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**THEIR SYNAPTIC SELVES: MEMORY AND LANGUAGE IN
BECKETT AND JOYCE**

BY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| LIST OF FIGURES | v |
| ABBREVIATIONS | vi |
| ABSTRACT | vii |
| 1. ALTERNATIVE COGNITION | |
| I. <i>Ars memoriae</i> , Recovering Cognition in Literature | 1 |
| II. Salvaging a Laureate | 4 |
| III. Deleuze's Creative Evolution, and The Bergsonism of Beckett and Joyce | 11 |
| 2. SOMETHING IS <i>SLIPPING</i> IN MY HEAD: THE FICTION OF MEMORY IN BECKETT | |
| IV. The State of Memory in Beckett | 19 |
| V. A New Bergsonism in <i>Watt</i> and <i>Endgame</i> | 24 |
| 3. DELETE, INVERT, REPEAT: BECKETT'S <i>WATT</i> AND A RESPONSE TO STEIN | |
| VI. A Forgotten Letter | 36 |
| VII. The Sounds of Poetry, the Sounds of Words | 41 |
| VIII. Re-Reading Beckett | 44 |
| IX. Reading the Referents: Stein and Composition | 47 |
| X. Alternative Readings of <i>Watt</i> : Parody, Allusion, and Response | 48 |
| 4. A DIGESTIVE TRACT, OR A JOURNEY DOWN THE GULLET WITH SHAUN THE POST | |
| XI. Living Language, Written Memory | 55 |
| 5. JOYCE AND THE MEMORY OF NATION: FORGING AND FORGETTING NATIONALISM IN <i>FINNEGANS WAKE</i> | |
| XII. Memory and Nation | 63 |
| XIII. Forging and Forgetting | 66 |
| XIV. Prejoycing | 70 |
| 6. CONCLUSION | |
| XV. Some Miracle of Analogy? | 74 |
| REFERENCES | 77 |
| NOTES | 83 |
| BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH | 87 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. Bergson's 'pure memory' to 'perception' scale from <i>Matter and Memory</i> | 3 |
| 2. Bergson's Memory Cones from <i>Matter and Memory</i> | 10 |
| 3. Speech Centers in the left hemisphere of the brain | 16 |
| 4. Diagram of Jonathan Swift's literary machine from Ladago in <i>Gulliver's Travels</i> | 72 |

ABBREVIATIONS

Samuel Beckett's

| | |
|---|-----|
| <i>Play</i> | CSP |
| <i>Proust</i> | P |
| "German Letter of 1937" <i>Disjecta</i> | |

Henri Bergson's

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| <i>Creative Evolution</i> | CE |
| <i>The Creative Mind</i> | CM |
| <i>Matter and Memory</i> | MM |
| <i>Time and Free Will</i> | TFW |

Maurice Blanchot's

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| <i>Faux Pas</i> | FP |
|-----------------|----|

Seamus Deane's

| | |
|--|------|
| <i>Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature</i> | NC&L |
| <i>Strange Country</i> | SC |

Gilles Deleuze's

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| <i>Difference and Repetition</i> | D&R |
|----------------------------------|-----|

James Joyce's

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| <i>Ulysses</i> | U |
| <i>Finnegans Wake</i> | FW |

Richard Kearney's

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| <i>Postnational Ireland</i> | PnI |
|-----------------------------|-----|

Giordano Bruno

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| <i>Cause, Principle, & Unity</i> | CPU |
|--------------------------------------|-----|

ABSTRACT

This project is an attempt to reexamine the linguistic shifts that memory events force in Beckett and Joyce, specifically how spatialization and mapping affect memory in the work these authors. By considering the headway made by contemporary thinkers and writers, such as Bergson (and later writers such as Deleuze), we can come to understand better the complex and elusive approaches through which these authors transformed the way we use language and read texts today. This study is set up as a companion to how each of these authors deals with memory and its role in language—memory and language are not things, but events. Chapter two focuses on Beckett’s engagement with Bergsonian notions of space, time, and duration as they relate to the specific instances or events of memory (or a *glissade* or slippage) as we might read Beckett informed by both Bergson and Alain Badiou’s concept of “evental sites.” Chapter three examines the intent and impetus behind Beckett’s “language of the unword,” and how it relates directly to issues of memory and the brain. We will see how specific language acts (in this case serial repetition) unseat the received meaning or Bergsonian “habit-memory” of the word (in effect, creating a moment of slippage) to find the *something* or *nothing* that hides or lurks behind the barrier created by the *word*. As the memory event occurs, or rather fails to occur in *Watt*, we see a correlative shift in language. As memory is disturbed, so is Watt’s mental capacity to communicate. The operational memory (of words) turns his language into something nearly unintelligible. As a counterpart to Beckett’s approach to memory, chapter four discusses a specific (though endemic) instance of Joyce’s approach to transformative language, wherein as language is remembered, it becomes literalized first through text, and then through the consumed body as an attempt (and failure) of creating a permanently accurate memory through an act of concretized language, specifically writing. Chapter five, then, turns to Joyce’s vastly different approach to spatialized memory (specifically the act of *forgetting*), as he fraudulently inscribes it on the history of his nation.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

ALTERNATIVE COGNITION

There is no single, definitive “stream of consciousness,” because there is no central Headquarters, no Cartesian Theatre where “it all comes together” for the perusal of a Central Meaner. Instead of such a single stream (however wide), there are multiple channels in which specialist circuits try, in parallel pandemoniums, to do their various things, creating Multiple Drafts as they go. Most of these fragmantery drafts of “narrative” play short-lived roles in the modulation of current activity but some get promoted to further funtional roles, in swift succession, by the activity of a virtual machine in the brain. The seriality of this machine (its “von Neumannesque” character) is not a “hard-wired” design feature, but rather the upshot of a succession of coalitions of these specialists.

—Daniel Dennett, *Consciousness Explained*

...the only world that has reality and significance, the world of our own latent consciousness.

—Samuel Beckett, *Proust*

I. ARS MEMORIAE, RECOVERING COGNITION IN LITERATURE

In his 1997 study of *How the Mind Works*, Steven Pinker calls the 1990s “the Decade of the Brain” (24). While no one would contest that the 90s have certainly been a decade of great interest and advances in cognitive neurology, bio-neuroscience or neuro-linguistic pathologies, marking the *nineteen-nineties* the decade is somewhat limiting. He does give considerable space to Richard Dawkins, Stephen Jay Gould, and, of course, Charles Darwin (and he even mentions René Descartes twice), but Pinker overlooks the history of neuro-research in the earlier parts of this century—including 13 Nobel Prizes (11 shared) and 23 recipients before 1990. In fact, it is strange that the 1990s hold such a special place for Pinker, since no laureates in neuroscience or neurology were awarded in the 1990s, and after 1981 only three have been, all of which were in 2000.¹ Apart from these phsyio and medical awards at least one other scientist-philosopher won the Nobel for work on neurology: Henri

Bergson. However, like Freud, who was awarded the Goethe literary prestige prize (1930) despite his work in cognition and neurology, Bergson received the Nobel Prize neither in Physiology nor Medicine, but in Literature (1946).

Although Pinker discusses thinkers and writers from Galileo to H.L. Mencken, he never refers to Bergson. While issues of cognition date back to Descartes, by overlooking Bergson, Pinker (like many others in this field, including Daniel Dennett and António Damasio) is only creating new metaphors for old concepts. Take, for instance, the discussion that Pinker forms around the role of the eye in cognitive image formation (155-159). The primacy of the image in meaning making is something that Gilles Deleuze discusses in detail regarding Bergson's construction of memory images. The inclusion of the eye (biologically) and the imagistic description (figuratively) are key parts of Pinker explanation of the computational theory of the mind:

It says that beliefs and desires are information, incarnated as configurations of symbols. The symbols are the physical states of bits of matter, like chips in a computer or neurons in the brain. They symbolize the thing in the world because they are triggered by those things via our sense organs, and because of what they do once they are triggered. (25)

This description of the brain as an incarnated configurer of symbols sounds strikingly like the description that Bergson sets out in the third chapter of *Matter and Memory*, "Of the Survival of Images,"² over a century earlier in 1896:

Psychical life, then, is entirely summed up in these two elements, sensation and image. And as, on the one hand, this theory drowns in the image the pure memory which makes the image into an original state, and, on the other hand, brings the image yet closer to perception by putting into perception, in advance, something of the image itself, it ends by finding between these two states only a difference of degree, or of intensity. [...] *To picture* is not to *remember*. No doubt a recollection, as it becomes actual, tends to live in an image; but the converse is not true, and the image, pure and simple, will not be referred to the past unless, indeed, it was in the past that I sought it, thus following the continuous progress which brought it from darkness into light. This is what psychologists too often forget when they conclude, from the fact

that a remembered sensation becomes more actual the more we dwell upon it, that the memory of the sensation is the sensation itself beginning to be. (172-174)

Perception, for Bergson is thus never only a contact of the mind with a present object. Perception is, rather, impregnated with ‘memory images,’ which complete it as they interpret it. The memory image, in Bergson’s rationale, partakes of the ‘pure memory,’ which it begins to concretize, and of the perception in which it tends to embody itself (see **figure 1**). From this point of view, we might define Bergson’s perception as a nascent perception.

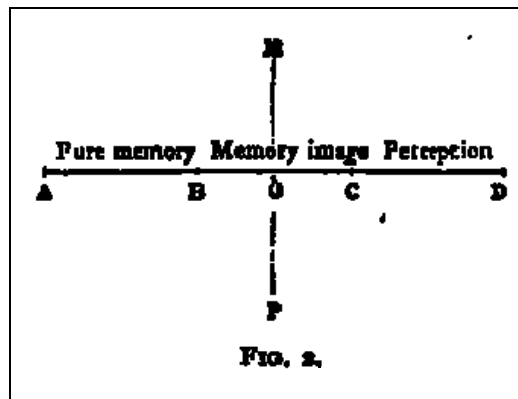


figure 1: Bergson’s sliding scale of Pure Memory through the Memory Image to Perception (MM 132).

Although these memory images do not use a modern metaphor like the computer, Bergson’s interconnected description of sensation to image to memory, and vice versa, speak to the same notions to which Pinker posits in his text. Why then should we continue to ignore Bergson’s contributions to this field.

We can, of course, identify some practical reasons behind Bergson’s disappearance; as the 20th century reached the halfway point a new wave of philosophers, including Merleau-Ponty and Sartre, appeared in France. As with any new generation, the successors felt the need to distance themselves from the previous school of dominant thought, which, in this case, was Bergson’s tradition. Perhaps more damning to Bergson’s legacy was the interest that arose in phenomenology immediately after the appearance of the successive generation of French philosophers. The post-WWII German school of phenomenology, particularly the Husserlian and Heideggerian brands, contributed largely to this move away from Bergsonism.

This interest in phenomenology coupled with Bergson's suspicion of language might have signaled the end Bergson's importance in French philosophy.

For Bergson, language was the equivalent of the symbol. Symbols, as we will see in Bergson's concept of intuition, interrupt the flow of duration (*durée*), and this division leads to illusions. The newer cohort of French critics and philosophers, such as Jacques Derrida, who—following in the footsteps of Martin Heidegger—claims that language and the word are paramount, could not have warmly received this type of criticism of language. As Derrida famously puts it: “there is nothing outside the text” (158). We have seen, however, a recent renaissance of Bergsonism, spearheaded by Gilles Deleuze. And, as we will see, Deleuze's own thoughts are clearly under the influence of Bergson, specifically multiplicity and duration (which form the basis of Deleuze's becomings, as we see Deleuze setup *becoming* opposed to *duration* in *Difference & Repetition* (239)). Additionally, Bergson's criticism of the concept of negation in *Creative Evolution* (a critique of the Hegelian negative dialectic) must have been attractive to Deleuze, as it provided the basis of an alternative to Heideggerian phenomenological thought. Here Deleuze gives us new ways of discussing the effects of memory on language, wherein we can begin to see the complex ways that writers incorporate memory in their work—specifically those contemporary to Bergson: namely James Joyce and Samuel Beckett.

II. SALVAGING A LAUREATE

To understand more clearly Bergson's role in literary works on, or incorporating, memory, we should first re-examine some of the primary areas of Bergson's philosophy, specifically those that Deleuze focuses on: issues of Multiplicity and Duration; duration as it explains the use of Intuition as a Method; and intuition to substantiate the monism of memory, and explain Perception's Role in Memory. According to Deleuze, the concept of multiplicity has two fates in the 20th century: Bergsonism and phenomenology. The established phenomenological approach says that the multiplicity of phenomena is always related to a cohesive consciousness. Deleuze contrasts this concept with his Bergsonian notion that consciousness is always a multiplicity (*Bergsonism* 117-118). It might be that the most fundamental difference between these two can be found in the prepositions: the locative *to*, and possessive *of*. The latter phrase that we find in the title of Bergson's first work: *Time and Free Will: An*

Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness. In many ways, *Time and Free Will* attacks Kant's concept of freedom; Bergson offers a response to Kant's confusion of the location of freedom outside of Time and Space: he proposes that time and space be differentiated, and through that differentiation, we can find that the "immediate data of consciousness" is temporal—there is no juxtaposition of events in duration (*durée*), and, thus no causality. Therefore, he claims, that only in duration can we speak of experienced freedom. Freedom is equally important to Beckett's own concept of consciousness; Gontarski and Ackerley's *The Grove Companion to Samuel Beckett* ascribe this key aspect to Beckett's concept of consciousness deriving from Arnold Geulincx (110), but it might well stem from equal parts Occasionalist philosophy and Bergson's critique of Kant.

I begin here with Bergson's discussion of duration in *TFW*, and move forward through *The Creative Mind* and *Matter and Memory*. We can see the evolution of Bergson's concept of duration at each juncture. Initially, in *TFW*, duration is a qualitative, not quantitative, multiplicity. He provides a number of examples of quantitative multiplicities, such as a flock of sheep. While looking at a flock, we see that they are homogeneous. However, we can count the sheep, despite their homogeneity, because each sheep is spatially separated from the rest, each occupies a specific spatial location. Quantitative multiplicities are always represented by homogeneous and spatial symbols (*TFW* 76-77). Qualitative multiplicities, as in duration, are always already heterogeneous and temporal. Bergson explains this via our moral feeling of sympathy. This complex feeling incorporates a number of concurrent though potentially adverse emotions: empathy, abhorrence, horror, pity, pain, and humility. Bergson calls this feeling "a qualitative progress," which takes place as a "transition from repugnance to fear, from fear to sympathy, and from sympathy itself to humility" (*TFW* 18-19). This feeling illustrates the heterogeneity of feelings without one's negating or superceding the other.

Since qualitative multiplicities are heterogeneous and interconnected; they cannot be represented symbolically, and, for Bergson, are thus inexpressible (though he contradicts this with the images in *The Creative Mind*). Because this interconnection expresses mobility, duration is then a type of freedom. In *The Creative Mind*, Bergson provides a familiar image to explain duration and qualitative multiplicities: two spools, with a tape running between them, one spool unwinding the tape, the other winding it up (164-65). According to Bergson, the future decreases as we age, while the past increases proportionally. This image shows how

the continuity of experiences operates without juxtaposition. Duration is a continuity of progress and heterogeneity that conserves the past.

I use the phrase ‘familiar image’ intentionally, as it should call to mind the wearish, purple nosed, unshaven image of Krapp as he sits over his spooling tape machine in Beckett’s *Krapp’s Last Tape*. This example that Bergson provides to explain that memory conserves the past (and that this conservation does not imply that one experiences the past the same way every time, but differently at each new point of experience) is the same that we see Beckett unfold on stage as Krapp experiences his memory simultaneously with the event of hearing the memory (along with his other activities that are part of the future’s past). For Bergson, one moment is added to the older ones, and the next moment is added onto all the other old ones plus the one that came immediately before—not unlike the growing boxes of tapes that Krapp accrues between his 31st and 69th birthdays. The past is larger at the current moment than it was at the previous moment. This spooling image should imply that duration is memory: the mobile and connected prolongation of the past into the present. This image (along with his other examples of the color spectrum and an elastic band) is always incomplete, however. Bergson claims that no image can represent duration, because the image is immobile, while duration is “pure mobility” (*CM* 165). These images and their representative concepts—“the unrolling of our duration in certain aspects resembles the unity of a movement which progresses, in others, a multiplicity of states spreading out” (*CM* 165)—show us that duration actually has as much to do with unity as it does multiplicity.

This dual nature of duration carries over into Bergson’s method of intuition as well. Again, in opposition to Kant’s dismissal of absolute knowledge, Bergson relies on a method of intuition to re-establish the possibility of absolute knowledge and metaphysics. Intuition, for Bergson, does not consist in choosing between concepts or in taking sides with specific schools of philosophy like rationalism and empiricism or idealism and realism. According to Bergson, our intelligence is guided by needs, and therefore the knowledge that intelligence gathers is relative knowledge; intelligence gathers knowledge through “analysis,” or the division of objects or situations according to perspective. Analytic knowledge, in turn, consists of the reconstruction, or *re-composition*, of an object or situation by synthesizing multiple perspectives. Although this synthesis satisfies needs, it never produces the thing itself, rather only a general concept of that object or situation (*CM* 175-76).

Intuition, then, is the reverse of the standard or rational intelligence process. Bergson explains in the fourth chapter of *Matter and Memory* that this difficult reversal, or “turn of experience,” is the instance of human experience (184). Intuition, then, is a type of experience, akin to the example he gives us of putting ourselves in the place of others, or, as Bergson calls it in *The Creative Mind*, “sympathy” (CM 159). Bergsonian intuition is the entering into a situation, rather than the circumventing of it—this engagement provides absolute knowledge. Intuition is “seiz[ing] ourselves from within,” but with an auto-sympathy that develops heterogeneously into others; as we sympathize with ourselves, we understand a “certain well defined tension, whose very determinateness seems like a choice between an infinity of possible durations” (CM 185).

Bergson offers the example of the color spectrum image to illustrate intuition, which is always already an intuition of duration. By imagining that orange is the only color, and entering into it, we can sympathize with it and thus sense that we are caught between the poles of red and yellow. By trying to perceive orange, we *sense* the array of orangish shades. The more effort we make, the more sense we have of its spectrum. By understanding one color and its spectrum, we can sense all of the other connective colors. Again, if we sympathize with our own duration, we can sense the variety of shades in duration. The intuition of duration allows us to contact a continuum of durations, which, with degrees of effort, leads up to metaphysical spirit or down to base matter (CM 187). Intuition is a type of understanding of what is other, because intuition is a “component part” or “partial expression” (CM 170). Intuition never provides absolute knowledge of the whole of the duration, only its component parts. Its goal, however, seems to be to imply an infinitely interconnected continuum of durations. Since Bergson’s intuition is composed of a series of acts, each corresponding to a degree of duration, the method is our understanding of those relationships and connections, or the series of acts (CM 171-72). The method, then, comes to resemble that of a painter who can see both how each color fits next to the other on the pallet as well as how they all work together on the canvas.

If we understand the concept and method of intuition, then we can confront everyday situations that appear dualistic or polar, and see the unifying elements within them—like with the color spectrum—and by understanding as a unified memory, we can see duration’s continuous heterogeneity. Intuition, for Bergson, is not perception, but memory. In the classic

philosophical tradition, problems have generally centered around external perception, that is, the opposition of representation and the thing itself (or idea of a thing). Bergson's theory of "pure perception," laid out in the first chapter of *Matter and Memory*, however, sets out to prove that the knowledge of objects or situation events—in an ideal state—happens within the things it represents.

Since Bergson says that we are only able to sense images, he explains perception in terms of images as they seem to be in an intermediate position between "realism and idealism" (*MM* 26). By using the image, he is able to dismiss the notion that matter is a thing that can produce representations for us. The image does differ from representation, but its character is not fundamentally different from representation (nor is matter); the image is *less* than a thing but *more* than a representation. These qualifying *lesses* and *mores* mark the difference in degree of these three, but not a difference of kind. Perception, then, takes part in a continuum of degree, where it is congruent with images of matter, and is connected to the real.

According to Bergson, as we perceive, the image of matter becomes a representation, but representation is always a virtual image. In perception, there is a transition from the image as being in itself to its being for a perceiver; it adds nothing new to the image though. In a way, the transition degrades the image: as Bergson explains, the transition from image to pure perception is "in the etymological sense of the word, discernment," that is, a segmentation or selection; this selection is a suppression of things physically unnecessary resulting in conscious representation; the conscious perception displays a "necessary poverty" (*MM* 38). Although Bergson claims that we perceive things in the objects or events, the necessary poverty of perception means that it cannot define intuition. Intuition is fundamentally unrepresentative. Bergson attempts to ameliorate this inconsistency in the third chapter of *Matter and Memory*:

[...] if you abolish my consciousness, the material universe subsists exactly as it was; only, since you have removed that particular rhythm of duration which was the condition of my action upon things, these things draw back into themselves, mark as many moments in their own existence as science distinguishes in it; and sensible qualities, without vanishing, are spread and diluted in an incomparably more divided duration. Matter thus resolves itself

into numberless vibrations, all linked together in uninterrupted continuity, all bound up with each other, and traveling in every direction like shivers through an immense body. In short, try first to connect together the discontinuous objects of daily experience; then resolve the motionless continuity of their qualities into vibrations on the spot; finally, fix your attention on these movements, by abstracting from the divisible space which underlies them and considering only their mobility (that undivided act which our consciousness becomes aware of in our own movements): you will thus obtain a vision of matter, fatiguing perhaps for your imagination, but pure, and freed from all that the exigencies of life compel you to add to it in external perception. Now bring back consciousness, and with it the exigencies of life: at long, very long, intervals, and by as many leaps over enormous periods of the inner history of things, quasi-instantaneous views will be taken, views which this time are bound to be pictorial, and of which the more vivid colours will condense an infinity of elementary repetitions and changes. In just the same way the multitudinous successive positions of a runner are contracted into a single symbolic attitude, which our eyes perceive, which art reproduces, and which becomes for us all the image of a man running. (*MM* 208-209)

The way in which we can overcome the failure of all images of duration is the same way in which we see intuition described: as motile degrees along a continuum—those numberless vibrations or shivers. The experience described in this passage is not a perception of matter, but a memory of matter. Bergsonian intuition is always already a memory.

As with method, Bergson sees the word *memory* as a mixture of two distinct types of memories: the ‘habit-memory,’ which, through repetition, establishes certain automatic behaviors or sensory-motor mechanisms; and ‘pure memory,’ which is unconscious personal memories. That is, ‘habit-memory’ is aligned with bodily perception, while ‘pure memory’ is something we encounter. Bergson illustrates this with the image of the memory cone (see **figure 2**) twice in the third chapter of *Matter and Memory* (152 and 162).

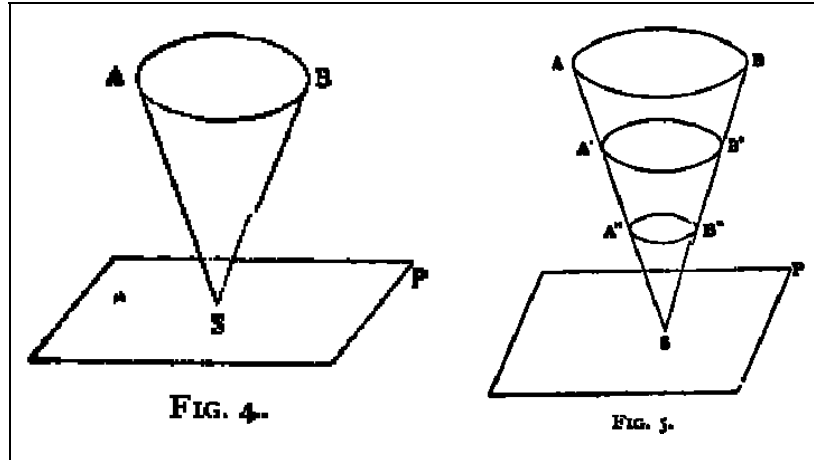


figure 2: Bergson's Memory Cones

The plane, plane *P*, as Bergson calls it, is the “plane of my actual representation of the universe” (*MM* 152). The cone *SAB*, of course, is supposed to represent pure memory (or what Deleuze refers to as regressive memory). At the cone's base, *AB*, are unconscious memories, which emerge spontaneously, such as dreams. As the cone narrows, an indefinite numbers of different regions of the past are ordered by their distance or nearness to the present, as we can see in the horizontal lines bisecting the second cone. At the point of the cone, *S*, is the image of the body focused into a point of present perception, which is inserted into the plane: the image of the body, then, participates in the plane of representation of the universe. This image, above all, should symbolize the dynamic processes or mobility of memories. Since memories move down the cone from the past to the present perception and action, we should understand that pure memory in Bergson is progressive or motile. This progressive movement of memory as a whole takes place, according to Bergson, between the extremes of the immobile base of pure memory and the plane of action. Conscious thinking, then, occurs when pure memory moves down into singular images.

III. DELEUZE'S CREATIVE EVOLUTION, AND THE BERGSONISM OF BECKETT AND JOYCE

For our purposes here, Deleuzian Bergsonism can be separated into five major categories that Brian Massumi denotes as: anti-Cartesian monism, duration, connectionism, anti-representationalism, and selectionism. We should focus on the last section of Deleuze's categories. Here Deleuze leads us to a way of understanding the process by which Joyce and Beckett incorporate the event of memory in their work—an event of transition or transformation. Consciousness, for Deleuze, is a product of the process of selection. However, unlike Bergson's, Deleuze's process has two primary elements that stand apart from the 'realism and idealism' that Bergson refers to in *Matter and Memory*; for Deleuze these components, or concepts, are *the virtual* and *the actual*, or the virtual world beyond experience, and the world actualized via experience. Deleuze, like Bergson, is on guard against Kantian or Cartesian notions of these words; he uses them not as a binary or dichotomy, but as interconnected and solid aspects of process. There is no mysterious cogito or any phenomenal experiences in Deleuze's schema. Neither is privileged over the other, and they are equally material. The actual, though, is a subset of the virtual.

In Deleuze's scheme, the aspects of the surrounding world that are actualized are those of organic interest that initiate a connection between sensation and memory in such a way that a consciousness is actualized. During this actualization two things happen: certain surroundings are acknowledged as being of interest, and then a new entity emerges (as the body and brain coordinate with the surrounding environment); that entity is the selection, or *event*, of consciousness. The virtual is, in turn, the entire moving material universe. Deleuze falls in line with Bergson regarding this notion: he says, "the images which surround us will appear to turn toward our body the side, emphasized by the light upon it, which interests our body" (*MM* 36). In *Bergsonism* Deleuze makes (more plainly) almost the same point: "by virtue of the cerebral interval, in effect, a being can retain from the material object and the actions issuing from it only those elements that interest him ... it is not the object *plus* something, but the object minus something, minus everything that does not interest us" (24-25). The virtual not only acts on our bodies, but also enters the body through contact with the senses. The body, through its own virtual complexity, builds system upon system toward the

brain and nervous system; thus our digestive and respiratory systems first interact with a taste or smell, which is then transferred through the nervous system, and processed by the brain providing us with a memory of that specific taste or smell. The same is true of images and the eye. This system completes the machine that actualizes consciousness by selecting things, objects, or events of relevance for the conscious exercise of will. The body responds to this exchange by generating a multitude of possible thoughts, actions, and utterances.

Paolo Marrati uses Deleuze's *D&R*³ to explain further Bergson's concept of *élan vital* (or vital force),⁴ which provides a "systematic conceptualization of this Bergsonian insight" crucial to Deleuze's own philosophy:

Deleuze compares, and opposes, two pairs of concepts: the possible and the real, on the one hand, and the actual and the virtual, on the other. Between the possible and the real there is a perfect resemblance: each one of them is the mirror image of the other. The only difference between them is the category of existence: the real exists, but the possible does not, or not yet. But precisely because existence does not conceptually add anything new to its own possibility, it becomes impossible to account for it; paradoxically speaking, existence becomes irrelevant, the shadow of a pre-given possibility. By contrast, the conceptual pair of the virtual and the actual displays a very different logic. First of all, the virtual and the actual are both real, that is, they are different modalities of reality. Secondly, the passage from the virtual to the actual, what Deleuze calls *actualization*, is not governed by any resemblance. The virtual and the actual do not resemble each other. The very process of actualization is here one of *differentiation*. From this perspective, existence does make a difference: it implies a creative process of differentiation. (1109)

During Deleuze's attempt to recover Bergson's idea of *élan vital*, chiefly in *Bergsonism*, the concept and the term both underwent a change by Deleuze. This 'force' would no longer be a type of mystical or elusive force acting on animal matter; *élan vital*, for Deleuze, becomes the substance in which the difference between organic and inorganic matter is unclear, and the emergence of life unresolvable. Duration is no longer intangible, but something that is material and solid

In a similar way Joyce and Beckett actualize a memory event; here, however, the actualization comes through specific and separate types of spatialization. The Beckettian and Joycean memory is no longer an intangible idea, but a concrete thing, be it organic, as in Beckett's case, or material writing (and the body) for Joyce. Moreover, the way that Beckett and Joyce spatialize memory forces a linguistic shift or transformation. The spatialized memory forces language to shift or transform into a type of representative image. This shift can either be concretized, as in the case of Joyce's specifically preternational Hiberno-Dublin images, or the transubstantiated texts his characters create; or abstractly as is the case with Beckett's creation of aphasic and amnesic characters who render language porous. The moment, or event, of actualization is where the memory slips for these writers. The virtual surroundings become literal in some cases and even more elusively figurative in others. Daniel Dennett and Marcel Kinsbourne, in "Time and the Observer: The Where and When of Consciousness in the Brain," explain this spatialization of memory events in their model of a Multiple Draft memory. For Dennett and Kinsbourne, the action of memory is not a linear system that builds on progressive elements until a whole memory is achieved, rather the memory event is a synchronous accessing of disparate memory elements. These elements are not necessarily connected in a rational way, but are instead triggered by the associations that they have with the event at hand. These elements are then mapped onto specific associative triggers to form a spatialization of that memory event. They explain this concept thus,

We perceive—and remember—perceptual events, not a successively analyzed trickle of perceptual elements or attributes locked into succession as if pinned into place on a continuous film. Different attributes of events are indeed extracted by different neural facilities at different rates, (e.g. location versus shape versus color) and people, if asked to respond to the presence of each one in isolation, would do so with different latencies, depending on which it was, and on other well-explored factors. The relative timing of inputs plays a necessary role in determining the information or content in experience, but it is not obligatorily tied to any stage or point of time during central processing. How soon we can respond to one in isolation, and how soon to the other, does not exactly indicate what will be the temporal relationship of the two in percepts that incorporate them both. (245)

In both *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, we see this spatialization in two ways. The location event, and its counterpart memory are tied directly to the place itself. Consider the Nighttown episode, which is a series of seemingly random memories but is a continual confluence of disparate memory events based on the surroundings of Stephan or Bloom—each encounters the same environs and experience similar memories, but in different latencies. These memories occur when the characters interact with or arrive at the physical locale (the mapped space) that coincides with that memory event. The surreal, geographic location is important here as well. Without the environs and their inhabitants, this type of free memory association would not occur.

The locative mapped becomes more literalized in *Finnegans Wake* as the phantasmal Ireland, and Dublin specifically (or the superimposed body of the Earwicker [HCE] over Dublin as John Bishop suggests in *the Book of the Dark*), as the specific and mythic locations, and their tenants, correspond to the created memory events. The Black Pool and the Pale (both geographic Dublin) location-images allow the avatars to shift quickly back and forth between those Gaelic (*dubh linn*) and those Norse (*djúp lind*); both the Gaelic and the Norse are contained within the remembered word Dublin (before it become *Baile Átha Cliath*). As the characters or avatars move from one geographic location to another within any of the phantasmagorical Irelands (i.e. Éire, Tara, Tír na Nóg, etc) or actual Ireland, the places instigate specific hiberno-cultural memory events in which the avatars participate in various degrees. This happens on the literal level in the *Wake* as the memory of Shem and Shaun is transfigured into actual bodies and missive texts. Dennett and Kinsbourne's notion of memory drafts—the concurrent operation of multiple memories and versions of those memories—speaks not only to the act of writing itself, in which both Shem and Shaun participate, but also to the concurrent and recurrent (or accordioned events) that move the characters and situations from *Ulysses* into a permuted form in *Finnegans Wake*. The memories of Shem and Shaun (and originally Anna Livia Plurabelle) are transcribed onto a letter text, and then, in turn, are inscribed on the transubstantiated bodies of Jesus Christ and Giordano Bruno. The memory event in Joyce transforms language into matter: body and text, or word made flesh.

In Beckett, we discover almost the opposite, the word removed from both flesh and memory. During the transformative actualization, the integral memory component of language slips away from the Beckettian character. As we see with the repeated concern on

Hamm's part that "something is dripping in [his] head," as if language has fallen out of the Beckettian character's head. This actualization seems almost like a departure from Deleuzian consciousness, but is merely another moving memory material in his larger virtual world—a different agrammatical type of neuro-communication, with which only some are afflicted and fewer can understand.

Of Beckett's neurologically impaired characters the most famous is, of course, *Waiting for Godot's* Lucky. All too often the quick, and unqualified, prognosis that critics assign to Lucky is aphasia, which has, in turn, become something of a catchall term for describing issues of speech disorders in literature in general and Beckett specifically. This type of logorrhoea, or an uncontrolled and excessive flow of words, is what we find in Lucky's speech; this almost sociopathic logorrhoea is far beyond the type of 'word salad' text created by Alan Sokal in his satirical pseudoscientific paper, "Transgressing the Boundaries: Toward a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity," published in the postmodern cultural studies journal *Social Text* in 1996.

We know that Beckett had a penchant for using esoteric medical terminology in a very precise and exact fashion—one need only flip through *More Pricks than Kicks* with a medical cyclopedia at the ready, or remember Willie's pun on "formication" in *Happy Days* to see the breadth and depth of Beckett's knowledge of these terms. So why do we still quickly respond with aphasia each time we see an interesting language event take place in Beckett's texts?

The answer may be the result of our own unfamiliarity with Telencephalonic areas of the brain, and their corresponding processes and disorders. If this is the case, then it would be pertinent to, at least briefly, examine those other disorders that Beckett might have instead imagined as he created these characters, specifically those disorders relating to the *angular gyrus*. This area of the brain is involved in the greater number of processes related to language and cognition (see **figure 3**).

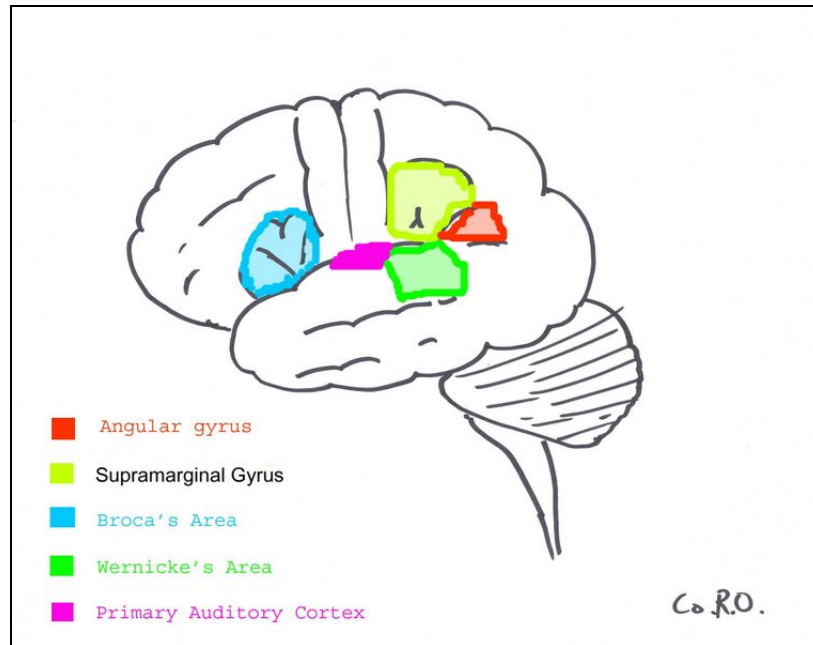


figure 3: The Telencephalos contains the primary speech centers and common areas of language disorders in the left hemisphere of the brain; the *angular gyrus* (far left in red) is also responsible for our ability to understand metaphors.

While Lucky’s case might be easier to identify than Watt’s, the latter is a bit more complex. That is to say, Watt’s is not a single disorder, but a gathering of neurological impairments. What we come to find with Watt is that he could easily be suffering from both expressive, or Broca’s, aphasia (affecting the area far left in blue), and receptive, or Wernicke’s, aphasia (affecting the area lower right in green). As illustrated in the chart above, each affects a separate, but related area of the brain. The common symptoms of Broca’s aphasia are that speech becomes difficult to initiate, non-fluent, labored, and halting; we often dismiss this as simple agrammatism—ignoring these symptoms as simple slips-of-the-tongue that any of us might make. During the onset of Watt’s language problems, he makes these types of *mistakes*. In Wernicke’s aphasia, speech is preserved but language content is incorrect. This varies from the insertion of a few incorrect or nonexistent words to a profuse outpouring of jargon. In addition to *Godot* and *Watt*, these combined disorders appear painfully in *Play*: in spoken dialogue with the jingle-esque “Personally I always preferred Lipton’s” quasi-advertisement of M, or in acted gestures both with M’s dysarthric hiccupping⁵ and W2’s de-contextualized “*Peal of wild low laughter*” (both recall a receptive aphasia), as well as, the halting, non-fluent speech (or expressive limitation) of all three characters (*CSP* 154, 157). These examples appear throughout Beckett’s work, such as the logorrhoeic voice in *Not I*. These

types of disorders seem like a lighter version of what Lucky undergoes in *Godot*, but the replaced content—the involuntary nonsense or inappropriate words or phrases inserted into the regular flow of speech—sounds more like Watt’s loss of context for specific words. This is not without a greater precedent. Beckett may well have known about Paul Broca’s famous patient ‘Leborgne,’ who was nicknamed “Tan,” after the only word he could say. Watt’s “pot, pot, pot” seems much more tame in comparison. Regardless, the transformative actualizations of these disorders—wherein acts of memory no longer align with their linguistic counterparts—permeate Beckett’s texts. As he sets out in a letter to Axel Kaun, his intention is to create a language that dissolves language; and with the characters he creates afterward, he creates acts of semantic severance, or types of positive, forced amnesic disorders, such as dysarthria,⁶ ideoverbal apraxia,⁷ semantic dementia or logopenic aphasia, where the meaning is dislodged (or dissolved) through a linguistic construction (in most cases repetition), and allows the speaker or reader to experience the word in a completely new or individual way as the restricted definition fades away (see section VI).

This project, in large part, is an attempt to reexamine the linguistic shifts that memory events force in Beckett and Joyce, specifically how spatialization and mapping effect memory in their work. By considering the headway made by thinkers and writers, such as Bergson (and later writers such as Deleuze), we can come to fuller understanding of the complex and elusive approaches by which Beckett and Joyce transformed the way we use language and read texts today. This study is set up as a companion to explore how these authors, in turn, deal with memory and its role in language. Through a reading of Beckett and Bergson informed by Alain Badiou’s concept of ‘evental sites,’ Chapter two focuses on Beckett’s engagement with Bergsonian notions of space, time, and duration as they relate to the specific instances or events of memory (or a *glissade* or slippage) as we might read Beckett informed by both Bergson and Alain Badiou’s concept of “evental sites.” Chapter three examines the intent and impetus behind Beckett’s “language of the unword,” and how it relates directly to issues of memory and the brain, wherein we will see how specific language acts (in this case serial repetition) unseat the received meaning or Bergsonian ‘habit-memory’ of the word (in effect, creating a moment of slippage) to find the ‘something’ or ‘nothing’ that hides or lurks behind the barrier created by the ‘word.’ As the memory event occurs, or rather fails to occur in *Watt*, we see a correlative shift in language. As memory is disturbed, so is Watt’s mental

capacity to communicate. The operational memory (of words) turns his language into something unintelligible. As a counterpart to Beckett's approach to memory, chapter four discusses a specific (though endemic) instance of Joyce's approach to transformative language, wherein as language is remembered, it becomes literalized first through text, and then through the consumed body as an attempt (and failure) of creating a permanently accurate memory through an act of concretized language, specifically writing. Chapter five, then, turns to Joyce's vastly different approach to spatialized memory (specifically the act of *forgetting*), as he fraudulently inscribes it on the history of his nation.

CHAPTER 2
SOMETHING IS *SLIPPING* IN MY HEAD: THE FICTION OF
MEMORY IN BECKETT

*At first I did not write, I just said the thing.
Then I forgot what I had said. A minimum
of memory is indispensable, if one is to live
really.*

—Malone Dies

...till suddenly I was here, all memory gone.

—Texts for Nothing 8

IV. THE STATE OF MEMORY IN BECKETT

In James Knowlson's Preface to *Beckett Remembering, Remembering Beckett* he laments the process of paring down the entries in this centenary collection. The language that he uses, though, is apt for both the topic of the book and the author in question. Knowlson writes: "A biographer draws on reminiscences of his subject from such personal sources [...] but must necessarily select, filter, as well as reject so many of these memories" (xvii). The notion of filtering, selecting, and rejecting memories takes up so much of the space on Beckett's page; it is astonishing that more has not been done on memory and its surrounding issues long ago. The majority of work regarding memory has focused on either Beckett's early monograph, *Proust*, or imagination's role in passive memory. However, a new trend in this area has already begun addressing many of the unanswered questions, both in general 20th century fiction, and specifically in Beckett's work.

This study is intended as a supplement to the growing discourse of memory and its role in both Beckett's fiction and drama, and focuses on the specific instance or event of memory, a *glissade* or slippage, as we might read Beckett informed by both Henri Bergson's theory of memory, and Alain Badiou's concept of "evental sites." It might be most helpful here to think of this slippage as an instance of awareness where one knows that he or she is participating in a memorable occasion. However, unlike the Joycean epiphany, this instance is

specifically elusive; something happens (perhaps a manifestation of Pound's vortices), but the one who experiences this instance cannot identify the event. Moreover, this *glissade* moves away from the commonly understood whole. In terms of the memory event, the slippage works towards a state of forgetting rather than total recall or understanding, as we see with Arsene. In other words, it is the difference between the estimated or imagined event and the actual memory event. Although many Beckettian memory texts contain either, or both, the reconstructive or imaginative components of memory—two burgeoning areas of study in themselves—I want to limit this discussion to two primary texts where we are brought to witness the event of memory as it works to both alienate the characters from one another, and draw the reader or viewer into a complicit memory act in *Watt* and *Endgame* respectively.

Beckett was certainly not the first, or only beside Proust, to explore the role of memory in innovative and complex ways. Ellmann tells us in *the Consciousness of Joyce* that memory and imagination are inseparable; he explains that during the time Joyce was working on *Finnegans Wake* (around the time Beckett would have been working with Joyce), he “accepted Vico’s idea that the phantasmal faculty was essentially a function of memory” (3). We can see this, even before *Finnegans Wake*, in *Ulysses*. As Stephan sets out across the strand, his imagination and memory mingle as they are triggered by both senses and memories of senses to show us an early version of creative recollection, with “Ineluctable modality of the visible: at least that if no more, thought through my eyes” (31).⁸ The phantasmal in Beckett’s work, of course, takes other forms—perhaps most notably, the disembodied voices of *Eh Joe* or *That Time*—but Beckett’s work continually revisits the theme of the ineluctable modalities of sensory perception, and their collection and storage (e.g. *Krapp’s Last Tape*, *Rough for Theatre II*, *Malone Dies*, etc...). In Nicolas Zurbrugg’s 1988 book on Proust and Beckett, operating under the same title, he points out the break between the consciousness of yesterday and of today, “Proust’s characters constantly discover that the ‘aspirations of yesterday were valid for yesterday’s ego, not to-day’s’” (105). It would seem in light of other contemporaries surrounding Beckett, specifically Bergson, that this notion no longer applies to Beckett the same way in which it might to Proust. That is, when we consider the overlooked implications of Beckett’s *Proust*, and their similarity to much of Bergson’s work, the idea of yesterday’s ego becomes yesterday’s news. Memory, and its present manifestation

as it infiltrates texts, has come to play an increasingly large role in our current study of last century's writing.

The real influence of Bergson's philosophy is becoming more evident in this current trend of cognitive studies in literary criticism, especially as we see the development of the binary (recollective and inventive) memory discourse. In Eric Berlatsky's article on memory's necessity in resisting power, "Memory as Forgetting," he explains the developing and enabled position of memory; he says: "Kundera and Spiegelman show in their hybridized texts of fact and fiction, of memory and creation, memory cannot be seen as a security blanket against the master narrative of history, because memory itself dynamically creates history and is an implement of power or ideology" (137). Kundera also, in *Testaments Betrayed*, acknowledges the difficulty of supporting the memory/forgetting binary: "We do not know [reality] as it is in the present, in the moment when it's happening, when it is. The present moment is unlike the memory of it. Remembering is not the negative of forgetting. Remembering is a form of forgetting" (128).

The range of memory study runs the gambit in Beckett studies from the specialized usage areas of spatial locations of characters and voices, such as we see in Jonathan Boutler's notion that Beckett's "narrator inhabits a twilight world that may exist only as a memory beyond the grave" (334) to Justin Beplate's study of the "complex relations between memory, identity, and language" (154). Beplate explains the importance of memory and its role in identity creation in *Malone Dies*: "Malone, a narrator of short memory, affirms his uncertain existence through his written records—an enterprise inextricably bound up with creating an abiding memory for himself and his 'figments'" (155), but we can see the continuation of this model resurface, with the same figments, in *Ill Seen, Ill Said*: "Not possible any longer except as figment. Not enduring. Nothing for it but to close the eye for good and see her. Her and the rest. Close it for and all and see her to death. Unremittant." (65).

In addition, Jeanne-Sarah de Larquier looks expressly at the failure of language and memory in *Molloy*, but her assessment could easily be adapted to address *Watt* or *Malone Dies*. She explains, "In addition to creating problems of miscommunication, language plays tricks on memory, and vice versa. A certain combination of words or length of phrase, interfering with temporary break-ups in Molloy's memory, contribute to his periodically faulty memory" (45). It is hard to dismiss *Watt* from mind as she discusses the specific

complications of memory and language in *Molloy* (such as, the imprecise and subtly misused language we see as Moran and his son review his vocabulary in the botanical garden or as he sends the boy off to buy a bicycle both of which exceed the boy memory capacity—he can not draw together the things and their names), although in *Watt* the limitation is imposed by various people for various reasons: “The ultimate limitation brought to language by a faulty memory is that of the impossibility of naming when one fails to remember” (46). This failure might be working toward the same end that Badiou discusses in *On Beckett*, as he says, “the function of words is that of bringing about the failure of things, because things themselves are failures of being. The ground of everything is but void and dim” (114). Badiou could easily take this to the next step, where not only would words bring about the failure of things, and the failure of things the failure of being, but also the failure of memory results from the failure of being.

However, many of these studies follow the genetic thread back to Proust, and Beckett’s work on him. Ackerley and Gontarski, in *the Grove Companion to Samuel Beckett*, provide a comprehensive rundown of memory in Beckett’s corpus, as they treat it in terms of Proustian critique of the basic Cartesian position. As they explain it, being is a sequence of sensory impressions stored unreliably in mind; and thus identity would operate where rational foundations have been undermined by uncertainties. However, “elements of unreliability, of forgetting, offer openings for creative invention. Memory is finally a joust between involuntary and creative recollection” (361).

In one of the more recent monograph studies of Beckett’s connection to Proust, James Reid sets out to discuss the interplay between “allegory and irony” within Beckett and Proust. He contends that most studies in this vein simply construct the relationship between Proust and Beckett as a “clear and distinct historical change from a Proustian narration based on the overcoming of forgetting and the recovering of lost memories of self to a Beckettian narration based on the failure of memory and the absence of self” (2).

One of the most interesting approaches to the issue of memory, expressly faulty memory, in Beckett, which seems subconsciously to have its roots in Bergson, is John Wall’s, “A Study of the Imagination in Samuel Beckett’s *Watt*.” In it he discusses the potential pitfalls of purely psychoanalytical approaches to the problems of Watt’s lack of memory, which would tend to view it as the result of a traumatic experience in the past. We should

keep in mind that any physical trauma can, and often does, instill a psychological trauma as well. A trauma of unknown origin that would lie at the foot of the general amnesia and other neurotic symptoms afflicting Watt does seem very plausible considering the few “wistful and plaintive memories that do manage to break into” the narrative of *Watt* (Wall 534). Wall suggests that instead of treating this question of memory as either a literary or a psychological problem, we should remember that Beckett was still under Proust’s influence. He explains, “in *In Search of Lost Time*, Marcel Proust is concerned with the discrepancy between the impact of an event, that is, the impressions and affects created by certain experiences, and its subsequent expression as a memory” (535). To show the connection to character Watt, he explores how *Watt* proceeds to shed “all traces of empirical memory” to the point where “Watt finds that he is unable to recall events of the immediate past,” and is, instead, “interested in, however, the afterimage of specific memory, in which are revealed the structures underlying memory” (536).

In the same spirit critics like Anthony Uhlmann have begun exploring the connections to memory as influenced by Bergson in addition to Proust. In Uhlmann’s recent *SubStance* article, “Image and Intuition in Beckett’s *Film*,” his concern is primarily “the relevance of Bergson’s ideas to Beckett, and Beckett’s use of the image as a means of translating philosophical ideas into an artistic language” (94). The hand of Giles Deleuze is clear throughout Uhlmann’s work, especially as he focuses on Bergson, and his ideas of image, matter and memory. In *Bergsonism*, Deleuze boils down Bergson’s thesis to the notion that there can not be a difference in kind, only degree, that is only ever a difference of degree in the “perception of matter and matter itself” (25). He goes on to explain the difference between matter/perception and memory/recollection. Deleuze’s rationale is that being and past are actually the same; presentness does not exist because *being* present is always *pure becoming*, but the past does not act. The past is useless, inactive, and impassive, and therefore, “identical with being itself” (55). The present is the action or usefulness, because this recollection or memory of the past is always the unconscious, always virtual. Whether or not the early Beckett who wrote to MacGreevy in 1937 would align himself with such a notion is not entirely clear. That ‘presentness’ seems much more like true consciousness and, what should be ‘past’ or ‘in-itself being’ is not *being*, but rather ‘presentness’ is the consciousness in which we find *being*. Beckett writes, “the real consciousness is the chaos, a grey commotion

of mind, with no premises or conclusions or problems or solutions or cases or judgments” (cited in Knowlson 249). Beckett’s work is inconsistent in this vein, though, at times reveling in the chaos of the unjudged presentness of plays such as *That Time*, but floundering in the problems and conclusions of others that we see in the repeated trips to the whisky bottle in *Krapp’s Last Tape*. This presentness is something that will return en force in *Endgame*.

V. A New Bergsonism in *Watt* and *Endgame*

Beckett’s *Proust* explores the same territory that Deleuze investigates in Bergson’s work, and we can certainly see even the textual similarity of Beckett’s early work with Bergson’s. Consider the two following passages. Beckett tells us of moments, or events, that pull the present out of habitual action:

Life is habit. Or rather life is a succession of habits, since the individual is a succession of individuals; the world being a projection of the individual’s consciousness [...] habit then is the generic term for the countless treaties concluded between the countless subjects that constitute the individual and their countless objects. The periods of transition that separate consecutive adaptations [...] represent the perilous zones in the life of the individual, dangerous, precarious, painful, mysterious and fertile, when for a moment the boredom of living is replaced by the suffering of being (*P* 19).

We can see, likewise, as Bergson says in *Creative Evolution*, the effect of successive action and habitual memory:

These memories, messengers from the unconscious, remind us of what we are dragging behind us unawares. But, even though we may have no distinct idea of it, we feel vaguely that our past remains present to us. What are we, in fact, what is our character, if not the condensation of the history that we have lived from our birth—nay, even before our birth, since we bring with us prenatal dispositions? Doubtless we think with only a small part of our past, but it is with our entire past, including the original bent of our soul that we desire, will and act. Our past, then, as a whole, is made manifest to us in its impulse; it is felt in the form of tendency, although a small part of it only is known in the form of idea (5).

In *Matter and Memory*, however, Bergson gives us a slightly different development in memory theory with two “theoretically independent” forms of memory: one, a recorder of “memory-images,” which catalogues every detail of life as it occurs, and it is by this type of memory that we can recognize the perception of that which we have already experienced; the other, is an accumulation of those details, what he calls a prolonged perception of “nascent actions,” that forms a “series of mechanisms [...] with reactions to external stimuli.” This type of memory does not represent the past, but *reenacts* or *replicates* the past built into our mechanized reactions (*MM* 81-82). These two memory forms certainly seems to operate separately but are also clearly linked at a fundamental level. At that connective level, lies the possibility for the strongest correlation to Beckett’s works. Rather than glossing over Beckett’s characters as personifications of Bergsonian memory, we should instead look at how these characters both participate in the remembering process, and how they suggest development within the memory structure.

To enhance our understanding of this structure, Alain Badiou’s model of events and eventual sites may be used as a metaphor for memory roots, and his concept of developmental consequences used as a starting point to examine *Watt* and *Endgame*. The recent work on Badiou and Beckett is exceptionally insightful; critics from Richard Begam and Carla Locatelli to Steven Connor and Anthony Uhlmann have made serious contributions to the study. Most important, in this discussion, might be Andrew Gibson’s contribution to *Other Becketts*: “Badiou, Beckett, *Watt* and Event.” We can use a similar model to Gibson’s that builds this notion of the place and significance of the event, but where Gibson focuses on the religious development of event (and rightly so, as he takes from Badiou’s discussions of Paul between “Saint Paul” and *L’éthique*) we should look instead at the memory-event and its consequences.

In section Five (§V) of *Being and Event*, Badiou outlines one of his basic goals: to expose the potential for “transformative innovation” in any given situation. These innovations can only initiate with an exceptional, though fleeting, break with the status quo, what he calls an “event.” These can occur at any time but are located near the edge of some type of ‘void’ or the place that is ‘indistinguishable’ in a situation (the area of a situation where traditional modes of recognition or understanding no longer have any significant agency). That event makes it possible for a ‘truth’ to develop out of the ‘evental site’ (what Feltham translates

from *site événementiel*). For Badiou these truths are dogmatic convictions of those effected people who develop the revolutionary implications of the event, and thus become “subjects” of that event’s truth. A bit tautologically, subjects and their adherence to the consequences (dogmatic, although sometimes random) of an event carry their ideology forward, while the truth becomes nothing more than the accumulation of after-event consequences, and, because of this cumulative effect, the consequences will invariably be inconsistent. By applying these consequences a situation will vastly reorganize itself to keep with the implications of the original event.

This works only as an analogy here, as Badiou’s work pertains to more traditional Marxian notions of socio-cultural events (even down to the discussion of the religious event in *Watt*). That is, this application of Badiou’s philosophy to the theory of memory might be a gross misuse. Considering Badiou’s theory a model, then memory would function something like an event, where the memory-event substitutes for the void; and rememberer becomes subject to that memory-event. The truth that the rememberer-subject eventually adheres to, with conviction, is the accumulation of both types of memory that Bergson outlines: the ‘truth’ is the catalogue of memory-images, but the conviction to it is the mechanical memory that responds to further the consequences of the believed, or perceived, memory event.

While these notions do apply to Beckett, they apply more so to his successors. Deleuze’s condensation of Bergson’s memory theory becomes clearer against a character such as Dennis Cleg from Patrick Mcgrath’s *Spider*. Moreover, if we consider the film adaptation that David Cronenberg produced in 2002, the concept of images and memories becomes concrete or actualized on the screen. Dennis is participating in his memories—perhaps only in the way that a paranoid schizophrenic can—as much as he is trying simply to recall them. He cannot passively recall them, as, say, Marcel does, but is immediately pulled into the living memory. On screen it is a bit easier to conceive this, as we can *see* both of the manifestations of Dennis, the boy, and Dennis, the adult, simultaneously; the same way we might unconsciously participate in our own memories. This, of course, in Bergsonian terms would have to be a virtual memory, as it is always under scrutiny as inventive or subject to interpretation.

The ‘thin transparent film’ that Deleuze alludes to in “the Greatest Irish Film,” and that Uhlmann returns to in his explanation (96), is pulled into our perception in a less

symbolic way in Mcgrath's/Cronenberg's work(s); that is, painfulness of "perceiving self by self" (100)—or the self-projected image of one's self. In Mcgrath's work, the scenic shifts that occur without border, seam, or instance/event show us how Dennis is living within (or perhaps accessing would be a less pejorative way to describe it) his memory. He is neither in contemporary London, nor the London of his childhood; he exists entirely within the created construct of his remembered London. It is a place that is ultimately malleable by the *rememberer*, who has no responsibility or necessity to maintain, or even desire, a consistent or reasonable version of any particular memory. Despite his own introduction: "I've always found it odd that I can recall incidents from my boyhood with clarity and precision, and yet events that happened yesterday are blurred, and I have no confidence in my ability to remember them accurately at all" (9), we come to find out that even his claim of remembering his childhood is not necessarily true (in fact, the reader is never sure what Dennis creates or remembers). Regardless the level of fabrication, we not only forgive Dennis for these misrecollections but are consistently drawn into that moment and overlook the obvious impossibilities of his memories. He could not, for instance, know that his mother was killed by his father, yet we take—especially in the film sequences—as fact that Dennis knows this and is thus driven into a mentally instable state. Only because of this is Dennis's Oedipal dispatching of his mother shocking.

The predecessor to Mcgrath's web of mis-memories is, of course, *Watt*. Here also do we fall prey to the fabrications of the narrator. The memory that we trust, if not without some irony, should be clearly fallacious. Yet, the reader takes for granted that Sam is recalling this, rather than *recomposing* it. In many instances, Sam is absent. We should be more troubled, though, by the instances where neither Sam nor Watt is present. That absence should stand out to us. The narrative equivalent of the change (the *glissade*, the *slippage*) is the event point for memory in these texts. Here is the beginning from which all consequences will amass, and a mechanical memory process will form. Zurbrugg rightly notes that "this 'change' is the key event in Arsene's and Watt's misadventures" (244) but underestimates its operative importance; he sees it only as a slip from the non-habitual to the habitual. This event is not the privileging of one type of memory concept over or in favor of the other, rather we should focus on this event's process, which is the act of movement. Here we find the failure of memory, its destruction, and subsequent recomposition. That moment of slippage, where

something happens—and I would posit that it is the psychic act of concretizing and cataloguing, thus associating, abstract concepts—and memory must be reconstituted, deformed, or manipulated. In *The Creative Mind*, Bergson explains the difficulty in pinpointing the originating memory, or the event catalyst:

But what we shall manage to recapture and to hold is a certain intermediary image between the simplicity of the concrete intuition and the complexity of the abstractions which translate it, a receding and vanishing image, which haunts [...the philosopher...] and which, if it is not the intuition itself, approaches it much more closely than the conceptual expression, of necessity symbolical, to which the intuition must have recourse in order to furnish “explanation.” (128-129)⁹

It is that “explanation” which is missing in *Watt*.

The development of this missing explanation—the fleeting, non-permanent memory component—takes the form of a block or inaccessibility in regards to fundamental knowledge through either virtual or pure memory, and we can see it most clearly in texts like *Texts for Nothing*, *Play*, and *The Unnamable* where even the most basic questions (heuristic questions: who, where, what, etc...) are either unanswerable or the narrator suppresses them. The narrator or character cannot receive or understand the answers to these questions. In *Texts for Nothing* the questions are subverted by answers that are only indirectly related to the questions. The characters of *Play* are aware that they are denied answers to these questions. The answers for these questions perhaps never existed for the narrator of *The Unnamable*, and, perhaps most emphatically—that is, noted textually with a degree of irony on the author’s part—in *Watt* where these answers are either textually missing (indicated by a bracketed question mark) or manufactured. All of these instances are separate from the biological aphasic event, such as Lucky’s during his speech in Act I of *Waiting for Godot*, which Shira Wolosky points out. These instances appear to originate from some external stimulus rather than from a specific disorder. Her further assertion that Beckett’s negativity “makes visible the fundamental place, and self-contradictory status and value, of language and of negation itself” points to another possibility where the failure of memory and thus discourse—at least word recall as it could appear in *Watt*—has little to do with choice (213).

By examining these instances of failed or missing memory in *Watt*, which here take the form of heuristic facts, we can begin to understand the problems surrounding memory as a

legitimate recollective process (which is antithetical to Bergson's approach), or even as a solace for some traumatic event (as Boutler suggests). The only connections we are left with are dissolved references to something that might have come before, or a textual manifestation of some other temporal instance poorly seen and poorly related. Just as Mr Hackett cannot make out Watt as a person, and Mr Nixon has to assure him of Watt's human form (17), these other images only bear passing resemblance to that which they allude to. These are the textual reoccurrences of statements like: "all sound his echo" (41) from Arsene's short statement, or Watt's realization that the story of the Gall's was one "ill told, ill heard, more than half forgotten" (74). These comments are something like a failing memory of something before, of which Watt has only access to fragments.

Watt approaches the event of memory, that is, its 'deformation' and recomposition, by attempting to place upon it an ordered syntactical system. That syntax, however, ultimately fails to elucidate either pure or virtual memory, voluntary, involuntary or otherwise. In *Watt*, one finds that certainty and heuristic knowledge are made unattainable by the conventions of language. Watt, like the narrator of *The Unnamable*, continues using these failures of memory, these ill heard, ill remembered descriptions or explanations, which should make impossible the fantastic feats of remembering that both the narrator and Watt provide for the reader. Of course, both Bergson, and his contemporary Freud, would argue that those memories are always there. Characters like Watt (and perhaps his author) are caught in something almost like a Viconian cycle (the Brunonian monad would work as a model here as well) where the deformation of memory occurs simultaneously with its recomposition. A monadic permutation of this is in the overture to Watt's story, where Mr Hackett, a somewhat reasonable voice (reason in *Watt* does have to function on a sliding scale), points out that Geoff Nixon says he knows Watt, but cannot describe Watt in any understandable fashion.¹⁰

The narrator of *Watt* is always in the process of either *un*-understanding or mis-remembering Watt, or perhaps more insidiously dissembling to fill in the gaps of his (and subsequently the readers') understanding or perception of the story's events. The reader can most clearly see this inability in the absences in the texts; these absences tend to be heuristic in nature. These memories (the whos, wheres, whats, and whens) should be readily accessible but are instead utterly unreachable. These are literally *utterly* unreachable. They are unutterable and unstutterable. We will see this type of connection between memory and

language capacity—especially in the aphasic sense—developed further in the discussion of Stein and Beckett (discussed below in section X).

The Addenda to *Watt* are one of the most interesting and troubling occurrences of modified memories because it problematizes even the dissembling, or, at least, the protean memory, of *Watt*'s narrator. Clearly the Addenda are not simply a way of ignoring the problems, by allowing “the incongruities,” as Rabinovitz puts it “[to be] swept under the rug” (161), since they are published with the book. This notion seems also to stand counter to the notion that Beckett puts forth in “First Love,” as he writes, “Kepis, for example, exist beyond a doubt, indeed there is little hope of their ever disappearing, but personally I never wore a kepi” (35). In regards to *Watt*, this statement might read something like: *This, for example, existed beyond doubt, indeed there is little hope of its ever disappearing, but personally I never knew or can't remember it.* The Addenda might then work around convention, but Sam, the narrator, includes them within that general structure. The Addenda are the continuation of the text after the story proper ends. While these might look like other moments of this type of memory event, they are also full of aborted explanations for knowledge obscured or omitted from the text. These omissions are prime examples of how we distrust our own ability to know or remember even the most basic heuristic facts as Cavell writes, “If I do not accept the criteria you manifest as revealing something true of you—if, e.g., I invariably distrust your manifestations of suffering—then is this a distrust of you (your capacity to give yourself expression) or of myself (of my capacity as a knower of others, as a reader of expressions)? Now if I distrust your acknowledgement of me, fail to believe in any manifestation of sympathy or of praise, am I distrusting you (your capacity as a knower of others) or myself (my capacity to give myself expression)?” (382).

The bracketed question marks in the text are not an editorial mistake on the part of the printer; rather these mistakes are the fault of the narrator. Sam, the narrator (but not an omniscient narrator), is unable to know certain simple or basic things about various characters or situations. Since he is not able to know these things, he places doubt in the mind of his reader of his infallibility or even accuracy. His later claims might actually be mediated creations or fabrications set to fill the unknowable gaps—as in how did he come to understand Watt's inverted language, or the lineage of the character in the painting for the Addenda, or the conversation of Mr Hackett and Geoff Nixon, or Mr Spiro's bicycling (since Watt was

listening to the voices singing crying stating and murmuring in his head and not listening to Spiro), or (as Rubin Rabinovitz notes of O'Connery in the Addenda) that the narrator shows that "O'Connery has attempted to depict an auditory experience in a visual medium, but even the musician in his picture seems to have trouble hearing any sounds" (Rabinovitz 157). We should take note that Sam is relating this story (containing the instances above) after Watt's break with language.

The narrator has no problem articulating the instances that are impossible for him actually to recall, but finds it impossible to impart to the reader some of the basic details of the overall story. In lieu of a fabrication he uses a question mark. Each of these instance seem to be made not by the printer or typesetter, but by Sam the narrator as they are not misprinted, but completely elided in the storytelling. The following are six of the question marks (?) used textually in place of some kind of basic heuristic answer: The heavenly favored McCanns of ? (*where*), or that Watt's blood is deficient in ? (*what*) both on page 32; Erskine's song in an unknown *what*:

The song that Erskine sang, or rather intoned,
was always the same. It was:

?

Perhaps if Watt had spoken to Erskine, Erskine
would have spoken to Watt, in reply. But Watt was
not so far gone as all that. (85)

The *who* question of someone's painful relation to Simon and his young cousin's wife (102); the narrator's mental faculties, "faculties properly so called of ? ? ? ? ? were if possible more vigorous than ever" (169)—an unanswered *what* question that all but admits that it is dishonest, an un-re-memorable memory, or *what* Mr Case read from George Russell's *Songs by the Way* on page 228; these question marks are apart from the dashes used to obscure nouns and descriptions (i.e. "I call that the act of a —, —, —, —, —, —, —, —, —" (191)). These instances represent a memory space that is uttered into existence, a space between, what Badiou calls, "the deceitful excess of words and the impossibility of silence" (117).

Where we see the memory event as something that is suppressed or misplaced or simply obscured in *Watt*, *Endgame* provides another avenue of consideration: the awareness

of the event and the fear or resistance to the truth and consequences of that event. Something is clearly changing and slipping, or has, as we find out from both Hamm and Clov, yet we never find out precisely what that something is. However, there is clearly a modification, perhaps even a memory modification, taking place during the course of Hamm and Clov's speeches. These changes are both past and present, or rather simultaneously past and present.

Shane Weller, in his study on nihilism in Beckett, finds a division between the Beckett and Bergson's processes of modification. "Where Beckett departs most obviously from Bergson, however," he explains, "is in his emphasis upon change as 'deformation,' since for Bergson duration (*durée*) is rather a modification and accumulation, a creative rather than deforming process [...]" (35). This seems to be at odds with his later discussion of Simon Critchley and Cavell in their relation to Beckett's process of change. Beckett, for these latter two, is creating something (in his case a 'nothing') through this deforming process. Again for these two, that process of deformation is literalized as Beckett deforms the conventions of drama by making the absurd ordinary. This differentiation between accumulation and deformation seems tenuous, though, as both make a notable modification or event regardless of their respective meanings. 'Nothing' is as much of an event (in the same way that memory for Bergson is event rather than thing) as "something." And indeed, in *Endgame* there are things afoot, as Clov says: "one day, suddenly, it ends, it *changes*" (81; emphasis added), "something *is dripping* in my head" (13, 50; emphasis added), "something *is taking* its course" (13, 32; emphasis added).

The focus in *Endgame* centers around an abstinence from this change, or this act of remembering and event-making, and the production of meaning that is involved with it. What are we to understand from the vague nouns used by both Hamm and Clov in these lines? The repeated something, something, something is not merely a failure of language for these characters. It, rather, points to the cumulative process of the gathering consequences. This cumulative effect is in evidence from the first lines of the play, and the consequences hinted at in Clov's preceding "brief laughs":

CLOV (*fixed gaze, tonelessly*): Finished, it's finished, nearly finished, it must be nearly finished. (*Pause.*) Grain upon grain, one by one, and one day, suddenly, there's a heap, a little heap, the impossible heap.
(*Pause.*) I can't be punished any more. (1)

These grains piled upon grains of millet speak directly to the slippage of memory. These Sisyphean grains continually work toward the creation of a whole heap, but they are always component parts; moreover, there is always a point at which a grain falls and slips away leaving the heap an incomplete pile of individual grains. The heap is not quite finished, as Clov says, it is “nearly finished.” But the recognition of the event (even in the form of the millet heap metaphor) and an awareness of that incompleteness from the outset: Clov recognizes that something (memory) is moving toward completion; this something is moving from memory toward forgetting as it develops. Even Hamm recognizes that an event has taken place, though, he, like Clov, is unable to yet articulate it.

HAMM: What’s happening?

CLOV: Something is taking its course. (*Pause.*)

HAMM: Clov!

CLOV (*impatiently*): What is it?

HAMM: We’re not beginning to... to... mean something?

CLOV: Mean something! You and I, mean something! (*Brief laugh.*) Ah that's a good one! (32-33)

The two possibilities here are: first, the truth is yet unformed for them; they are unable to recall the original memory event (or because it has been blurred, marred, or diluted as the something dripping might indicate), and thus lack the direction toward or fidelity to that original memory-event, or alternatively, these two might have run the course of that conviction. The inconsistency of the consequences could have driven them away from any remaining conviction, and consequently any hope of that event’s truth actually meaning something. The final consequence of the memory event—once it has run out to its furthest end—might well be the truth of forgetting. It is that to which Hamm and Clov (and indeed Watt in a different degree) are still committed. Forgetting, here, is not the inverse of memory, nor does it stand as its binary opposite. Forgetting is the final stage of the memory event, the finishing of memory. Hamm calls those that are able to forget madmen, but it is they alone who are spared.

HAMM: I once knew a madman who thought the end of the world had come. He was a painter—and engraver. I had a great fondness for him. I used to go and see him, in the asylum. I'd take him by the hand and drag him to the window. Look! There! All that rising corn! And there! Look! The sails of the herring fleet! All that loveliness!

(Pause.) He'd snatch away his hand and go back into his corner. Appalled. All he had seen was ashes.

(Pause.) He alone had been spared. *(Pause.)* Forgotten. *(Pause.)* It appears the case is... was not so... so unusual. (44)

Forgetting functions at the literal level, however. Hamm's pauses in his speech to recall the next line, which is 'forgotten' or inaccessible to him, so he goes on with his speech, or alters the rest to match the omission. The ability consciously or actively to forget, or escape memory, is a reprieve; note the isolated "Forgotten" in Hamm's speech. The pause before and after at first appears to indicate a moment of dramatic tension where Hamm should emphasize the connection, and importance, of the madman's perception and the ability to be forgotten (i.e. not perceived). The madman of Hamm's story is, unfortunately, our only concrete example, or more accurately illustration, of this slippage as the madman reorganizes his perception to accommodate the consequences of his distinctively dissociative memory event. The notion of illustration is important because of the creation of a specific series of memory images. This happens both for the madman with his construction of what the world looks like, or what he remembers its looking like, as well as with Hamm as he creates a specific image of what the world looked like, and what he imagined the madman's point-of-view to be.

Although Clov seems aware of the change that is taking place as the play opens, we only see the full development near the end of the play in another of Clov's—now more sentient—monologues:

CLOV *(as before)*: I say to myself—sometimes, Clov, you must learn to suffer better than that if you want them to weary of punishing you—one day. I say to myself—sometimes, Clov, you must be better than that if you want them to let you go—one day. But I feel too old, and too far, to form new habits. Good, it'll never end, I'll never go.

(*Pause.*) Then one day, suddenly, it ends, it changes, I don't understand, it dies, or it's me, I don't understand that either. I ask the words that remain—sleeping, waking, morning, evening. They have nothing to say.

(*Pause.*) I open the door of the cell and go. I am so bowed I only see my feet, if I open my eyes, and between my legs a little trail of black dust. I say to myself that the earth is extinguished, though I never saw it lit.

(*Pause.*) It's easy going.

(*Pause.*) When I fall I'll weep for happiness. (80-81)

Again, Clov recognizes that the 'something' is changing. Here it takes the metaphoric form of a retrospective awareness, as Clov looks backwards through his legs to see a little trail of ash. This ash or "trail of black dust" is the logical end of the millet heap: the ash is the remnant of the heap as it has slowly slipped away from the heap into a dead trail. The initial grain that begins the heap was the memory event, while the additional grains that form the heap act as the consequences of that memory event. The truth that comes from these consequences, at least in the Beckettian sense, has to be the act of forgetting. Forgetting is, ironically enough, the fruition of memory in the world of *Endgame*.

What this reading of Beckett offers to the discourse is only another avenue of development, wherein these texts can highlight, for us, the complete machinery of memory and the components of memory events. To think on, and articulate the sequential consequences of those memory-events (be they biologically traumatic, genetically inherited, or forcefully resisted) would allow us to see a more fully developed picture of memory and perception in Beckett's text; and, perhaps, it is the bent and twisted half-language that Beckett gives his characters that will help us see them, to see the endgame when 'all memory is gone.'

CHAPTER 3

DELETE, INVERT, REPEAT: BECKETT'S *WATT* AND A RESPONSE TO STEIN

*... quaqu on all sides then in me bits and scraps try and
hear a few scraps two or three each time per day
and night string them together make phrases more
phrases*

—Samuel Beckett, *How It Is*

*Listening to repeating is often irritating,
listening to repeating can be dulling*

—Gertrude Stein, *The Making of Americans*

*The true effect of repetition is to decompose and then to
recompose, and thus appeal to the intelligence of the
body [...] In this sense, a movement is learned when the
body has been made to understand it [...] Now the logic
of the body admits of no tacit implications. It demands
that all constituent parts of the required movement shall
be set forth one by one, and the put together again.*

—Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*

VI. A FORGOTTEN LETTER

In 1937, Samuel Beckett wrote to a friend that “as we cannot eliminate language all at once, we should at least leave nothing undone that might contribute to its falling into disrepute.”

This statement of purpose comes very close to sounding like a manifesto, and the act Beckett calls for here he imagines as the highest goal for a writer. How does one go about destroying the fundamental unit of any medium? How does a writer write without using language?

Beckett has often been called a minimalist and a nihilist in both the most positive and pejorative senses of those terms. If his intention was to bring language or the ‘word’ to a point of failure, then he has certainly achieved that goal. He has pared down language to its barest from in his later short fiction. But what prompted Beckett to write against the traditions of

those other linguistic scientists around him, even against Joyce's 'apotheosis of the word' that sprang from *Finnegans Wake*? While we might not be able to say with certainty what Beckett's intention was, we can indeed find the point from which he began working; that is, even without knowing the genesis of, we can still locate the exodus of his work. That point of departure is another expatriate living in Paris at the beginning of the twentieth century. The works of Gertrude Stein, specifically her logographs—symbols that show the relationship between things—that she creates in *Three Lives* (1909) and *Tender Buttons* (1914), might come closest to the experimental tradition that focuses on the violent reorganization and re-stratification of syntax and grammar in which Beckett later situates himself.

By examining the linguistic experiments of Beckett's *Watt* (1953), specifically its seriality, we can see how Beckett use of serial repetition unseats the received meaning of the word. This repetition, in effect, creates a moment of slippage where the denotation of the word or phrase no longer holds any agency or has any power to produce meaning. Rather, these created sounds (as they no longer are recognizable as words) fail to connect either to a single specific or a universally understandable meaning. This textual creation of slippage works to find, what Beckett identifies as, that 'something' or 'nothing' that hides or lurks behind the barrier created by the 'word.' In the form of serial repetition, this textual slippage seems to be a possible and multi-leveled response to, what he calls in his "German Letter of 1937" to Axel Kaun, Gertrude Stein's vehicle for a "mathematical" language game—a game that he sees as having lost only some of the "sacred seriousness" that he desired to remove totally by creating the often quoted "literature of the *unword*" (*Disjecta* 173).

As we survey Stein's works, such as *As a Wife Has a Cow: A Love Story* (1926) or *Matisse* (1912), against the strikingly similar serial approach that Beckett uses in *Watt*, we can begin to see the complex relationship between these texts. Instead of comparing only this stylistic similarity, or showing it only as a connection (most critics, discussed below, attribute to the experimental qualities of their works), we should explore three alternative readings of this serial textual link. Based on the specific words that Beckett uses in this letter, the relationship between *Watt* and Stein's texts can be read in other ways from that of the traditional experimental-fiction connection in three primary ways. First, as *parody*, where the subject, *Watt*, is a parodic embodiment of what Stein, via her language game, could only try to realize; as *a complex allusion* by Beckett to Stein's work as a stepping stone; or a necessary

stylistic stage to reach a nominal irony; or, finally, *a response* to this style where the narrator of *Watt* provides a report, through his telling of Watt's story, of what this "literature of the *unword*" might actually look like.

This method of reading *Watt* might be a pale version of a full genetic study as it focuses not on the manuscripts or drafts of Beckett's novel but instead on the sparse correspondence surrounding it. This letter appears just before Beckett moves to Paris and, in this letter, styles himself as something of an art critic, writing on Jack Yeats, Bram van Velde, Kandinsky, Klee and others (painters likely hanging in Stein's own gallery). As he began writing it in 1942, *Watt* is the next significant piece that Beckett undertakes after this letter to Kaun, with, of course, the translation of *Murphy* into French excepted.

Beckett's contentions regarding Stein are that the "word" holds some "sacred seriousness," that seriousness needs to be completely excised, and that Stein has attempted and failed to do this already. Beckett takes the stagnant situation of the word as self-evident. But what does "sacred seriousness" of "the word" mean? In answering this, Beckett is at his most Modern. The serious and earnest approach to language handed down from Georgian grammarians and those Victorian writers that solidified that system was certainly limiting to a writer who would see himself as an artist. Beckett, in fact, looks to the other arts, of music and painting, which had already (even in the examples he cites, such as Beethoven's seventh symphony) begun to emphasize the soluble and porous nature of the medium. He equates this solubility with the white space of painting and the silences integral to music (*Disjecta* 53). The versatility of these arts allows them to develop, evolve, and expand. For Beckett, literature and the word stagnated. Literature, or perhaps literary artists, has not acquired the ability to dissolve in the same way that the other contemporary arts had. What I take Beckett to mean here by dissolve or dissolution is not simply a transformation, but an act of semantic severance. This severance is a positive type of forced amnesic disorder, such as semantic dementia or logopenic aphasia, where the meaning is dislodged (or dissolved) through a linguistic construction (in this case repetition), and allows the speaker or reader to experience the word in a completely new or individual way as the restricted definition fades away.

Why then does Beckett so badly want to remove the "sacred seriousness" completely? He sees something "paralysingly holy in the vicious nature of the word" (*Disjecta* 53). The emphasis here should be on paralysis. The accuracy (the limitation or boundary) of words

handed down from the 18th century grammarians stagnates and paralyzes language, and further prevents either innovation or evolution. Beckett's goal is then to counteract that paralysis by conquering the linguistic stagnation and revitalizing the mutability of the word. Beckett attacks this stagnation by creating a text that questions the use, accuracy, and necessity of language. His approach of dismembering and nullifying language seems somewhat paradoxical as he undertakes this as a writing project (rather than a critical one). What we find in *Watt*, however, is in fact an answer addressed to all three of the aforementioned questions. Watt re-remembers language by various permutations of inversion (to the point where the groups of letters are no longer words), but the narrator, in his oft repeated line "in the end I understood," claims to understand him regardless. These permutations and inversions should logically render the language of the character both useless and unnecessary—if Sam, the narrator, can understand Watt where the reader cannot (without serious and *near dementedly* deliberate study), there is no need to reproduce Watt's new language in the text. However, the accuracy of language is much more subtly sabotaged as the narrator provides us with those same inconsistent and impossible accounts.

Watt, in this light, anticipates the plain and simple aporia by which the narrator of *The Unnamable* proceeds, and the aphasia that Lucky displays in *Waiting for Godot*. The complete removal of the paralyzing effect of the word should, according to Beckett's letter to Kaun, allow the reader to participate in the same aphasic space as that of these characters. In this space the word is no a longer symbol but an event that we experience in the same way that the musical note and its companion silence penetrates us.

However, if Beckett references Stein (as discussed below), then we might ask why and how does he see Stein's failing to remove that paralyzing seriousness? He tells Kaun that she is "doubtlessly still in love with her vehicle" in the same way that a mathematician is in love with his figures. For these types of mathematicians, according to Beckett, the solution is only of marginal interest, and the death of those figures is frightening. Stein's failure, for Beckett, is not one of capability, but of intent. Beckett's position appears to be that Stein's writing—her vehicle of logographs—is limited by working within a self-contained ironic mode, which he calls the necessary stage of "nominalist irony" (*Disjecta* 53).

While Beckett clearly feels that Stein has not reached the point of "nominalist irony," what Beckett means by "nominalist irony" is not clear in this letter. We can deduce that

Beckett means to include not only the philosophic implications of the *Nominalist* versus *Realist* debate that C.S. Peirce made famous in the 1860s, but also the ridiculousness of the binary distinction between the two philosophies. Like Peirce, Beckett appears to see this division not as distinction, but as a phenomenological monad.¹¹ Things and words are not opposites. They are inverse sides of an object, or perhaps a phenomenon. This *object* monad is perhaps what Beckett views as approaching ironic status. The *object* becomes unnamable. Once a thing no longer has a distinct or single word that denotes a name, then the act of naming becomes superfluous or ironic.

While the first half of the “nominalist irony” description might be applicable to Stein, the second half is a bit more tenuous. Stein’s poetry, her logographs, certainly can work at a strikingly unrealistic level. The ideas represented by her words might have no real existence beyond our reading imagination. *Wife* and *cow* are concepts we can quickly associate with specific images. The way in which Stein uses them, however, they *should* function at an imaginative level. Not only do they represent an unrealistic concept, but also the *object* or *phenomenon* that we imagine they represent is limited only by our own understanding. However, the irony might be that the way she uses language and words creates an impossibility of imagination. Like Beckett’s dissolution of words, Stein’s process acts as another type of positive forced amnesic disorder. Both are positive as this dislocation allows for individualized and thus endless innovation.

Any of the poems from *Tender Buttons* renders the same effect. Their meaning is always already limited to our imaginative association of what these mismatched words might mean. Beckett, however, sees the meaning limited by the inherent irony of the situation and Stein’s continued use of the actual word, rather than the created one. The next step, in Beckett’s critique of Stein, would be both to let go of the connotations of the words and to utilize their absence. Stein, for Beckett, continues to cling to the words and to focus on their arrangement as objects. Perhaps Beckett’s is not a completely fair assessment. Stein certainly does remove the *wordness* of the word in favor of the *thingness* of the word. She does so to the same extent that Beckett will in *Watt*. *Cow* becomes only the sound of cow for her ‘wife,’ just as *pot*, becomes only the sound of pot for Watt. The way in which they both do this is through the repetition of sound.

VII. the Sounds of Poetry, the Sounds of Words

It is important not to trivialize the experimental qualities that link the works of Stein and Beckett, or dismiss the likeness on a basis of similar genre. These texts can of course function as what Craig Dworkin would describe as a type of non-expressive poetry—that is, a poetry of intellect rather than emotion, or a poetry where the substitutions of the given traditional metaphor are given instead as the direct presentation of language itself—both of which imply meticulous procedure and exhaustively logical processes. I do not mean, though, to imply that only a purely self-reflexive language developed in the (at least nominally) poetic works. To that end we might find other *avant garde* works utilizing repetition like John Baldessari's poem "I will not make any more boring art,"¹² in which this line is repeated 16 times, chalk board style to form the poem, or Richard Serra's "Verb List Compilation: Actions to Relate to Oneself"¹³ (a list in four columns/stanzas all beginning with the word "to"... to roll, to crease, to fold, and so on).

Perhaps the link that we unconsciously follow between these types of "experimental" poets and authors like Stein and Beckett is a grammatical one. In *21st Century Modernism*, Marjorie Perloff explains that "[g]rammar [...] is never arbitrary: part of speech, tense, case, and especially syntax have their own connotative power" (55). She gives us an example of what she means by this in her review of Lyn Hejinian's *Happily*. In her article "Happy World," Perloff describes Hejinian's grammar as one of *accordioning* sentences; that is, a sentence with solid sides (a clear beginning and a clear end), but with a middle that is "pleated and flexible." This allows for an influx of material to surge into any given thought—material that is "charged with various and sometimes even incompatible emotional tonalities."¹⁴ Hejinian, in the introduction to *the Language of Inquiry*, explains this as the *experiencing of experience*. Hejinian replaces logic with syntax, but it appears to operate in a very similar fashion; she says, "poetic language puts into play the wildest possible array of logics, and especially it takes advantage of the numerous logics operative in language, some of which take shape as grammar, some as sonic chains, some as metaphors, metonyms, ironies, etc. There are also logics of irrationality, impossibility, and a logic of infinite speed. All of these logics make connections, forge linkages" (3). In these last few logics that Hejinian describes we can see functioning in Beckett and Stein, those irrational, impossible, and infinite. The

“sonic chains” might be the best way to understand what Stein began, and Beckett sought to finalize; that is, the sound of their texts, as opposed to the material of them solely.

Gerald Bruns, in his recent *The Material of Poetry*, sets out two theses regarding sound poetry, that “there is an internal link between sound and the displacement of the ego,” and “sound [...] has a claim on our capacity for listening and responsiveness that is analogous to [...] the ethical claim that other people have on us” (46); and his own position, “Sounds overload the function of language” (44). These concepts point to the psychological aspects of sound, which include both the cognitive functions as well as the political machinations of both language and of non-linguistic sound. The effect that Beckett and Stein attempt to achieve might become clearer through Bruns’s reading of sound poetry. Sound, even apart from sound poetry, is able to circumvent the limitations of systematic taxonomies in order to unsettle our notion of control over it. He explains that, “sound entails a critique or displacement of the cognitive subject exercising rational control and that this in turn makes possible an openness and responsiveness, an acceptance of sound as such, with no more in-sounds versus out-sounds” (49). Although he does provide an explanation of what Levinas or Cage would consider a constitution of sound, we might take this further into Beckett and Stein’s writings as a parallel. Their grammatical goals appear to operate in the same space. As the constant and subtle framing devices of Steve Tomasula’s *VAS* allows us to see, it is the context of poem (sound, performance, or print) that denotes it. Bruns describes the context thusly: “Poetry is no longer performed as a reading but becomes itself a performance art; it is no longer an object but an event in which the distance between performer and audience breaks down completely” (60). If we take that along with his claim that, “[c]onceptualization is a species of framing or foregrounding; it dramatizes its content” (46), we can see how poetry (and both Stein’s and Beckett’s works are a type of sound poetry) frees itself by upsetting traditional hierarchies, or “Hence to break with language is to break with the order of rules” (63). We should again think of Alain Badiou’s *events* and evental sites—an exceptional break with the status quo—in these instances.¹⁵ These are *events* that force us, both reader and listener, to reorganize our understanding of how language functions once we see or hear them.

In his discussion of sound, Bruns develops an equally strong, though less explicit, theme of the body as well. Through this stress on the body (or body-words) and sound as

things corporeal, what we discover is not only a physical response to sound, but also a physical stratification of it. We talk of sound with a lexicon of the body. It is one thing to explain that sound, rather than sight, is porous, but it is another to use a more sanguine metaphor, such as: “Sound bleeds itself” (45). He goes onto say, “[...] that the sounds of the body can be more violent, more intrusive, than the body’s touch” (62). The agency that sound takes on here (and it does have a distinct difference to language based description) not only displaces the ego, but performs an act that is, in many ways, inescapable. We find the same type of body metaphor (in fact, the same descriptions) in Stein and Beckett, as the grammar becomes porous. The connection to sound here is important, as for Beckett and Stein its employment of repetition operates differently than it might in other ‘experimental’ writers that emphasize repetition. Through sound and vocal enunciation of words in repetition and inversion Beckett and Stein dislodge the authority of the definition and replace it with the associative connotation that the reader develops. We will see this aphasic dislocation in the later discussion of *ORANGE IN*’s staccato repetitions of ‘a no sense’ and *Watt*’s ‘pot’ (see section X).

We might consider other writers who make use of repetition or recurrence in their work, such as Carole Maso or Dan Ferrell, but in their work words are still primary, rather than the event of the word as repetition operates in Beckett or Stein. We can easily find textual repetitions in *AVA*, even to the point in which they include Beckett. In her novel we see him appear as: “Samuel Beckett in a tree” (10), or “Samuel Beckett waiting for reinforcements. It’s the war. But no reinforcements come” (31), or “[...] Ana Julia was just being born as Samuel Beckett was learning to fly” (46), “Beckett in a tree: To be an artist is to fail, as no other dares to fail” (67), “Beckett in a tree—outside Paris—the Germans below making slow circles with guns and dogs. [...] Samuel Beckett practicing the Etudes. [...] Beckett in Roussillon hiding in the red village for two and a half years” (86-7) apart from the nine other specific references and the dozen or so allusions to his work. In Farrell’s prose poem *366, 1996*, we can see a style that resembles the repetition-based language-games of Beckett and Stein:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday,
 Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, going into the woods, Sunday,
 Monday, typical trees, Tuesday, typical grass traces, Wednesday, Thursday, typical

excitations, Friday, typical regional sounds, Saturday, Sunday, why slow rather than slowest, Monday, clouded height, Tuesday, some same ground, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, left and possible, Sunday, right and possible, Monday, Tuesday, could what there is not to be believed be asked, Wednesday, Thursday... (57)

The repetition that these two writers use works to a different end than that of Beckett or Stein. The difference might be only scope, but the focus on theme rather than individual phonetic components in these two later writings points to an end apart from the earlier writers' works. In Maso's and Farrell's works, the reiteration of certain words or the reappearance of characters creates something of an open organizing system or schema. While this schema is a complex and esoteric system, it is a syntax, nonetheless. We see in Maso's novel, *Beckett* (or the image of Beckett in a tree) operates as a marker by which the speaker associates a consistent theme. With Farrell's we see a pattern of the ordinary appear. What begins as a jumbled or compressed series opens up into a consistent organizational system: the days are always in order, and the events are demarked by them. The repetition in these texts does not activate a dissociation with the *meaning* of the words or phrases. Beckett and Stein work in opposition to this type of syntax. Their use of repetition, and again the primacy of sound is important as we will see later in *ORANGE IN*, removes this organized system or hierarchy and allows the sound or word (perhaps the sound of the word/phrase) to, as Bruns says, overload our received concept of that word and, ideally, language.

VIII. RE-READING BECKETT:

What we find in Beckett's 1937 letter is that he, despite his unflattering depiction of Stein, read Stein's work closely and understood it well. As Stein would put it, *What I mean by this is this*. In reading Beckett's letter, critics have traditionally tended too much to focus on the one or two phrases in this text, but gloss over the rest. We should go back to this letter, and not only examine the often cited "literature of the *unword*" that Beckett mentions here, but also look at the tradition that Beckett thus situates himself in (in a qualified manner) only a few lines before. In essence, we should now re-read this text without reading around the parts we do not like.

Only a handful of critics have written about Stein and Beckett to any extent. What we find typically are two things: either 1) that Beckett along with Hemingway and other soon to

Vladimir: They murmur

Estragon: They rustle.

SILENCE.

Vladimir: What do they say?

Estragon: They talk about their lives.

Vladimir: To have lived is not enough for them.

Estragon: They have to talk about It.

Vladimir: To be dead is not enough for them.

Estragon: It is not sufficient.

SILENCE.

Of course, the only extended critical work that draws these two writers together is Marjorie Perloff's *Wittgenstein's Ladder*, in which she addresses Wittgensteinian writers such as Stein, Beckett, Bachmann, Bernhard, Creeley, Waldrop and Hejninian. She argues that Wittgenstein can provide the reader with a *ladder* with which the outwardly obscure language of Stein or Beckett are perfectly understandable once we learn how *not* to read them. She employs Wittgenstein's rigorous interrogation of language—the oft quoted “the limits of my language mean the limits of my world”—to provide a critical paradigm for experimental poetics, and through this interrogation our reading and viewing habits (to which we should also add listening) are transformed. Perloff's chapter on *Watt* in *WL* does explore the similarities between Wittgenstein and Beckett, specifically as they both share a sense of the linguistic gap between logic and its “fixed and unequivocal use” (127). However, her analysis of Beckett and Stein goes only a little further than Albright's description of logographs, and how Stein has made grammar porous (121).

Sianne Ngai's 2000 article from *Postmodern Culture*, “Stuplimity: Shock and Boredom in Twentieth-Century Aesthetics,” takes a different approach from those mentioned above. She sees that Stein's style in *the Making of the Americans*, and Beckett's final work, “Stirrings Still,” become “syntactically dense or complex while remaining minimalist in diction” (8). Ngai explains that the “the overlapping accretion of phrases and word clusters within the boundaries of a severely limited diction” points to a backsliding or slippage, in both Stein and Beckett, where “narration is consequently forced to ‘begin again’” (7). Where

Perloff discusses the porous natures of Stein's and later Beckett's grammars, Ngai reads these grammars as a "thickening," which is "paradoxically both ascetic and congested." This grammatical "thickening" creates the narratives of stasis, or as she puts it, "progresses into a narrative of not-progressing" (7). Though the approach is interesting, the accretion of words and phrases that she points to do not appear to be uncovering or revealing anything behind the words themselves. Indeed, this type of accumulation seems further to cover that *something* or *nothing* that Beckett says he is trying to get at by falling in line with Stein's approach to grammar.

IX. Reading the Referents: Stein and Composition

While there is certainly nothing wrong with looking to these established critical models of Beckett, or even philosophical models Beckett uses, we might be better served to look back to the literary models as well (those apart from Joyce and Dante). By looking back to poetics that Beckett read in Stein, we can see both the "certain circles" where "language is most efficiently used where it is being most efficiently misused," which he sees as aiming for the highest possible goal for the contemporary writer, and where he falls into line with these writers also tearing away the veil of language to get at the things (what he calls the Nothingness) behind it.¹⁷ To leave this connection in such a vague state is not enough, but if we also consider the maxims that Stein puts forth in her criticism, we can see a more specific correlation with two of the strongest themes throughout Beckett's corpus.

Stein says in "Composition as Explanation," "To come back to the part that the only thing that is different is what is seen when it seems to be being seen, in other words, composition and time sense" (514), and "Beginning again and again is a natural thing even when there is a series. Beginning again and again and again explaining composition and time is a natural thing" (516). What we find here is a focus on Time and Time Sense, as well as composition. What Stein means here by composition is not only the act of writing, but also the ordering of things (as we see her enact in the museum-like spatial arrangements of *Tender Buttons*). We find both of these types of orderings in an exacerbated capacity in Beckett's novel *Watt*, from the time sequential series of servants in Mr Knott's house to the specific patternings of words that Watt composes in the third section of the novel. We can of course see these things (orderings of time, space, duration, and perhaps even new creations like

chronophasia as *Watt*'s structure is chronological misordered or misremembered) in then contemporary philosophers, like, say, Henri Bergson, but in the stylistic method that Beckett prosecutes, these themes seems to take as much from literary contemporaries as it does from those philosophical.

X. Alternative Readings of *Watt*: Parody, Allusion, and Response

Given that Beckett touches nothing without leaving some trace of ridicule or satire, we find a alternative connection between *Watt* and Stein's work as a parody where the subject, Watt, is a parodic embodiment of what Stein, via her language game, could only try to realize. As Beckett says in his letter to Kaun, [...] "the way in which a mathematician is in love with his figures; a mathematician for whom the solution of the problem is of entirely secondary interest, indeed to whom must the death of his figures appear quite dreadful" (*Disjecta* 172). In *The Making of Americans*, a series of short sketches in which she depicts people by repeating and inverting seemingly meaningless phrases, Stein goes so far to say that "by repeating you can actually change the meaning" (262). We can see a literal example of this changing of meaning in "ORANGE IN" from *Tender Buttons*:

"Pain soup, suppose it is question, suppose it is butter, real is, real is only, only excreate, only excreate a no since. A no, a no since, a no since when, a no since when since, a no since when since a no since when since, a no since, a no since when since, a no since, a no, a no since a no since, a no since, a no since" (496).

Here "a no since" almost involuntarily becomes 'innocence' as it is repeated. By parsing "excreate" we find create or creation, ex-create (as in the Latin *ex* or from) and excrement. These derivations provide a number of possible combinations: 'only excrement,' 'only from creation innocence,' 'only excrement innocence,' 'only from creation nonsense,' or 'only excrement nonsense.' There are, evidently, numerous ways in which this easily becomes humorous. That is, if we read these words the way Stein suggests (as above), which it appears Beckett does, we can see the eschatological/scatological humor. Here we can see how Beckett easily forms a parody of Stein's style in something like Watt's muttering of 'pot' (as it becomes the sound *pot pot pot* or /pɒt/ /pɒt/ /pɒt/). However, what we should see, past the simple parody, is the development of the text itself. Consider the two following extracts from *Matisse* and then *Watt*:

Some said of him, when anybody believed in him they did not then believe in any other one. Certainly some said this of him.

He certainly very clearly expressed something. Some said that he did not clearly express anything. Some were certain that he expressed something very clearly and some of such of them said that he would have been a greater one if he had not been one so clearly expressing what he was expressing and some of such of them said that the greatness of struggling which was not clear expression made of him one being a completely great one.

Some said of him that he was greatly expressing something struggling. Some said of him that he was not greatly expressing something struggling. (329-30)

Conversely, Beckett writes:

Then he took it into his head to invert, no longer the order of the words in the sentence, nor that of the letters in the word, nor that of the sentences in the period, nor simultaneously that of the words in the sentence and that of the letters in the word, nor simultaneously that of the words in the sentence and that of the sentences in the period, nor simultaneously that of the letters in the word and that of the words in the sentences in the period, ho no, but, in the brief course of the same period, now that of the words in the sentence, now that of the letters in the word, now that of the sentences in the period, now simultaneously that of the words in the sentence and that of the letters in the word, and now simultaneously that of the words in the sentence and that of that of the sentences in the period, now simultaneously that of the letters in the word and that of the sentences in the period, and now simultaneously that of the letters in the word and that of the words in the sentence and that of that of the sentences in the period.

I recall no example of this manner. (168) ¹⁸

It is not merely the repetition that should draw our attention, but what the text says in extremely ordinary language. That the ‘he’ in both instances is *struggling* to express something great. In Watt’s case the struggling can be read as intentional—by reading the phrase “he took it into his head” as an indication of choice—or as incidental—by reading the phrase “he took it into his head” as a colloquialism for an *unexplainable* idea or motive.¹⁹ The inversion series is important not only because it emphasizes both the speaker’s and the

listener's roles, but also because it shows the amorous nature of the explanation itself. The explanation of these very plain words is, for Stein's listeners, inconsistent, and, for *Watt's* narrator, unreachable. As we read or hear these in succession, we can understand how the second becomes the explanation of the first. Watt's inversions are how the 'he' of *Matisse* is struggling. The barrier to saying something great is the limitation that syntax places on expression. In these works there is certainly an implication of terminal failure, even if we take this relationship to be parodic. If Watt is the embodiment or personification of this type of language game that Stein composes in *Matisse*, then, for Beckett, this game will only lead to the asylum.

A stronger and more fruitful connection in this relationship operates first as a complex allusion by Beckett to Stein's work as a stepping stone, or, as he supposes, that this style "might be a necessary stage." He describes his linguistic similarity to Stein specifically in his letter to Kaun: [...] "the texture of language has become porous" (*Disjecta* 172). We can easily see some of the more superficial allusive connections in these texts, such as Beckett's grossly un-erotic and literal sexual descriptions of a non-sexual act (in *Watt*) opposed to Stein's codified or in-group slang descriptions of a sexual act with non-sexual language (wife, cow). The way one chooses to read aloud *As a Wife Has a Cow*²⁰ will reflect the obviousness of the connotative meaning of the phrase "my wife has a cow." The implication of a female orgasm is, at best, thinly veiled. Inversely, we see Beckett's *Watt* operate at an almost completely denotative level. Where Beckett means to impose a sexual image, he uses sexual language. Thus we see Watt masturbating his snout. Again Beckett's treatment of painters (such as his painfully detailed description in *Watt's* Addenda) functions as a counterpart to Stein's impressionistic depiction of painters (Matisse, Cezanne, & Picasso). At best these act as allusion, but more likely they represent a parodic or developmental response on Beckett's part to match the unflattering comments about Stein in his letter to Kaun.

The stylistic and contextual repetitions that permutate as they progress or develop are evident in both writers. Consider how similar the round of voices and its sequencing is in *Watt*:

Now these voices, sometimes they sang only, and sometimes they cried only, and sometimes they stated only, and sometimes they murmured only, and sometimes they sang and cried, and sometimes they sang and stated, and

sometimes they sang and murmured, and sometimes they cried and stated, and sometimes they cried and murmured, and sometimes they stated and murmured, and sometimes they sang and cried and stated, and sometimes they sang and cried and murmured, and sometimes they cried and stated and murmured, and sometimes they sang and cried and stated and murmured, all together, at the same time, as now, to mention only these four kinds of voices, for there were others (29)²¹

is to Stein's *Many Many Women*

Her voice, her pleasantness, her neurasthenia were expressing that she was being one who was all one hearing and loving, seeing and loving, hearing and seeing and loving. Her voice which was a pleasant thing was the voice of one who was one seeing and loving and hearing and loving and seeing and hearing and loving. Her pleasantness which was a present thing was expressing that she was one seeing and loving, hearing and loving, hearing and seeing and loving. Her neurasthenia which had been a pleasant thing was something that was expressing that she was one seeing and loving, hearing and loving, seeing and hearing and loving.²²

While these instances might seem similar to the other experimental writers listed above, the speed and variation²³ of components becomes a jarring experience for the reader. These occurrences function as an event in which the murmuring and singing, or hearing and loving no longer hold a significant linguistic value. Rather the repetition dissociates the *meaning* of the words, leaving the reader only with the experience of the sounds or images that the rapid reading (enabled by the syntactical configuration of the punctuation) creates.

However, there is a further, perhaps more general, thematic connection as well. During an interview on *Four Saints in Three Acts*,²⁴ Stein explains her own quest for Nothing (left uncapitalized by Carpenter).

A saint a real saint never does anything, a martyr does something but a really good saint does nothing and so I wanted to have Four Saints that did nothing and I wrote *Four Saints in Three Acts* and they did nothing and that was everything. Generally speaking anybody is more interesting doing nothing than doing anything.

This *doing* of Nothing, or rather construction of Nothing in the theatre is perhaps clearer, in Beckett. The tradition of Nothing in Beckett is a long one, and the commentators of the opposing sides are well-known. They split, however, between those who tend either to dismiss Beckett's *oeuvre* as nihilist or defend it as anti-nihilist. On the former side are critics and theorists such as Georg Lukács and Slavoj Žižek, and on the latter, theorists such as Theodor Adorno to Alain Badiou and including Blanchot, Cavell, Cixous, Deleuze, Derrida and others. The latter (primarily Adorno) tend to defend Beckett's nihilism as, what I take to be, a kind of positive Schopenhauerianism. That is, these latter critics are settled to make an identification of the only available world: the negative world. More recently, Shane Weller, among others, has begun problematizing this critical tradition by pointing out that the relationship between Beckett (or his texts) and nihilism is one that will always be missed by those who are simply on one side or the other of this discourse. For Weller, only Adorno (and his "more and more faded positivities") provides an avenue for Beckett's nihilism to be something other than the readily identifiable form of nihilism. We can see this most clearly in *Endgame* as Clov relates what he imagines happens, and then no longer happens. Here both the characters of Clov's tale and then their words cease to do anything:

How easy it is. They said to me, That's friendship, yes, yes, no question, you've found it. They said to me, Here's the place, stop, raise your head and look at all that beauty. That order! They said to me, Come now, you're not a brute beast, think upon these things and you'll see how all becomes clear. And simple! They said to me, What skilled attention they get, all these dying of their wounds. [...]Then one day, suddenly, it ends, it changes, I don't understand, it dies, or it's me, I don't understand that either. I ask the words that remain—sleeping, waking, morning, evening. They have nothing to say. (80)

While this attempt to create Nothing or Nothingness, a specific brand of modern nihilism, is part of a much larger literary project in which we find many other authors as well (William Carlos Williams in *Spring and All*, for instance). Beckett stands as one of our most notable examples of this project. One of the most provocative instances of Nothing regarding Beckett's work is Maurice Blanchot's dismissal of "limitless perspective of renewal" as an approach to combating a naïve concept of nihilism often associated with Beckett's project. The Beckett of 1937 might well work as one of the anguished writers of Blanchot's *Faux Pas*.

Beckett would be a writer wholly given over to a completely negative work, or what Blanchot calls “a destructive work” (*une oeuvre destructrice*). Although nihilism can never be negative enough for theorists like Blanchot and Adorno, Beckett might then come as close as any artist to actual or authentic nihilism for thinkers like these (*FP* 6-7).

Any rejection of naïve nihilism owes thanks mostly to Stanley Cavell’s 1969 essay, “Ending the Waiting Game.” His essay on *Endgame*, perhaps most importantly, observes that Beckett’s characters are participating in the “new heroic undertaking” of resistance in a work that is “the reduction to nothing of both hope and meaning in the interests of a freedom that would be the essence of genuine human existence” (21). That essence, for Cavell, is comprised of: “solitude, emptiness, nothingness, meaninglessness, and silence (156). The stoic heroism that Cavell assigns the characters of *Endgame* is what Weller would call a sign of “the making of meaningless itself [as] an essentially anti-nihilist task” (111). This is true of Simon Critchley’s *Very Little...Almost Nothing* as well, although, here the resistance—taking the form of production—develops as laughter. In either case, the resistance that these two critics call for is the production of something or some meaning from nothing that the narrator of *The Unnamable* announces in his final line: “I’ll go on” (414).

For Cavell, the task is heroic precisely because, despite appearances, the struggle against meaning, or the attempt to do away with all meaning, is a struggle against nihilism, not for it. For Critchley, this approach to meaninglessness is, “an achievement of the ordinary without the rose-tinted glasses of redemption” (132). The subtle anxiety of Hamm’s question “We’re not beginning to...to...mean something?” (32), becomes more clear in light of this resistance. The “something” that “is taking its course” (*Endgame* 32), is either the passing of meaning and the appearance of actual *nothingness*, or the failure—and constant resistance—to mean nothing. The laughter here (even noted in the stage direction: “brief laugh”) that is Clov’s response to Hamm’s fearful question, “Mean something! You and I, mean something! Ah that’s a good one!” is the same type of laughing resistance that we find in Critchley. We should understand that this undertaking (of Clov’s line), for Cavell, is “a negating that here takes the form of ‘play’: enacting, performing, imitating or staging” (135). The removal of meaning through a self-awareness of the *playness* of the drama, or the approach of examining the ordinariness of the play strips away the graphed or imposed meanings of the play (or in Adorno’s case, this is the presence of a difference in a play that might or might not be there).

This might be the nearest achievement of meaninglessness without falling into the naivety of romantic nihilism. From this same operative space we can see Beckett launching his assault against words in his texts.

The relationship of these two function as something more of a response of what the “literature of the *unword*” should actually look like. Beckett writes, “But it is not enough for the game to lose some of its sacred seriousness. It should stop. Let us therefore act like that mad (?) mathematician who used a different principle of measurement at each step of his calculation. An assault against words in the name of beauty” (*Disjecta*, 173).

In “Playing Outside with Beckett,” Judith Roof comments that in Beckett’s drama an apparatus is used to instigate change within character. “What all of these apparatuses do is ‘wake up’ characters and force their confrontation with otherness...” (147). We can see this in both fictions of Beckett and Stein as well. Here, however, the apparatuses are linguistic rather than dramatic. The repetition of words and phrases cause the change—the slippage away from language—in these characters and works. We can see this unfold on a number of levels from the larger characterization of Watt’s invertive transformation into the near unintelligible, to the sentence level of inverted phrases, words, and letters. Watt, like so many instances in the book, is a character of linguistic experiment. Watt may well work not as a character in the traditional sense with a frame of reference. Rather Watt, both the character and novel, is presented in Iser-ian terms of its value to the reader.

In this capacity we see Beckett enacting the “literature of the *unword*,” not merely by inverting Watt’s words, but by creating a novel in which the reader must also participate in the aphasia of the characters. With this linguistic experiment, Beckett does move beyond the perceived ‘limitations’ of Stein’s work, as he transforms words not into things, but into events. *Watt* not only creates a model of how a character or writer/reporter problematically organizes knowledge, which we do get in *Tender Buttons*, but pushes the reader into that same space of aphasic nothingness and uncertainty through the repetition, and the repetition of sound to a point past where all sound is his echo and words can only ever function as afterimages of ideas.

CHAPTER 4

A DIGESTIVE TRACT, OR A JOURNEY DOWN THE GULLET WITH SHAUN THE POST

Lard have mustard on them!
—[FW 409:15-16]

He said Bruno was a terrible heretic. I said he was terribly burned.
—Stephen Dedalus, *Portrait*

XI. Living Language, Written Memory

‘*Decomposition and Recomposition in James Joyce’s Finnegans Wake*’ might have made a better title for this section, as acts of digestion, ingestion, and the accompanying actions (perhaps most notably blessings) begin to develop as major motifs almost as soon as Book III opens. These acts of consumption, consubstantiation, or cannibalism all center on the notion of transcription or transubstantiation; thus the attempt (and failure) to create a permanently accurate memory comes through an act of concretized language, specifically writing. The representation here, of course, is flesh or the word made flesh. Book II, chapter IV has just ended with the voices of Mamalujo²⁵ recounting their purloined looks of Tristan and Isolde’s (or HCE and ALP) post-marriage feast consummation²⁶ as they float down the river on a buoyant bridal bed.

As the chapter changes, the focus shifts also, but not too far, spatially speaking. This section focuses—at least thus far—largely on Shaun the Post. Shaun, though represented by many avatars, is embodied with a character that makes this shift appear organic, if not natural. As Tindall points out, this, the third book, coincides with Vico’s third or human age; he says that “Shaun is as human as any of the drunks in the pub” (223). The text has moved from the age of heroes to the age of men; the last age before the final ricorso. Book II ends with the Apostles, and Book III begins with Christ, the corporeal god. Christ is Shaun as he bobs down

the river in his Guinness barrel. The Shaun as *Shaun-the-savoir* connection is most clear in what Benstock calls “the minor epic” (187) at the end of Book I²⁷ but is equally clear here as well. Joyce’s chronological inversion of Christ first and the Apostles second (as accounted in the New Testament—that is, Christ’s ministry, then the ministry of the Apostles) should not be overlooked. While it might appear a negligible joke, it alludes to other Joycean inversions, specifically Mulligan’s *black mass* from the beginning of *Ulysses*. The inversion changes from simple chronological inversion to character inversion (from Messiah to Heretic, and vice versa) as the execution and consubstantiation of Christ are concurrently redrawn as the burning and consumption of Giordano Bruno.²⁸

To develop this connection, we should concentrate on three specific elements: this section’s focus on Shaun and his connection to Christ/Bruno (and the complications that this doubling presents), the role of eating and consubstantiation or transubstantiation in this section, and the leg of the journey that Shem and Shaun are currently on, which has not yet been discussed. While this examination might not yield any conclusive findings, it should, at least, draw our attention back to the complications of this issue of eating the body, as well as *what* that consumption might mean or *how* it is transformed and into *what*.

In Book III six major stories (or drafts of stories) operate: the story of Shaun’s debate with Shem as one draft, the story of Christ’s last supper and crucifixion as another draft, the story of Bruno’s execution as another, the parable of the Ant and the Grasshopper (the Ondt and the Gracehoper) as a fourth, Leopold Bloom’s burning of the kidney in “Calypso” as the fifth, and finally the telling of Buck Mulligan’s *black mass* that opens *Ulysses* as the last (in no specific order, of course). These stories are not being told as equivalents, but rather the corresponding or matching elements of each are intermingled and mutated into the others. That is, Shaun is Shaun, Christ, the Ondt, Bruno, Bloom, and Mulligan. Some connections are more obvious than others, but none necessarily more important than the others (even those elements not covered here, such as the presence of playing cards and their suits at the beginning of Book III).

In his 2005 presentation, “*Ulysses*, A Biography,” Michael Grodin outlined a genetic reading of *Ulysses* that revealed the possibility of interchangeability in Joyce’s writing in *Ulysses* as well as in *Finnegans Wake*. In short, Grodin (miraculously) obtained access to drafts of *Ulysses*, specifically a draft of the “Cyclops” chapter. In this draft, Joyce placed

Stephen within Barney Kearnan's pub, hurling insults at Bloom along with the other nationalist patrons. Ultimately, the lines are attributed to another character, and Stephen is excised from that scene.

Admittedly, this might seem like a dismissible point, but the notion that a major character could undergo such a significant change, or that it did not matter who said those lines speaks to a number of possibilities. Namely, either the drafts of *Ulysses*—as Grodin posits—are non-sequential. We should understand that the chapters either appear to have been written out of sequence, or that characters in *Ulysses*, even those as critical as Stephen, can easily move in and out of roles or are interchangeable or multi-representational, essentially avatars that end up limited to a consistent character.

A reading such as Grodin's suggests an added level of significance to Stephen's idle omphallic ponderings form a connection to the manifestation of characters in *Finnegans Wake*. Stephen, in *Ulysses*, cannot be his own grandfather. However, Stephen, or any other character (and we could certainly read the dichotomy of Bloom and Stephen as a foil to the binary relationships of Shem and Shaun), can be (or perhaps more accurately is) someone else in *Finnegans Wake*. The Wake is, of course, filled with what we might call the *eluctable modality of character*. The constant permutation of characters into other things or beings is commonplace; this, primarily, to indicate the connection between *Ulysses* (as it shifts between drafts) and *Finnegans Wake* (as it simultaneously enacted all drafts—even those using Ulysses as a draft).

We can see Joyce's reference, and relation, back to Bruno as early as *Portrait* with his reinterpretation of Bruno's phrase "internal artificer" (*CPU* 38) as "Old father, old artificer" (*P* 185), likewise with Stephen's comments (mentioned in the epigraph above) that appear briefly before the conclusion. While uncounted allusions to Bruno appear in the Wake as Shem (notwithstanding Joyce's own identification with Bruno or Shem; that is, men both rebellious and persecuted-by censors in Joyce's case, by Pope Clement and the Dominicans in Bruno's case, or by Shaun in Shem's case) we should understand that Bruno, in this instance, is an avatar of Shaun, which we should garner from page 406's "brown." Of course, Shem and Shaun are as much one individual as they are two, the same way that Browne and Nolan of Nassau St. are embodied in the single character of Bruno Nolan.

By the same indivisible token, to separate the discussion of Bruno and Christ is impossible. The allusion of Shaun as Christ is most directly implied in the “Thinker’s Dam” [FW 409:21]; or in the earlier and much more explicit con-fusion of Christ and Bruno and Shem/Shاون and Browne & Nolan: “his sinister cyclopes after trigamies and spirals’ wobbles pursuing their rovinghamilton selves and godolphing in fairlove to see around the waste of noland’s browne jesus 4 (thur him no quartos!) till that on him poorin sweat the juggaleer’s veins (quench his quill!)” [FW 300: 26-31]. Here Jesus, Browne, and Nolan [“noland’s”] are self-evident, while Bruno is couched in the common referent of the Nassau St. bookseller, and Shem/Shاون the penman that possesses “his quill.” As Shaun is introduced, however we see that Joyce draws parallels to Christ. First in the lines: “the hummer in their ground all vociferated echoing: Shaun! Shaun! Post the post!” [FW 404:6-7], which is mostly likely an allusion to Luke 19:40 (“And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones of the ground would immediately cry out.”), insofar as it points to the ground vociferating or proclaiming the name of Shaun/Christ. This coupling of Shaun and Christ is quickly complicated on the same page as Shaun/Christ is coupled with cooking: “(and may his hundred thousand welcome stewed letters, relayed wand postchased, multiply, ay faith, and plultiply!) Shaun himself.” [FW 404:36-405:1-2]; here we can see that the evangelical is retained (in both “faith” and “plultiply” or pulp/pulpit/multiply), and that the first instance of eating is introduced, “stewed.” Letters are what are stewed here, but as we have seen earlier in Book II, chapter II writing/letters and the body are interchangeable: first in “it’s me chews to swallow all you saidn’t you can eat my words” [FW 279:4], and later in the twins’ essay assignments we find, “And Trieste, ah Trieste ate I my liver! *Se non é vero son trovatore.*” [FW 301:16-17].

We also see intratextual ties. Consider, for example, the passage, “In the name of the former and of the latter and of their holocaust. Allmen.” [FW 419:9-10] as a reference back to the prayer that ends Book II beginning with, “*Anno Domini nostri sancti Jesu Christi*” [FW 398:31], and ending with, “So, to john for a john, johnajeams, led it be!” [FW 399:34]. This notion is, of course, complicated by the alchemical blessing/recipe that before Shaun’s benediction at the end of the Ondt and Gracehoper poem: “(seven bolles of sapo, a lick of lime, two spurts of fussfor, threfurts of sulph, a shake o’shouker, doze grains of migniss and a mesfull of madcap pitchies.” [FW 415:4-7]. The dual-valence instances of food are hard to

miss in this section; some of the more notable instances like, “peas, rice, and yeggy-yolk” [FW 404:29-30], “beamish brow” [FW 405:16-17], “porterhouse scutfrank” [FW 405:23], “broad beans, hig, steak, hag, pepper” [FW 406:16], and, my favorite, “prairial roysters” [FW 407:1]. Occurrences such as, “a bless us O blood and thirsty orange, next, the half of a pint of becon with newled googs and a segment of riceplummy padding, met of sunder suigar and some cold forsoaken steak [...]” [FW 405 32-35] and “old phoenix portar” and “Irish too” [FW 406:10-11], point to the significance of food in this section as they either indicate a benedictory connection (as in the former) or point to a resurrection (in the case of the phoenix from a fiery death) or a tie to the Irish character (as in the latter’s Irish stew or Irish as well/too). It is important not to overlook the coupling of the Ondt with Shaun/Christ/Bruno. While the Ondt might escape the flame (at least, I think he does), he certainly shares similarities with (at least) Christ. The connection is implied in the storing up of goods that the Ondt preaches/practices is an allusion to storing of treasures in heaven (both in the Old Testament: “Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures?” [Deuteronomy 32:34], and specifically from Christ in the New Testament: “But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.” [Matthew 6:19-20]), but more subtly in the thunderclaps surrounding the Ondt-as they signify his fall (the 9th thunderclap [FW 414.18-20] “Ullhodturdenweirmudgaardgringnirurdrmolnirfenrirlukkilokkibaugimandodrrerinsurtkrinmg ernrackinarockar!”) and resurrection (the 10th thunderclap [FW 424.23-26] “husstenhasstencaffincoffintussemtosemmdamandamnacosaghcusaghhobixhatouxpeswchbech oscashlcarcaract”). The connection of food in this instance appears only insofar as it forms the metaphor of the parable.

The allusion to the burning of Bruno appears as a telescoping death/food pun on the words “stake” and “steak”, as well as various references as to how one might go about preparing (e.g. “fired smart” [405:15]) a cut of steak. There are at least a dozen examples of steak and staking on pages 405 & 406: *mistaking* [405:16], *porterhouse* [405:23], *prime* [405:14], *rounding* [405:19], *topping* [405:21], *chuck* [405:16], *frumped* [405:28], *loin* of veal [406:18], *chops* [406:4] (these seven as specific cuts), forsoaken *steak* [405:35], *round steak* very *rare* [406:2], saddlebag *steak* [406:10], or *steak* and pepper [406:16] (*all italics mine here*). If we take the parallel of this to the Eucharist, or parsing of Christ’s body for

consumption, as evident, this allusion should also take us back to both Mulligan's sacrilegious jibes at Stephen: "*Introibo ad altare Dei*" or "the genuine christine: body and soul and blood and ouns" (U 3), and Bloom's unintended burnt offering.

What these allusions should work to do is to draw our attention back to what Anthony Burgess first pointed out, which is that Shaun is the "greedy eater of his father's substance" (259). The ceremony (be it execution or consecration) is only of peripheral importance. The real meat of the issue is what we see appear during "Oxen in the Sun," which is the process of transforming or recreating the consumed into a new product. In "OitS," we should take specific note of the following lines: "In woman's womb is word made flesh but in the spirit of the maker all flesh that passes becomes the word that shall not pass away. This is the postcreation" (U 320) and its counterpart, "*Entweder transubstantiality oder consubstantiality but in no case subsubstantiality*" (U 321), as these lines demonstrate both the recreation and the consumption that allows it. If this were a reasonable association, it would appear that in this section, at least, food, body, and writing (i.e. language as text) are as interchangeable as any of the characters in the text. We can, of course, see other treatments of this issue in Samuel Beckett's *Watt*. First, illustrated here by a question posed to Mr Spiro:

Sir

A rat, or other small animal, eats of a consecrated

Wafer.

1) Does he ingest the Real Body, or does he not?

2) If he does not, what has become of it?

3) If he does, what is to be done with him?

Yours faithfully

Martin Ignatius MacKenzie (28)

Later in *Watt*, the question of what becomes of Mr Knott's poss and unfinished food further develops this consubstantiation theme.

This begs the questions why use con/transubstantiation as the operative metaphor for writing, and where does it come from. The short answer is from both Swift and Vico. The contextual influence comes from Swift's "A Modest Proposal" and "the Tale of the Tub." The former for its unorthodox consumptive suggestions, and the latter for the situational context of

Shem and Shaun (floating downriver past the bridal bed in the barrel). However, apart from where these issues might originate, more pressing is where are they going or where do they position us in the text. As always, a level of this text incorporates images of the river and its movements. This section offers something that we have yet to encounter in the *Wake*: the gullet as the river of life/Liffey. This leg of Shaun's journey takes place at the human level—that is, within the body. Shaun, however, is not both devourer and devoured. Shaun, if we can take this consumption of burnt body as representative of the stewed letter, is consumed by ALP. The stewed letter becomes a macabre form of embodied language. That is, she takes in his letter. As she represents/is the Liffey, she is also the digestive tract that Shaun travels down in his barrel. We have seen various permutations of the river already in the text however, each previous permutation has remained water-based. While it would be foolish to argue that the contents of any digestive tract are not primarily water (or water-based), this canal down which they float is clearly separate from the river or even the ejaculate/urine that at other times forms the allusion to the river, as the consumed food is still internal, not passed away through the body as the passage from “OitS” points out. Why the change here? Is it only to reflect and emphasize the human era in the Vicoian ricorso? That seems doubtful. It would appear that the influence of Vico is a bit broader. Here we see Joyce using Vico textually, rather than just as a structural marker, which we normally see just as a shift or round, is about to take place in the text (for instance, the retelling of a tale). If we look back to what Vico writes in Book II, chapter II, section I of *the New Science*, we can see the influence of the taking in of a thing and the becoming of this thing (presumably here knowledge or text) into something else—the con/transubstantiation that it undergoes, or as Vico's writes,

It is noteworthy that in all languages the greater part of the expressions relating to inanimate things are formed by the metaphor from the human body and its parts and from the human senses and passions [...] All of which is a consequence of our axiom that man in his ignorance makes himself the rule of the universe, for in the examples cited he has made of himself the entire world. So that, as rational metaphysics teaches that man becomes all things by understanding them (*homo intelligendo fit omnia*), this imaginative metaphysics shows that man becomes all things by not understanding them (*homo non intelligendo fit omnia*); and perhaps the latter proposition is truer

than the former, for when man understands he extends his mind and takes in the things, but when he does not understand he makes the things out of himself and becomes them by transforming himself into them. (§450 pp130)

What Joyce does in this section is to express the notion of writing text-a language act-as consuming self, or to use Vico's words: the human metaphor here implies that Joyce (or perhaps Shaun) might not have completely understood the thing that he is writing and therefore becomes. Is this a further inversion? Whereas we normally find Joyce using Bruno as a philosophical or contextual basis, here we see him using Vico. The Vicoian structure of the text is replaced with the structure of consuming Bruno, the *Wakian* Christ correlative, the heretic word made flesh.

CHAPTER 5

JOYCE AND THE MEMORY OF NATION: FORGING AND FORGETTING

NATIONALISM IN *FINNEGANS WAKE*

We must take seriously Vico's great observation
that men make their own history, that what they
can know is what they have made...

—Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*

There are questions you see and don't ask yourself.

—Samuel Beckett, "Enough"

XII. MEMORY AND NATION

In *Postnationalist Ireland* (1997), Richard Kearney depicts Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* as the "prototypical postmodern text," marking it as an example of an awakening of postnational consciousness. He describes Joyce as working in the "Fifth Province" of imaginative space that "connects the parish to the cosmos." Further, he reads James Joyce's cosmopolitan reshaping of Dublin in *Finnegans Wake* as central to the notion of a Europe of Regions, and Joyce's mediation between things continental and things Irish as a marker of a burgeoning transnational Irish awareness. Kearney uses Joyce's imagined world to make the invention of this postnational consciousness seem like a natural socio-evolutionary event (65).

Kearney positions Joyce, along with Samuel Beckett and Thomas McGreevy, as a cosmopolitan challenger to revivalists like Yeats, who were attempting to recover a kind of unified authentic national mythology or identity (*PnI* 113). Joyce, for Kearney, provides an example of how to re-create history as fiction or myth (*PnI* 117), or as Joyce puts it, to issue an "epical forged cheque" [*FW* 181.15]. Certainly, Kearney is not alone in exploring the issue of history as myth (or at least creation). Both Seamus Deane and Declan Kiberd have written on this topic. Both writers hint at the devaluation that occurs in what these two would call the process of re-invention, what we might see cognitively as consequential remembering, and what Joyce might call re-forging.²⁹

Deane introduces the collection of essays, *Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature* (1990), by explaining that, “a society needs a system of legitimation and, in seeking for it, always looks to a point of origin from which it can derive itself and its practices” (*NC&L* 17). In a way, Comerford answers the impossible proposition in the second section of his book, *Inventing the Nation: Ireland* (2003), by recounting the various origins surrounding Irish culture—Comerford modifies Deane’s thesis to read *points of origin*. By approaching nationalism (and here we could easily substitute national identity or the synonymous national memory) as an invention and not a phenomenon, both Deane and Comerford agree on the unnatural or arbitrary quality of national culture or, at least, its origin: “once the origin is understood to be an invention, however necessary, it can never again be thought of as something ‘natural’” (Deane *NC&L* 17). Comerford agrees at the beginning of his second section, “nowhere is nation-invention more in evidence than in the matter of origins” (51). In *Strange Country* (1997), Deane goes on to demonstrate a view that suggests the impossibility of a universal Irish national character without the “elimination of traditional practices and customs” (*SC* 49).

Kiberd operates similarly to Deane in his opening chapter, “Inventing Irelands.” Here Kiberd says, “[i]n theory, two kinds of freedom were available to the Irish: the return to a past, pre-colonial Gaelic identity, still yearning for expression if long-denied, or the reconstruction of a national identity, beginning from the first principles all over again” (286). The connection between the ideas of reconstruction in these three writers and Kearney’s mast-heading of *Finnegans Wake* as archetypal text might become more evident if we consider Homi Bhabha’s explanation of the “ambivalent temporalities of nation-space” in “DissemiNation.” For Bhabha, the essential question of representation is one of temporal process (142). The connection of temporal process to Joyce’s own method is significant, as the Joycean work is ever recurrent: it continues to begin “the siem anew” [FW 215.22], and is always already re-remembering.

While we should not go so far as to laud Deane’s suggestion, in *Strange Country*, that it is impossible to reach an inclusive Irish national character—what he outlines as a “controlling voice in recalcitrant community narratives that refuses...to yield itself to either the state or to any comparable transnational, or ‘universal’ goal or condition”—without the “elimination of traditional practices and customs” (49), neither should we flatly accept

Kearney's claim, in *Postnationalist Ireland*, that postnationalism merely calls for a reinterpretation rather than a liquidation of national memories (59). Especially not when later, in *Poetics of Imagining*, Kearney essentializes the narrative of *Finnegans Wake* not as Said's or Lyotard's *po-mo* "counter narrative" or "subversive narrative" that he says "brush[es] history against the grain and put[s] the dominant power in question" (251).

By focusing on the Dublin that Joyce remembers in *Finnegans Wake* as not a postnational city (a borderless world that Kearney suggests), but Dublin as a kind of "preternational" place, we can see how the Dublin of *Finnegans Wake* becomes a place that is not only borderless, but also extraordinarily unreal, or a city akin to Benjamin's phantasmagorical Paris. The larger part of identity creation in this "preternational" place is achieved not through re-creation or re-forging, but by *forgetting*.

We should not accept Kearney's reading of *Finnegans Wake* without some reservation, as he asks Joyce's work to become something real. It is almost an Orphic request (in that Heidegger *reading* Hölderlin sense) to bring a new postnational world into existence through language. However, what Joyce creates with *Finnegans Wake* is more of an unreality than anything else. This world—or identity as Kearney might call it—is as unreal or unreally real as possible to the point that it seems Phantasmagoric.

The similarity between *Finnegans Wake* and Benjamin's *the Arcades Project* has surely not gone unnoticed—the method of the two is almost identical. To borrow Rajeev Patke's language, both *Finnegans Wake* and *the Arcades Project* are source material that is combined in a montage that creates a constellation-like web, which offers mirror revelations in place of analysis and hints at the importance of awaking from a dream or fantasy. They differ, however, in intent as much as they resemble each other in practice. The *Arcades* aims to awaken a society from its myth-laden and dreamy faux consciousness into a state of active consciousness of Parisian class, while *Finnegans Wake* operates almost in reverse, enticing a society into a amorphous Phantasmagoria of myth and dream that occludes difference and activity.

In *Poetics of Imagining*, Kearney moves beyond Joyce, to claim that Beckett's anti-narratives (such as the decompositional *Malone Dies* or *the Unnamable*) show that traditional narrative tempers real experience (251). This notion is a celebration of the shattering of the Phantasmagoric state. Kearney later asserts, however, that *Finnegans Wake* is somehow a real

experience despite that the *Wake* is what most of us would be comfortable calling Phantasmagoria or Fantasie. The attraction that Kearney would have to *Finnegans Wake*'s Dublin is easy to see. The city appears to be beyond borders, that is, inclusively regional, or postnational, as opposed to provincial. However, this Dublin is more of a preter-nationalist place. It exists outside of the concept of borders and cities. This Dublin is what Benjamin would see as thoroughly unreal, or Bergson would call virtual. Things do not come and go in a city like this; they both are and are not. This might speak to the inclination that Kearney has to revise these narratives, in *Poetics*, as post-modern (counter-narratives) rather than simply postnational.

This process, regardless of what we call it, in which we see Ireland invented or re-invented, its memory composed and recomposed, and its consciousness forged or re-forged, is not myth-making. It is, rather, a creation of identity and memory centered around what that culture forgets. By following the progression from Joyce's attempt at *forging uncreated consciousness* to Beckett's later more hyperbolic attempts, we can see how this narrative is a fabrication of national creation. It's an Odysseian yarn, not a reinterpreted myth or memory, but a fraudulent history and a manufactured memory. That type of reinterpretation reduces and devalues anything resembling nation to a negligible degree (literally, in *Finnegans Wake*, it becomes either a footnote or marginalia). The importance here is not in re-inventing, as anyone can do that—some more capable at fabrication than others—but in the ability to forget.

To understand this process it is important to examine the textual *forgetting* that takes place (some 60 times) in *Finnegans Wake*. We can also see the complementary fraudulent substitution (also occurring some 60 times) that occurs during this creation process, or, to be more specific, the forging of someone else's history and passing it off as one's own forgotten past. The forging of Stephen's *smithying* proclamation in *Portrait* is not one of national creation, but of national fabrication. He is, after all, later one of the two key characters in the novel named for ancient Greece's greatest fabricator, Odysseus.

XIII. FORGING AND FORGETTING

The notion of Joyce as forger is certainly not new. However, that notion is often given short shrift, and is generally mentioned only in passing or on the way to another point. In addition

to examining the textual instance of forgetting and forgery in *Finnegans Wake*, we should also consider two aspects of these words that would not have escaped Joyce: etymology and typography.

Forge, is, of course, a transitive verb, which takes a number of denotative shifts compared to the few semantic routes that the noun form of the word takes. The Indo-European root of the modern English form comes from both the Old French (*forgier*) and the Latin root (*fabiāre*). While we generally take Stephen's meaning of *forge* to be that smithing or the process of shaping metals, the other older meanings of this word are much more applicable to the intention behind Stephen's proclamation. They, in fact, might be inseparable. The *OED* pairs the meaning "to coin or mint" with the meaning "to invent" ('forge' s.v.3). The two meanings that are most applicable are the verb form "to fabricate" (s.v.4), as in 'to tell a story' or 'to lie,' which came into popular use with Chaucer ("In hwich delit they wol forge a long tale" [*sic*]) in the 1380s, and the verb form "to fraudulently imitate" (s.v.5), which originated with Brunne in the 1330s ("fals brefe and forged wele" [*sic*]).

Forget originally came into the English lexicon from the Old French in the 880s. The denotation changed from the colloquial French for "a lapse in memory" ('forget' s.v.3) to "to willfully neglect" (s.v.4) in Old English, but the colloquial meaning became popular again through Shakespeare's *Henry VI* and *Henry VIII*. More interesting than either of these more popular meanings is an archaic use of the word that suggests the process of literal fabrication. Forget (II s.v.1) was a mispronunciation of the French "forchet" meaning, "to make gloves."

Perhaps more pressing than the etymological connection between the words is the typographic similarity. Graphically these words are only a single dental suffix apart. The one letter difference (F-O-R-G-E and F-O-R-G-E-T) certainly would not have gone unnoticed by Joyce, especially given the importance of the appearance of the words on the page in *Finnegans Wake* (apart from the similarity in sound). Forgetting and the forgery it allows operate differently in *Ulysses* and in *Finnegans Wake*. This brief discussion examines the nature and function of these words in *Ulysses* before moving to a closer look at the text of the *Wake*.

In *Ulysses*, the nature of these instances, in which we see a character forgetting, are primarily situational rather than specifically textual; the textual occurrence is less important than the action (or rather attempt) of forgetting. In fact, forgetting (and thus forging or re-

forging) in *Ulysses* is an interrupted and impossible task. Any number of instances could serve as examples of situational forgetting, but the two most notable for Bloom are the confusion of Rudy/Molly and the incident at Kiernan's Pub. The first occurrence is an issue surrounded by personal anxiety, something we might look at psychologically, while the second seems centered around sociological anxieties. Forgetting and conscious memory are stumbling blocks for Bloom. He is unable to re-cast himself as a new man (or even as a natural[ized] man) because of the anxiety of specific memories. Bloom makes immediate connections from memories, which prevent him from realizing a new relationship. He cannot actualize his extra-marital affair since each time he considers it he immediately sentimentalizes his lost relationship with his dead son or his philandering wife. Of course, we could substitute any of the other separations as well: his father or Elijah for instance. His personal identity is just as problematic as his social identity where forgetting and re-inventing are concerned. In the Cyclops chapter, for instance, each time that he is on the verge of forgetting himself—that he is not 'simply' Irish (white, Catholic, or any other of a number of stereotypes)—someone (and it apparently does not matter who, as we will later see in section XIII) points out his difference, and more importantly forces him to claim—to remember—his otherness. Conveniently modified memory becomes all-important for these patrons. They even toast with it: "The memory of the dead, says the citizen taking up his pint glass and glaring at Bloom" (251).

Forgetting and remembering are emotionally laden for the characters in *Ulysses*, but avatars of *Finnegans Wake* are able to transcend this anxiety of forgetting. The *Wake* freely tags the memories that it finds useful and appropriates them in the process of identity creation. The text forges various memories into an identity that can forget, remember, and adapt according to new memories that it might recover. The most recent study that includes the notion of the Joycean forger is Louis Armand's *technē*, which focuses on Joyce and hypertext. Armand examines Shem as, what he calls, the "plagiarist-heretic" (50), and points, indirectly, to two of the more interesting instances of forgery in *Finnegans Wake*.

Armand notes the two following passages. In the first, we can see the importance of over-writing or recomposing something; in this passage the act of recreating is just as authentic as the act of creating is inauthentic. The first level of writing is not lost, but incorporated into the second level (the "squidself," or ink, does not pass away).

[...] the first

till last alshemist **wrote over** every square inch of the only fools-cap available, his own body, till by its corrosive sublimation one continuous present tense integument slowly unfolded all marry-voising moodmoulded cyclewheeling history (thereby, he said, reflecting from his own individual person life unlivable, trans-accidentated through the slow fires of consciousness into a dividual chaos, perilous, potent, common to allflesh, human only, mortal) but **with each word that would not pass away the squid-self which he had squirtscreened from the crystalline world** waned chagreenold and doriangrayer in its dudhud. [FW 185.34-186-7; emphasis mine] ³⁰

The second passage refers to ALP's letter and the notion that she herself (or herselfes rather) did not write it, or at least did not write it, as it should appear. Shem has appropriated his mother's words and articles into his own, or ALP has adopted her son's letter and passed it off as her own.

[...] Closer

inspection of the bordereau would reveal a **multiplicity of personalities inflicted on the documents** or document and some prevision of virtual crime or crimes might be made by anyone unwary enough before any suitable occasion for it or them had so far managed to happen along. [FW 107.23-28; emphasis mine]

Consider the following instances of forgetting in the text of the *Wake*.³¹ Each of these 60 instances hint at the creation of a new identity (in a constant state of revision or *becoming* if we were to consider this in a Bergsonian context) through forgetting and then through the fraudulent appropriation and re-presentation of a new identity.

dirty on the old vic, to **forget** in expiating manslaughter and, [FW 62.5]

all will be **forgotten!** Ah ho! [FW 96.20]

ye are **forgetting** me!, [FW 194.18]

he had to **forget** [FW 203.28]

Ay, you're right. I'm epte to **forgetting**, [FW 208.4]

his breastplates for, **forforget, forforgetting** his birdsplace, [FW 231.24]
 But, holy Janus, I was **forgetting** the Blitzenkopfs! [FW 272.15]
 I **forget** to) bolt the thor. [FW 279.14]
 to **forget** the past, [FW 390.1]
 on the best of terms and be **forgot**, [FW 390.21]
 because he **forgot** himself [FW 391.17]
 and because he **forgot** to remember [FW 391.19]
 selling him before he **forgot**, issle issle [FW 394.16]
 by the world **forgot**, [FW 397.22]
 Begin to **forget** it. [FW 614.17]
 So may the low **forget** him their trespasses [FW 615.32]

The forgetting of one's birthplace, the forgetting of self or the past, and the forgetting of the isle speak specifically to the Irish nature of the text. The most important instance from this list is the mention of one's aptitude for forgetting. The act of forgetting seems not only natural, but also desirable for the speaker. Moreover, forgetting is obviously intentional. The forging or re-creating of the penman in *Finnegans Wake* is ongoing. As Kearney says, we all have "the freedom to re-invent" (*PnI* 117), but we must realize that that invention is always already a fraud. In *Finnegans Wake*, this supplementing is not comprised of thoughtful selection, but rather of a series of quick replacements for elementary tales when one specific to Ireland is forgotten:

shamiana, how few or how many of the most venerated public
 impostures, how very many piously forged palimpsests slipped
 in the first place by this morbid process from his pelagiarist pen? [FW 182.1-3] ³²

What we find in *Finnegans Wake* is a consciousness that continually revisits the validity of its previous utterances, much the same way that Beckett's *Watt* or *the Unnamable* will deal with aporia later.

XIV. PREJOYACING

Joyce is not the first to tackle these issues, of course. He operates within an Irish tradition by questioning the authenticity of memory (or being) and the identity that is created around that memory. Sterne employed the same types of omissions (that we just saw in Beckett) in

Tristram Shandy. The elided details replaced with ***s in Chapter XX or Chapter XXII, or the completely empty Chapter XVIII & XIX speak not only to the inconsistency or unreliability of memory, but also to the notion of remembering what one chooses. The cock-and-bull story that Sterne creates through *Shandy* is thematically similar to Joyce's *Wake*, but Swift's skepticism in *Gulliver's Travels* is more closely related to the textual inauthenticity that Joyce forges in the *Wake*. Gulliver's spatially mapped memory is like the characters of the *Wake*. For each instance of storytelling, we not only see a shift in language (and learn how Gulliver comes to this new language), but we also find that he remembers these instances based on where they happened geographically. Each instance has a time and a place that corresponds with the concurrent memory creation. These mythical lands and people mutate as easily in Gulliver's memory as the avatars in *Finnegans Wake*.

Swift's conclusion—albeit a bit frustrated—seems to be the impossibility of authentic communication through language due, in large part, to translation or transcription. Swift's protagonist continually muddles, mumbles through, or misinterprets the languages and the stories during his adventures (even those mediated by a translator). This conclusion does appear in text, but only briefly as Gulliver speaks with a necromantically resurrected Alexander in Glubdubdrib: "Alexander was called up into the room: it was with great difficulty that I understood his Greek, and had but little of my own" (184). Despite the fact that they cannot communicate Gulliver is able to garner the meaning of their conversation. Swift's skepticism of the authenticity of language—or perhaps the authentic memory of language, specifically writing and the written word—comes full circle while Gulliver is in Grand Academy of Laputa, where language is reduced to un-signified symbols and mechanical reproduction (see **figure 4**).

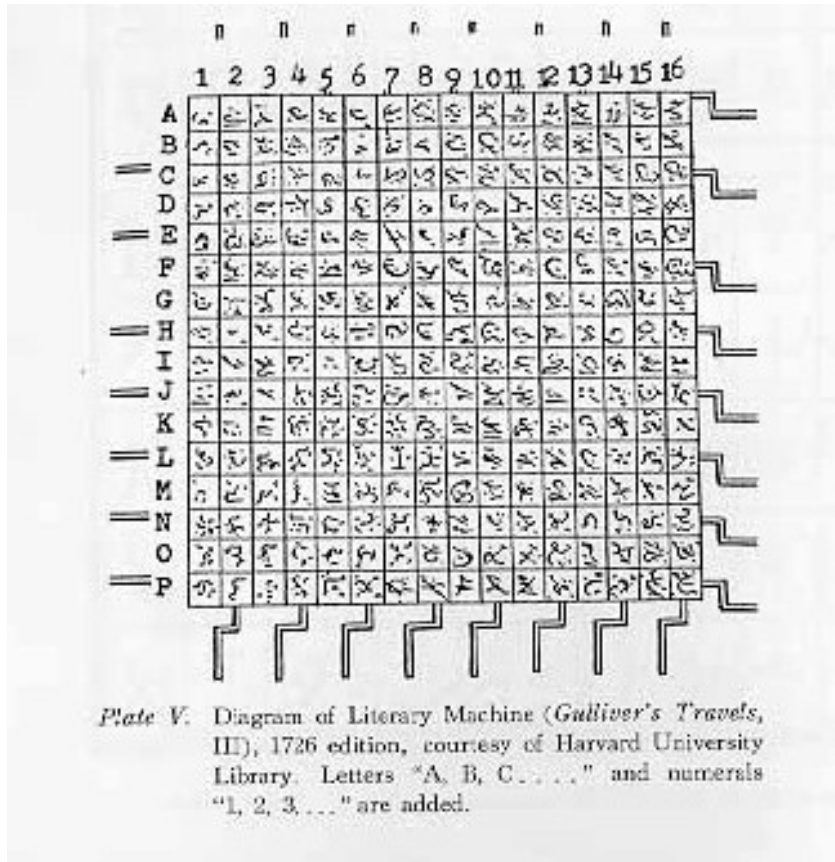


figure 4: Diagram of Literary Machine from Lagado

This mechanization of words and stories might most closely approximate the plagiarizing Shem as he forges palimpsests: an enactment of Wittgenstein's words on the arrangement and understanding of knowledge. He says, "problems are solved, not by reporting new experience, but by arranging what we have always known" (§109). An alternative to the notion is that Joyce uses forgetting as an integral part of the identity creation process. The reader of Joyce participates in this forgetting. By returning to Cavell, we see that we must go back and challenge what we assumed to know as true. As he explains, "what precedes certain discoveries is a necessity to return to a work, in fact or in memory, as to unfinished business" (*Disowning Knowledge* 85). We so often return only in memory to these notions, and, then, misremember them, or appropriate these misrememberings as authentic memory. It could be that the reader, by validating Joyce's example of recreational re-creation, has been duped as well. In reading this narrative of forgetting, have we forgotten the claim that young Stephen makes in *Portrait*? We have avoided what we *know*, that a prominent and recurrent character

(not to mention the one is often used to represent Joyce himself) has declared that he will create—*will forge*—this consciousness. If we misremember this fact, we miss the joke as well. More importantly though, when we overlook this transformational act, we fail to see the way memory shapes language in all its representative forms.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

...it is not the recollection-image or the attentive recognition which gives us the proper equivalent of the optical-sound image, it is rather the disturbances of memory and the failures of recognition.

—Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2*

XV. SOME MIRACLE OF ANALOGY?

Even as Beckett, in *Proust*, calls memory “some miracle of analogy,” he qualifies it in the preceding phrase: “an accident” (72). Like Murphy’s inability to recall his father, or Molloy’s inability to remember his mother, or even Malone’s incapability to remember how he arrived in his room, Beckett’s focus on memory centers on, what Deleuze calls, its disturbances and failures. Only the occasional accident provides a legitimate memory for Beckett’s characters in his novels, or, worse, moments of duress, such as those we see with the dramatic works, as with the interrogated characters of *Play*, *Not I*, or *What Where*, or the cold analysis that Bertrand and Morvan replay and remember as C stands stock still in *Rough for Theatre II*.

Perhaps because of these disturbances of memory and failures of recognition, Beckett’s characters seem doomed to repeat themselves, as much as the accidents or miracles of analogy allow them momentary insights into their situations. If Krapp happened upon an inadvertent parallel as he listened to his spools, would he become something more heroic like *Endgame*’s Clov as he realizes, through his own millet heap analogy, the end might never come, but only draw nearer. This is, of course, how memory works for Bergson; memory never actually ends, but only growing larger as the past increases. But does memory end for Beckett? With the examples discussed in this study, we should understand that instead of memory ending, memory transforms. That is, it shifts, evolves, or *slips* into forgetting or imagination. This change is as much of a natural accident as remembering is for Proust.

For Joyce, the evolution from remembering to forgetting is drastically different. Memory in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* are just as important as in any Beckettian text, but there is no slip from remembering to forgetting. This transition is a forced shift rather than a slippage. Where Beckett's characters struggle to remember and cling to memories that are "ill told, ill heard, and more than half-forgotten" (*Watt* 74), Joyce's characters are unable to forget. The sensory catalysts are too present and too many for the characters to evade. Stephan cannot escape even when he closes his eyes, as both images and the memory of images rush to him from the sounds of Sandymount and the feeling of sand under foot. Likewise, Bloom is always already committing memory to paper, even as he writes with one hand and masturbates with the other. The memory of Joyce's characters is spatialized outside of themselves onto the geography of Dublin, as much as it is any part of their memories. This concept becomes hyperbolized in *Finnegans Wake*, as places and locations are characters themselves. The mutability of personal memory becomes impossible as that memory is already con-fused within any given character and the entirety of all the characters' surroundings.

Despite the substantial textual forgetting in Joyce's work (on par with *Watt* and *Endgame*), the way in which these characters forget is by forging a new consciousness that does not necessarily have to remember the past's events, or, at best, an accurate portrayal of those memory events. Joyce literalizes this notion by committing memory to paper with his characters. His writing becomes both a literal and figurative forgery. The *Wake* approaches transformative language in a way that shows how language is remembered by becoming literalized first through text, and then through the consumed body. This is an attempt (and, again, this is a failure or disturbance) to create a permanently accurate memory through an act of concretized language, specifically writing, wherein memory is actualized. As Bergson tells us, this concretization is always a deformation—the act of writing is always already a distortion of *durée*. The paradoxical urge is to preserve accurate memory through writing, while the entire narrative is constructed as a fraudulent history of national memory. In both cases, we discover these memory events—where something slips—and their consequences cause a shift that connects memory immediately to language.

By examining Beckett's engagement with Bergsonian notions of space, time, and duration, as they relate to the specific instances or events of memory (this *glissade* or

slippage), we can see, in texts like *Watt* and *Endgame*, how memory runs its course to the natural end of forgetting. In these texts, the event of memory is slowed down and expanded to point where we are able to follow out the duration of the event. We are able then to watch how Clov can notice, acknowledge, and understand the event taking its course even if he cannot describe what that event is—an event that normally happens in the blink of an eye. Further, in the character Watt, we are able to see how a specific language act (in this case serial repetition) can unseat the received meaning or memory of the word. What we find is that this text brings to fruition Beckett's intent and impetus behind his "language of the unword," as it, in effect, creates a moment of slippage that finds the "something" or "nothing" that hides or lurks behind the barrier created as the memory of the "word" stagnates. This stagnation is the process by which we forget, ignore, or suppress the flexibility of language in favor a purely orthodox (what Beckett calls sacred seriousness) approach to how language must be, or can be, used. As the memory event occurs, or rather fails to occur in *Watt*, we see a correlative shift in language. As memory is disturbed, so is Watt's mental capacity to communicate. The memory of the word turns his language into something unintelligible.

As Beckett's texts show the impossibility of remembering, Joyce's texts approach the impossibility of forgetting. Both, however, deal directly with the failures of those respective ventures. The goal of this study has been to reexamine the linguistic shifts that memory events force in Beckett and Joyce, specifically how spatialization and mapping effect memory in their work. By keeping in mind the intellectual surroundings of Joyce and Beckett in Paris with contemporary thinkers and writers, such as Bergson, we should be able to understand better the complex and elusive approaches that these authors took to transform the way language was both used and understood. By reevaluating these earlier notions alongside the development in literary and cultural memory studies made by writers such as Deleuze, and advances currently underway in neuroscience and neuropathology, we can come to either a new or a more developed understanding of how each of these authors deals with memory and its role in language, as well as, how they have anticipated advances in those areas. Memory and language are never things to treat, for Joyce and Beckett, but events to experience.

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NOTES

CHAPTER 1

¹ Before 1990 there have been 13 Prizes in Physiology or Medicine, 11 of which were shared, and 23 recipients: Allvar Gullstrand in 1911, “for research on the image formation by the lens of the eye”; Sir Charles Scott Sherrington and Edgar Douglas Adrian in 1932, “for work on the function of neurons, including the fact that stronger stimuli result in a higher frequency of nerve impulses”; Sir Henry Hallett Dale and Otto Loewi in 1936, “for work on transmission of nerve impulses via neurotransmitters”; Joseph Erlanger and Herbert Spencer Gasser in 1944, “for the discovery of different types of nerve fibers”; in 1949 Walter Rudolf Hess, “for mapping the various functions of the midbrain,” and Antonio Caetano De Abreu Freire Egas Moniz, “for discovering the therapeutic effect of lobotomy”; Edward Calvin Kendall, Tadeus Reichstein and Philip Showalter Hench in 1950, “for the discovery of the hormones of the adrenal cortex, their structure and function”; Sir John Carew Eccles, Alan Lloyd Hodgkin and Andrew Fielding Huxley in 1963 “for describing the electric transmission of impulses along nerves”; Sir Bernard Katz, Ulf von Euler and Julius Axelrod in 1970, “for work on neurotransmitters”; Roger Guillemin and Andrew Wiktor Schally in 1977, “for work on peptide hormones produced in the brain”; in 1981 Roger W. Sperry “for research on the cerebral hemispheres”, and David H. Hubel and Torsten N. Wiesel “for work on the processing of visual information in the brain.” Since 1981, there have only been three (seperate) Prizes for work in neuroscience, neurology, or neuropathology: Arvid Carlsson “for proving that dopamine is a neurotransmitter in the brain whose depletion leads to symptoms of Parkinson's disease”; Paul Greengard “for showing how neurotransmitters act on the cell and can activate a central molecule known as DARPP-32”; and Eric R. Kandel “for describing how short-term and long-term memory is formed on the molecular level” all in 2000.

² S.E. Gontarski has previously pointed out this connection during his lectures on Neurology and Cognition in Literature.

³ Deleuze revisits this notion in the fourth chapter of *Cinema 2* (“Actual and virtual according to Bergson”) p55.

⁴ *DR* p101.

⁵ Singultus, or hiccups, are indeed a neuro-disorder, as they are only treated medically (in intractable cases) with Haloperidol or chlorpromazine (both anti-psychotic sedatives), or metoclopramide (an anti-spasmodic stimulant). All three of these drugs are used to neterualize the psychological elements of the ‘aliment.’ While the country remedy might still be drinking sugar or vinegar, or standing on one's head, the most effective 'natural' cures are all psychosomatic.

⁶ A neuro-disorder, which hinders control over the tongue, throat, lips or lungs.

⁷ The loss of the ability to execute or carry out learned or familiar movements, in this case inability or difficulty planning the movements necessary for speech.

CHAPTER 2

⁸ Another, slightly more humorous, instance of a character engaging with the past in an active way is Mulligan's overly contentious courtroom rambling; note the action of memory here: “Mulligan however made court to the scholarly by an apt quotation from the classics which, as it dwelt upon his memory, seemed to him a sound and tasteful support of his contention: *Talis ac tanta depravado bujus secuk, O guirites, ut matresfamiliarum nostrae lascivas cujushbet semiviri libici titillationes testibus ponderosis atque excelsis erectionibus centurionum Romanorum magnopere anteponunt...*” (329-330).

⁹ As quoted by Uhlmann in “Image and Intuition in Beckett's Film.”

¹⁰ Indeed, Mr Hackett cannot even make out Watt on the platform (16-17), despite the fact that the narrator has reported to us that Hackett has discussed his keen eyesight with the policeman only a few pages before (9).

CHAPTER 3

¹¹ We should note that Beckett mentions Joyce at the beginning of this statement on the comparison of nominalism and realism. Given his writing on Joyce's *Work in Progress* in "Dante...Bruno.Vico..Joyce," from *Our Exagmination Round His Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress*, it seems reasonable to consider Beckett's view of this issue in terms of a monad.

¹² *the ubuweb::Anthology of Conceptual Writing*. Dworkin, ed. http://www.ubu.com/concept/bald_boring.html

¹³ *the ubuweb::Anthology of Conceptual Writing*. Dworkin, ed. http://www.ubu.com/concept/serra_verb.html

¹⁴ "Happy World: What Lyn Hejinian's Poetry Tells Us About Chance, Fortune and Pleasure." *The Boston Review*: February / March 2000.

¹⁵ An event, for Badiou, generally occurs near the edge of a 'void' (*site événementiel*); that is, in the part of a situation where traditional modes of recognition or understanding no longer have any significant leverage. See *Being and Event*.

¹⁶ "German Letter of 1937"

"Perhaps the logographs of Gertrude Stein are nearer to what I have in mind. At least the texture of language has become porous, if only, alas, quite by chance, and as a consequence of a technique similar to that of Feininger. The unfortunate lady (is she still alive?) is doubtlessly still in love with her vehicle, albeit only in the way in which a mathematician is in love with his figures; a mathematician for whom the solution of the problem is of entirely secondary interest, indeed to whom must the death of his figures appear quite dreadful. To bring this method into relation with that of Joyce, as is the fashion, strikes me as senseless as the attempt, of which I know nothing as yet, to compare Nominalism (in the sense of the Scholastics) with Realism. On the way to this literature of the unword, which is so desirable to me, some form of Nominalist irony might be a necessary stage. But it is not enough for the game to lose some of its sacred seriousness. It should stop. Let us therefore act like that mad (?) mathematician who used a different principle of measurement at each step of his calculation. An assault against words in the name of beauty" (*Disjecta*, 172-3).

¹⁷ "German Letter of 1937"

It is indeed becoming more and more difficult, even senseless, for me to write an official English. And more and more my own language appears to me like a veil that must be torn apart in order to get at the things (or the Nothingness) behind it. Grammar and style. To me they have become as irrelevant as a Victorian bathing suit or the imperturbability of a true gentleman. A mask. Let us hope the time will come, thank God that in certain circles it has already come, when language is most efficiently used where it is being most efficiently misused. As we cannot eliminate language all at once, we should at least leave nothing undone that might contribute to its falling into disrepute. To bore one hole after another in it, until what lurks behind it—be it something or nothing—begins to seep through; I cannot imagine a higher goal for a writer today. (171-2)

¹⁸ *Watt*

The following is an example of this manner:

*Lit yad mac, ot og. Ton taw, ton tonk. Ton dob,
ton trips. Ton vila, ton deda. Ton kawa, ton pelsa.*

Ton das, ton yag. Os devil, rof mit.

This meant nothing to me. (167)

¹⁹ The laughter in the narrator's description points to the latter. The "ho no" is not merely a good chuckle, but indicates an exasperation on his part much like that of Clov as *Endgame* begins (or the uncomfortable laughing of Morvin in *Rough for Theatre II* or *W2 of Play*).

²⁰ **As a Wife Has a Cow**

[...] And to in six and another. And to and in and six and another. And to and in and six and another. And to in six and and to and in and six and another. And to and in and six and another. And to and six and in and another and and to and six and another and and to and in and six and and to and six and in and another.

In came in there, came in there come out of there. In came in come out of there. Come out there in came in there. Come out of there and in and come out of there. Came in there, come out of there.

Feeling or for it, as feeling or for it, came in or come in, or come out of there or feeling as feeling or feeling as for it. [...]

On the fifteenth of October as they say, said anyway, what is it as they expect, as they expect it or as they expected it, as they expect it and as they expected it, expect it or for it, expected it and it is expected of it. As they say said anyway. What is it as they expect for it, what is it and it is as they expect of it. What is it. What is it the fifteenth of October as they say as they expect or as they expected as they expect for it. What is it as they say the fifteenth of October as they say and as expected of it, the fifteenth of October as they say, what is it as expected of it. What is it and the fifteenth of October as they say and expected of it. [...]

Have it as having having it as happening, happening to have it as having, having to have it as happening. Happening and have it as happening and having it happen as happening and having to have it happen as happening, and my wife has a cow as now, my wife having a cow as now, my wife having a cow as now and having a cow as now and having a cow and having a cow now, my wife has a cow and now. My wife has a cow. (543-5)

²¹ **Watt**

As for his feet, sometimes he wore on each a sock, or on the one a sock and on the other a stocking, or a boot, or a shoe, or a slipper, or a sock and a boot, or a sock and a shoe, or a sock and a slipper, or a stocking and boot, or a stocking and shoe, or a stocking and slipper, or nothing at all. And sometimes he wore on each a stocking, or on the one a stocking and on the other a boot, or a shoe, or a slipper, or a sock and a boot, or a sock and shoe, or a sock and slipper, or a stocking and boot, or a stocking and shoe, or a stocking and slipper, or nothing at all. And sometimes he wore on each a boot, or on the one a boot and on the other a shoe, or a slipper, or a sock and boot, or a sock and shoe, or a sock and slipper, or a stocking and boot, or a stocking and shoe, or a stocking and slipper, or nothing at all. And sometime he wore on each a shoe, or on the one a shoe and on the other a slipper, or a sock and boot, or a sock and shoe, or a sock and slipper, or a stocking and boot, or a stocking and shoe, or a stocking and slipper or nothing at all. And sometimes he wore on each a slipper, or on the one a slipper and on the other a sock and boot, or a sock and shoe, or a sock and slipper, or a stocking and boot, or a stocking and shoe, or a stocking and slipper, or nothing at all. And sometime he wore on each a sock and boot, or on the one a sock and boot and on the other a sock and shoe, or a sock and slipper, or a stocking and boot, or a stocking and shoe, or a stocking and slipper, or nothing at all. And sometimes he wore on each a sock and shoe, or on the one a sock and shoe and on the other a sock and slipper, or a stocking and boot, or a stocking and shoe, or a stocking and slipper, or nothing at all. And sometimes he wore on each a sock and slipper, or on the one a sock and slipper and on the other a stocking and boot, or a stocking and shoe, or a stocking and slipper, or nothing at all. And sometimes he wore on each a stocking and boot, or on the one a stocking and boot and on the other a stocking and shoe, or a stocking and slipper, or nothing at all. And sometime he wore on each a stocking and shoe, or on the one a stocking and shoe and on the other a stocking and slipper, or nothing at all. And sometimes he wore on each a stocking and slipper, or on the one a stocking and slipper and on the other nothing at all. And sometimes he went barefoot. (200-1)

Watt (cont.)

Here he stood. Here he sat. Here he knelt. Here he lay. Here he moved, to and fro, from the door to the window, from the window to the door; from the window to the door, from the door to the window; from the fire to the bed, from the bed to the fire; from the bed to the fire, from the fire to the bed; from the door to the fire, from the fire to the door; from the fire to the door, from the door to the fire; from the window to the bed, from the bed to the window; from the bed to the window, from the window to the bed; from the fire to the window, from the window to the fire; from the window to the fire, from the fire to the window; from the bed to the door, from the door to the bed; from the door to the bed, from the bed to the door; from the door to the window, from the window to the fire; from the fire to the window, from the window to the door; from the window to the door, from the door to the bed; from the bed to the door, from the door to the window; from the fire to the bed, from the bed to the window; from the window to the bed, from the bed to the fire; from the bed to the fire, from the

fire to the door; from the door to the fire, from the fire to the bed; from the door to the window, from the window to the bed; from the bed to the window, from the window to the door; from the window to the door, from the door to the fire; from the fire to the door, from the door to the window; from the fire to the bed, from the bed to the door; from the door to the bed, from the bed to the fire; from the bed to the fire, from the fire to the window; from the window to the fire, from the fire to the bed; from the door to the fire, from the fire to the window; from the window to the fire, from the fire to the door; from the window to the bed, from the bed to the door; from the door to the bed, from the bed to the window; from the fire to the window, from the window to the bed; from the bed to the window, from the window to the fire; from the bed to the door, from the door to the fire; from the fire to the door, from the door to the bed.

The room was furnished solidly and with taste. (203-4)

²² ***Many Many Women:***

She was continuing. She was saying in beginning and ending she was continuing. She was continuing. She had one. In continuing she was saying that anything, anything that was beginning and ending was like continuing. She was saying that beginning and ending was not like continuing she being living and having one and not compelling saying. She was saying that not compelling continuing she being one and having one and feeling what was like not continuing, she was not feeling like compelling continuing, she was continuing if beginning and ending is continuing and beginning and ending is and is not like continuing.

²³ These two elements clearly change the way in which we understand these texts. Take, for instance, the performance of Lucky's speech. The speed and variation of the actor can make Lucky seem like a victim, a madman, or a factotum. The syntax that both Beckett and Stein create in their respective works forces the reader into a specific rhythm and cadence. The type of rhythms that these works impose on the reader work to jolt them from their standard mode of reading, and thus their typical understanding of the words themselves.

²⁴ qtd by David Carpenter in his review of *Last Operas and Plays* (1949).

CHAPTER 4

²⁵ That is, **Matthew, Mark, Luke,** and **John** (or avatars thereof).

²⁶ We should not overlook the typographical connection between consume and consummation.

²⁷ That is, a mundane look at the anti-heroic preparations for the day, but perhaps one of the most clear connections between Shaun and Bloom.

²⁸ That is Giordano Bruno, or Bruno of Nola or Bruno [the] Nolan; an Italian philosopher, astronomer/astrologer, and alchemical occultist executed as a heretic in Campo de' Fiori in 1600; he was popularly regarded as a martyr to the cause of freedom of thought via anti-dogmatic church doctrine, specifically his adherence to Copernicanism.

CHAPTER 5

²⁹ R.V. Comerford has continued this trend, and has written on it since Kearney's seminal work.

³⁰ In *Annotations to Finnegans Wake*, Roland McHugh cites "marryvoising" as "marivaudage," or preciosity in writing (186).

³¹ From the 60 mentioned, note that I have not included any portmanteau-words in that list of 60.

³² "palimpsests" McHugh cites as "parchment & c., written over twice" (182).

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Dustin Anderson was born in East Tennessee, and grew up there and in Anchorage and Seattle. He earned his bachelor's degree in English from Carson Newman College in 2002 and his master's degree in Literature from Florida State University in 2006. His interests are broadly in 20th century literature, particularly in James Joyce and Samuel Beckett; and in contemporary Irish and British culture. His research crosses recent developments in national modernisms, their literatures, and critical theory, with an emphasis on how the writings of Joyce and Beckett express relations between language and memory. Dustin was awarded the Program for Instructional Excellence (PIE) Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award conferred by the Office of Graduate Studies in 2004, and the Robert O. Lawton Award for Excellence in First Year Writing Instruction in 2005. He has served the past three years on the English department's Advisory Council of English Students; Dustin is especially proud of his work as both as the Program Assistant for the First Year Writing program, and as the Associate Editor for the *Journal of Beckett Studies*.