandt ('81). Delivered on university campuses in five cities across Canada, and purported to "brin[g] Canadians some of the greatest minds of our times" to "explor[e] the ideas that make us who we are" – the Massey lectures are emblematic of the desire to put national, intellectual and contemporary cultures in dialogue with each other. Lessings lectures were published as a slender volume.
83. Doris Lessing, *The Prisons We Live Inside* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), 23.
84. J.M. Coetzee, *Stranger Shores: Literary Essays* (New York: Penguin, 2001), 247.
85. Lessing, *Prisons*, 46.
86. Ibid, 43.

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