

Modernist Assemblages and List-like Configurations in Stein, Joyce, and, Roy

By

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For Ho-Hong Hsu and Wan-Wan Hsu Chang

As you go on your way may God go with you. May God go before you to show you the way. May God go behind you to encourage you, beside you to befriend you, above you to watch over, within you to give you peace.

-John Ylvisaker

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During the Twentieth Century, poets and novelists endowed lists and list-like configurations with important modernist significance and experimental characteristics. Since the *Fin de Siècle*, much modernist production, literary and otherwise, has ceased to valorize the whole, and entailed a skeptical attitude toward totality or simply leaned towards eroding an abiding belief in totality. This theoretical posture entailed a change in intellectual interest and artistic judgment about how (and which) individual components are perceived and imagined. The displacement or deconstruction of the whole (as in the sense of coherence and unity) shifts focus from the construction of a grand narrative to the imaginative creation of smaller narratives, and to the complexity of the patterns and rhythms of fragment-focused structures. Nowhere is the intellectual turn to parts—an epistemic shift from the whole to parts—clearer than in modernists' use of lists and catalogues, and their embrace of a cataloguing style. This dissertation examines work by Gertrude Stein, James Joyce, and Arundhati Roy to illustrate how each expanded the meaning and use of the listing form in both its simple and broader sense.

They provide examples that illustrate an astonishing breadth and variety of ways in which the twentieth century has used list-like assemblages. The consequences of their usage are usually to exhibit a propensity toward a destruction of hierarchy, to privilege the arbitrariness of chance, and to illuminate the complex process and implications of association in the narrator's or character's mind. The latter becomes one of the hallmarks of the twentieth-century lists. This dissertation explores many of the stylistic and narrative strategies (i.e., stream of consciousness,

embedded lists, practical lists, anaphora, etc.) prioritized by the Twentieth Century, and considers them as lists or list-like configurations. I argue that some of the twentieth-century lists should be distinguished from a simple itemization in terms of four interlocking aspects: associativeness, multidimensionality, atemporality, and capacity to effectuate. Different in styles and techniques, the texts examined in this study attest that the lists' artistic value, sociocultural meaning, political valence, and representational power are an important element of the narrative and poetic technique of the Twentieth Century.

Cyrena N. Pondrom

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Introduction

List-making is by no means new. But the arrival of the new millennium has only proved listing's formidable presence and growing popularity. Everyday all sorts of lists vie for our attention and consume our time. From the 53,772 results of a Google search to the 12 web pages of best sellers in books from amazon.com, from the swelling list of senders and subject lines in our school Inbox to the ever-expanding Timeline on Facebook, from a string of tweeter feeds to a series of commentaries posted on Stanley Fish's blog at Opinionator, we are deeply aware that list-making is more than an impulse. So much of what we know about the world and of how we stay in touch with it is mediated through lists and catalogues. A social practice and a cultural phenomenon, list-making has shaped and transformed the way we live, think, and behave. With the appearance of myriad lists and list-like configurations, listing or cataloguing can be found in expressions and registers as diverse as two lists of "Across" and "Down" clues in a crossword puzzle, a list of steps to solve a mathematical problem in an algorithm, and strings of the most popular videos in music, sports, or TV shows on YouTube.

It is commonplace that nineteenth-century English novelists spend a lengthy paragraph cataloguing the characteristics of an object or a landscape. At the opening of Chapter Fifteen of *Adam Bede* (1859), George Eliot provides a detailed description of an old-fashioned looking-glass in a bedroom. The accumulation of the images of its various parts (e.g., its "tarnished gilding," "a firm mahogany base," many "drawers," and two "brass candle-sockets") amounts to a catalogue of the mirror's remaining appeals (Eliot 149). Written in a language that shows engaging directness and clarity, Eliot's catalogue successfully captures the looking-glass in its still image. Her catalogue is an example of sheer description—a paragraph in lucid prose that proceeds without action and without narrative progression. Eliot's descriptive catalogue is a

literary strategy that takes on a static form and attracts attention to its mimetic force. The mimetic quality of Eliot's catalogue is characteristic of a simple list of items, a simple itemization. Such a listing form that emphasizes the value of *correspondence*—that is, the correspondence between the object perceived and its literary representation—remains common in twentieth-century literature. Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Ramsay, for instance, keeps the habit of writing down wages and other expenses in columns in a notebook, creating a list of numbers that reflects her daily finances. On the other side of the Irish Sea, James Joyce's Leopold Bloom practices the same ritual, making a budget list to balance income and expenditures. However, there are twentieth-century writers, including Woolf and Joyce, who eschew the correspondence theory to produce lists and catalogues that exist outside the confines of *mimesis* (mimetic representation). These writers experiment with *list-like configurations* that exemplify the breakdown of perception and representation. They approach and understand everyday objects and scenes from a perspective which does not subordinate a spatiotemporal continuum to the dictates of three-dimensional space and clock time. In the light of this, their list-like configurations are not simply an accretion of static and still images corresponding to real-life objects. List-making in their cases does not concern a faithful reporting or reproduction of what is perceived, although it may report the succession of images in the consciousness of the observer.

What are other possibilities that can also be recognized and considered as listing? This line of inquiry has not received as much attention and discussion as it should. Since the early twentieth century, lists and catalogues have implicitly undergone metamorphosis into something that is intellectually challenging and aesthetically engaging. One of the obvious reasons is that listing or cataloguing has evolved into combinatorial structures no longer confined to a simple

itemization. In appearance, they are extended or elaborated expressions of listing or cataloguing, the kind of expressions which are the center of this study. But however expansive and diverse these list-like structures may be, my investigation does not encompass lists or catalogues that are envisioned to be encyclopedic. The twentieth-century list-like configurations examined and discussed in my dissertation fall into three major categories.

The *first category* includes listing that has been transformed into forms that are not transparently recognizable as a list, but still involve a grouping or an accumulation of paratactic fragments which may be in a nonhierarchical sequence. Two examples are a list of the associations of the mind in the stream of consciousness, and an arrangement of items in a way that suggests a musical form. The *second category* encompasses practical lists that *are* simple itemizations, itemizations that may seem aesthetically insipid on a first reading, but are actually socially relevant and politically engaged. Finally, the *third category* focuses on list-like configurations that are created through typographical maneuverings, and thus invested with strong pictorial characters. Other list-like configurations in this category are identified in some verbal and stylistic patterns that highlight a preoccupation with the play of linguistic signs. For instance, a set of signifiers are repeated and rearranged in different permutations and combinations, which evoke the art of chanting and the power of incantation. Both the first and second chapters take up the first category of lists; the third chapter focuses especially on the second category, and the fourth chapter on the third. Of course, these writers often deploy lists from multiple categories.

Since the purpose of this study is to explore the poetics of listing and cataloguing, it is necessary that I define the terms “list” and “catalogue” before I proceed further. What is a list? Commonly recognized is a list that is associated with a linear consecutive presentation. At its

simplest, a list is a form of representation that begins and ends in simplicity, a simplicity that most often involves the process of naming: sock, shoe, pant, and purse. Nicholas Howe, in *The Old English Catalogue Poems* (1985), has already pointed out that the practice of “naming” is characteristic of a list (22). It culminates in an accumulation of items. Its natural advantage rests on a minimal or simple serial relation among its constituent parts. A catalogue, I suggest, is an enumeration at its most complex and elaborated, an enumeration to which descriptive language is central. This is not a new claim. Howe has already associated a catalogue with the practice of “describing” (22). Howe thus understands the catalogue to be a “describing” form and the list a “naming” form (22). In *The List* (2004), Robert Belknap makes much the same point. He makes the distinction that a list is referential, and a catalogue descriptive (2). In addition to its descriptive function, the catalogue is further described by Howe as “an accumulative, open-ended structure” (12). In Anne Ferry’s slightly different account, a catalogue, understood in the context of sixteenth-century English poetry, is sometimes recognized as “Naming in the form of extended lists” (148). In sixteenth-century England, a catalogue refers to “any long sequence of names” (Ferry 148). Writers often use lists that are both referential and descriptive. In this introduction, I am using “list” and “catalogue” interchangeably.

Many of the stylistic and narrative strategies prioritized by the twentieth century can be seen as lists. Unlike a simple itemization (the casual understanding of the list), lists in the literature of the twentieth century can be seen in sentence fragments or discontinuous details assembled without connection and hierarchical ordering, replete with leaps and gaps in perspective. From here, we can press on to distinguish a simple itemization from the twentieth-century list, and consider their differences in terms of four interlocking aspects: associativeness, multi-dimensionality, atemporality, and capacity to effectuate. These four aspects can be seen in

three early and late twentieth-century writers: Gertrude Stein, James Joyce, and Arundhati Roy—exemplary writers who deployed lists in this broader sense as a crucial element of their literary practice.

Stein in *Tender Buttons* (1913) and in some of her early portraits, Joyce in *Ulysses* (1922), and Roy in *The God of Small Things* (1997) all engage in the practice of listing in both its simple and its broader sense, and implicitly expand the meaning and use of the form. Particularly, in all three writers, twentieth-century lists unfold as an associative process that does not involve subordinating one fragment to another, or privileging one detail over another, even though the items so associated are unlike in most essential ways. The arbitrariness of chance takes command. It not only becomes one of the hallmarks of these twentieth-century lists, but also accentuates the process of association in the narrator's or character's mind.

In at least some of the listing practices of all three writers, the locus of the list is the mind either of the author or a character, and many of the attributes of their lists derive from the newfound understanding of the nature of consciousness in the early twentieth century. For instance, Henri Bergson's account of the flux of duration in *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (1903) exemplifies a new understanding of the nature of the mind. He articulates the issues of interiority, time, and memory that inform our knowledge of human consciousness. Emphasizing the continuous and endless nature of consciousness as our psychic reality, Bergson particularly focuses on the way the state of mind proceeds as a transforming and expanding conglomeration. He states, "there is no consciousness without memory, and no continuation of a state without the addition, to the present feeling, of the memory of past moments" (40). This mixture of sensations and memories constitutes what he calls duration: "the continuous life of a memory which prolongs the past into the present" (40). Bergson insists that duration would not be possible

without the surviving images of the past into the present (40). Duration manifests itself in accumulation of feelings and the memory of past moments. Human consciousness demonstrates a powerful and complex operation that deals with accumulative items of experience and multiple orders of existence (e.g., perceptions, feelings, and memories).

Bergson's description of the psychological state as a perpetual becoming resonates with William James's insights into the nature of the brain and consciousness as being in a state of change. James, Bergson's formidable contemporary, also made an original and profound contribution to the discussion of the nature of consciousness. In *The Principle of Psychology* (1890), James proposes to view consciousness (or thought) as a continuous stream. As a stream, the movement of consciousness is irregular and unpredictable, which renders it an evasive entity. The flow of thought is predicated upon the relationship between *thought* and *things that the thought is aware of*. If consciousness alternates between movement and stillness, it is because each response to things perceived is different. "The things [that thoughts are aware of] are discrete and discontinuous," James states (233). These things include "every sudden shock, appearance of a new object, or change in a sensation," all of which can cause interruptions in the consciousness (James 233). "[T]hey do pass before us in a train or chain, making often explosive appearances and rending each other in twain," James continues (233). "But their comings and goings and contrasts no more break the flow of the thought that thinks them than they break the time and the space in which they lie" (James 233). Significantly, things can potentially evoke sensorial images in us, but it is our mind that decides and selects its objects of thought. The mind is not un-discriminatingly responsive to every outward stimulus. Rather, it is a machinery of selection and association, which entails what James calls "this different pace of its parts" (236). James uses a bird's life as an analogy to describe the movement of the consciousness: "Like a

bird's life, it seems to be made of an alternation of flights and perchings" (236). However evasive or unpredictable it may be, "the mind," James asserts, "is at every stage a theatre of simultaneous possibilities. Consciousness consists in the comparison of these with each other, the selection of some, and the suppression of the rest by the reinforcing and inhibiting agency of attention" (277). Consciousness, as James portrays it, is a multicausal, multinodal, and multifocal event, one that implicates acts of comparison, selection, and suppression. Its operation, expressions, and manifestations have consequences and resonances far beyond what is considered to be common sense or rational judgment. Furthermore, James's depiction of consciousness alludes to a treasure trove of dramatic possibilities that registers a heterogeneity of images, feelings, and mechanisms, all of which contribute to combinatory surprises. Psychic components are interwoven with one another. Some surface, whereas others submerge. Far from being cut-and-dried, mental activities are relational and conditional—constituted by and constitutive of one another.

Stein, Joyce and Roy frequently resemble Bergson and James in their efforts to capture or externalize the intricate and opaque workings of the mind. All three writers attempt to offer a representation of the consciousness at least in part through the use of the listing strategy, and convey on the page that the mind has the power of calling up image after image. This is compatible with Bergson's and James's views on a nimble mind, alert and lively in movement. In their texts, the consciousness often takes the form of a list, a series of unconnected words or fragmentary sentences. Notably, the listing strategy functions to elucidate and animate one of the trademarks of the stream of consciousness: the shifts in attention, emphasis, and feeling. A non-sequential list in works of literature about perception and affect bears resemblance to a mobile consciousness that does not follow a strict sequence. Such a list is an act of representation by the

author, an act which may be attributed to a character. In Stein, Joyce, and Roy, the list is used to bring forth a succession of imaginary frames that is not necessarily continual, causal, or coherent. Though all three writers use the listed contents of consciousness (which may not be the only kind of list they use) as the locus of the new form of listing, the content and functions of the list differ among each of them. Different types of listings are used to carry different meanings. It is best to treat each in its own terms.

Stein offers a catalogue of what she, as the narrator of *Tender Buttons*, observes in the present moment, in her immediate environment. All of the content of *Tender Buttons*, consisting of a blended assemblage of short prose poems, is present time. It is a complex rather than straightforward record of the perceptual process, so that the collection may itself be thought of as a kind of list. In addition, Stein composes poems (both in *Tender Buttons* and elsewhere) that contain a list or a list-like structure—poems in which a list is embedded. In the poem which has an embedded list, Stein assembles a series of disjointed and incoherent images that is oriented toward capturing sensory experience and responding to sensorial reality. This collection of images is a microcosmic representation of things in the flux of becoming and of heterogeneous encounters among entities. The “Objects” section of *Tender Buttons* is thus a collection of events as simple as the air surrounding the object, the sounds in a room, the clacking of a typewriter, or the sunlight hitting an object—events that illustrate things’ ephemeral, volatile, and contingent existence. Stein’s lists of sensations move us beyond just the things themselves, and extend investigation to the phenomena and different orders of existence surrounding the things, *i.e.*, the “objects.” Tellingly, the twentieth-century practice of listing deconstructs and revises our understanding of the list as one-dimensional and as object-focused. The twentieth-century listing does not simply center on one object after another. Rather, the list takes on multi-dimensional

properties as it moves between the object and the perceiving consciousness and generates multiple resonances.

Joyce, in the “Sirens” episode of *Ulysses*, offers a list-like structure that includes both what Bloom perceives in the Ormond bar and associations with those perceptions from his memory. Although what Bloom remembers is prompted by current perception, the fragmentary images from Bloom’s memory of past episodes with Molly—images of their romantic enchantment and courtship that Joyce lists—encode Bloom’s emotional ties to her and his capabilities for love and forgiveness. The list in this instance is both an object (Bloom’s mental list) and an action. To list here is to put things in perspective, to reconnect, and to restore. Bloom accumulates memories about love to which he can repair, preferring not to despair over Molly’s sexual betrayal and emotional estrangement. Joyce also creates in Bloom’s mind lists of seductive actions and moments that intimate his unspoken awareness of Molly’s four-o’clock rendezvous with Boylan. But the idea that an old love is challenged or forever lost is not explicit in Bloom’s consciousness. Here we may see at once the interlocking aspects of associativeness, temporality, and capacity to effectuate.

Roy uses both Stein’s current observation and Joyce’s integration of current sensation and remembered incidents, but she differs from them by sometimes highlighting the status of these memories or observations as simple enumerations, set apart, seemingly obstructing the narrative and does so for political and psychological reasons. A character in *The God of Small Things* recites in his head his grandmother’s pickle products in response to an inappropriate sexual contact. The reciting of the pickle inventory helps the character block out the fear of the molestation. The inventory thus works as a trope for temporal arrest that registers an act of dissociation from the immediate experience of a traumatic moment. The inventory in the

character's internal consciousness actually effectuates the disassociation from the present moment the character so desperately seeks. In its larger context in the novel the pickle list has political implications in a society that valorizes hierarchy, whether in industry or social caste. The pickle list unveils classification as an ideological battleground that creates tension between the individual and the state, or the self and the order of the culture. Roy uses the pickle list to illuminate the way in which forces and energies are mobilized to safeguard a privileged taxonomy (of pickles) and to discipline those who disrupt the stability of existing taxonomic codes. Later in the novel, an Untouchable enumerates single words ("gate, road, stones, sky, and rain"), a list of non-sentient objects. It is an object list that mirrors what he literally perceives, registering the flux of his consciousness. The Untouchable surrenders himself to sensations and perceptions of a visual character in order to divert his attention away from the shame and humiliation provoked by a higher-caste member. List-making is intended to help him retain a sense of reality, and here too the list seems to have the capacity to effectuate. At the same time, his listing is not simply psychological but allegorical. As we will see in Chapter Three, this sequence of stand-alone words alludes to the issue of disunion in a caste-ridden society. Roy exploits the potential of listing or cataloguing to be a politically charged critique of ruling cultures.

More radical still than the practice in the first three chapters, Stein in Chapter Four uses the trope of listing not to present the mind of the author or a character, but to represent ideas and grapple with subjects such as conformity, womanly eroticism, and the mind-body divide. These are lists that are not based on one's consciousness. They are not examples of the associative stream of consciousness, but are cases of anaphora, of incremental repetitions, and of repetition with variation. In these cases, the listing structure amplifies its visual effect by drawing attention

to its typographical arrangement. As I will argue in Chapter Four, the list can be a visual rhetoric deployed by Stein to engage the reader in thinking in visual terms, and to prompt us to recognize the descriptive power of visual components in lists. These lists thus help open up a conversation about the power of active imagination, a female body, and intuition. The use of lists to articulate ideas and feelings also resonates with Joyce and Roy, although neither uses lists for their visual functions. Neither deploys listing as a vehicle for communicating visual pleasure. Joyce's listing of sixty narrative fragments about sounds, noises, and sundries in the overture to "Sirens" conveys existential contingencies (e.g., the sense of loneliness, betrayal, loss, or sexual prowess) in everyday living. Despite the lack of a temporal progression and a sequential order, lists of this sort can actually gesture in the direction of conclusive knowledge. As I will consider more fully in Chapter Two, Joyce, for instance, lists fragments of a song as characteristics of a love event and as consequences of falling in love in order to reveal transcendent truth about love.

In the light of the ways lists are organized, Stein, Joyce, and Roy oscillate between two types of listing: listing as fragments and pieces assembled together without clear connections other than the associations in memory or the juxtapositions in acts of perceptions (as seen in their representations of the consciousness) and listing as a way to collect, group, or organize things into some kind of order that represents feelings or ideas. This latter structure may be seen in *Tender Buttons*, where Stein presents groups of verbal portraits comparable to a collection of paintings displayed in a gallery; in her arrangements of words in visually suggestive shapes; in Joyce's opening section of the "Sirens" episode; and in Roy's lists of pickle products and non-sentient objects. These two kinds of lists are resonant with two poetics of listing that operate in medieval lists. In *The Infinity of Lists*, Umberto Eco uses Homer's extensive lists in his epics as paradigmatic examples to highlight two modes of listing: one is "the poetics of the 'etcetera',"

and the other “the poetics of ‘everything included’” (7). “The poetics of the ‘etcetera’,” as seen in Homer’s massive catalogue of captains and ships, implies a conglomeration of characteristics which proceeds into infinity without end, without defining the form of what comes before (7). It presents an enumeration on which no form imposes itself—other than an ever-expanding series. On the other hand, Homer’s detailed description of Achilles’ shield in the *Iliad* illustrates “the poetics of ‘everything included’”—one that reflects an *a priori* sense of ending and harmony and closure (7). The concepts of coherence and harmony inform all the things that went before. Eco concludes that Homer does not favor one poetics over the other, and asserts that Homer’s lists do not imply a hierarchical order (18).

Similarly, there is a propensity toward a destruction of hierarchy in the lists produced by Stein, Joyce, and Roy. These writers provide examples that illustrate an astonishing breadth and variety of ways in which the twentieth century has used list-like assemblages, and the consequence of their usage is usually to privilege the parts over the whole and to destroy a totalizing grand narrative. Like Hayden White’s account of the Chronicle, twentieth-century lists of this sort include spatially juxtaposed fragments and pieces, and have no necessary closure. The relationship among fragments is paratactic, that is, unaccounted for in the syntax or narrative of the text. But unlike the Chronicle, these kinds of twentieth-century list are an additive form that is not ordered chronologically. The erasure of temporality (a historical time) in a list is nothing new. Many simple itemizations present what seems to be an additive process that does not produce a time-related sequence, such as a table of contents, a class roster, a voting ballot, and a directory. But, significantly, the sense of atemporality staged in twentieth-century lists is based on mental associations that derive from the coexistence of multiple time frames, which renders the idea of clock time inadequate, if not meaningless. Such is the case with Joyce. In

Joyce's *Ulysses* the content of Bloom's immediate experience impinges upon his consciousness and triggers flashes of remembrance and imagination. Bloom's stream of consciousness registers a list of flashbacks and imaginings, which disrupt the time sequence. This listing strategy puts writers in touch with a sensibility that is not governed by the dictates of clock time, and provides an assembling strategy through which writers freely juxtapose disparate time frames and amass varied fleeting moments in one space. Despite the shared vision of a nonhierarchical order, the modernists' lists are remote from the medievalists' in their content and functions. One reason for their difference is that the modernists may turn to the stream of consciousness as their model for listing, a realm that defies the common bondage to clock time.

When the modernists' stylistic or narrative strategies—deployed to record the flux and flow of consciousness—are comparable to a listing structure, it is because they exhibit the traits we identify in a simple itemization. In a simple enumeration, an object adjoins other self-standing objects to form a sequence without explanation or description, as though it stands in the midst of other objects without preamble. Objects stand in unexplained contiguity. As Didier Maleuvre astutely points out in *Museum Memories* (1999), objects in the list are introduced *in medias res*. The self-standing object may be regarded as a whole in itself that compels us “to rediscover the experience of objects glimpsed in their original, unmediated light: things existing in and of themselves” (139). Maleuvre also draws attention to the use and function of the conjunction “and”: “‘Et’ produces the first conceivable chain of being by binding things together into a grammatical whole” (140). In the absence of “and,” the sum total forms a picture of “pure multiplicity without unity” (140). In their respective stylistic strategies, Stein, Joyce, and Roy assemble words or narrative fragments without clarifying the nature of their relationship, embracing an extended form of listing.

What should be emphasized at this juncture is that these authors' use of the list-like configuration is not simply a stylistic experiment or a narrative strategy. Their list-like constructions are literary endeavors pursued in tandem with the issues that preoccupy them: for instance, Stein's interest in the flux of circumstance and phenomena; Joyce's preoccupation with the question of infinity; and Roy's concern with the issues of classification and separation. All these different preoccupations implicate the listing form in discourses of perception, love, and hierarchy. It is thus important that we come to understand each writer's listing styles and techniques in their social landscape and cultural context, evaluating listing or cataloguing on a case by case basis. In uncovering forms of listing that center on the workings of consciousness and ideas, I will situate the practice of listing in a larger cultural or historical framework, and concentrate on the ways these three writers bring patterns of listing to bear on important sociocultural issues of the day.

More than anything else, in offering explanations of various listing forms, I seek to realize the promises of a flexible and daring reading of the list in order to expand our understanding of the significance of list-making in twentieth-century literature. One of the promises is to consider many of the stylistic and narrative strategies employed by twentieth-century writers as lists. Attention to the stylized presentations that resemble the listing format is significant, because such stylization broadens and deepens the meaning of listing. Another promise is to stimulate dialogue among parallel domains of inquiry (e.g., anthology studies and museum studies) that also focus on combinatory structures, methods of collecting, and patterns of assembling—an effort I undertake in a subsection of the introduction, below. Equally important is the promise to reveal that some of the twentieth-century lists—largely Stein's—assume the significance of an assemblage, the assemblage in Gilles Deleuze's terms. Deleuze's assemblage is comparable to a

network. But it is not so much that the list-like configurations are networks, as that they lend themselves to certain Deleuze's conceptions of an assemblage, such as the celebration of an assemblage as a state of "multiplicity" rather than unification; the embracing of an assemblage as a matter of "conjunction"; and the depiction of the art of assemblage as the reign of the conjunction "AND" (*Dialogue* 34-5; 44; 57). I wish to show that in the list-inspired assemblages, the nonsequential juxtaposition of fragments of ideas or images reflects twentieth-century writers' engagement in thinking or presenting the list-like structure as a repository and as gesturing toward a network of relations (although a list is usually less likely to be thought in association with a network than with a repository). Different combinations of parts or fragments might offer a nascent model of the assemblage that Deleuze envisions.

All these approaches are meant to enhance conversation about an ordinary enough but fundamental activity: list-making. But why lists? Like anthologies, listing comes in many forms. Furthermore, a list is sufficient enough to express the most fundamental assembling rules, and diverse enough to encompass almost endless patterns of assembling praxis. It enjoys the advantages of offering principles of combination and selection, and of requiring an interpretive and epistemological framework that conceptualizes the list in relation to contiguity and similarity, metonymy and metaphor, the diachronic and the synchronic, and syntagm and paradigm. I hope my study will add an interesting contribution to the long line of epistemological and conceptual frameworks that have explored or interrogated the practice of assembling. To that end, my work seeks to synthesize a reading practice that encompasses refined tools of close-reading and attention to form, in conjunction with interdisciplinary approaches involving such fields as visual arts, philosophy, feminism, and postcolonialism. It was a pivotal shift in thinking, a shift from privileging the whole to the parts.

There are recent twentieth-century fiction writers who have extended the boundaries of the term catalogue beyond the definitions I explore here; they do so through including in this category the disruption of conventional grammar, syntax, and genre. One thinks of Nicholson Baker's *The Mezzanine* (1986) and Laura Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate* (1992). Both break the regime of a single and homogenous genre, and widen the boundaries of the traditional fictional narrative by using lists as one of the methods of narration. The former experiments with pages of narrative sentences that contain a list and an extensive footnote, and the latter begins each chapter with a recipe immediately followed by a paragraph or two of description that concern cooking preparations. In the radical expansion of the common understanding of the list, for which I argue in Chapter Four, I think we can see ways in which the modernist writers prepared the way for these developments.

As I have acknowledged before, I am not the first to inquire about the list in literature. There is significant research that attends to the importance of lists and catalogues in work from Homer to F. Scott Fitzgerald. However, most of this research confines the discussion of lists and catalogues within narrow parameters, and few move beyond the focus of seeing a list as simply an enumeration.¹ Only recently did the view of the list as something beyond a simple itemization begin to attract the attention of literary scholars. Rebecca L. Walkowitz, for instance, in her examination of the fundamental nature of idiom in literary modernism, in "For Translation" (2011), notes that "lists and catalogues" are one form of idiom, one that can establish

¹ Much effort has been put into defining what a literary list or catalogue looks like. Most of this scholarly work brings critical attention to the structures of parataxis and parallelism in literary lists. For instance, in his discussion of the catalogue form, Leo Spitzer noticed that literary catalogues are marked by parallel structures (i.e., parallel wording and parallel phrases). As early as 1951, Donald Sutherland alerted us to Gertrude Stein's use of parataxis and asyndeton (the omission of conjunctions between words, phrases, and clauses) and to her fondness for counting. He considered all three of them as examples of list-making. In "Whitman's Catalogue Rhetoric," Mattie Swayne stated that cataloguing involves the enumerative method of assembling materials (162). Lists involve juxtapositions. In combination, these explanatory efforts set the terms of discussion of catalogues or lists.

comparisons of genres of social acts, comparisons (by anthology) of different transnational voices, and new comparisons of different languages (through juxtaposed multilingual quotations) (255-7). Taking cues from Walkowitz, we are compelled to consider the elasticity of the definition of the list. There remains, however, a scarcity of critical vocabulary to describe twentieth-century list-like forms that present interpretive challenges and argue for a wider sense of listing or cataloguing.

The List, the Anthology and the Archive or Museum

Recently attention has been given to studies of the anthology, museum, and archive. I regard the development of these studies as in some ways parallel to study of the form of the list. In offering disparate systems of gathering, collecting, and organizing, these domains of knowledge also prompt us to reconsider the vexed question of the part-whole relationship. They can expand the understanding of readers' or viewers' relationships to parts or fragments in an accumulated set, thereby helping us to see the list in a fresh way. Preceding Walkowitz's reconceptualization of lists and catalogues, Leah Price's study of anthologies, although focusing not on the topic of cataloguing, helps to expand the definition of the list beyond a few lines, a paragraph, or even a page of enumeration. To anthologize is to assemble excerpts or complete texts from various sources. Anthologies thus reproduce a succession of often truncated texts (fragments). But Price, in *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel* (2000), argues that "[a]nthologies are more than a referendum" (3) that decides which text is included and which is not. Anthology bears "the liberating potential of the combinatory structure" (3), Price and others argue. This combinatory structure is "at once the voice of authority and a challenge to prevailing

models of authorship” (Price 3). Anthologies’ combinatory nature parallels lists and catalogues that are also organized in combinatory fashion.

Like an anthology that constitutes a body of information based on “scattered fragments” (Price 4), a list is a type of document that involves discontinuous *parts*—a succession of items that amounts to a condensed or extended expression. In this respect, both an anthology and a list are combinatory structures that are subjected to different levels of fragmentation. Anthologizing as a method of compilation invokes a larger combinatory framework than a simple list or enumeration. It is obviously more complex than a combinatory framework that centers on words rather than sentences. But Mattie Swayne, in “Whitman’s Catalogue Rhetoric” (1941), reminds us that the concept of cataloguing operates on various levels: “there seems, indeed, no limit to the possible methods of expansion or diminution of catalogue items. The enumerative form is found in the phrases, sentences, and cadences of lyrics, in the lists of episodes or movements of narratives, and in the adjectives or separate items of descriptions” (178). In other words, in Swayne’s view, some of Whitman’s catalogue may approach the anthology. An anthology is a massive combinatory apparatus that allows us to envision models of cataloguing that share the characteristics of being partial, incomplete, and fragmentary—but which nonetheless have enormous importance in canon formation. Anthologies, Price notes, “determine not simply who gets published or what gets read, but who reads and how” (3). It would be a mistake to simply reduce an anthology to a systematic model of accumulation that endorses or rejects the existing canon. Every detail—for instance, the length of an excerpt, the number of works for one writer, or even the use of introductory sections and footnotes—is a deliberate choice. Similarly, the listing device is anything but neutral and value-free.

Pragmatically, the production of anthologies is an indispensable business for market share in commodity culture, and a cultural enterprise for curricular and instructional purposes in academia. But anthologizing was once integral to America's nation-building and identity-fashioning movements in the early nineteenth-century, as Richard Crawford suggests in *Devolving English Literature*. Crawford maintains that the quality of eclecticism we identify in American literature is founded upon "the anthologizing of the old at least as much as (and probably more than) the gathering of the new" (176). He identifies three modes of eclecticism that demonstrate nineteenth-century American writers' enthusiasm for anthologizing America: "cultural eclecticism" and "linguistic eclecticism" represented by James Fenimore Cooper and "encyclopedic eclecticism" espoused by Ralph Emerson (186; 188; 197). The influential nineteenth-century writer, James Fenimore Cooper, for instance, was among those who turned to Scottish writers such as Sir Walter Scott and Thomas Campbell for inspiration and knowledge. When writing about Native Americans, Crawford notes, Cooper had no knowledge of them, but adopted ideas from Campbell, "relying mainly on assembling writings about them" (182). Another area that demonstrates Cooper's eclecticism is the texture of his writing—his linguistic eclecticism. Cooper's eclectic language is distinguished by "the slippage between various textures of language" (Crawford 188). Cooper modeled and adopted this linguistic style from reading Scott's work: "Cooper followed Scott in bringing together various registers and types of English" (Crawford 194). Taken together, Cooper's tendency to gather materials from other writers and his imitation of Sir Walter Scott's writing style are where new combinations are made possible. Cooper had a fondness for epigraphs. His attraction to epigraphs in the *Leatherstocking Tales* may be seen to exemplify his fascination with combining parts and pieces to form a catalogue. Cooper's acts of appropriating, recycling and assembling textual materials

produced by Scottish writers are comparable to anthologizing—producing his own anthologies—and, most importantly for this study, parallel the act of cataloguing. His work of *fusion* amounts to a form of cataloguing that embraces the old and heralds the new. It is a form of cataloguing that turns what is borrowed (whether it be a Scottish setting, a Scottish character, or an epigraph) into one of the sources of Cooper's popularity, since those familiar characters and idioms from Sir Walter Scott's narratives lend weight and charm to Cooper's own frontier fiction. Whoever delighted in reading Scott's novels would also develop a liking for Cooper's. Cooper's popularity in nineteenth-century America affirms that his *Leatherstocking Tales* exemplify the effectiveness of his assembling power.

Price also alludes to the question of intertextuality, calling attention to George Eliot's citational strategy as it was realized in her late style of employing an epigraph in every chapter. Epigraphs may be Eliot's personal strategy, but beyond that, Price recognizes Eliot's and other Victorian writers' "intertextual appropriation" as a strategic way to enhance their reputation, since "novels could borrow seriousness not only from the texts that they quoted (like Eliot's epigraphs) but from the texts that quoted them" (119). Here, strategically, the catalogue is a means to an end. The accretion of epigrams and quotations communicates the desire to form a constellation of relations with other texts, staging a heterogeneous virtual collection. In terms of narrative arrangement, the insertion of a quotation "between the lines" or "between the pages" (Price 119) brings into focus the diverse ways in which we receive, sort out, and document information. Equally important, ways of inserting a quotation in fiction suggest an art of contiguity, coinciding with the art of contiguity manifested in different modes of juxtaposition in lists and catalogues.

The effort to assemble multiple epigrams within one text has resonance for those who carefully gather and sort the remnants of a life in the past into an analysis that frames a life story. Archival studies add another dimension to our understanding of the implications of parts and fragments in the construction of meaning. Archival studies shed light on the moments when the partial is where meaning is gained, knowledge built. Virginia Jackson in *Dickinson's Misery* (2005), reflecting on the endeavor to recover Emily Dickinson's manuscripts, describes the onerous venture as an "ongoing attempt . . . to make out of the heterogeneous materials of her practice a literature" (1). In doing archival research, we learn to listen to the silence in objects, finding ways to recover stories surrounding the *object*. Jackson enumerates them: "the presence of . . . the stationer that made the paper, of the manufacturer and printer and corporation that issued guarantees and advertisements and of the money that changed hands, of the butcher who wrapped the parcel, of the manuals and primers and copybooks that composed individual literacy . . ." (3). All of these can be woven into a tapestry of nostalgic experiences and unnoticed collaborations. All, taken together, constitute a treasure trove of anecdotes from lives that intersect. Artifacts of the past and their historical moments are all mediums of expression, invaluable tools that help readers reevaluate an author's work and tease out extraliterary elements to re-vision his or her life. Artifacts may be essential but they are also partial, in the sense of incompleteness. They are nowhere near to offering a complete picture. They are "remains," to borrow Jackson's words (10). Inevitably, we are compelled to exercise close reading of surviving artifacts in order to locate various narratives in history. Jackson writes, "the persistent sense that something *is* left—those handsewn leaves, those pieces of envelopes pinned at odd angles—keeps recalling modern readers to an archaic moment of handwritten composition and personal encounter" (10, italics in original). To be sure, objects evoke specific *moments* of

experience in the temporal flux, not the flux itself. To engage in archival studies is to construct new perspectives and historical knowledge from clusters of parts and fragments. In this sense it parallels the study of the list. It is a process that begins with threads and pieces, and concludes with a sense of closure or completion: the aim “to sort [Dickinson’s] various pages into various poems, those various poems into a book” (Jackson 1).

I do not mean that anthology studies and archival studies are only concerned with parts and fragments. In assigning meaning, an anthologist or an archivist attends to the way a text or an object functions in a *context*. One neither makes sense of an object, nor decides its worth without paying attention to its sociocultural historical conditions. But I wish to underscore the curious attention to parts and fragments—a point where all the archival and museum work begins—in order to call particular attention to the category of “fragment,” a category which allows me to situate the practice of listing and cataloguing in relation to other combinatory and assembling practices, and to draw parallels among four vastly different domains of inquiry: anthology studies, archival studies, museum studies, and list or catalogue studies.

The question of the fragment functions as my point of entry into a discussion of listing in relation to other combinatory frameworks, and more importantly, into a discussion of the role of a fragment in the workings of consciousness. In archival studies, “parts” along with their contexts become the core of investigation and analysis. But since any context is merely part of a past event or a small portion of a long timeline, the reciprocal relationship between parts and the whole that we depend upon to construct a meaning of the past breaks down. (The same can be said of museum studies, a point to which I will turn shortly.) But I need to emphasize that working with or working from fragments is not all negative, since it allows us to encounter and experience what I see as the beauty of multiplicity and the art of heterogeneity. The fulfillment

of these two promises hinge on what I see as fragments' detachability. By "detachability," I mean that a part or fragment is not necessarily locked into, or defined by, one single context. It should be considered as an element embedded in multiple contexts. We may use excerpts in an anthology as an example. It is difficult to read an excerpt from an anthology in one single context (i.e., the historical conditions in relation to its production and reception). Rather, we situate the excerpt in at least two *more* contexts: the context of an anthology as the book that contains the excerpt (anthology as a context) and the context of the excerpt's relation to its neighboring excerpts. As I have previously discussed, an anthology is a book-form publication designed with deliberate choices, loaded with political agendas (its market value, multiple editions, pedagogical/ aesthetic/ historical value, audience, etc.).

At the same time, the excerpt can be *inserted* in multiple contexts other than the primary contexts that are directly related to its genesis, gestation, and afterlife (Walkowitz discusses extensively the potentials and promises of a text's afterlife as a translation in her essay). A fragment (or a text) embodies a migratory quality that extends its life and meaning beyond its original context. We may recall how writers are passionate about using other writers' epigrams and quotations in their work. Dislodged from the original context that makes it what we think it is, a fragment or an excerpt may live on and be constantly on the move, making appearances in different texts and contexts. By the same token, one would not choose to assess a part or a fragment in one setting, but hope to take into account places where it is cited and reappropriated. Fragments' detachability invites us to read *askew* and to look *askew*—to read sideways—rather than reading in one direction for one goal. Fragments change hands, because they reside in an open system of viewing, borrowing, and poaching—a system where creation is inseparable from, if not animated by, the interplay between imagination and duplication. This is a system where

parts and fragments are in the hands of writers who ceaselessly negotiate between originality and duplication.

Jacques Derrida, in “Signature Event Context,” has already theorized similar things. He invokes interlocking ideas such as the “spacing,” “iterability,” and “citationality” of a written sign to challenge the idea that the meaning of a signifying mark is determined by the context of its inscription. What I called fragments’ detachability parallels what he terms “spacing” (*espacement*) in a written sign. Derrida states, “spacing . . . constitutes the written sign” (231). “Spacing,” he continues,

separates [the written sign] from other elements of the internal contextual chain (the always open possibility of its disengagement and graft), but also from all forms of present reference (whether past or future in the modified form of the present that is past or to come), objective or subjective. (231)

Spacing helps to differentiate one signifying mark from another, and alludes to an opening that creates a separation between the signifying mark and the contextual chain of meaning. The opening provides the opportunity for the signifying mark to be merged into other chains, reinforcing the disengagement and citationality of the signifying mark. According to Derrida, “a written syntagma can always be detached from the chain in which it is inserted or given without causing it to lose all possibility of functioning . . . One can perhaps come to recognize other possibilities in it by inscribing it or *grafting* it onto other chains” (231). The disengagement and citational graft embody what Derrida identifies as “the force of rupture” (*force de rupture*). He writes, “a written sign carries with it a force that breaks with its context, that is, with the collectivity of presences organizing the moment of its inscription” (230). This rupturing force exemplifies that the signifying mark travels, a Derridian point that is very important for my

argument. Most importantly, the signifying mark proves to be recognizable outside of its context of inscription. Seen through the lens of Derrida's framework, a stream of consciousness that consists of random fragments of mental images or ideas emerges as an expansive and expandable repository—a literary technique deployed by Joyce in conjunction with the listing technique.

To draw on Derrida is to explore ways of explaining how parts and fragments assume prominence beyond their points of origin. The lesson of parts and fragments here is the prioritizing of circulation over center and the valuing of multiplicity over singularity. Fragments' detachability helps complicate my argument about a list being more than an enumeration by shedding light on a specific tendency: fragments are put through permutations and combinations. We can chart a diagram of associations among the texts where fragments have been reused and recycled. If Cooper, for instance, writes as if he is assembling his own anthology of fragments, and other writers do the same thing, then the idea of a list evolves into a permutational or combinational apparatus. Each example demonstrates some pattern of permutation and combination.

Close attention to parts and fragments tests our skills of close-reading, and most importantly, it increases critical lenses and enlarges the scope of investigation. Emerging in various texts and contexts, fragments lend themselves to plural interpretations. The intertextual nature of writing produces a resistance to a single meaning or viewpoint, requiring one to read texts and contexts side by side. Such a reading practice can certainly generate multiple understandings and multiple narratives. As we shall see, the lists or list-like configurations that Stein, Joyce, and Roy respectively put together valorize the concepts of multiplicity and heterogeneity. Their work associates the pleasures of reading with the pleasures of listing.

While a collection of excerpts, quotes, or axioms rewards multiple readings and attracts a variety of narratives, a collection of specimens, artifacts, treasures, relics, and dioramas in museums also yields similar results and functions in similar ways to engage the audience in different modes of feeling and imagining. The latter is just what Catherine E. Paul's *Poetry in the Museums of Modernism* intends to illuminate and illustrate. To show us that objects in poetry, like museum objects, put us in touch with a wide spectrum of imaginary and creative possibilities, Paul draws parallels between reading a book and looking at an object, comparing "the poems in a book" to "the objects of a museum" (3). She uses *Tender Buttons* as an example to illustrate how a private art collection "both shaped a writer's creative process and was impacted by that writer's literary production" (195). In Paul's view, *Tender Buttons* showcases Stein's art of collecting, "one that is both masculine and feminine, museum-like and domestic, monumental and mundane" (197). Furthermore, Paul argues that Stein's "*Tender Buttons* engages issues of valuation and possession to examine how a person comes to care for her belongings . . ." (196). Paul pays careful attention to the "Rooms" section, which, she believes, "does through its methods of presenting and naming objects argue with Leo's sense of aestheticism, his taste, and his methods of assessing the value of objects" (197). Taking up Paul's argument, we may compare "Rooms" to a list of Gertrude Stein's ways of assessing, possessing, and aestheticizing objects.

A museum is a place where parts and pieces are used to glimpse a bygone world and where iconic signs are employed to explain remote corners of the earth. In museums, we lean on the categories of the partial and the fragmentary to impart information and to serve as the source of knowledge. In other words, museums generate a selective collection of *metonyms* and *synecdoches* to arrive at an image of the whole. Cadres of scholars in various disciplines have already paid attention to the way in which museums create an event or a context that stages the

tension between partiality and wholeness. For instance, James Clifford, following Susan Stewart, argues in *The Predicament of Culture* that “collections, most notably museums—create the illusion of adequate representation of a world by first cutting objects out of specific contexts . . . and making them ‘stand for’ abstract wholes” (220). The partial is mobilized to represent or stand for the whole. This is how Paul imagines Stein’s *Tender Buttons*, a text that “brings together many small pieces to form a larger whole, much like an actual collection” (196). Unlike Paul, I see Stein’s *Tender Buttons* (and Joyce’s and Roy’s lists) as offering a way of putting together a literary assemblage that is nonhierarchical, non-totalizing, and nonlinear. I will elaborate this point later.

I have taken the time to emphasize the ways lists and catalogues might be given different looks and assigned different functions in the contexts of anthology, archive, and museum. Anthologies, archives, and museums embody a model of part-whole relationship that emphasizes the use of a collection of parts to project an image of the whole. From an anthropological point of view, Clifford associates the same synecdochic strategy to the making and remaking of a western self. The proclivity to use an accumulation of objects and possessions to project an image of the self is what Clifford and others term “possessive individualism” (217). Clifford’s comment on the western practice of accumulation is worth highlighting because the idea of listing is implicitly present in the discourse of subjectivity. As Clifford notes, “[the] notion that this gathering involves the accumulation of possessions, the idea that identity is a kind of wealth (of object, knowledge, memories, experience), is surely not universal. [. . .] In the West . . . collecting has long been a strategy for the deployment of a possessive self, culture, and authenticity” (218). Acts of collecting provide access to information about the making of a western self. One’s identity is tethered to properties and goods. A collection of objects is an

expression of the self. But it is crucial to understand that the very same collection that projects status, knowledge, wealth, and power becomes an extension of the self. Here the concept of subjectivity or identity takes on a list-like form, synonymous with the collections one owns. Clifford understands this well, so he proposes to “see in collecting . . . a form of Western subjectivity” (220). But we may also add to his comment: we see a form of subjectivity in a collection of objects mistaken for the entire self.

In anthologies and museums, the definition of a list as the enumeration of disparate items is enlarged into an epistemological framework that concerns itself with the partial and the fragmentary. Stein, Joyce, and Roy create list-like configurations that also focus our attention on the parts and fragments, for instance: free mental associations in the stream of consciousness; Stein’s collection of personal investigations organized around everyday objects and lived experience; Joyce’s account of the characteristics of the love event or a perceived object; and Roy’s practical lists standing apart from the main narrative. These variations of listing forms and presentations exemplify different literary assemblages, a modernist fascination. These three writers’ literary assemblages expand the definition of the catalogue or list through including in this category new modes of representation. Furthermore, these list-like assemblages provide opportunities to explore ideas such as multiplicity, heterogeneity, divisibility, and interconnectedness, which are articulated by cultural institutions such as anthologies, museums, archives, and censuses. All of these list-like assemblages exhibit nonhierarchical, non-totalizing, and nonlinear qualities. Within the assemblage, no one value predominates over the other. These list-like configurations are, some more directly than others, sharply focused in their aim to make room for the unexpected and the contingent. The reader encounters a series that celebrates fluidity and contingency rather than a stable set of ideas. To this one must add that the reader is

invited to enter a realm where the principles of fragmentation and decenteredness prevail. This type of assemblage belongs to an imaginary that allows for a heterogeneous population of contingent experiences, so no rigid categorizations can easily be applied to the parts or units that constitute the assemblage.

Forms that I recognize as catalogues in this study include literary lists (whose effects are rhetorical and expository) and practical lists (whose presentation is unadorned but politically effective). Among the literary lists (literary assemblages) I include—and closely examine—are a paratactic series of descriptions of objects in the “Objects” section of *Tender Buttons*; a sequence of juxtaposed narrative fragments in the opening section of the “Sirens” episode of *Ulysses*; several pages of narrative passages creating a back-and-forth pattern like the musical chair in “Sirens”; an enumeration of the characteristics of the love event (or a perceived object) within a stream-of-consciousness narrative; incremental repetitions, examples of anaphora, and arrangements of words in visually suggestive shapes. The practical lists selected from Roy’s *The God of Small Things* encompass a wide range of kinds: an inventory of items for sale; two vertical and unordered lists of names placed in juxtaposition; a succession of nouns as an index of caste conflict; and a series of brief questions and answers.

With these distinctions in mind, in the following pages I will initiate a more systematic review of scholarship and theory on the list, and seek to show that listing is a historically evolving discourse.

The Evolution of the List: From Homer to Whitman

For more than a century, writers and scholars have commented on the literary device named the list. Scholars of different literary periods—spanning centuries from antiquity to the

twenty-first century—have investigated the listing practice in various cultural landscapes and social contexts. They visited and revisited the subject of listing, and offered subtle readings of the catalogue form in works from the Greeks’ Homer, to the Bible, to French satirist Rabelais, to the English Renaissance’s Milton, to France’s Flaubert and Balzac, and to the twentieth-century James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Gary Snyder. The list continues to grow. In 2004, literary scholar Robert Belknap published an informative book entitled *The List*, examining various listing devices—the catalogue, the inventory, the itinerary, and the lexicon—used in nineteenth-century American literature. Lists and catalogues have continued to engage scholarly attention and public imagination.

An overview of literary criticism suggests that critics disagree about the significance of lists and catalogues in literature. Lists in literary texts have incurred both approval and opprobrium, whether in poetry or narrative. Lists and catalogues can be found in numerous texts, but some readers viewed them unfavorably. According to Anne Ferry, although the list is one of the characteristic features of sixteenth-century English verse, it has prompted a Renaissance scholar like John Thompson to consider it as “a kind of idiocy” (4, qtd. from Ferry). In this respect, the list has been a contested subject that caused a divide among literary critics. Mattie Swayne, in her study on the reception of Whitman’s catalogue poems, notes that some literary scholars in the twenties, who frowned upon Whitman’s use of catalogues in his poetry, did not consider the list in modern works as a product of complexity, sophistication, and beauty.

Since I am faced with more than a century’s worth of scholarship and research on the list, I will not be able to review catalogue styles and forms in all ages. Rather, to provide adequate context I will focus on three points within the sweep of time from Homer to the end of the nineteenth century. I will examine two widely referenced and recognized writers, Homer and

Whitman, treating their listing styles as the archetypes of cataloguing that provide the characteristic qualities and evolving patterns of the list prior to the twentieth century, and I will note the importance of the list in the medieval times between.

In “Rhetorical Status of the Descriptive” (1981), Philippe Hamon points out that for centuries lists have had descriptive functions, such as “[c]atalogues of vessels (Homer), genealogies (nordic [sic] sagas), parodic enumeration (in Rabelais, the list of the books in Saint-Victor’s library)” (5). But the very variety of enumerative forms shows that description does not always entail the notion of mimesis. It has more to do with the parade of erudition than with the art of representation. In the sixteenth century, for instance, “[t]o describe is never to describe a reality, but to prove one’s rhetorical know-how, to prove one’s book-learning . . .,” according to Hamon (6). Detlev W. Schumann in the 1942 essay, “Enumerative Style and its Significance on Whitman, Rilke, Werfel” (*MLQ*), has already surmised that Homer’s “Catalogue of Ships” in the *Iliad* might be a way “to show off his topographical and ethnographical knowledge” (171). Listing is thus a medium to display one’s literacy and learning, an emblem of knowledge. Furthermore, Hamon stresses the list’s power to instruct rather than its simple imitative quality. It labors to instruct the reader, facilitate communication, and enhance comprehension. In this respect, the list functions as a type of description that betrays didactic and rhetorical impulses. As a discursive element in narratives, the list has its sociocultural functions.

Hamon is not alone in being attentive to lists’ extraliterary functions. A similar preoccupation can also be found in Nicholas Howe’s study of the old English catalogue poems. While recognized to be descriptive, catalogues in encyclopedias or poems, on Howe’s careful examination, were formulated to supply information. Practically speaking, list-making, for the ancients, was a way to preserve knowledge and at the same time to disseminate information.

Howe drives home the list's cultural function of teaching. The poets of the old English catalogue poems, Howe argues, used the listing form with cultural aspirations in mind. For them, cataloguing lends itself to the task of culture transfer: "when the poet must serve as historian and teacher, preserving the collective memory of his culture, the functional element will become dominant. This burden of memory is the source of . . . the catalogue" (Howe 18). Howe's study furnishes evidence of epic lists being deployed to animate ancestral memory and facilitate cultural accretion. Significantly, the profusion of lists in epics conveys to us how shared values are reinforced in a community and how the desire to safeguard collective memory is in this context intrinsic to the list. Here listing amounts to a social act.

Since the Middle Ages, the composition of a list has been a purposeful act that engages in the making and sustaining of communal value and identity, either tribal or racial. Ancient poets used the list to summarize and synthesize voices preceding them. The list thus not only became an avenue of comprehending and connecting to the past, but also inspired belief and loyalty. While reflecting lived experience, the list was used to propagandize for a particular ideology. Epic catalogues show that traditional values become incarnate in the catalogue form.

The use of lists and catalogues as vehicles to convey attitudes and values in association with community or society is seen not only in medieval catalogues, but also in the late nineteenth-century American poet Walt Whitman's catalogue poems. But unlike the medievalists, Whitman neither rehearses nor parrots time-honored values. He creates his own set of values promoting the idea of inclusive democracy. Whitman's lists and catalogues that include everyone regardless of gender, age, and class have long been recognized as an index for democracy. Robert Kern, amongst many others, has explored the theme of democracy in Whitman. His essay, "Recipes, Catalogues, Open Forms Poetics" (1977), considers Whitman's catalogue poems as an

example of the poetics of open form, a poetics that reveals Whitman's democratic attitudes. Recently, Matt Miller, in "Makings of Americans: Whitman and Stein's Poetics of Inclusion" (2009), revisits the topic of inclusion. While observing that Whitman's poetry encompasses the broad strata of American lives, Miller responds to Whitman's gesture of broad inclusion with an argument that "[Whitman's] well known lists and catalogues . . . form a system that aims toward a complete consensus of what it means to be American" (48). Following Miller, we realize that the listing form here is not simply a stylistic choice. It alludes to its engagement in establishing a set of values, the values of being American. Whitman's lists and catalogues help illustrate the value of listing as a kind of social discourse that articulates ideas of national identity.

Thus, as we can see, listing or cataloguing is not a particularly twentieth-century form, but the nature of interest in lists and catalogues has changed in the twentieth century. As will become clear, the difference between pre-twentieth-century writers (such as Homer, writers of Old English catalogue poems, and Whitman) and twentieth-century writers lies primarily in the shift in attention from the whole to parts and fragments—a move from the enumerative style (from Homer to Whitman) to the deconstruction of the whole and to the building of an assemblage. Twentieth-century lists and catalogues exhibit a *part*-based sensibility. Twentieth-century writers keep pressing the form for various purposes, for example, for the purpose of rejecting the notion of totality.

Part-focused Assemblages in the Twentieth Century

Modernist Assemblages and List-like Configurations brings together a constellation of diverse creative writers (Stein, Joyce and Roy), an artist (Cézanne), and philosophers (Deleuze, Badiou), whose work explores what it means to imagine, or even aspire to, a collectivity that

neither discounts the worth of the unexpected, the anomalous, and the volatile, nor suppresses productive tensions among individual parts. With the sum of the parts presenting an accumulation that is not bound by temporal boundaries, the presence of a modernist assemblage in these writers' respective visions and works throws into prominence the prospect of diversity and multiplicity through breaking open new spaces for rich argument about collectivity: the literary assemblages in Stein's *Tender Buttons* are spaces of encounter and becoming, the assemblages in Joyce's *Ulysses* spaces of contingency and randomness where novelty is produced. While Roy's practical assemblages in *The God of Small Things* are spaces of social critique (i.e., political space), Stein's visually suggestive assemblages in early works offer cultural and gendered spaces (i.e., gender discourse). These three writers make both simple and extensive lists in their work. They all elaborate the process of list-making, and extend the range of the listing style by alluding to assembling, gathering and collecting as ways of listing and cataloguing. From their literary assemblages, we learn to identify various assembling and collecting strategies as forms of list-making.

My study starts with an examination of Stein's catalogue techniques in *Tender Buttons*, successively followed by an exploration of Joyce's cataloguing strategies in *Ulysses* and a consideration of Roy's cataloguing styles in *The God of Small Things*. I choose to begin and close with Stein, using her works as bookends to my study for the following reasons. Since 1903, the year she began an early version of *The Making of Americans*, Stein has produced a varied and prolific body of writing which encompasses poetry, verbal portraits, narratives, nonfiction prose, lyric dramas, and children's literature. Her name stands for an oeuvre that embraces multiple genres and numerous styles. Stein produced the most experimental work based on lists and catalogues. Her catalogue style is stunning in its range and variety. She represents the breadth of

the catalogue practice and the diversity of the form. Lists and catalogues in Stein's hand become one of the potent tools in literary expression. Collectively, her lists highlight a cataloguing practice both within and beyond the scope of seeing a list as an enumeration. Stein is not only a practitioner, but also an explorer who, in "Composition as Explanation," seeks to explain and theorize the way she uses lists and catalogues. My last chapter on Stein is a culmination of her experiment with various catalogue forms, a style which on a first reading seems surprisingly simple.

Chapter One, "The Poetics of Cataloguing and Literary Assemblage in *Tender Buttons*: Stein, Cézanne, and Deleuze," discerns several listing and cataloguing patterns at work in *Tender Buttons*. Some operate at the macro level, others at the micro level. The first group of lists and catalogues manifests itself in the anatomy of *Tender Buttons*, a collection consisting of three separate sections: "Objects," "Food," and "Rooms." The "Objects" section is made up of fifty-eight poems in various lengths, each with its own title (or heading). These fifty-eight poems are fifty-eight obscure portraits of objects surrounding Gertrude Stein. Structurally, the pages are filled with poetry, poem after poem, all strung together in a nonchronological and nonlinear sequence. Although written in poetic density, if not poetic form, and elliptical fashion, these fifty-eight portraits constitute a catalogue of descriptions of lived experience in association with everyday objects—or more precisely, a catalogue of "nondescriptive descriptions" of everyday objects. Unlike "Objects," the "Food" section opens with a long list of food items and food-related objects. But its remaining text, like "Objects," is a mixture of short and long prose poems. Interestingly, Stein creates a list in some of the long poems in the "Food" section, a listing form embedded in a long poem. The second group of lists and catalogues, identified at the micro level, represents the narrator's perceptions and stream of consciousness, and embodies feelings and

ideas. Using the “Objects” section as a case study, I consider each portrait in “Objects” as a collection of the sensations and perceptions from a moment in life—a mundane phenomenon of what Stein calls “happening.” “Happening” coincides with moments when the narrator senses the imperceptible—such as a network of forces and movements—and renders it visible. Stein’s “happening” also gives salience to the content of the narrator’s stream of consciousness, as images and ideas are filtered through the alembic of the narrator’s mind. Stein’s reflective engagements with everyday objects reveal her fascination with moments when the thing exists as it is part of a collective that undergoes transformation, and as it is included in a series of contiguous connections. I juxtapose Stein’s notion of “happening” with Cézanne’s attraction to forces of the emergent and Deleuze’s notion of “assemblage.” To read them side by side is to argue for their vision in creating an aesthetic assemblage that valorizes the art of “encounter.” It is also to argue for a category of perceptual practice that is based on the perceiving subject’s acute awareness of the complex context (s)he is part of.

Chapter Two, “The Style of Radical Parataxis and the Event of Love: Joyce and Badiou,” focuses on Joyce’s art of cataloguing in relation to his fascination with love and its unpredictable advent. I use the “Sirens” episode of Joyce’s *Ulysses* as a case study to explore the way Joyce assembles list-like configurations that exemplify radical parataxis. Each list-like configuration is a set of sentence fragments bound together by what I call nonrelational contiguity. Such a style of parataxis—such a paratactic arrangement—is characterized by the radical juxtaposition of image with idea; a blended use of classes of discourse (e.g., statements, questions, and directives); the combination of imagined scenes and conversations and scenes from memory; a slippage between the imaginary and the real; and the mixture of perceptions in the moment and memories from the past. I concentrate on three nonhierarchical and episodic list-like

configurations in “Sirens”—a fugue-inspired overture of juxtaposed narrative fragments in the opening section of “Sirens”; Bloom’s stream of consciousness that discloses his love for Molly; and a set of narrative passages revolving around Simon Dedalus’s performance of “M’appari” in the “M’appari” scene (i.e., several pages of narrative passages creating a back-and-forth pattern like the musical chair). In each list-like framework, unity and linearity give way to the partial and the episodic. The quality of nonrelational contiguity is also used to characterize a scene consisting of chance encounters and unpredictable incidents (e.g., an account of the characteristics of the love event). To emphasize the element of contingency is to highlight Joyce’s interest in the contingent elements in life that he sees as endowed with transcendent value. Chance events account for the emergence of truths, particularly truths about love. I read Joyce’s “Sirens” alongside Alain Badiou’s *Being and Event* to foreground the similarities between them. Both writers define love in similar terms, and characterize love as a revelatory moment, a transformative occurrence, and a chance event. Finally, the event of love in Joyce and Badiou is an approach to infinity. Joyce’s list-like configurations, foregrounding the idea of love as a timeless truth, illustrate how love taps into our sensibility and how love enables us to glimpse infinity.

Chapter Three, “The Poetics of Listing and Sociopolitical Criticism in *The God of Small Things*,” examines the intersection of the literary and the social through analysis of lists’ sociopolitical implications, exploring how practical lists operate as narrative agents that bring awareness to systems of violence. I attend to three practical lists: a pickle inventory in a child’s mind; an Untouchable foreman’s enumeration of non-sentient objects; and two series of brief questions and answers. These listing examples are based on characters’ consciousness. Thus, my focus is not only three textual details that take on the form of a list, but also Roy’s use of the

trope of listing to present the mind of a character (a use also evident in Joyce). Central to the use of listing as the representation of a stream of consciousness is Roy's interest in ordinary people's lived experience and lived realities. While drawing attention to the interiority of ordinary individuals, Roy's enumerative forms interrogate social relations of domination and subordination. Roy's practical lists not only allude to troubling lived experience, but also gesture toward the rigidity and outdatedness of some sociocultural formations such as the caste hierarchy. Roy's practical lists thus furnish a kind of critical vocabulary for revaluing the enforcement of classification. At the same time, the list is also used to frame a discussion of racial hierarchy, mental colonization, and historical shame. In this chapter, I concentrate on exploring the lists' social meaning and political valence, which are often masked by the surface simplicity of their presentation. Furthermore, Roy intentionally creates those practical lists as stand-alone and unassimilable to stage a type of interruption in the narrative progression. But they are interruptions that need not be anti-narrative, and need not adversely affect narrative progression either. Rather, they forward the narrative without being part of it.

Chapter Four, "Cataloguing as Playful Pedagogy: The Sense and Sensation of Movement in Gertrude Stein," explores the relationship between Stein's practice of cataloguing and her representations of movement in her experimental work. Stein inserts lists and like-like configurations in her poetry. She composes these embedded lists or list-like configurations with the anaphora technique, which evokes the art of chanting and the power of incantation. Stein also builds in their very structures patterns of repetition and echoing. In adjacent lines of poetry, she repeats and rearranges a group of linguistic signs (mostly nouns), imposing no fixed order of these signifiers. There are also cases in which the list-like configurations exhibit typographical maneuverings, and thus are meant to create visual effects. These list-like forms are so different in

nature that they resist assimilation into my previous model of analysis in Chapter One. I focus on the list-like configurations embedded in texts like “Sacred Emily,” *Tender Buttons*, and *Four Saints in Three Acts*. These texts foreground the centrality of movement in Stein’s use of list or list-like forms, thematizing listing as the agent of both sense and sensibility. The list or list-like configuration is used as a pedagogical method to engage the reader in critiquing categorical thinking; as a visual framework that provides ways of thinking and questioning notions of monumentalization and conformity; finally, as a vehicle for communicating visual pleasure and sexual sensations. Stein uses the list as a category of analysis to theorize gender, sexuality, and national identity. They merit a chapter by themselves, and because they represent the most radically experimental deployment of the list in these writers, this discussion appropriately concludes the study. Stein works to push at the limitations of how movement is presented on paper, offering an alternative epistemology of movement to challenge the clichéd assumptions of it predominantly as mechanically driven and empirically verifiable. As I seek to show in this chapter, Stein enlarges the discourse of movement to include “erotic flow” (movement that emerges as an erotic emotion and is found in erotic impulses) and an “epistemic shift” (a shift in the way we understand the mind-body dichotomy). The scope of Stein’s discussion on “movement” surprisingly implicates issues about aesthetic creation, the status of American writing, and her confidence in being an American writer.

Foregrounding a strand of modernist poetics that runs from Stein to Roy, my project illuminates the ways these various combinatory structures broaden our view of what it means to list, give new meaning to the concept, and foster appreciation of new catalogue forms. These list-like ways of communication reveal how writers of the twentieth century make use of listing to capture the sensibility of their time. My project also illuminates listing as a shared practice by

both traditional and new American, Irish, and Anglophone modernists. I seek to explore the ways discourse on modernism moves beyond East-West thinking by first identifying cataloguing as a highly charged cultural phenomenon that can potentially facilitate discussions about a transnational modernism that includes writers who are not originally within the Anglo-American modernist movement. Those various listing and cataloging strategies found in Stein, Joyce, and Roy contribute to our understanding of modernism as a transnational phenomenon with a heterogeneous meaning. *The God of Small Things* was first published in 1997, which would not have placed Roy among modernist writers, but Roy employs modernist techniques such as the use of allusions and the citational strategy, which reflect modernist influences. Roy adds an interesting contribution to the legacy of modernist writers who used the practice of listing in their work. I hope my dissertation will thus contribute to the current redrawing of the boundaries of modernism and remapping of its territories.

Chapter One
**The Poetics of Sensing the Incorporeal and the Knowledge of the Ordinary:
 Stein, Cézanne, and Deleuze**

In *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, Gertrude Stein identifies *Tender Buttons* as the landmark text that marks “the beginning [. . .] of mixing the outside with the inside” (SW 147). This *mixing* formula that Stein began to explore and develop around this time derives from her literary commitment to describing an object as it is. Through Alice B. Toklas in *The Autobiography*, Stein undertakes to describe herself as being “concerned with seriousness and the inside of things” (SW 147). Such a literary endeavor as ascertaining the inside of things is, nevertheless, inevitably constricted and conditioned by a writer’s position as an outsider in relation to the object described. Knowing the inerasable boundary, if not the barrier, between perceiver and perceived, Stein rejected an omniscient and god-like position by identifying her attempt at understanding the inside as a way to “describe the inside as seen from the outside” (SW 147). Stein’s scrupulous attention to the distinction between inside and outside merits careful consideration, for it denies an observing/writing subject a superior, privileged status that entails a totalizing view or definitive understanding of any observed object or event. After all, what is perceived from the outside by no means accounts for the full content of what inherently exists on the inside. I wish to use the four interlocking aspects—associativeness, multi-dimensionality, temporality, and capacity to effectuate—developed in the introduction to highlight the ways Stein’s paratactic (or list-like) structures do not strive to resolve the issue of the inside-outside barrier, but to reveal her acute awareness of the epistemological quandary that resulted from the perceiver’s position as an outsider in relation to the perceived object. Stein’s list-like configurations, as we shall see, exhibit no relation of resemblance, but rather register the fusion of the instantaneous perception of the object and the moment-to-moment consciousness.

Her list-like structures therefore contain an immediate understanding of the object in the present, and give salience to immediate perception, which constitutes her knowledge of a thing as it is.

Critics and scholars have written extensively and astutely about Stein's exploration of the spectator's shifting perspective and on her abiding curiosity about the act of looking in early literary portraits,² such as the ones collected in *Tender Buttons*.³ Their analyses are persuasive and well-recognized, but they make little, or no, impact on our understanding of the nature and foundation of a poetic endeavor that transforms what might otherwise have seemed like anarchy and chaos into the fertile ground for newness and innovation, a poetic power that embodies Stein's vision of mixing the inside and the outside. Hence, I want to take the discussion in a different direction.

Rather than directing attention to Stein's ways of looking, this chapter foregrounds her imaginative, list-like ways of capturing and embodying what she terms "happening," a state that requires objects, non-objects, feeling, and force as its conditions of possibility.⁴ Furthermore,

² Wendy Steiner's study on painted portraiture informs us that it is "the traditional assumption that a portrait is an 'imitation of an individual'" (12). It is characteristic of portraits to have living people as their subjects. A portrait is a painted equivalent of an existent person. Strictly speaking, the genre of portrait in the visual arts is the representation of human beings to elicit their human character. What if the subject of a portrait is a non-human entity? Can we still call it a portrait? In her lecture "Portraits and Repetition," Stein herself refers to the short poems in *Tender Buttons* as "portraits": "I began to make *portraits of things* and enclosures that is [sic] rooms and places" (112, italics mine). Clearly, Stein expands the traditional definition of a portrait. Following Stein, I will argue that this genre is not restricted to people, since non-sentient objects are as animated by forces and affects as people. Unlike many Stein scholars, Robert Bartlett Haas, in a volume of Stein's uncollected writings, addresses the *Tender Buttons* poems as "still lifes," a genre focusing on objects as the subject. In my chapter, "portrait" and "still life" will be used interchangeably, both applied to Stein's poems in *Tender Buttons*.

³ See Lisa Ruddick's *Reading Gertrude Stein: Body, Text, Gnosis* (pp. 195-6), Jayne L. Walker's *The Making of Modernist: Gertrude Stein from Three Lives to Tender Buttons* (p. 135), and most recently, Nicola Shaughnessy's *Gertrude Stein* (chapter 2). Both Ruddick and Walker use the poem "A CARAFE, THAT IS A BLIND GLASS" as a primary example to illustrate and argue how thematically Stein encourages a new way of seeing in her poems.

⁴ Marjorie Perloff, in *The Poetics of Indeterminacy*, also invokes the notion of "happening" to describe Stein's poetic achievement. Her persuasive close reading of "Susie Asado" and "Accents in Alsace" proves the point that the poet "construct[s] a way of happening rather than an account of what has happened, a way of looking rather than a description of how things look" (85).

Stein's literary expression of "happening" focuses as much on nonhuman entities themselves (either material objects or unformed matter), as on the presence of the sensation-flowing and force-packed matrix that they are all part of. The matrix is an open-ended, dynamic field that implicates humans in a web of connections, sustaining the processes of forces confronting, wrestling with, and competing against each other. For Stein, to present things as they are is, I believe, to look beyond surface appearance in order to tap into what she considered things' reality. Relevantly, to present things as they are is to engage in the interplay of inside and outside, which engenders the sense of associativeness and multi-dimensionality, as she moves between the object and the perceiving consciousness. Both associative and multi-dimensional qualities will be discussed later.

Stein's attraction to things is clearly demonstrated in the way she organizes ideas around things and frames a poetic project about things in *Tender Buttons*. But she also moves beyond a consideration of just things to include the sense of liveliness that builds on perceptual experiences. Stein's attention to perceptual experiences betrays her fondness for sensations, and thereby designates feeling and sensation as the primary figures that drive the lyric narration in *Tender Buttons*.⁵ Significantly, the event of "happening" brings into focus objects, imperceptible forces, and scenes which inspire curiosity about the ever-changing world. Stein's close attention to the event of "happening" renders *Tender Button* a catalogue of the descriptions of lived experience. *Tender Button* is a collection of personal investigations organized around nonhuman entities and everyday objects. In "Objects," each portrait works as a small assemblage in which we see a network of encounters.

⁵ Despite the fact that a literary depiction of "happening" cannot do without Stein's observation and perception, my reader should notice by now that my focus on Stein's "happening" in this chapter is not on the process of observation and judgment. Additionally, I am not interested in "happening" as a record of the perceiver's thought process.

While demonstrating that Stein's literary portraits in *Tender Buttons* render visible the *process* of "happening" (namely, the rhythms, actions, and movements surrounding and evolving around an object), I also conceive Stein's act of rendering visible as a "happening" itself (namely, Stein's obscure but avid characterization of literary production). Both types of "happening" take the form of a list or a list-like structure, as Stein puts together depictions of rhythms, actions, and movements in a paratactic way. As we will see, Stein's lists and list-like configurations showcase the absence of a single, central viewpoint. Her lists and list-like configurations promote the idea of *mixing* which is embodied in her literary act of weaving together multiple perspectives from both the human and the nonhuman. It is with no privileging of a single human perspective that the hierarchical relationship between the perceiver and the perceived shifts. In Stein, listing is thus the trope of an egalitarian assemblage where both inside and outside claim importance. Her lists also point to a perceiving consciousness that abandons any hierarchical relationship between human and non-human. The ways Stein assembles her lists have implications for our understanding of the man-world relationship in general. Her writing leaves us thinking about what it means to cultivate a close and intimate relationship with the nonhuman (corporeal or otherwise).

Reading *Tender Buttons* as a List

All of the content of *Tender Buttons*, consisting of a blended assemblage of short prose poems, is present time. It is a complex rather than straightforward record of the perceptual process. There are several listing and cataloguing patterns at work in *Tender Buttons*. Some operate at the macro level, others at the micro level. The first group of lists and catalogues manifests itself in the anatomy of *Tender Buttons*, a collection consisting of three separate

sections: “Objects,” “Food,” and “Rooms.” These three sections stand for three separate categories in a framework, so the collection may itself be thought of as a kind of list. The “Objects” section is made up of fifty-eight poems in various lengths, each with its own title (or heading). These fifty-eight poems are fifty-eight obscure portraits of objects surrounding Gertrude Stein. Structurally, the pages are filled with poetry, poem after poem, all strung together in a nonchronological and nonlinear sequence. Although written in poetic density, if not poetic form, and elliptical fashion, these fifty-eight portraits constitute a catalogue of descriptions of lived experience in association with everyday objects—or more precisely, a catalogue of “nondescriptive descriptions” of everyday objects.

Unlike “Objects,” the “Food” section opens with a long list of food items and food-related objects. But its remaining text, like “Objects,” is a mixture of short and long prose poems. Interestingly, Stein uses parallel wording and parallel phrases to create a list or a list-like form embedded in some of the long poems in the “Objects” and “Food” sections. In the poem which has an embedded list, Stein assembles a series of disjointed and incoherent images that is oriented toward capturing sensory experience and responding to sensorial reality. This collection of images is a microcosmic representation of things in the flux of becoming and of heterogeneous encounters among entities. The second group of lists and catalogues, identified at the micro level, represents the narrator’s perceptions and stream of consciousness, and embodies feelings and ideas.

Stein’s *Tender Buttons* offers a succession of intimate portraits of Stein’s encounters with things, representing an assemblage of affects where the idea of mixing is at its most incandescent. The task of mixing the inside and the outside in Stein functions to tap into a realm of sensations. Stein increases its role as an invaluable method that helps facilitate the *appearing* of an object

and the *happening* of an event or an experience that involves all sorts of the disembodied such as sensations, desire, forces and rhythms. The knowledge of mixing, in short, can be understood as a culmination of literary attempts to recreate the active, vibrant realm of the imperceptible and the state of happening or becoming in a scene of interactions among objects.

Stein's interest in the process of happening overlaps with the painter Paul Cézanne's artistic concerns, primarily his attraction to rendering visible the force of the emergent. To consider Stein's preoccupation with the sensible world as part of a more general interest in a phenomenological approach to things, I will turn to Cézanne's aesthetic principles and practices that inspire new ways of thinking about the subject-object encounter. In addition, a close examination of the "Objects" section of *Tender Buttons* will demonstrate that Stein's highly elliptical and abstract modes of expression—her disjointed and incoherent images—adventurously promote and stage zones of heterogeneous encounters between entities, a zone which comes close to or depicts what Gilles Deleuze later termed an "assemblage" and the knowledge of becoming in his theory of affect. Stein mobilizes the notion of assembling with the technique of cataloguing in a manner that anticipates Deleuze's conceptual categories and critical vocabularies. The catalogue style Stein used to format *Tender Buttons* can be read as a microcosmic representation of things in the flux of becoming.

The Phenomenon and Portrayal of "Happening"

After the completion of *The Making of Americans*, Stein's narrative techniques evolved *in concert* with her literary sensibility, a sensibility that promoted a short but lively word portrait over a complete description of everything. Realizing that she no longer contented herself with describing what is going on inside in everyone and herself, Stein focused on experimenting with

language and syntax, a determined effort that culminated in a pivotal shift in style and focus. “It changed,” Stein states, “it kept on changing, until at last it led to something entirely different something very short and lively to the Portrait of Mabel Dodge and the little book called *Tender Buttons*” (“The Gradual Making” 151). Looking back at her transition from *The Making of Americans* to *Tender Buttons*, Stein gave an account of how a different literary consciousness gradually came to life, in her 1935 lecture, “The Gradual Making of The Making of Americans.” Criticism in this regard has already established that the dominant feature of this period, arising out of Stein’s struggle with the issues of temporality and memory, is the concern with the continuous present, namely “a notion of perception in nows, in moments unconnected or irrelevant of connection” (Steiner 51). But one creative impetus behind Stein’s literary endeavor that puts her in the company with artists of historical magnitude (such as Cézanne) and separates her from male counterparts (such as, for instance, Ezra Pound) has gone underdiscussed. It is her unmitigated interest in the event of *happening* that I am referring to here, an impetus that helps open a new avenue for the study of Stein.

As Stein herself explains, her stylistic evolution pivots upon the capacity to portray, embody, and surrender herself to the force of coming about, occurring, or, in her word, *happening*. This “happening” is the perception of an object in the fullness of its context in that moment, involving elements as simple as the force of sunlight hitting it, the air surrounding it, its use value, its aesthetic value, or its place in the room, etc. In “The Gradual Making of The Making of Americans,” Stein asserts that “it was necessary to let come *what would happen* to come because after all knowledge is what you know but *what is happening* is inevitably *what is happening to come*” (158, italics mine). In a quasi-apocalyptic tone, Stein emphatically repeats that the phenomenon of *happening* is what she embraces. In contrast to knowledge that becomes

lackluster and static, *happening* excites Stein with its immediacy and liveliness. Despite the use of the present participle in the verb happen, Stein's conception of "happening" should not be simply construed as the unfolding of events over time. While it involves the synchronic perception of a rich variety of relations or affects, Stein's idea of supreme happening, I propose, is not a function of time. Rather, it exemplifies, as we will see later, an affective configuration or a location of richness in sense perceptions (seen, heard, touched, and smelled). "Happening" involves the synchronic perception of a variety of relations or affects. In that sense, Stein's literary still lifes do not foreground what happens or how things happen, but elements coming into contact with each other and about constituent parts making countless points of connection. *What* and *how* things happen is the type of happening that loses attraction, a dull scenario of happening that is reported or documented by radios, cinemas, newspapers or biography (*What Are Masterpieces* 87). For Stein, such happening has no bearing on the creation of a masterpiece, and reins in creative force.

Stein's awakening to the state of happening marks her transition from finding bottom nature to embracing the combination of perceptual experiences. It signals her departure from the willful penetration into "the basis of essence" in each individual ("The Gradual Making" 136) to the exploration of the power of the multi-faculty sensing of the object or scene portrayed. Such a changing focus proceeds from her belief that sensation overrides logic, as later reaffirmed and reiterated in her book *Everybody's Autobiography*: "That is all understanding is you know it is all in the feeling" (122). As F. W. Dupee in the introduction to *Selected Writings of Gertrude Stein* has rightly suggested, critical attention should be drawn to "[Stein's] insistence on the primacy of phenomena over idea, of the sheer magnificence of unmediated reality" (xvi). Dupee's reading of Stein as a writer who values her perceptual knowledge of the world leads to

the conclusion that “Culture in her terminology becomes ‘composition,’ an aggregate of institutions, technologies, and human relations which the artist, as artist, accepts as it is, eliciting its meanings primarily through eye and ear rather than through mind, memory, or imagination” (xii). As we focus on Stein’s composition, it is evident that the excitement of the advent of happening rests on the playfulness and restlessness of the abstract forces permeating her lived experience. In “Pink Melon Joy,” Stein’s speaker states a mystery, “By me I see sounds of dirt. I can hear something. I listen best. I am willing” (*GP* 373). How is it possible that the human beholder *sees* the sounds of dirt? How is it possible to communicate aural specifics through visual perception? How is it possible that the acoustic sensation of the infinitesimal is experienced through the visual?

Here Stein’s synaesthetic words reflect not a concern for logical clarity, but a delight at the chance encounter with dirt that communicates its presence in unusual ways. The poem does not provide readers with satisfactory clues or answers to how the “sounds” of inaudible dirt appear. But the appearance of dirt spurs an imaginative association with the sound of the room. The sight of dirt prompts an imagined sound of a broom or other cleaner. Coming into play here is the associativeness of Stein’s list of forms of sensory perception in her stream of consciousness. Equally important, we may read the capability to *see* “sounds of dirt” as a result of a literary endeavor that poeticizes the sounds on the printed page, a result of a poetic rendering of dirt and dust, which in turn becomes a muse for aural images. Such a way of sharpening acoustic sensitivity is consonant with what Carrie Noland identifies in the poetry of Arthur Rimbaud and Patti Smith: “a textual music one hears through the eyes” (176). Significantly, “this vision of an aesthetic practice that transforms the physical world,” as Noland argues, “is rendered textually, not phenomenologically” (176). In a similar vein, Stein’s “sounds of dirt” emerge as a literary

music that is not actually heard but textually evoked. The dirt's auditory presence positioned as a point of perceptual reference that demands and asserts a re-ordering of experience involving the imperceptible is textually inspired. Essentially, Stein's words bring to prominence a different order of relationship between different modes of being (human and nonhuman), an encounter that is by no means dominated by the beholder's visual awareness (such as "I see dirt"). Obviously, the usual, customary way of identifying specks or clumps of dirt is not privileged here. What is implied here is a courageous move to dehierarchize sense modalities and treat them equally.

To Render Visible the Imperceptible

The task of rendering visible is never a one-way street that heavy-handedly puts a high premium on the visibility of human bodily pleasures and sensational responses by excluding the sensations transmitted from nonhuman objects and other species. Stein takes it upon herself to render visible the dynamic environment that is animated by the movements of forces emanating from non-human entities, giving them equal attention without imposing anthropocentric agendas. In Stein, there is no uneasiness in promoting the view of an inanimate being having its own reality, a reality that is bound up with the phenomenon of happening and coterminous with human reality. Literary portraits in *Tender Buttons* demonstrate Stein's awareness of the existence of a matrix where various forces come into play. For instance, "MILDRED'S UMBRELLA" focuses on a phenomenon of happening that involves rapid motions, object-object contacts, jarring sounds, and images of depletion and expenditure.

A cause and no curve, a cause and loud enough, a cause and extra a loud clash and an extra wagon, a sign of extra, a sac, a small sac and an established color and cunning, a slender grey and no ribbon, this means a loss a great loss a restitution. (SW 464)

I want to set aside the title for later discussion. Unapologetically, the poem begins with a puzzling “cause.” The “cause,” which displays “no curve” and is “loud enough,” is neither specified nor named, but Stein associates the enigmatic “cause” with “an extra wagon” and “a small sac.” Midway through the poem, the sense of mystery and obscurity gradually dissipates, as a set of concrete images looms into view—“an established color,” “a slender grey,” and a “ribbon.” Here the combined presence of these three pivotal details arouses the image of a typewriter that is taken seriously as the portrait subject: a long, narrow strip of inked fabric that produces ink impressions runs out of ink, with the result that the typewriter yields a sequence of grey and faint letters. Such a fading color as grey is poeticized and estheticized as “a slender grey,” hinting at a deficiency in black, the established color. Alternatively, the expression “a slender grey” on the lyric page can be read as a long, silvery iron typebar in reality. The poem contains the image of “a small sac,” which adds an increment of new meaning. Photographs of the typewriters manufactured in the early twentieth century show that the shape of a letter key on an alphabetic typewriter keyboard remarkably resembles a rain drop, prompting the allusion to a sac that functions to produce dark printed characters. The combination of the images of “an extra wagon” (the platen), “a small sac” (a letter key), “an established color,” and “a slender grey” projects a fascination for the working parts of a typewriter. Articulating the subtleness of Stein’s perceptual awareness, the poem concerns the perceptual reality of the clacking of a typewriter, a reality that involves sensations of a visual, auditory, and, suggestively, tactile character.

With the identity of the enigmatic “cause” being unveiled, what is the *happening* that is staged in “MILDRED’S UMBRELLA”? Stein’s careful attention to the aural impact of the technology (“loud enough” and “extra a loud clash”) reminds us that typewriting is far from a

noiseless and effortless operation. It is typical of a typist to strike the letter keys hard and to dramatically carry out increasingly frenetic keystrokes, as the typing speed goes up. The insistence on “loud enough” and “extra a loud clash” becomes shorthand for the way the typist performs a typing task on a noisy technology: the tack sound with each key pressed and the jarring dinging of the bell of a carriage return. The clacking of the typewriter, in Stein’s portrayal, renders the writing experience a sound-challenged undertaking. But is the happening centering on the noisy and busy action of the typebars that inspires distressing disquietude and renders the entire experience (either of typing or of watching someone typing) upsetting and unglamorous?

The answer must be *no*. With varying objects catalogued in the poem, the typewriter is neither the only locus of perception, nor the only subject of representation. Bidding for attention is the movement of all things present in the scene along with the invisible forces and rhythms that course through the object-centered matrix. The event of *happening* is thus found in the tension between iron typebars and paper as well as the dynamic between ink and paper.

Happening is the weight that falls on the paper. It is the ink on the inked ribbon that gets pressed onto the paper. *Happening* manifests itself between the iron typebars, as they accidentally get entangled and make a dull noise about it. Alternatively, the event of happening unfolds between the typebar and the air, as the striking head on the typebar seems to be tugged by a pull to a specific spot on the white surface. How is it that the striking heads take turns swinging in the air, a phenomenon aptly portrayed as “cunning” by Stein? It is “cunning” because the mechanical design that enables each typebar to hit the ribbon is partially hidden from view. Different modes of bodily engagement in connection with a typewriter are put on display. And what this tells us is that a *happening* is found between two or more objects as they come into contact. For instance, a “small sac” takes on an “extra wagon” (the platen). Or the paper compliantly rolls around the

typewriter's platen, with its backside deeply curved inwards. With all these in mind, we learn to see a typescript as the product of, or perhaps the reason for, various creative tensions and contacts between constituent elements inside and outside a typewriter, which constitutes the mechanics of typewriting. Indeed, it is the sense of interconnectedness and its attendant liveliness that Stein finds most captivating. What preoccupies Stein is the ability to tap into the illuminating moments with the perceived, the thing.

Stein's "happening" is a mark of liveliness to the extent that it affirms and sustains a scene of perceptual plenitude enabled by all of the elements, in this instance, inside and outside a typewriter. Stein's capacity for such a vision of multiplicity finds its formidable match in her Radcliffe professor, William James, who preceded Stein in relishing moments when the external world manifests itself as dynamic and experienceable.⁶ Like Stein, James finds a model of plenitude in the external world itself. He not only gives a clear priority to the sensation-filled environment, but also proclaims that such a state is reality rather than a figment of imagination, a natural phenomenon rather than a theoretical construct. In a word, it is what constitutes our everyday living. In his 1908 work, *A Pluralistic Universe*, James asserts,

[W]hat *is* actual at every moment of our lives is the sort of thing which I now proceed to remind you of. You can hear the vibration of an electric contact-maker, smell the ozone, see the sparks, and feel the thrill, co-consciously as it were or in one field of experience. But you can also isolate any one of these sensations by shutting out the rest. If you close your eyes, hold your nose, and remove your hand, you can get the sensation of sound alone, but it seems still the same sensation that it was Now the natural way of talking of all this is to say that certain sensations are experienced, now

⁶ I follow and concur with Bruce Wilshire's reading of the external world in James's philosophical framework as "experienceable" (110).

singly, and now together with other sensations, in a common conscious field. (*WJ* 753, italics in original)

James then concludes that whether or how a sensation is felt largely depends on where we focus our attention. James is not, I believe, advocating an unbreakable, ironclad link between “sensation” and “attention,” but rather reflecting on the palpable status of “attention” in our sensory judgment and experience, and thus asserting that our attention patterns and attention targets explain well the exclusion of some sensations from our perceptual field. The issue of attention that James had long entertained before the turn of the century is not my focus here.⁷

What attracts my attention is his interest in concrete phenomena embedded in lived experience (e.g., “the vibration of an electric contact-maker,” the smell of “the ozone,” the sight of “the sparks,” and the sensation of “the thrill”), an interest developed *after* the turn of the century.

Evoking an image of the world as giving itself away with all sorts of nonverbal communication, James’s catalogue of sensory experiences purports to account for the myriad opportunities humanity has to tap into the knowledge and richness of sensible reality wherever they turn.

I introduce James here because he speaks in support of exploring the dynamism intrinsic to the expressive aspects of the world, a quality Stein also takes as her focus. Stein’s active engagement with elements at the phenomenological level in “MILDRED’S UMBRELLA”

⁷ Interestingly, Michael J. Hoffman in his book, *The Development of Abstractionism in the Writings of Gertrude Stein*, also explicitly references James’s preoccupation with “a teeming multiplicity of objects and relations,” James’s own words from *The Principles of Psychology* (224). Such a “multiplicity” differs in nature from the Jamesian multiplicity of relations to which I will draw attention later. The model of multiplicity Hoffman cited in his book is read and understood in the context of James’s formulation of human consciousness. According to *The Principles*, human consciousness is akin to an entity, a reservoir that contains a teeming multiplicity of objects. Hoffman further explains that Stein understood pretty well “the Jamesian conception of consciousness as an entity expressing itself most strongly in habits and powers of attention” (209).

harmonizes with what James sees as the proliferating quality that the material world has to offer.⁸ James brings into view a stimulating and thriving environment where humanity is invited to engage with it and to facilitate its evolution and transformation through their creative acts. The idea of humans as co-creators is made explicit in *Pragmatism*—published in 1907, based on his lectures at the Lowell Institute in 1906 and at Columbia University in 1907—where James asserts that “In our cognitive as well as in our active life we are creative. We *add*, both to the subject and to the predicate part of reality. The world stands really malleable, waiting to receive its final touches at our hands” (*WJ* 599, italics in original). Such a view of reality anchored in his belief in creative evolution focuses public attention on how human perception and human creation are closely intertwined, suggesting that active and direct perception entails fruitful, illuminating creation.

⁸ There is no dispute over James’s important influence on Stein’s linguistic experimentation during the early years of her career. A trove of compelling scholarship has nicely charted their intellectual affiliations and similarities. Some scholars (such as Wendy Steiner and Jayne L. Walker) went even further to mark the point when Stein started to depart from James. Decades of scholarship from the forties through the eighties largely foreground the parallels between James’s theories of psychology and Stein’s narrative techniques. For instance, Norman Weinstein’s 1970 study on Stein’s linguistic revolution stresses James’s influence on Stein’s thoughts on personality, on the movements and density of consciousness, on the stream of consciousness, and on how humanity can be classified into categories of psychological types. Like Weinstein, Wendy Steiner in the late seventies also discussed Stein’s ideas of time and personality in relation to James’s “stream of consciousness,” but she further argued that Stein inherited from James the notion that careful observation entails a knowledge of the essence of the object (140). She explains Stein’s treatment of her subjects with close observation through the lens of James’s psychological theory of “identification” (141). Obviously, scholarly discussion spanning close to half a century mostly focuses on James’s work published before 1900 (primarily *The Principles of Psychology* [1890] and sometimes *The Varieties of Religious Experience* [1902]). Weinstein’s book *Gertrude Stein and the Literature of the Modern Consciousness* is an exception, for he reads James’s influence beyond his early, psychology-based period. Weinstein considers *Stanzas in Meditation* as an example of Stein’s attempt to “capture James’s pluralistic universe through the development of an experimental syntax” (83). In the 21st century, Sara J. Ford’s *Gertrude Stein and Wallace Stevens* foregrounds James’s influence and legacy in the fields of psychology and philosophy, reading Stein’s *Tender Buttons* in the context of James’s attention to the relationship between language and the self. Ford argues that Stein creates theatrical metaphors to depict our relationships to language in *Tender Buttons*. Departing from these scholars, I do not seek to map out the ways Stein’s literary practices correspond to James’s theories of psychological states. Rather, I am interested in working at the intersection of Stein’s phenomenological reading of the world and the metaphysical questions that preoccupied the later James as a pragmatist and radical empiricist.

Taken together, these two passages from *A Pluralistic Universe* and *Pragmatism* cast important light on James's recognition of sensible realities and experiences as vital ground for fertile partnerships: empirical reality, for James, presents itself as an aggregate of sensations and movements, whose presence not only fuels man's creative energy, but also inspires attentive minds. This position is shared by Stein, whose work models for us ways to engage existentially with existing reality and immediate objects in sight.⁹ As she told her audience in the "Portraits and Repetition" lecture how she, in the course of composing *Tender Buttons*, devoted her attention and energy to objects around her through practicing a phenomenological reading of them, "I did express what something was, a little by talking and listening to that thing, but a great deal by looking at that thing" (112). The fact that Stein located her creative force in lived experience rather than an imaginary land reminds us of James's assertion that "If there *be* real creative activities in being, radical empiricism must say, somewhere they must be immediately lived" (*A Pluralistic*, WJ 809, italics in original).¹⁰ While it is obvious that Stein's portrayal of a sensible life is tightly related to her immediate feelings, she betrays a concern with the detail of things existing in the moment as perceived. She once told her interviewer Robert Bartlett Haas that

You must remember each time I took something, I said, I have got to satisfy each realistic thing I feel about it. Looking at your shoe, for instance, I would try to make a complete realistic picture of your shoe. It is devilish difficult and needs perfect

⁹ As Donald Sutherland notes in *Gertrude Stein*, "[Stein] felt that ideas should be constantly created or recreated out of experience, that they belong to the present and not to memory or authority. For her they came, as abstractions, as an intrinsic part of present experience, as a quality of it . . ." (174).

¹⁰ As David C. Lamberth correctly points out, in the essay "Interpreting the Universe after a Social Analogy," radical empiricism demands that "philosophies take up the world as we actually experience it, both phenomenologically and metaphysically . . ." (243).

concentration, you have to refuse so much and so much intrudes itself upon you that you do not want it (29)

Admittedly, such a “complete realistic picture” of an object would not have been possible, if her mind was not steeped in the intensity of concentration. What takes charge here is the single mind that relies on perceptual experiences guided by the way the object presents itself to the mind, rather than by an inquisitive mind that imagines the object in an overbearing manner. For Stein, to avoid foreshortening reality is to work beyond the bounds of preconceptions and past experience. Interestingly, Stein’s insistence on rejecting the dictates of memory highlights much the same thinking found in William James, who cautioned against the habit of “substituting a lot of static objects of conception for the direct perceptual experiences” (*A World*, WJ 1164). For James, speculative concepts and talks of pure abstraction easily get in the way of understanding the nature of the world.

Aside from being the product of direct perceptual experience and perfect concentration, Stein’s “complete realistic picture” of Haas’s shoe calls for the inclusion of elements at the micro level, reinforcing an interest in the details of Haas’s shoe—every nook and cranny of Haas’s shoe. In other words, the picture’s completeness hinges on the parts that constitute the whole. Stein’s appeal to the details, as also shown in “MILDRED’S UMBRELLA,” betrays her awareness of the substantial difference between a shoe and the parts that make up a shoe (shoe strings, shoe eyelets, a tongue pad, a rubber sole, etc.). In this aspect, Stein can easily find a sympathetic ear in James. James contends that parts and the whole are “two distinct orders of witness” that hold equal value: “The all-form assuredly differs from the each-form, but the *matter* is the same in both If their forms of appearance are so different, the all and the eaches cannot be identical” (*A Pluralistic*, WJ 720, italics in original). He adamantly rejects the

notion that the whole is the sum of its parts, because it not only dismisses the importance of each part as a vital member in its own right, but also overlooks the complex interrelation, if not interaction, among the constituent parts. James writes,

We can't say that awareness of the alphabet as such is nothing more than twenty-six awarenesses, each of a separate letter; for those are twenty-six distinct awarenesses, of single letters *without* others, while their so-called sum is one awareness, of every letter *with* its comrades. There is thus something new in the collective consciousness. It knows the same letters, indeed, but it knows them in this novel way. It is safer, I said, [. . .] to treat the consciousness of the alphabet as a twenty-seventh fact, the substitute and not the sum of the twenty-six simpler consciousnesses Do not talk, therefore, I said, of the higher states *consisting* of the simpler, or *being* the same with them; talk rather of their *knowing the same things*. They are different mental facts, but they apprehend, each in its own peculiar way, the same objective A, B, C, and D" (*A Pluralistic*, WJ 714, italics in original).

Here an anti-universalist view is intrinsic to James's understanding of the world. The same is said regarding the notion of experience: "I [James] don't logically see how a collective experience of any grade whatever can be treated as logically identical with a lot of distributive experiences. They form two different concepts" (*A Pluralistic*, WJ 722). Thinking back to Stein's "MILDRED'S UMBRELLA," the indication that she probably shares a similar view with James on the issue of parts and the whole is her insistence on making alive and visible an array of palpable details (concrete images, heard sounds, tactile qualities) gained from the sensory perception of a variety of relations or affects. Significantly, those details are used to index the presence of a typewriter. Indeed, "MILDRED'S UMBRELLA" is a product of a period of pure

and intense concentration on an object. Of more fundamental importance is Stein's profound attention given to members of the connecting and collective whole, that is, constituent parts found on the inside and outside of the typewriter. Equally important is that each encounter with various aspects of the object (the typewriter) is taken as real.

Stein's concentration on the presence and presentness of the inorganic and on forces engendered by different sets of dynamic relationships becomes a major source of spontaneous creativity and aesthetic pleasure in the *Tender Buttons* period. The artistic gain is in a consciousness that pays attention to lived reality, to the minute, and to the detailed. Although appearing to be quite cumbersome with all the mechanical parts, the machine is surrounded by signs of impersonal movements and interactions. While enacting impersonal craftsmanship, the typewriter is more than an instrument of expression and communication. It represents an aggregate of energy and rhythm.

Combining utility and convenience, the typewriter is good at producing clean typed text that not only guarantees its words printed in a straight-line fashion, but also manifests horizontal consistency. But the suggestive phrase "no curve" at the beginning of the poem seems a witty caricature of the dull lettering created by the standard font that delivers no pictorial excitement. From some of the anecdotes in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, we learn that even though Stein herself owned "a wretched little portable typewriter," she chose not to use it (SW 48). Alice B. Toklas in her 1963 memoir, *What Is Remembered*, briefly reminisces about Stein's wretched typewriter, recalling that she assisted Stein in the preparation of the manuscript of *The Making of Americans* and did its typewriting "on a worn out little Blickensdorfer [sic]" (54). Shortly, the Blickensdorfer typewriter was replaced by a Smith Premier at 27 rue de Fleurus. The year was around 1908. Possibly, Stein's own possession fed into her writing. It is no secret that Stein's

personal experience with the typewriter was fraught with tension. *The Autobiography* discloses that “Gertrude Stein tried to copy *Three Lives* on the typewriter but it was no use, it made her nervous, so Etta Cone came to the rescue” (49). After Stein met Alice B. Toklas in Paris, the latter handled all the typed works, while the former took pleasure in producing handwritten texts, playing penciled scribbles against a background of white. It may be concluded that the typewriter is a piece of modern technology that Stein found unattractive or uninteresting. Compared to crisp clean lettering yielded by a succession of keystrokes, Stein’s penciled scribbles and her large cursive handwriting come across as animated, forceful, and full of personality. As if the act of *writing with a pencil in hand* is an artistic event, Stein takes great pleasure in writing in big cursive on pieces of scrap paper and French school children’s notebooks. The Alice in *The Autobiography* remarks that “[Stein] always then and for many years later wrote on scraps of paper in pencil, copied it into French school note-books in ink and then often copied it over again in ink” (SW 48). Strikingly, this passage from *The Autobiography* conjures up the image of a writer religiously and attentively making duplicate copies with pencil and pen, as if the everyday practice that involves pencils and ink has become a natural ritual that Stein could not forfeit.

Umbrella and Typewriter

Although there is sufficient evidence of Stein’s rejection of the typewriter, the poem “MILDRED’S UMBRELLA” did not turn out to be a full-scale assault on the idea of using typewriters. Embodying Stein’s aesthetics of happening, an object as ordinary as a typewriter is identified as the site where a whole new scope and scale of seeing along with a range of palpable activities comes into focus. “MILDRED’S UMBRELLA” demonstrates that *happening* occurs at

the infinitesimal, minute level and involves the inorganic and the inanimate, striking us as phenomenologically perceptible.

Furthermore, the image of a working typewriter that Stein offers as analogous to an umbrella (as the title suggests) is thematically significant for the perspective it gives on the view of writing that Stein finds embodied in her friend Mildred Aldrich. A typewriter articulates the centrality of writing to a writer's life, and for Aldrich it speaks volumes for writing as a profession and a mission. Here a view of the poem tied closely to biographical facts is worth pursuing, since in all likelihood the Mildred in the poem's title "MILDRED'S UMBRELLA" refers to Mildred Aldrich, an American journalist and theater critic, with whom Stein had developed an intimate friendship since the first decade of the twentieth century. Aldrich was best known for her commercially successful World War I memoirs in epistolary form: *A Hilltop on the Marne* (1915), *On the Edge of the War Zone* (1917), *The Peak of the Load* (1918), and *When Johnny Comes Marching Home* (1919). The most widely known career that Aldrich pursued before she took up residence in France was the launch of the weekly literary newspaper *The Mahogany Tree* in 1892.¹¹ This opportunity was actually an unexpected turn of events. It was Aldrich's dismissal from her long-time job as a theater columnist with the *Boston Home Journal* that made her new venture into newspaper publishing. Creating *The Mahogany Tree* single-handedly, Aldrich entered the business with passion, but unfortunately, the publishing career was cut short after the paper was discontinued months later, under her editorship.

This was not Aldrich's first and final taste of defeat in her professional life. She endured other difficult conditions while being an outspoken theater critic who never hesitated to give a bad review to an immature, underperforming actress or an underwhelming performance.

¹¹ According to Alma J. Bennett's *American Women Theatre Critics*, *The Mahogany Tree* was a 16-page newspaper, "the first volume of which came out in September, 1892. The paper was a failure; however, Aldrich did not give up her career in journalism" (79).

According to Aldrich herself in her unpublished autobiography, *Confessions of a Breadwinner* (1926), her early theater criticism was driven by the belief and principle that “I was going to speak my mind without fear or favor” (180). As a result, her candor made enemies, and her blunt commentary provoked strong opposition, as Aldrich herself puts it in her autobiography: “The sins of my early attitude in the theatre . . . flew home to roost with a vengeance” (191). Despite all the setbacks and oppositions, Aldrich did not give up her profession as a theater critic, but rather redirected her passion to establishing herself as an expatriate journalist and reviewer residing in France, introducing French plays to American audiences. Her past predicaments did not thwart her unstinting and indefatigable effort to introduce the world of theater to a broader audience. Just as an umbrella protects man from rain, a lifetime of devotion to writing—telescoped into the image of a typewriter and moments of fervent typing—must have protected Aldrich from the tides and eddies of life, from the rainstorm of the harrowing experience of stress and failure that life entails. In this sense, the poem “MILDRED’S UMBRELLA” reveals a deeper layer to Stein’s thinking about the value of writing than her rejection of an impersonal technology. As writing becomes thematically central in this poem, the call for “a restitution” after “a great loss” at the close of the poem makes the more remarkable the consoling and therapeutic role of writing and the metonymic role of the typewriter. A “restitution” through continuing to write is necessary, since writing with its redeeming quality can triumph over failure and diminishment.

This poem is not necessarily Stein’s homage to Aldrich, but it is certainly a memorandum of how writing sustained them in times of difficulty and how writing shaped their lives. Nowhere is the illustration of writing as a life-shaping force clearer than in Aldrich’s life. Being enthusiastic about promoting the moral and social values of the theater, Aldrich wrote to lend a

voice to this aesthetic genre whose merits beyond those of a fantasy world with sensory delights and breathtaking glamour she felt were yet to be sufficiently established. She also wrote to push for a shift in attitude toward the theater, arguing for the dramatic form as a genre of permanent value. Aldrich thought beyond the entertaining value of the theater to its social, aesthetic, and moral responsibilities, describing its multiple functions “As an inspiration to thought, as a teacher of beauty, as an instructor of culture and manners, as an awakener of emotion” (241). Coinciding with the seriousness of Aldrich’s mission to elevate the theater to the status of a serious art form—a mission from which Aldrich never really deviated—theater criticism held every promise of encouraging and generating serious interest in dramatic performances. On this understanding, writing kept her mission alive. To stop writing would amount to “a great loss,” as Stein suggests in the poem, a loss on both personal and professional levels.

It is likely that Stein’s cautionary pronouncement of “a great loss” was a personal and genuine response to another unexpected turn of events in Aldrich’s life before the outbreak of the First World War, that is, Aldrich’s plan to move out of Paris to pursue a tranquil life in a bucolic setting. Aldrich’s friends in Paris were not very sanguine about the prospect of it. As Harriet Lane Levy recalls in *Paris Portraits*,

[Aldrich] said that she was tired of struggling, of trying to live her life within the earnings from the purchase of French plays for the American market as she had been doing for many years. She would retire to a French village . . . and spend the remainder of her life free from financial strain, living within her annuities. (92)

Aldrich’s decision to live in the rural area to meet her evolving needs proved worrying to many of her close friends, as it might stymie her creative progress. In her memoir, Levy documents how Aldrich’s friends responded with pessimism and objection:

We told her that the idea was a mad one. [. . .] Her plan to leave Paris and live the remainder of her days in seclusion shocked us. She was pre-eminently social and we could not associate her with village life, removed from the scene, from the people of note, above all things the stage. It would mean the end of her active life and her writing, which had been growing less vital over the years. She was still a vigorous woman

Her friends tried to dissuade her from her plan to retire. (92-3)

The potentially adverse effects of it, which include the suspension, or even dissolution, of Aldrich's writing career, must have weighed heavily on Stein at the final stage of composing *Tender Buttons*, an effort that came during or shortly after Mildred's decision to move.

Cézanne and the Art of Encounter

Stein's attentiveness to the phenomenon of happening reflects her interest in different orders of experience. This calls to mind her predecessor Cézanne's passion for portraying the emergent on canvas in an attempt to come close to reality. One anecdote reported by Joachim Gasquet, a poet and Cézanne's sympathizer, illustrates Cézanne's appeal to rendering things as they are appearing. While working on a portrait of Gasquet's father, Cézanne was sensitive and responsive to moments of interaction unfolding simultaneously before him—interaction between particles in the air, between the sitter and his surrounding environment, between the sitter and the painter, etc. Cézanne details what seems like a charmed scene of energy-zapped busy-ness that absolutely commands his attention:

[Gasquet's father] is sitting there . . . He's listening with only one ear . . . Also he's receiving a cloud of sensations . . . His eye is not the same . . . An infinitesimal

proportion, an atom of light has changed from within and met up with the unchanging, or almost unchanging, curtain in the window. (Gasquet 214)

What plays out in front of Cézanne is a rich scene of illuminating resonances and subtle sensations that reveals a steady flux of change accompanied by a release of forces at every time point, at every blink of an eye. It presents a world in constant motion and change. Most notably, it is a matter of attentiveness and concentration that makes Cézanne a witness to localized events that unfold in seemingly slow motion. The knowledge of keeping himself close to the elemental, the emergent, and the transient helps Cézanne develop an aesthetic sense that insists on capturing nature in its reality and painting the world in its essence. Cézanne engages and encourages Gasquet with his resounding statement which is foundational to his persistent aspiration to become an advocate of nature's "infinite diversity": "Ah, life! Life! To feel it and capture it in its reality, to love it for itself, to see in it the only true beauty, eternal and changing . . ." (Gasquet 214; 158).

What is essential is to recognize that Cézanne's dramatic account of those scintillating moments of surprise and unexpectedness presents a view of lived reality in its complexity. This reality truly showcases an "ontologically heterogeneous field," to borrow Jane Bennett's words.¹² Entities never stand in isolation but exist in relation. Furthermore, mobility is found not only in tangible objects but also in imperceptible elements and particles. What is remarkable is that the existent world registers a ceaseless activity marked by contingent but constant exchanges of forces or energies between organic and inorganic beings. The world on Cézanne's canvas, however, shows more than that. Cézanne's painting serves to heighten, through coloration, the sense of harmony established between the perceiver and the perceived, since in his view the

¹² In *Vibrant Matter*, Bennett uses the phrase to explain how agency is found and distributed across species and space, rather than "being a capacity localized in a human body or in a collective produced (only) by human efforts" (23).

painter and the model are bound together by “the same passing moment” (Gasquet 212).

Revealingly, Cézanne’s nuanced way of observing the world—his subtle way of looking—yields ontological insights:

What is there in common between a pine as it appears to me and a pine as it is in reality? [. . .] Wouldn’t it be the realization of that part of nature which lies before our eyes, presenting us with a picture? . . . Conscious trees! . . . And in this picture wouldn’t there be a philosophy of appearance more generally accessible than all the tables of categories, all your noumena and phenomena. Seeing it, one would feel how everything is related to oneself, to man. (Gasquet 166)

Since the world is a network of mutually constituted relationships, the notion of connectedness between humans and objects comes natural in Cézanne.

Not only does Cézanne’s canvas capture nature’s changing face, but it also shows that “Nature isn’t at the surface; it’s in depth” (Gasquet 166). As Forrest Williams has pointed out, Cézanne’s painting is never merely a matter of “reproducing the sheer surface sensuousness of the given” (170).¹³ As Cézanne once said to Gasquet, his work is committed to “captur[ing] changeable, iridescent substance” (Gasquet 213), while celebrating the primacy of sensation necessitated by the way things are. For Cézanne, nature’s depth is only accessible through a purging of clichés, that is, through rejecting any criteria of aesthetic and theoretical judgment based on nothing but academic formulas and rules. What bothers Cézanne most is that the act of looking is habitually filtered through preconceived knowledge, established protocols, and

¹³ Williams carefully explains that “painting for Cézanne was neither to distort the things of the world under the influence of the ardent emotions of his inner self, nor to represent on canvas his visual impressions, as the impressionists were doing. Thoughtful discernment, an assiduously reflective search for invariant structures, enabled him to approach that objective reality which he sought with increasing determination. His aim, as he was wont to put it, was to ‘*faire la chose*,’ i.e., to paint *the visual thing*, not the mere impression” (167).

preexistent categories. He urges painters to treat each portrait subject as singular, as endowed with singular attractions. To Cézanne's dismay, it is not uncommon that painters "deny nature or copy it with their minds made up" (Gowing 194).

Clichés are where a painter, as Cézanne asserted with candor, "already had the image in his eye, ready-made" (Gasquet 164), rather than investigating closely what he comes into contact with. Relevantly enough, clichés *are* the ready-made, and they are never in short supply. Clichés exist in profusion. In everyday reality, "the painter has many things in his head, or around him, or in his studio," Gilles Deleuze states in *Francis Bacon* (71). "There are psychic clichés," Deleuze continues, "just as there are physical clichés—ready-made perceptions, memories, phantasms" (71). Understandably, there is a sense of disappointment emerging from seeing what is on the canvas become the cliché or colorless mediocrity, but painters' great disappointments, as often as not, are heightened by the awareness that "a whole category of things that could be termed clichés already fills the canvas, before the beginning. [. . .] Cliché are always-already on the [empty] canvas" (*FB* 72). In Cézanne, we notice a mind that seeks to negotiate this besetting artistic challenge by submitting to a higher imperative. To paint sensation is what Cézanne considers as a way to break free of the shackles of clichés. In order to explain why sensation becomes all the more important in Cézanne's modern aesthetic, I want to return to where Cézanne calls attention to the active nature of the forces that animate human and nonhuman sensitivities in the course of painting a portrait of Gasquet's father. The way Cézanne makes observations of the world around the sitter prepares him for the task of dethroning clichés and of defying the notion of cliché determinism (i.e., we see images of cliché, learn from clichés, think through clichés, and reproduce images of clichés).

Cézanne's account furnishes details about how Gasquet's father is momentarily engaged in contemplation, how the father's passing fancy reflected in one of his eyes percolates in the air, and how "an atom of light" moves through the air and hits the curtain. Nurturing an excitement about witnessing the multiple encounters among entities, Cézanne's observation reveals his appreciation of the central role that "encounter" plays in creating images different from images of clichés. His insight has strategic implications for how art should be practiced to get past clichés. Cézanne's attention to encounters of varying kinds and forms is a gesture toward displacing clichés' control and influence. It manifests a shift of focus from "objects of recognition" to "objects of an encounter," that is, from images of clichés to movements of sensations. Deleuze, in *Difference and Repetition*, identifies objects of recognition as those which fall short of stimulating thinking. Essential to the object of recognition is its recognizability, that is, its capacity to be recognized and recognizable as some preexistent form or empirical figure with which comes a set of presupposed concepts. It is owing to the existence of an objective identity that an object of recognition can be recognized. The principle of identity plays an important role in the act of recognition: "An object is recognized . . . when one faculty locates it as identical to that of another, or rather when all the faculties together relate their given and relate themselves to a form of identity in the object" (*DR* 133).

By the same token, clichés are the recognizable, the objects of recognition. We recognize a cliché as that which happens or occurs again and again. It is based on the principles of resemblance and identity that we identify clichés. They make evident that "the sensible is [. . .] that which bears directly upon the senses in an object which can be recalled, imagined or conceived" (*DR*, 139). In sum, objects of recognition represent an image of thought that "[has] nothing to do with thinking" (*DR* 138), since to recognize is to think with presuppositions, and,

consequently, reinforces a stolid habit of mind. The objects of recognition illustrate how recognition as a cognitive behavior orients us to looking for resemblance and thinking back to empirical figures, and therefore Deleuze characterizes them as dogmatic in the sense that they are in association with a type of sensation that blunts our creative sensitivity and faculties of imagination.

By contrast, the objects of a fundamental encounter communicate a different type of sensation that sharpens our awareness of newness by “forc[ing] us to think” (*DR* 139). This sensation is different in kind to the extent that it can only be felt or sensed: “What is encountered may be Socrates, a temple or a demon. It may be grasped in a range of affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, [and] suffering. In whichever tone, its primary characteristic is that it can only be sensed” (*DR* 139). This type of sensation requires a material entity or multiple entities to be its condition(s) of possibility, but the empirical conditions of possibility remain functional rather than central in the artistic rendering of sensations. Most important, it invites us to think without image, that is, to think beyond the objects of recognition. As Deleuze explains,

sensation is not in the ‘free’ or disembodied play of light and color (impressions); on the contrary, it is in the body, even the body of an apple. [. . .] sensation is in the body, and not in the air. Sensation is what is painted. What is painted on the canvas is the body, not insofar as it is represented as an object, but insofar as it is experienced as sustaining *this* sensation. (*FB* 31-2, italics in original)

Critically, the viewers or readers encounter the “body” as an object of an encounter that maintains sensation rather than an object of recognition that perpetuates the knowledge of clichés. The objects of a fundamental encounter, in Deleuze’s framework, promote sensations that are “freed from the presuppositions of both recognition and common sense” (Smith 31). With that in

mind, the aesthetic interest shown in Cézanne's paintings is not the image of an apple, but the sensations that make the apple an apple with singular appeal or even the forces that are exerted on the body of an apple. What Deleuze sees in Cézanne's brilliance is the painter's capacity to capture forces and render them visible. Deleuze argues that "The task of painting is defined as the attempt to render visible forces that are not themselves visible," forces as elementary as "pressure, inertia, weight, attraction, gravitation, germination" (*FB* 48).

The capacity to render visible the imperceptible has a parallel existence in Stein's *Tender Buttons*. In Stein's writing, we encounter similar aesthetic interests in painting sensations and capturing insensible forces. Stein puts demands on writing, seeking to use language to materialize the beauty of objects' distinguishing sensations. Literary portraits in *Tender Buttons*, for example, exemplify the attempt to "express the rhythm of the visible world" (*SW* 112). It is worth noting that Stein's appreciation of "rhythm" resonates with Cézanne's prioritizing of sensation over clichés. We have long known that the influence of Cézanne's aesthetic principles on Stein is clear. As Jayne L. Walker has pointed out, Stein's working notebooks in the period of *The Making of Americans* reveal her admiration for Cézanne, who embodies a new vision and whose revolutionary painterly techniques bespeak a different relationship between painter and object.

Charting the emergence of a strand of modernist culture beginning with Cézanne, Walker writes about Cézanne's artistic aspirations, unorthodox techniques, and his influence on Matisse and Picasso, while presenting an account of how Stein's fascination with Cézanne invigorates the writer in her pursuit of a new model of realism in narrative form. Working through Stein's notebooks, Walker teases out what Stein identifies in Cézanne's visual representation, among which are an intense preoccupation with color sensations, an emphasis on the "direct relation to

the object” (NB-A, 19; in Stein’s words), and “the process of perception” (10).¹⁴ Walker’s study on the Cézanne-Stein nexus reinforces how those principles of Cézanne’s help solidify Stein’s literary conviction of the importance of realizing the object itself, as reflected in her fictional narratives such as “Melanctha” and *The Making of Americans*. Stein did say in “Portraits and Repetition” that she includes “color” in her *Tender Buttons* (112). But my concern is not so much with the way colors or color sensations on canvasses are translated into literary terms, as with Stein’s literary expression of “movement” and “force”—the imperceptible elements that animate the world and objects. These imperceptible elements never escape Stein’s notice, and her acts of perception of reality bring us close to them. With careful attention to inaudible but rhythmic movements and intensity surrounding us, Stein shows how her creative energy is directed at the “objects of an encounter” rather than the “objects of recognition.”

Explicit in Cézanne’s goal and his originality, for Stein, is to make “the reality of the object count” (NB-B, 1), a vision Stein also embraced and closely followed. Such an aesthetic doctrine in no way entails an art that endorses an accurate, faithful rendering of retinal sensations. Nor does it fall in line with the Impressionistic aesthetic that foregrounds surface appearances and perceptual experiences inflected by light and air. As Forrest Williams explains, “Far from betraying a willful subjectivity or arbitrariness regarding things, Cézanne’s violations of the impressionist conception of fidelity to appearance was now reflectively controlled by a fidelity to

¹⁴ Walker is not the first scholar who takes up the topic of “the process of perception.” As early as 1978, Wendy Steiner, in her book *Exact Resemblance to Exact Resemblance*, discusses the importance of “the process of perception” and its relation to careful observation in Cézanne and Stein work. According to Steiner, “the process of perception” is a conceptual treatment of the temporal dimension in an artwork. She explains, “temporal sequence is implicit in the subject [of representation], because what is present on the canvas cannot be present in a single direct perception of this subject, but only through the superimposition of past views of it onto the present. The subject is thus presented as a synthesis of a number of temporally distinct perceptions” (141). For Steiner, “the process of perception” calls into play one’s memory and past knowledge, so she concludes that “it shows that the perception of an object is colored by previous knowledge about it” (141).

something more important than the surface sensuousness of visual phenomena: the real, appearing thing” (170). Just as Cézanne’s painting is not concerned with objects of recognition, Stein’s still lifes in *Tender Buttons* have nothing to do with the pursuit of an absolute correspondence between object and image (i.e., its artistic rendering). The elusive and elliptical quality of Stein’s writing, which provides no straightforward description of the object the title indicates, testifies to this. A photographic documentation of one’s impressions is worth less in Stein. “The reality of the object” in Stein’s aesthetic framework refers not to the coherent and recognizable image of the object, but to the inside and outside of the object, namely, the matrix (or the force field) that the object is part of, along with the conditions of possibility that constitute its reality (e.g., forces, rhythm, sensations).

“The realism of the people who did realism before,” Stein proclaims, “was a realism of trying to make people real. I was not interested in making the people real but in the essence or as the painter would call it value. [. . .] I got it largely from Cézanne” (*Masterpieces* 98). Here Stein’s concept of “essence” needs to be understood in the context of the difference between “identity” and “entity.” Critically, it is also in this context that we can associate Stein’s aesthetic sense of rhythm with Cézanne’s priority of sensation. Stein draws a sharp distinction between identity and entity, asserting that “Identity is recognition, you know who you are because you and others remember anything about yourself” (*Masterpieces* 84). “[C]reatively speaking,” Stein continues in the critique, “that is what destroys creation. That is what makes school” (*Masterpieces* 84-5). Entity, the opposite of identity, is a thing in itself. It does not involve memory and habits of remembrance: “mostly people live in identity and memory that is when they think. They know they are they because their little dog knows them, and so they are not an entity but an identity. And being so memory is necessary to make them exist and so they cannot

create master-pieces” (*Masterpieces* 90). Although Stein’s account of identity is discussed in association with recognition, which is not necessarily Cézanne-inspired, it does bear uncanny affinity to Cézanne’s understanding of the trivial value of the mechanically reproduced, the cliché. Like Cezanne’s aesthetic stance against objects of recognition, what Stein proposes is a model of literary creation that does not rely on what you have already known, but on what you are open to through modes of perception.

Such an approach to literary production might at first seem to reduce literary work to an artifact that is nothing more than a transfer of retinal data. If we have little grasp of Stein’s aesthetic pursuits, we risk reducing her remarkable *happening* to a template for a jumbled grouping of perceptions. As discussed at the opening of this chapter, Stein stated her interest in “the inside of things” early in her writing career. Her avowal of “mixing the outside with the inside” not only guarantees *Tender Buttons* (particularly the “Objects” section) to be a work that is predicated on sensory experience and involves acts of perception, but also acknowledges the significance of what lies behind the surface appearance. Using the fundamental difference between a thinker and a newspaperman as an analogy to articulate the significance of knowing a thing as it is, Stein asserts that “a thinker enters right into things, [and] a newspaperman is superficial” (*Masterpieces* 103). Although Stein’s intention is to enter right into things, it should be emphasized that during the *Tender Buttons* period, Stein did not set out to conjure up a core and essential identity of the perceived, which is nothing more than a product of the perceiver’s partial, one-sided construction. Stein recognized the fiction of perceiving identity as unified, fixed and changeless.¹⁵ Furthermore, her poetic attempts were not motivated by a desire to

¹⁵ Barbara Will, in *Gertrude Stein, Modernism, and the Problem of “Genius,”* points us to an early indication of Stein’s awareness of the impossibility of finding bottom natures: the impossibility of writing automatically, which is found in the result of the experiment in which Stein collaborated with Leon Solomons at Harvard. Will extends the claim that Stein’s enthusiasm to establish a typology of humans’

imitate reality. Stein's focus fell not on whether her work shows much resemblance to the perceived, but on the effort to allow a thing to appear as it is.

Stein saw it as her job to make visible things' own reality, a reality "not of things seen but of things that exist," to borrow Stein's words.¹⁶ In other words, Stein strives for moments when the thing exists as it is part of a collective or a world that undergoes transformation, and as it is included in a series of contiguous connections. Critically, it is not so much about making prominent what is already visible, as about approaching and bringing into visibility the imperceptible and the incorporeal—which make the existence of the thing possible and which the thing makes possible. In this respect, this is a path to understanding the vivacity of forces and movements that prevent any *existence* from becoming an isolated event. Furthermore, this strategy rebuts a Platonist metaphysics that posits the two ruling concepts of Truth and Meaning, according to which a totalizing view or a totalizing system of interpretation is attained.

While *Tender Buttons* is a work that argues for the use of perception as a category of understanding, it invites us to see beyond the visual spectacle. Stein sought to produce works beyond mere literalism, so the eye and the mind work their way into what is behind the surface appearance.

bottom nature seems to falter toward the end of the novel. She observes that Stein's concluding pronouncement in *The Making of Americans* indicates that she was aware of the novel's evolution from "a formulaic reporting of all types of human being into a text *in process*" (51, italics in original). The novel "present[s] 'characters' as at once given and essential, compelled to repeat itself in unchanging ways, and as an unexpected and unknowable force whose dimensions are always in excess of a unified 'bottom nature'" (50).

¹⁶ It comes as no surprise that Stein was not alone in contemplating and attempting the things' reality. Her lifelong friend Picasso approached his canvasses with that in mind when experimenting with Cubist techniques and perspectives. Stein voices resonant affirmation of him in her 1938 *Picasso*. In *Picasso*, Stein ruminates on what distinguishes the master of Cubism from other fellow painters: "The things that Picasso could see were the things which had their own reality, *reality not of things seen but of things that exist*. It is difficult to exist alone and not being able to remain alone with things . . ." (19, italics mine).

Deleuze's view that "Sensation is the opposite of the facile and the ready-made, the cliché" (*FB* 31) finds its best illustration in Stein's poem "A BOX":

Out of kindness comes redness and out of rudeness comes rapid same question, out of an eye comes research, out of selection comes painful cattle. So then the order is that a white way of being round is something suggesting a pin and is it disappointing, it is not, it is so rudimentary to be analysed and see a fine substance strangely, it is so earnest to have a green point not to red but to point again. (*SW* 463)

The poem begins with a parade of distinct images of cliché: a blush to the cheeks ("Out of kindness comes redness"), or possibly a set of a rosette and red ribbons on a gift box; an undesirable but recurring solecism ("out of rudeness comes rapid same question"); an empirical approach ("out of an eye comes research"); and a call for sympathy ("out of selection comes painful cattle"). These images are among the many commonplace instances that remind us of the world of the everyday. Nevertheless, however familiar these images may be, the ensemble induces a sense of stasis. The absence of vitality derives from a series of the repeating phrase "out of," which forces movement of thought into a routine, and thereby blunts appreciation of novelty and nuances. The pattern of echoing comes close to a repetitious incantation that can force a brain to stage knee-jerk reaction.

In this poem, Stein uses parallel phrases to create a list-like configuration. Stein is well aware of the rhetorical effect parallelism carries: the reinforcement of repetition. If repetition is a distinguishing characteristic of cliché, it follows that Stein puts it to good use to make a point, invoking it at the start of the poem to set up a glaring contrast between a perspective relying on the buildup of clichés and an alternative perspective seeking refreshing ways to talk about things. Stein's choice of using the technique of parallelism—starting with the prepositional phrase "out of" in this instance—encompasses two tasks. The parallelism not only alludes to the vapidness of

the clichés, but also carries a sense of urgency, signaling an insistence on the imperative to break free from the shackles of the predictable and the known (to get “out of”). It is not hard to imagine that the question of banality might have preoccupied Stein’s mind as she strived to apprehend and create the contemporary composition of her era. There is good reason, therefore, to have such an opening, one that is threaded on a string of images almost banal in character, since images of banality prompt one to distinguish between sources of creativity and works of cliché. Furthermore, the ordinariness of images raises the questions of where to find originality and where to see thought-provoking creation.

Toward the end of the poem, Stein proposes to see things “strangely.” The sentiment of working against cliché and creating something that is inimitable is echoed by Stein. But before a particular type of perspective is formed, it is necessary to first identify the object at which Stein is looking. In the middle of the poem, the object is described as “a white way of being round.” Interestingly, a chromatic effect (“white”) is balanced by a geometrical sensibility (“round”). And then “a pin” comes into the picture. I suspect the object in question is *a compass* that has a *white* face with a compass needle. It is the box-like compass Stein is referring to. The “strange” way Stein perceives the white-faced compass is indicated in the phrase: “it is so earnest to have a green point not to red but to point again.” Her way of looking *is* strange, but not in the sense that it constitutes a psychological grotesque or a bizarre abstraction. Rather, it is strange because of a reordering of seeing priorities. It is quite common that when one reads a compass closely, the individual pays attention to the red end of the *compass needle which points toward the north* to determine a direction. Few people would be bothered by why the needle constantly oscillates under some influence (“to point again”), showing irregular motion. But here is a poem that emphasizes not a compass’s utilitarian functions of finding directions and locating positions in

the finitude of a three-dimensional spacetime, but rather magnetism—the flow of magnetic current—in a four-dimensional continuum. Critically, Stein’s perspective engages the reader’s mind in a different way.

Her punning use of the phrase “is it disappointing” is witty and useful here. This interrogative sentence plays with the notions of “disc and pointing,” both of which are embedded in the word disappointing. As the homophone (“disc and pointing”) alludes to the instrument itself, Stein reassures us that “it is not” the compass that arrests her attention. Rather, she brings attention to the building blocks of nature: the magnetic field that enables the magnetized pointer to turn freely and move about. What truly holds the speaker’s attention is the imperceptible vibrancy that allows the needle to point again and again and again. More importantly, it is the processes of forces colliding, merging and reforming that define such vibrancy, and make the needle-turning possible. Indeed, the vibrancy emanating from the magnetic force expresses and explains the rhythm of the world. The poem gives us an imaginative account of a sensitive consciousness which stays close to the realm of incorporeal matter, with the result that it changes the way we talk about and think about our relationship with objects.

We can perhaps begin to understand Stein’s celebration of rhythm through Deleuze’s critique of Cézanne’s sensation. In *Francis Bacon*, Deleuze sees Cézanne’s sensation expressed and concretized in the following forms: “the folding force of mountains, the germinative force of a seed, the thermic force of a landscape, and so on” (49). What Cézanne renders visible, in Deleuze’s view, is not images simply detected from the naked eye, but the essence that makes a mountain a mountain, a seed a seed. For instance, Deleuze concurs with D. H. Lawrence’s view that Cézanne’s apples are distinguished by the quality of “appleyness” (*FB* 73). No matter how *appleyness* is defined, Cézanne’s work, I think, brings us closer to a prerational world of

sensation, that is, a world existing independent of, but coextensive with, human will, consciousness, and experience, a world projecting the objective presence of sensation. The sensation discussed here and foregrounded in Cézanne is not one's emotional, psychological, or physiological awareness due to some external stimulation.¹⁷ Instead, it is the flow of force and its effects—its weight, movement, or direction—manifested in and through the object. In order to better illustrate this, Deleuze invokes the painter Jean-François Millet, Cézanne's contemporary, whose chief task is *not* to paint “the offertory *or* the sack of potatoes,” but “the force of that weight” (*FB* 49). Deleuze apparently has his mind set on forces from within. Prior to Deleuze, Pablo Picasso also attends to similar operations on Cézanne's canvases, but he entertained a different theory about force:

What interests us most—what is outside or what is inside a form? When you look at Cézanne's apples, you see that he hasn't really painted apples, as such. What he did was to paint terribly well the weight of space on that circular form. The form itself is only a hollow area with sufficient pressure applied to it by the space surrounding it to make the apple *seem* to appear, even though in reality it doesn't exist. It is the rhythmic thrust of space on the form that counts. (Gilot and Lake 219, italics in original)

The “rhythmic thrust of space,” for Picasso, explains and determines the appeal of Cézanne's works of art, calling attention to forces and pressure that develop from *outside* the object.

However different Deleuze's and Picasso's interpretive models are, both offer their own critical evaluation that is force-informed and force-inspired. Although identifying different patterns of

¹⁷ It is necessary to clarify that Cézanne did not dismiss or discourage subjective sensations. He did not banish personal emotions from his work. A painter's immediate personal feelings and reactions toward the object or landscape can be included in paintings. Cézanne proclaimed adamantly that “An art which does not have emotions as its principle is not an art” (Gasquet 213). While disinterestedness and detachment never drove his vision, Cézanne did caution against overindulgence in emotion: “If there's nothing but emotion for me in [the painting], I send your eye crooked” (Gasquet 213).

force-movement, both assert that Cézanne's canvases play with the effects of force(s). Their considerations introduce us to the image of a dynamic field, opening up a discussion of the collective in which the force is considered.

For Cézanne, there is a disinclination to fall into formula, so it is apt to regard sensation in his case as the favorable consequence of a conscious effort to transcend fixation on right procedures and to act beyond the confines of theories. Most important, sensation is the reward of being *in, inside, and part of* the collective that enables the folding, germinative, aerodynamic, electromagnetic, or thermic force to emerge and surge forth freely, a collective that consists of heterogeneous elements. It is the collective strength of these elements' interrelation and coexistence that gets emphasized here. And this is where parts are as important as the whole. Parts and the whole are of equal value. Such an ensemble is what Deleuze calls an "assemblage," comparable to "a non-homogeneous set" (*Dialogues* 52). More than anything else, an assemblage "is always collective, which brings into play within us and outside us populations, multiplicities, territories, becomings, affects, events. The proper name does not designate a subject, but *something which happens*, at least between two terms which are not subjects, but agents, elements" (*Dialogues* 51, italics mine). Cézanne's awareness of varying parts in the assemblage that sustain the perceived object is demonstrated in the following statement: "If I weave around your expression the whole infinite network of little bits of blue and brown that are there, that combine there, I'll get your authentic look on my canvas" (Gasquet 213). Clearly, being inside—read in the context of recognizing an assemblage—is not a process that involves any mysterious transmutation on the part of a painter. It rather simply requires the painter to consider beyond the external qualities or outer appearance of a thing, to become aggregate-conscious, and, consequently, to enter the assemblage. Entering the assemblage marks the

threshold of gaining a close-up look, an intimate perspective on the object, where the painter is no longer closed off from the inside. Evidently, a view from the inside of the assemblage offers an opportunity for the painter to be released from an outsider position. Designating the threshold between inside and outside, sensation signals Cézanne's way of introducing us to the *inside* of the assemblage, as well as to a multi-dimensional reality. It is clear to me that it is the allusion to insiderness that bespeaks Cézanne's genius.

In a personal act of remembering her visit to Cagliari, Italy, Stein develops a similar view on being part of a community of vibrant forces that helps define the rhythm of the visible world: "I concentrated the internal melody of existence that I had learned in relation to things seen into the feeling I then had there in San Remy of light and air moving and being still" ("Portraits and Repetition" 19). Strikingly, Stein's own experience with her internal force comes to be understood and interpreted in relation to natural images—light and air currents—external to her. To think of rhythm, for Stein, is to be in touch with one's internal rhythm, and concurrently with the rhythm of imperceptible forces which is enjoyable and constitutes an aesthetic realm itself. As we shall see, Stein's rhythm on paper lays bare the intertwining of inside and outside, inner rhythm and outer rhythm—a kind of intertwining that gives voice to the meaningfulness of conjunctural gestures, moves, positions, and views. Clearly, Stein's emphasis on lived experience and her appeal to ephemeral realities work in tandem to give rise to a curious combination of elements in portraits such as "MILDRED'S UMBRELLA" and "A BOX," a combination that one can hardly create in an offhand manner.

Just as Millet paints the force of the weight of the sack of potatoes, Stein accomplishes a similar task by drawing attention to the robustness of blooming in roses in the poem "NOTHING

ELEGANT,” a poem that registers the subtleness of the germinative force essentially coming from within the blossom:

A charm a single charm is doubtful. If the red is rose and there is a gate surrounding it,
if inside is let in and there places change then certainly something is upright. It is earnest.
(SW 464)

What is it that is doubtful? A charm? Or the singleness of a charm? And what explains its failure to gain credence? The poem is off to an ambiguous and suspenseful start. Stein’s style, the sense of ambiguity, not only is an attractive cornerstone for close reading, but also guarantees many interpretive possibilities. Stein might be alluding to a sexually charged tale about a tongue and lips: the tongue as the seductive red rose and two lips as the gate. From this perspective, these lines show the quality of associativeness and how her past experience is translated into stream of consciousness statements. Alternatively, her attention might be focused on the act of decanting rosé at a party. Rosé wine that is kept in a bottle is poured into various containers or wine glasses. Yet at the same time, we cannot preclude the possibility that this poem speaks to Stein’s struggle to get published. It projects Stein’s concern with the barriers or roadblocks that kept her out of the publishing world and rendered her “outlawed,” as her friend Mildred once described (SW 183). The symbolic “gate,” setting a limit and drawing a boundary around the red rose, cannot but confine, suppress, and domesticate it.¹⁸ Stein must have felt hemmed in by the way she wrote. Or Stein might be referring to structures of control—literary conventions and traditions—that governed and dictated the discursive practices of her day. In “Makings of Americans,” Matt Miller makes a parallel argument, though from an opposite angle, about Stein’s difference from

¹⁸ “Rose is a Rose is a Rose” became an iconography used by Stein. This string of words is a wax seal for embossing envelopes. In Ruddick’s reading, the image of a rose in *Tender Buttons* can “symboliz[e] the female body itself” (209).

other writers—about the line drawn between Stein and her fellow writers. “She stalwartly refused to recognize literary peers,” Miller writes, “admitting comparison only to figures important to other areas of artistic and intellectual endeavor” and “creat[ing] elaborate smokescreens often involving some highly suspect claims” (39). Miller points out that scholars have conjured up an image of Stein as the one who consciously set herself apart from her fellow writers, created a center of her own, and fortified “her provisional singularity” (39).

Among many interpretations, there is one that stays central to the ongoing conversation about Stein’s vitalist sensibility, a sensibility that brings to the fore the imperceptible forces that make things what they eventually become. Let’s return to the poem itself, a poem having simple but elliptical syntax and giving an unpretentious message of earnestness. Its lines trace a shift—a progression from the static to the dynamic. To be specific, it is a shift from a vision of reality constructed from a perspective outside a flower in bud (“a single charm”), to a perception generated from inside the flower. To shift the focus from the exterior to the interior of a rose bud is to sharpen our awareness of its florescence. It is as if what is on the inside is left out and excluded from the world. “[I]f inside is let in,” Stein writes, “there places change.” Magical and lively things indeed happen in space, especially when what remains inside is released into the world (“if inside is let in”): the outermost whorl (the “gate”) that encloses the rose petals unfolds, and this protective layer transforms into a ring of individual sepals that subtends a new organic configuration seen in an open flower. An individual unity—represented by a single bud that is yet to bloom into a flower—gives way to an alternative spatial pattern where various flower parts stretch upward or sideways to declare their unique existence. When “inside is let in,” by implication, a range of growing activities is on parade, movement everywhere. It is the

germinative power that is unleashed here. Apparently, nature delights us with its variety of beauty and optical excitement, and therefore never stays as “a single charm.”

While celebrating multiple charms in a rose or in nature, the poem presents an image of nature in flux, that is, of an innate force or energy in the organic entity that transforms a single charm—the bud—into a full-size flower. The wonder of change in nature communicates the state of mutability in association with a lively life. The unfolding of a blossom essentially culminates in the erection of the pistil and the hair-thin stamens inside the rose (“something is upright”). Both pistils and stamens—the reproductive organs central to flowers’ continued existence—are where we find the beginning of a life, a creation that involves no trickery and false manipulation, but is subject to the course of nature. Such an elementary but fundamental design proves vital and genuine, demonstrating a style of “earnestness,” as Stein reminds us. Here the notion of earnestness takes a material form in the rose. The ambiguity of the “it” at the close of the poem complicates the way we interpret the adjective “earnest,” allowing for a reading of the flowering process and pattern as an agent that inspires sincerity in the perceiver-speaker. It is as if the encounter with the rose bud produces an epiphany in the speaker who recognizes sincerity inherent in roses as a quality of life. It is striking that the rose and its organic growth engage the speaker in an ethical moment of reflecting on the way a living object simply exhibits the force of life without pretension.

Consequently, the sentiment of earnestness fosters a closeness to the object perceived. From here, we are made aware that Stein’s idea of rhythm assumes an affective character, while identified as the movement of physiochemical forces in the rose. Stein’s rhythm appears as she expresses the sense of the emergent, as in the emergence of an opening flower. Here the rhythm of life is embodied in the organic force of bud-unfolding. In another respect, rhythm is explored

in this poem as a dimension of sensation that is figured as an infectious actant which transfers the sentiment of sincerity. Such a rhythm travels in psychological currents, since the perceiver-speaker feels the rhythm of sincerity upon encountering the potential birth of a new bud, the very beginning of a new life cycle that translates a sense of hopefulness and joy.

Stein's discovery of earnestness in the emergent is reminiscent of what William James underscores in given reality, an idea he learned from reading Henri Bergson: "What really *exists* is not things made but things in the making. [. . .] [P]ut yourself in the making by a stroke of intuitive sympathy with the thing . . ." (751). The statement comes from James' lecture on Bergson at Manchester College, Oxford. In the spring of 1908, James delivered an eight-part Hibbert lecture series, later published as *A Pluralistic Universe*. In one of the eight lectures, "The Compounding of Consciousness," James shows open admiration for Bergson, who, James argues, led the way to challenge intellectualism and whose great intellectual profundity in the field emboldened him to abandon the intellectualist type of criticism and to reject conceptual logic as the absolute measure of understanding life. James wholeheartedly states,

I have now to confess . . . that I should not now be emancipated, not now subordinate logic with so very light a heart, or throw it out of the deeper regions of philosophy to take its rightful and respectable place in the world of simple human practice, if I had not been influenced by a comparatively young and very original french [sic] writer, Professor Henri Bergson. Reading his works is what has made me bold. If I had not read Bergson, I should probably still be blackening endless pages of paper privately, in the hope of making ends meet that were never meant to meet, and trying to discover some mode of conceiving the behavior of reality which should leave no discrepancy between it and the accepted laws of the logic of identity. It is certain, at any rate, that

without the confidence which being able to lean on Bergson's authority gives me I should never have ventured to urge these particular views of mine upon this ultra-critical audience. (*Pluralistic* 726-7)

In his sixth lecture, "Bergson and His Critique of Intellectualism," James disseminates and reinforces Bergson's influence on philosophical approaches to man's experience with things and man's encounter with reality. Distinguishing the freshness and excitement of Bergson's intellectual endeavor from the mediocrity and dryness of recent transcendentalist literature, James affirms Bergson's intellectual superiority to the latter by insisting on the following, while intending to bring Bergson's ideas into intellectual currency again:

When I read recent transcendentalist literature—I must partly except my colleague Royce!—I get nothing but a sort of marking of time, champing of jaws, pawing of the ground, and resettling into the same attitude, like a weary horse in a stall with an empty manger. It is but turning over the same few threadbare categories, bringing the same objections, and urging the same answers and solutions, with never a new fact or a new horizon coming into sight. But open Bergson, and new horizons loom on every page you read. It is like the breath of the morning and the song of birds. It tells of reality itself, instead of merely reiterating what dusty-minded professors have written about what other perversive professors have thought. Nothing in Bergson is shop-worn or at second hand. (*Pluralistic* 751-2)

Indebted to Bergsonian thought, James offers a polemic against the supremacy of conceptual knowledge (i.e., knowledge based on pure concepts), which pivots on his certitude that it does not "reveal the nature of things" (*Pluralistic* 745). To apprehend the inner nature of reality, James advises, it is necessary to "Dive back into the flux itself, then, Bergson tells us, if you

wish to *know* reality, that flux which Platonism, in its strange belief that only the immutable is excellent, has always spurned; turn your face toward sensation, that flesh-bound thing which rationalism has always loaded with abuse” (*Pluralistic* 745-6, italics in original). This assertion casts light on James’ embrace of *things in the making*, a position that amounts to the privileging of process over result, a thing in progress over a thing in fixity. Clearly, James’ understanding of the nature of reality is rooted in his belief in the flow of life. His perception of reality as a flux is aligned with Bergson’s view of the nature of reality, that is, his belief in the continuity of the movement of life.

Significantly, James is wedded to the idea of things in the making in the context of understanding the essence of life as continuously changing (*Pluralistic* 746). We should also read his claim about things in the making in the context of his subtle yet forceful critique of how intellectual enterprises, such as science and mathematics, compress the flux of life experiences into a sequence of static *segments* or *cuts* through which past, present, and future are rigidly defined, and thereby deny a vision of a fusion and interfusion of the three. Scientific knowledge to some extent reflects our limited treatment of the temporal dimension as a succession of time intervals that fails to account for the interrelationship of past, present and future. James’ pluralistic universe is a universe that shows continuity, but not in the sense that the universe stays unchanged, that is, “being one throughout” (*Pluralistic* 748). Rather, for James, a pluralistic universe, although replete with traces of decay and activities of growth, has “a nucleus of relative constancy” that defines its continuity:

There is partial decay and partial growth, and all the while a nucleus of relative constancy from which what decays drops off, and which takes into itself whatever is grafted on, until at length something wholly different had taken its place. In such a

process we are as sure . . . that it *is* the same nucleus which is able now to make connexion with what goes and again with what comes, as we are sure that the same point can lie on diverse lines that intersect there. (*Pluralistic* 748)

According to James, this is a view of the universe that acknowledges the coexistence of past and future and vindicates the meshing or “compenetration” of experiences (*Pluralistic* 746; “A World” 1161). Apparently, James thinks and talks in alignment with Bergson in *Creative Evolution*, who argues that *continuity* is a quality of duration. Bergsonian duration “is the continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and which swells as it advances” (*Creative Evolution* 11). Duration flows. Viewing life through the lens of Bergson’s notion of *devenir réel*, James maintains that “the thing evolves and grows. Philosophy should seek this kind of living understanding of the movement of reality . . .” (*Pluralistic* 751).

The use of a rose as an expression of the force of life brings Stein’s aesthetic outlook close to a vitalist aesthetics, the one pondered by Bergson. The premise held by Bergson, who understands reality as “a perpetual becoming,” is that we are our own artisans who participate in the process of “creating ourselves continually” through what we do (138; 13). Bergson lays stress on “the creation of self by self” (13). He maintains that “the impetus of life . . . consists in a need of creation” (128). It is this vitalist spirit that defines our ontological essence. For Bergson, vitalist activity attests to an enduring organism and an enduring universe. If Stein’s poem “NOTHING ELEGANT” is in agreement with vitalism, it is because the poem suggests that the self-generative and self-ordering force exemplifies life at its most original and powerful, and life’s creation at its most expressive. Stein’s appreciation for the vitality shown in the organism anticipates a resurgence of enthusiasm among theorists and critics for tuning into different orders of experience in the post-World War II era. As Claire Colebrook along with others emphasizes,

“Experience is not confined to human experience, which means that there is a multiplicity of *worlds*. We need to expand the notion of experience to include all the different events of response and impression that characterise life” (81, italics in original). “The impersonal, inhuman or anonymous plane of experience,” Colebrook continues, “goes well beyond knowledge and the human world” (81). Robert Bartlett Haas observes similar qualities in Stein’s work during the “Spanish Period.” Stein shows the pursuit of “a language which emphasizes the process character of nature and its vivid moment-to-moment novelty” (55-6).

The poem “A FEATHER,” another example from *Tender Buttons*, renders most explicitly the attractiveness of invisible forces—the weight of the light, a bug, a post, etc.—exerted on a feather:

A feather is trimmed, it is trimmed by the light and the bug and the post, it is trimmed by little leaning and by all sorts of mounted reserves and loud volumes. It is surely cohesive. (SW 473)

In “Scenes,” one of the prose poems in *Geography and Plays*, Stein asserts that “every little quality has that intensity” (106), so it comes as no surprise that she focuses on the material existence of a feather. Interestingly, what is painted here is not a lifeless feather but a vibrant environment that actively engages with the feather. Signs of vibrancy run throughout the poem. It is first seen in the twin images of “the light” and “the bug” recognized as manifestations of the blooming season (from spring through summer), and then in the intensive encounters between entities signaled by the act of trimming—the feather comes into contact with a weightless and intangible entity (“the light”), a tiny entity (“the bug”) and a presumably heavy and lengthy entity (“the post”). And, equally important, the depiction of “little leaning” and “all sorts of mounted reserves and loud volumes” calls to mind a flowery meadow filled with cheerful and

boisterous crowds. Stein's delight in capturing points of contact in literary terms reminds us of James's assertion that "in life distinct things can and do commune together every moment" (749).

The verb "trim," used purposefully and cleverly, not only suggests how bodies make contacts, but also articulates the change the feather might have undergone—even at the microcosmic level—because of each random encounter. All encounters, or all events of trimming, are brought together to offer a picture of distinctive sensations, shapes, and sizes. The poem itself is an aggregate of sensations and movements, as the feather's existence is touched by contrasting forces—the light's carefree warmth, the bug's tender landing like a tickle, and the post's artificial stiffness and silence. Here the aggregate is far from an undifferentiated mass. Evidently, Stein's attention to the encounters among bodies—the mixture of bodies—bears significance, since it signals entrance into a field of forces, a terrain of an assemblage. Waltzing to its own tempo and rhythm, the realm of the nonhuman that bristles with material objects and nonhuman creatures achieves a new importance. This realm exists as the boisterous playground of sensations and forces, emerging neither as a static stage set with an insipid setting, nor as a lifeless tableau of motionless figures and entities. Its qualities of unpredictability and contingency offer an enhancement to the value of the quotidian and the commonplace that often eludes us. Stein's creative efforts are oriented toward producing a mind, a perspective that does not subjugate but stays in tune with its surrounding objects. In Stein, and particularly in *Tender Buttons*, what used to be considered the nondescript background gains a central place in the spotlight, treated as an important and inspiring object of sight. In sum, the poem makes prominent the emergence of forces and influences constantly renewing the vitality of the feather, such as negative forces involved in a process of attrition ("trim" interpreted as "reduce") and positive forces commanding a process of accretion ("trim" taken as "decorate").

Observing how animate and inanimate elements work in tandem to contribute to the art of assemblage, we notice that their relationships are “never given but always new,” in Deleuze’s phrasing from *Essays Critical and Clinical* (59). What Deleuze sees in Walt Whitman also rings true in Stein:

Nature is not a form, but rather the process of establishing relations. It invents a polyphony: it is not a totality but an assembly, a ‘conclave,’ a ‘plenary session.’ Nature is inseparable from processes of companionship and conviviality, which are not preexistent givens but are elaborated between heterogeneous living beings in such a way that they create a tissue of shifting relations, in which the melody of one part intervenes as a motif in the melody of another (the bee and the flower). Relations are not internal to a Whole; rather, the Whole is derived from the external relations of a given moment, and varies with them. Relations of counterpoint must be invented everywhere, and are the very condition of evolution. (*ECC* 59)

This passage remarkably encourages different lines of reflection, among which is the contemplation of *becoming*.

Stein’s suggestive choice of “cohesive” at the end of the poem brings attention to the correlation between parts and a whole, reminding us of how disparate parts come together to form a whole. Although the pronoun “it,” the subject of “cohesive,” remains ambiguous and overdetermined, open to interpretation, the assertion—“It is surely cohesive”—indeed works as a commentary to reinforce the image of a united whole, but it does not affirm the imagining of a totality. Nor does it account for the poem’s cohesiveness at the level of form or semantics. Stein typically cares less about the cohesiveness of her poems, but she can hardly abandon the principle of equilibrium. As Stein asserts in “Composition as Explanation,” “one finds oneself

interesting oneself in an equilibration, that of course means words as well as things” (SW 521). The image of equilibrium is established throughout the poem, through the repeated verb “trim” as a connective. Moreover, Stein’s advocacy of equilibrium is communicated at the level of rhythm and tempo.

Stein’s dismissal of the habit of knowing what one is looking at, her refusal to present the world as a totality, and her interest in entities in amorphous shape all become the guiding principles of how she writes and what is rendered visible on her paper. Stein turns to the existence of the disembodied and awakens us to a wide range of colorful sensations and multiple forces that lie beneath the orderly surface of everyday phenomenon.

Stein’s assemblage of sensations and forces, the human and the nonhuman on the stage of the mind offers us a clear example of the first category of listing that this dissertation concerns: forms that are not transparently recognizable as a list, but still involve a grouping or an accumulation of paratactic fragments in a nonhierarchical sequence. In the fourth chapter we shall take up the still more radical writings by Stein which offer us an example of the third category of lists, those created through typographical maneuverings and invested with strong pictorial character.

Chapter Two
The Style of Nonrelational Contiguity and the Event of Love:
Joyce and Badiou

In Chapter Two, twentieth-century lists' associativeness, multi-dimensionality, atemporality, and power to effectuate can be further illustrated through a consideration of James Joyce, whose "Sirens" episode projects a fascination with the status of parts in a whole. Nowhere in this study are these four aspects more pronounced than in the "Sirens" episode of *Ulysses*.

In the opening of the "Proteus" episode of *Ulysses*, Stephen Dedalus walks along Sandymount Strand, finding himself taking in the colorfulness and manifoldness offered by the world of sense. Words roll off Stephen's tongue, a stream of images flowing, as his eyes, an active agent, detect and register what comes into contact visually—the incoming tide along the coast, a boat, and the snotgreen Irish Sea at Dublin Bay. Stephen's awareness of the things around him has direct bearing on the mode of understanding based on visual experience. Highly aware of his reliance on visual perception, Stephen, in an exploratory way, decides to close his eyes to concentrate on the acoustic dimension of the surrounding world. With both eyes closed, Stephen takes a stride at a time, and uses the act of counting numbers as a way to navigate his way into the unseen world. Stephen refers to the sequence of one step following another as *Nacheinander*, a sequence of acts comparable to a succession of objects in a spatiotemporal continuum. He distinguishes *Nacheinander* from *Nebeneinander* ("juxtaposition" or "side by side"), a distinction that proceeds from his intellectual response to visual and auditory perceptions.¹⁹ Such a distinction marks visual apprehension as simultaneous and aural apprehension as sequential. By way of Stephen in "Proteus," James Joyce flirts with the notions

¹⁹ Cheryl Herr offers a gendered reading of the Sandymount scene. She points out the principle of binarism Stephen adopts in his thought on the beach at Sandymount. Herr contends that Stephen's organization of the beach scene exemplifies a mind steeped in Western philosophical tradition that privileges "male-identified, dichotomous philosophical discourses" (31).

of *Nacheinander* and *Nebeneinander*. They constitute the two fundamental axes of how we make sense of the world—experience through time and existence in space. These two models of apprehension parallel the two axes of language—the diachronic and the synchronic—found in Ferdinand Saussure’s, Roman Jakobson’s, and Gertrude Stein’s theories of language.²⁰ All these different ways of understanding demonstrate the way language and human thought provide different methods of ordering. However, Stephen’s patterns of ordering—*Nacheinander* and *Nebeneinander*—fade into insignificance seven episodes later.

The principles of *Nacheinander* and *Nebeneinander* rehearsed by Stephen early in the “Proteus” episode can still be found in the “Sirens” episode.²¹ However, the strengths of Joyce’s prose and his narrative experimentation do not rest on the use of these two principles. Instead, they hinge on a model of “one after another” that is a non sequitur²² without a clear relation and without the culmination of a synthesis or resolution. Furthermore, it is a model that showcases examples of fragmentary detail that operate on the synecdochic level. Leopold Bloom’s stream of thought—his broken flow of consciousness comprising ideas of tenors, flower, perfume, and cachous—in the “M’appari” scene best illustrates this. The tenor-flower-cachous assemblage represents a cascade of sentences that are linked associatively:

²⁰ See Chapter Four for an extended discussion of the theory of the two axes of language in Jakobson, Barthes, and Stein.

²¹ For instance, in the Ormond saloon scene, Simon Dedalus, sitting in front of a piano, tries to find the right tune for the song “M’appari.” Joyce writes, “The keys, obedient, rose higher, told, faltered, confessed, confused” (11.603). These are concurrent verbs that are alternative renderings and representations of how one might see the obedient keys. They also constitute the repository of the lexicon. This exemplifies a case of *Nebeneinander*. What follows is another example of *Nebeneinander*: “Sea, wind, leaves, thunder, waters, cows, lowing, the cattlemarket, cocks, hens don’t crow, snakes hissss. There is music everywhere” (11.963-4). The last complete sentence—“There is music everywhere”—cues us to a recognition that all the forgoing words present in Bloom’s mind constitutes a kind of music. Those words are recited in Bloom’s mouth, constituting a lexicon of sounds.

²² The literary technique “non sequitur” is known for its comic implications, but I am invoking it for its Latin meaning, “it does not follow.”

Tenors get women by the score. Increase their flow. Throw flower at his feet. When will we meet? My head it simply. Jingle all delighted. He can't sing for tall hats. Your head it simply swirls. Perfumed for him. What perfume does your wife? I want to know. Jing. Stop. Knock. Last look at mirror always before she answers the door. The hall. There? How do you? I do well. There? What? Or? Phial of cachous, kissing comfits, in her satchel. Yes? Hands felt for the opulent. (11.686-692)

In “Sirens,” Joyce moves beyond Stephen’s distinction between *Nacheinander* and *Nebeneinander*, and experiments with a way of putting together an assemblage that emphasizes a nonrelational arrangement of sentence fragments. It is an assemblage that exemplifies what I call “nonrelational contiguity,” particularly realized in Joyce’s nonhierarchical and anti-universalist assemblages, the ones with multidimensional implications.

Another Joycean model of “one after another” that merits attention also demonstrates the quality of nonrelational contiguity. It is demonstrated in a scene consisting of a string of chance encounters and unpredictable incidents. To create an ensemble that is contingent upon chance is to illuminate how truth arrives unannounced and how a person with amorous passion emerges from such a contingency. This too suggests some of the important permutations of the common “list” by modernists.

My focus in this chapter is Joyce’s fascination with creating a different strategy of assembling, in which a framework implying unity and linearity give way to the partial and the episodic. I will focus on two nonhierarchical and episodic assemblages in “Sirens”—the fugue-inspired list²³ in the opening section and a set of narrative passages revolving around Simon

²³ It is commonly known that Joyce, in a letter dated 6, August 1919, to his friend Harriet Weaver, refers to “Sirens” as a fugue. R. Murray Schafer in his introduction to *Ezra Pound and Music* points out that Pound in a letter dated 10, June 1919, to Joyce “criticizes the chapter, pointing out obliquely that the

Dedalus's performance of "M'appari" in the "M'appari" scene—two examples of how Joyce cares little for presenting a complete and coherent perception, and accords little value to a static image of the world.

Demonstrating a different art of assembling, Joyce's nonhierarchical and anti-universalist model exceeds the prescriptive and programmatic knowledge of *Nacheinander* and *Nebeneinander*. Furthermore, it reveals Joyce's interest in the contingent elements in life that he sees as endowed with transcendent value, elements that I consider to be unrepresented because unrepresentable. Joyce's attention here to paratactic fragments in a nonhierarchical sequence suggests his way of seeking an alternative mode of apprehension and expression for an event that is brought into being by chance. In Joyce, such chance events account for the emergence of truths, particularly truths about love. It comes as no surprise that love is one of the controlling themes in "Sirens": from the very beginning of "Sirens," Joyce invokes songs or music about the overflow of love or the loss of love: "The Bloom is on the Rye" (or "My Pretty Jane"), "The Rose of Castile," and "Love's Old Sweet Song," to name a few. The preoccupation with love is also suggested in Bloom being constantly distracted by Molly's four-o'clock rendezvous, and consequently in Bloom being nostalgic about past events centering on Molly, the absent but omnipresent figure in the episode.

From the narrative fragments in the opening section to the moments when images and sounds are dramatically and unexpectedly linked together in the remainder of the episode, Joyce shows how fragments and contingent elements can be assembled to form a love event. Such an event of love occurs when Simon's love song "M'appari" emerges as the *event* of love itself—an event that operates as an agent of change and facilitates the circulation of love as well as loving

climax with which it ends is contrary to the nature of the fugue" (17). But according to Schafer, it is unclear whether Joyce ever discussed with Pound his idea of the fugue.

relations. Simon's voice—his "M'appari"—unexpectedly catalyzes the formation of a small constellation of love events in the Ormond bar. As we shall see, the event of love gives salience to a transcendental meaning to life. I will argue that in Joyce to see love as a truth-imparting event is to assert infinity and to claim that not all is exhausted and lost. Significantly, the event of love in "Sirens," suggestive of the idea of infinity, constitutes a riposte to Stephen's somber awareness, in "Proteus," of the limitation of a time-bound human in the infinite world (3.7-8). With the unrepresented element such as love comes the moment of realization that allows access to an infinity which is not chronologically defined.

While engaging the reader with the marital issues Bloom confronts and with the felicity of love Lionel, an opera character, sings about, Joyce makes a list of the characteristics of love in a unique way. With love as the recurring trope in "Sirens," Joyce praises love as a chance event, a transformative occurrence, a timeless truth, and, most important, an event that approaches infinity. Joyce's fascination with love and its unpredictable advent puts the reader in touch with love's kaleidoscope: how love taps into our sensibility and has a wide appeal; how love incurs disappointment in real life; and how love enables us to glimpse infinity and splendor. All of these assert the value of love, and are brought together in "Sirens" to form a compelling statement of love. Therefore, the "M'appari" scene is a love statement, and by extension, the "Sirens" episode is also a love statement. Importantly, Joyce's view of love takes shape in the form of a list, and Joyce's practice of listing registers his allegiance to love.

The love event offered by Joyce resonates with the concept of "event" explored by Alain Badiou in *Being and Event*,²⁴ where the event is referred to as a transformative occurrence. Many

²⁴ *Being and Event* by Alain Badiou will be identified in the text by the following abbreviation: *BE*.

aspects of Joyce's *Ulysses* assume new significance when read alongside Badiou's work, so I will frame Joyce's vision of the parts placed in a whole against Badiou's concept of event.

The Overture

From its opening pages, the "Sirens" episode immediately offers its readers a sequence of narrative fragments, which can be seen as catalogue parts. This list of narrative fragments, which extends a page and a half, marks the introductory section of the chapter, an introduction that presents different moments of life in shorthand.²⁵ For convenience, I will call the opening section an overture. There are concrete and direct images in this opening section, but their relationship is unclear and problematic on a first reading. One is next to another in a way that does not explain but withholds their relationship. These narrative fragments later reemerge and are contextually woven into the remainder of "Sirens." Joyce organizes these fragments in the sequential order in which they will reappear in the remainder of "Sirens." The overture is intended by Joyce to be ordered information taken from a sequence of events to come. In the context of the overture, these fragments account for a type of contiguity that is nonrelational. By "nonrelational," I mean the absence of causal connections or of a progressive development in time. The overture indeed demonstrates Joyce's propensity for irregularity.

The same irregularity extends to the interplay between different sense modalities Joyce is mindful of in the overture. With this collage-like constellation of disjointed details, Joyce makes use of the catalogue form to enumerate conveniently a wide range of aural images expressed in onomatopoeia and alliteration, such as "Impertnthn thnthnthn," "Blew. Blue bloom," "Jingle

²⁵ Many have treated the opening section of "Sirens" as an aural text written for the ears. Among them is Michael Stanier who takes "the cacophony of noise" as "bewildering, disorienting, alluring, Siren voices" (326). Concurring with Sebastian D. G. Knowles, Juliette Taylor points out that "the less we understand these words, the more we *hear* them" (414).

jingle jaunted jingling,” etc. Accompanying the auditory images is a small palette of colors: bronze, gold, blue, and ocean-green.²⁶ The irregular alternation between the auditory and the visual engenders a string of sensory contingencies. Joyce chooses to assemble fragmented ideas in a collage-like juxtaposition drawn from a series of events unfolding sequentially in time. Essential to such an arrangement is an understanding that the fragmented and nonhierarchical nature of the presentation of events on the page parallels the contingent nature of experience recorded in Dublin in Bloom’s day. Here, the overture illustrates the suspension of historical temporality (as discussed in the introduction), and furthermore registers the privileging of chance and contingency over clock time.

The overture is no flat-footed catalogue. With one narrative fragment succeeding another, the overture becomes a carousel of changing perspectives that counters the dismay and dreadfulness set off by the staleness and repetitiveness of a routine lifestyle. Bloom’s interior monologue in “Lestrygonians” illustrates such boredom and futility: “Trams passed one another, ingoing, outgoing, clanging. Useless words. Things go on same, day after day: squads of police marching out, back: trams in, out” (8.6-8). Tediousness permeates Bloom’s thinking, and words lose their resounding quality, because his day to day experience is taken over by routine actions and mind-numbing sounds (the uniform “clanging”). Individuals at the mundane level of everyday existence are drowning in the undertow of the never-ending control of routines. Viewed in this light, the appearance of unexpected “irregularity” is symbolic of breaking away from the stasis and monotony in life.

In the overture, the list-maker takes on the stance of an omniscient narrator offering a continuum of sensorial experiences and showing no interest in harmonizing the incongruent

²⁶ Richard Ellmann, in *Ulysses on the Liffey*, reminds us that Odysseus encounters the Sirens aurally and visually, “though their attentions are more auditory than visual” (102).

experiences into a conceptual framework that is somehow rule-bound, as seen in Stephen's arrangements of *Nacheinander* and *Nebeneinander*. These two parallel structures of thought cast important light on the fundamental human need to endow life with structure or form. Central to each structure is an account of a method of putting objects of perception together in somewhat meaningful arrangements. Stephen's *Nacheinander* concentrates on a type of accumulation. By counting 1, 2, 3, and 4, Stephen demonstrates an act of combination, and it is an instance of combining numbers in ascending order. *Nebeneinander*, on the other hand, privileges the act of selecting words from the repository of the lexicon—the lexicon that offers multiple ways of describing the same phenomenon, as it is seen in Stephen's description: "the nearing tide, that rusty boot, Snotgreen, bluesilver, rust" (3.3). In this quotation, Stephen perceives, in the nearing tide, alternative ways of characterizing the colors of the water: "Snotgreen, bluesilver, rust." The selection which Stephen offers presents a set of "colored signs" (3.4). All these colors are alternative perceptual possibilities offered by Stephen, a water phobic who stands at water's edge, while the tide is approaching the beach and a "rusty" or disintegrating tan boot is detected in the water or sand. The quotation indeed constitutes a vision of the tide rushing over the sand.

Different from *Nacheinander* and *Nebeneinander*, Joyce's overture proceeds in a way that highlights disjunction and disconnection in his art of assembling. To begin with, the overture moves through a series of short descriptions which show no immediately perceived connections among them. The overture is laced with descriptive fragments (e.g., "Coin rang. Clock clacked"), sentences in figurative language (e.g., "Goldpinnacled hair"), and truncated narrative details stylized with rhythmic virtuosity (e.g., "A sail! A veil awave upon the waves"). Additionally, lines from operas are intermixed with catchphrases from a game of hide and seek. Stylistically, Joyce's list knows no boundaries. Indeed, the entire list proves to be a medley of linguistic

expressions unmoored from not one but multiple contexts. From here, we learn, Joyce's model of apprehension, as seen in the overture, stresses a chain of verbal fragments that exhibits a pattern of fragmentation that defies classification and easy categorization. Apparently, such an assemblage suggests that parts do not necessarily cohere into a stable and uniform set, and are not necessarily reconciled into unity.

The phenomenon of "fragmentation" or "disconnection" is intended to disrupt the linear sequence of narrative, but Joyce's meticulous attention to it seems to suggest its greater function, a function beyond the disruption of narrative sequence. Fragmentation is no small part of the overture. Other than the fragmentation that occurs at the structural level, the impression of fragmentation is reinforced syntactically and lexically, as seen in the following examples: "When first he saw. Alas!" (11.24) and "Goodgod henev erheard inall" (11.29). In the first example, Joyce offers a partial sentence, leaving a part of the sentence unwritten. In the second example, Joyce explores the effects of the elimination and misplacement of spacing. Without proper spacing, some words that are seen together are still pronounceable but unintelligible. The lexical eccentricity—the product of misplaced spacing—sharpens the focus of using spacing to regulate the tempo of reading. Furthermore, Joyce's erratic spacing choice forces the reader to read with eyes first. We understand the line quicker with our eyes than with the sounds of the words. If this is what Joyce had in mind when he composed the line, then the line successfully forges in the reader a sensitivity to how language works and how the privileging of speech over writing should be problematized and challenged. In reality, no one can fully catch the meaning of "Goodgod henev erheard inall" by simply "hearing." Joyce's unexpected pauses in the middle of the line bring into focus the rivalry between sound and sign—the rivalry between speech and writing (written speech) that Jacques Derrida discusses in *Dissemination*.

Undoubtedly, Joyce's incomplete sentence and his playful typography can reward good close reading, but what makes Joyce's use of fragmentation worthy of mentioning is the will behind the fragmentary work, that is, the will to break a word, to fracture a sentence, and to choreograph fewer spacings, because it suggests a desire to disrupt, interrupt, or obstruct continuity, or simply to slow down the progression—particularly the continuity manifested in history and enacted through a lineage of cultural inheritance and memory. The fragments, pauses, or breaks assume symbolic implications. They are symbolically staged as the intrusions that break progression, temporal or otherwise. The close of "Sirens" can help us gauge the nature, extent, and intensity of the fragments and breaks employed by Joyce, especially the ones that express his indifference to the authority of a mythologized past and his unsympathetic view of nationalist sentiments. Telling is the flatulence scene in which a string of flatulent sounds are sandwiched between the Irish martyr Robert Emmet's last words:

Seabloom, greaseabloom viewed last words. Softly. *When my country takes her place among.*
 Prrrr.
 Must be the bur.
 Fff! Oo. Rrpr.
Nations of the earth. No-one behind. She's passed. *Then and not till then.* Tram kran kran kran. Good oppor. Coming. Krandlkrankran. I'm sure it's the burgund. Yes. One, two. *Let my epitaph be.* Kraaaaaa. *Written. I have.*
 Prrrpfrrppffff. (11.1284-1293)

The Prrrr-bur-Rrpr fragments of a fart inscribe a delayed progression that yields comical effects.²⁷ More important, this first string of sound fragments along with its succeeding fragments about a passing tramcar and its mechanical and deafening sounds, fractures a chain of

²⁷ Scholars hold different views on Bloom's windbreaking in the end. Jack W. Weaver, for instance, proposes to read Bloom's farting as a form of music that counterpoints with his thoughts about music in general: "If music is vibrations, a series of farts qualifies" (73).

patriotic thought already etched in Irish collective memory and history. The mingling of Bloom's comical fart and Emmet's lofty aspiration for Ireland's independence underlines the tension between the individual and the collective. It also highlights the tension between the trivial and the monumental. "Softly," the narrator intones. On the one hand, Bloom views Emmet's last words softly. On the other hand, Bloom's flatulent sounds, inserted between Emmet's italicized sentence fragments, attenuate the seriousness of Emmet's patriotic rhetoric, soften the influence of Emmet's vision, and thus constitute a figurative move that displaces the Irish patriot's thinly veiled frustration and indignation. The untimely interruption of the flatulence presents a seemingly contingent ridicule, ridiculing the allegiance to patriotic history, and thus becomes an expression of contempt.²⁸ Bloom himself recognizes the risk in this expression, and cautions himself: "Softly."

Thinking along the lines of the musically inspired techniques²⁹ in "Sirens," Joyce's farcical mimicking of the flatulent sounds—coming on the heels of Emmet's sentence fragments—seems to be disguised as improvised harmonies that fail to complement but diminish the keynote. By dramatizing Bloom's fart as raspberries blown to Emmet's words, Joyce trivializes nationalist aspirations, and casts them in mocking terms. The mannerisms of mocking what is commonly

²⁸ Considered to be a farce by many contemporary historians, the quick rise and fall of the 1803 Dublin Castel revolt led by Robert Emmet is identified as a quest for failure. The political upheaval is sullied by the fact that the revolt ends on a sour note. Robert Kee in 1972 reported that "the plan itself was reasonable and practical, its execution lamentable to the point of farce" (124, qtd. from Gifford). According to Don Gifford's *Ulysses Annotated*, "[t]he revolt disintegrated into a riot . . ." (124). Joyce himself in his 1907 article, "Fenianism," does not sympathize with Emmet's patriotic martyrdom, characterizing Emmet's revolt as "foolish uprising" (CW 189). In *Joyce, Race, and Empire*, Vincent J. Cheng notes that "Emmet's attempt to seize Dublin Castle had been farcically botched—as was subsequently his public execution" (310). Cheng focuses on Joyce's parodic narration of Emmet's hanging in "Cyclops," and frames a discussion of Emmet's heroic status and mythological canonization in terms of "Celtic ethnocentrism," unnecessary bloodshed, and "nationalist nostalgia" (51).

²⁹ Richard Ellmann in the biography, *James Joyce*, documents a conversation between Joyce and his friend Georges Borach, in which Joyce admitted that the "Sirens" episode is "a fugue with all musical notations," and that he "exploit[s] the resources and artifices of music" (459, qtd. from *James Joyce*).

taken seriously are an extension of the parodic style in Joyce's early writing in the *Dubliners* period. Roy Gottfried, in "'Scrupulous Meanness' Reconsidered," points out that "Early on [Joyce] had begun to envisage the comic, protean powers of prose" (157). Interestingly, such envisioning was inspired by the "humor" and "comic possibilities" Joyce discerns in "the thematic and stylistic excesses of the nationalist writers" (Gottfried 157). Read against the backdrop of nationalist writing in Irish literary history, Joyce's passages of sound-play, humorously used to parody nationalist positioning, embody the sense of rebellion against the ruling elite class in early twentieth-century Ireland. Joyce's farcical mimicking thus signifies a break in the continuity of the uninspiring style of writing associated with Irish nationalist writers and well received by the Irish audience.

All those sound-fragments unrelentingly break Emmet's patriotic speech into separate, disconnected parts. This fragmentation is a metaphor for *loosening* the control of history, heritage, and memory. "Loosening" not "breaking away from" is the key point here. That Bloom finishes and *recites from memory* the rest of Emmet's final words—"Nations of the earth. Then and not till then. Let my epitaph be. Written. I have"—cues us to a recognition that no one can completely shun or deny the influence of the past. Thus, Joyce's use of fragmentation here by no means suggests a clean break with connections to the past, but signals his embrace of a tear or a rupture that makes room for the new. With a prolonged fart in the midst of Bloom's recitation, the ending of "Sirens" jovially alludes to the birth of a creation that develops out of nothing, no matter how aesthetically displeasing it may be. Just as the Judeo-Christian God declares the completion of his creation of the heavens and the earth on the seventh day, Bloom's farting reaches its climax and culminates in the word "done" (11.1294). Farting in Joyce's hands becomes a parody of *creatio ex nihilo* in *Genesis*. Farting manifests an affinity with *creatio ex*

nihilo in the sense that it comes close to a type of production that is not driven, pushed, or inspired by anything other than itself, a production that is simply *coming out of oneself*. Shelly Brivic argues in a different context that “to assume God’s role is . . . to produce the word out of oneself (like Shem) rather than merely receiving it” (92). From this perspective, Joyce’s style of “fragmentation” is more than a symbol of an interruption of continuity—it is an interruption that gestures toward a new creation.

“There can be no reconciliation,” Stephen discerningly asserts in the “Scylla and Charybdis” episode, “if there has not been a sundering” (9.397-8). We may use Stephen’s assertion as a pointer to start to understand the way Joyce views his artistic project—a project that is constantly shaped by a fragment-conscious mind—in relation to the past. Stephen raises an interesting point about how a “present” self with a creative mind positions itself in relation to other exceptionally talented minds in the past. The reconciliation Stephen refers to here is the reconciliation between the shadow/ghost (past) and the living being (present). Paradoxically, such reconciliation is founded upon the vision of a sundering, namely, blazing a trail into the new. This vision of “sundering” is registered in Joyce’s stylistic innovations such as the creative and heavy use of fragmentation throughout *Ulysses*. The style of fragmentation offers a realm where Joyce makes things new and claims them as his own. That Bloom reads Emmet’s words off a poster in a store window and then recites the rest of Emmet’s speech while farting is Joyce’s brilliant design. The intertwining of the historical and the personal demonstrates the effort to transcend the historical through a recognition of the existential that is endowed with personal and locational specificity.

The desire for transcendence—transcending the historical—is indirectly expressed through “style,” particularly through the fragmentary style that Joyce uses to present Emmet’s speech. Emmet’s fractured speech is not solely for amusement. It gives expression to the way different

parts of the speech are diminished to broken ruins that lose resonance and agility. To see Emmet's seven last words get printed on a poster displayed in an antique shop is to witness his ideas get resurrected through a different mode of representation and enshrined in a different venue. However, Emmet's words devolve into an uninspiring propaganda that fails to fuel interest in political change but arouses aversion or derision.

With its stylistic diversity and rhetorical intensity, the overture appears to subvert any definition of the catalogue form as a mode of representation that asserts coherence based on a common denominator the listed items share. Such an enumerative style resonates with Walt Whitman's endless enumerations of almost anything under the sun in *Leaves of Grass*, enumerations that imply a cosmological view of human existence as expansive and exuberant. Rather than promoting a strict homogeneity of items or presenting a stable set of items, the overture showcases a slew of narrative fragments as competing ideas and rival forces. As early as 1979, Margaret Honton likened the introductory part to "the warmup of vocal performers and the tuning up of instruments" (41). In a similar vein, Stephen Kern, in *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918*, points out that "Joyce sought to overcome the necessarily sequential time of literature and achieve an effect similar to the simultaneous sounding of different notes in musical harmony" (77-8). It is of interest to note that each narrative fragment commands attention. As the overture proposes no one center of attention, center is everywhere, and thus nowhere.

On this understanding, the catalogue form in the "Sirens" overture succeeds in dissolving the clichéd association between cataloguing and grouping. Joyce abandons the narrow view of cataloguing as a way of grouping—a way of assembling or dividing items under a criterion—whether it be, as Umberto Eco describes in *The Infinity of Lists*, "a (even dissimilar) series of objects belonging to the same context or seen from the same point of view" (131). What the act

of grouping suggests to us is that catalogues are perceived and used as a means to an end. Lists carry weight largely because of their instrumental value. It is evidenced in Bloom's budget list in the "Ithaca" episode, detailing the balance of income and expenditure on Bloomsday, 16, June 1904. A presentation such as Bloom's budget list makes explicit the mimetic nature of a list: the enumeration summarizes what Bloom has spent money on, and hints at where he has been over the course of a day. Furthermore, the budget list is closed with a sense of completeness, as Bloom makes ends meet at the end of the day. Bloom's budget list is analogous to *Nebeneinander*.

Other lists may withhold the sense of completeness but be endowed with a sense of development manifested in a logical or temporal progression. Such is the image of *Nacheinander* that betrays the workings of a rational consciousness, a list-maker's rational engagement. Below is what I consider to be a good illustration of *Nacheinander*. It assumes a list-form that inscribes an "order of precedence," according to the "Ithaca" narrator:

Lighted Candle in Stick
borne by
BLOOM
Diaconal Hat on Ashplant
borne by
STEPHEN

(17.1023-1028)

Bloom and Stephen move in a procession, as they exit Bloom's house on Eccles Street in the hours past midnight. The candlestick-holding Bloom is followed by the ashplant-clutching Stephen. These two parallel sentences indeed tell of two separate but complementary styles of departure and have a ceremonial ring. The images of candlelight and ashplant contribute to

religious overtones: the candlestick-holding Bloom is cast as a light-bearer who precedes, prepares, and announces the advent of the ashplant-holding and thus Christ-like Stephen.³⁰ While Bloom and Stephen symbolically perform two different functions in this scene, their close relation is cast as reciprocal and relational. Such a reciprocal and relational dynamic can be said to characterize the items in a form of *Nacheinander*.

Returning to the candlestick-ashplant *Nacheinander*, we notice that on the level of form the use of enjambment visually creates not only a list-like configuration, but also a typography that indicates the presence of an alter, one that is silhouetted against the white page. Such a visually suggestive arrangement indeed reinforces the sense of a ceremony of redemption in which Bloom and Stephen participate—a ceremony of walking out of darkness in connection with marital dysfunction (Bloom) and spiritual paralysis (Stephen). Interestingly, the image of the candlestick-holding Bloom leading the way out of his pitch-black house confirms Richard Ellmann’s point, in *Ulysses on the Liffey*, about Bloom symbolically assuming the role of Orpheus.³¹ According to Ellmann, Joyce reveals in the Linati schema that Orpheus is one of the characters in the “Sirens” episode, and Bloom is assumed to play the role of the modern Orpheus who seeks to win back his modern Eurydice (Molly) by getting her a present later in the episode (107). Indeed, “Orpheus” is a fitting analogy that adds another layer of meaning to the Bloom-Molly relationship, and extends beyond the Bloom-Molly dynamic. It is fitting, I believe, to

³⁰ Many have already pointed out that the ashplant in Stephen’s hand is a symbol of the Cross, for instance, Harry Blamires’s *The New Bloomsday Book*. Bloom’s status as a bearer of light in this scene resonates with his image of the one who brings “Light to the gentiles” (17: 353) from an earlier scene where he, upon seeing two torn betting tickets, contentedly reminisces about the coincidence of “throwaway” as the newspaper and “Throwaway” as the winning horse.

³¹ I realize that John Gordon, in *Joyce and Reality*, takes a different view. He argues convincingly that Simon Dedalus is the Orpheus type “whose wife has died, who has visited her grave in ‘Hades,’ who calls, musically, for her to return to him, whose song transfixes everyone in the room . . . and whose singing is ‘high in the effluence symbolistic . . . etheral’” (56). Gordon views Bloom as an anti-Orpheus, since Bloom violates at least two of the three prohibitions abided by Orpheus followers: “against the eating of meat, against the eating of beans, and against the burial of bodies in wool” (57).

consider Bloom as Orpheus to Stephen in the candlelight-ashplant scene, not because Bloom is forbidden from turning around to use his visual power, but because Bloom proactively positions himself as the one who leads Stephen out of spiritual darkness.³² What is at stake is the reciprocal relationship between the guide and the follower (or the vanguard and the army) in the process of egress, a relational connection that the list of *Nacheinander* conveys and emphasizes. One cannot exist without the other. “Lighted Candle in Stick borne by BLOOM” and “Diaconal Hat on Ashplant borne by STEPHEN” are mutually defined and mutually qualified. Equally significant, Bloom preceding Stephen in the order of egress and the order of precedence suggests a sense of continuation, particularly, the spiritual lineage in which Bloom wants to place Stephen.

Taken together, the two examples of *Nebeneinander* and *Nacheinander* from “Ithaca” evince that a rational consciousness can be distilled in the framework of a list. At the center of *Nacheinander* and *Nebeneinander* is the question of the ways to establish some relational connection among parts through a principle of grouping. By contrast, the non sequitur in the overture prods readers along with a sense of relational obscurity. Joyce leaves the relational connections of the sentence fragments in the overture unexplained. An array of literary expressions as poetically suggestive as the line “Chips, picking chips off rocky thumbnail, chips” in the overture increase the already lurking sense of structural incoherence. Above all, Joyce appears to indulge himself in the play of the constant shift in point of view. These narrative techniques I have just enumerated suggest Joyce’s intention to discredit the use of appropriate and intelligible grouping in a catalogue form. By decoupling cataloguing and grouping, Joyce

³² Toward the end of the “Circe” episode, Bloom shows avuncular, if not paternal, affection toward the unconscious Stephen by taking it upon himself to look after Stephen, who is knocked down by Private Carr. Bloom’s endearing words lend special significance to the ties he has with Stephen: “I’ll just wait and take him along . . .” (15.4901). Bloom keeps an eye on Stephen’s money, hat, and ashplant. He is more than willing to pose as a surrogate father to Stephen. Where Stephen is reckless and impulsive, Bloom is caring and introspective.

diminishes cataloguing's referential value, and, furthermore, consciously separates his "Sirens" overture from other lists that are easily seen as a whole.

To see the overture as a catalogue without classification and categorization is not to banish it to the realm of chaos or anarchy. Concurring with Stuart Allen in his recent article on "Sirens," I place no value on reading the overture as "a straightforward celebration of linguistic anarchy" (446). I also have no intention to propose a reading of the "Sirens" overture as an anti-catalogue or a substanceless catalogue that contains sheer wordplay and linguistic games that defy meaning and interpretation. If the narrative fragments in the overture are yoked together in an obscure way, it is to highlight a perception-centered consciousness. As Christopher Butler notes, modernists are preoccupied with "sense perceptions as the basis of our apprehension of the world" (363). Joyce is no exception. Tellingly, his non sequitur in the overture develops into a distinctive idiom of realism that is used to describe layer upon layer of sensory experiences that are inseparable but do not cohere into a totalizing whole.³³ As we turn attention to the incongruous mixture of the sentence fragments in the opening lines of "Sirens," we are greeted by a pulsating world full of activity, a world that captures the vicissitudes of life in Ireland, through a heightening of our acoustic sensitivity. The overture becomes an eclectic ensemble which makes vivid the idea of the overdetermination and endlessness of meaning. What Joyce meant to do in the overture is to elevate cataloguing to the status of art, particularly to a status comparable to music, a genre that in Theodor W. Adorno's eyes is privileged with qualities that distinguish it from "the totality of meaning created by intentional language" (5).

³³ My argument here runs concurrent with David Bennett's comment on Joyce's prose in general: "As in listening to music, one can enjoy the effect of Joyce's prose upon the senses without having the slightest conception of the organization and composition of the whole, that is to say, meaning" (78).

Love as an Event

As often noted, the overture is unapologetically suffused with sound qualities. Lining the one and a half pages is a wide spectrum of literary and rhetorical devices as diverse as, most notably, comical compounds, homophones, portmanteau words, onomatopoeia, and assonance.³⁴ There is no shortage of different units of sound-patterns in the overture, which leads us to consider sound as more dominant than the verbal sign. For decades, the musicality of “Sirens” has been commented upon in a substantial way.³⁵ Particularly, the opening section has long been the focus of scholars’ study of Joyce’s experiment with a literary form of a musical genre.³⁶ Joyce’s attraction to musically inspired elements is not merely artistic, and his interest in the marriage of literary content and the catalogue form with a musical twist is not accidental. Joyce’s overture, read in the context of its close link to musical techniques, demonstrates that cataloguing has meaning beyond a linguistic event that locks constituent parts into a stable and sedimented³⁷

³⁴ Jean-Michel Rabaté, in “The Silence of the Sirens,” offers a fairly comprehensive list of classical rhetorics to describe the musical figures in “Sirens.”

³⁵ As early as 1934, Frank Budgen, in *James Joyce and the Making of ‘Ulysses’*, asserts that “For the form and technic Joyce borrowed the devices of the musician. *The Sirens* is a fugue in counterpoint” (135). Most recently, Eric Bulson, following others, points out that Joyce structured “Sirens” as an operatic fugue (74).

³⁶ Scholars have presented three major areas of inquiry: to examine the prelude as a verbal equivalent to a fugue; to read it in relation to a canon in the original sense; to consider it as a literary counterpart of Wagner’s *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. For instance, Margaret Rogers considers the overture as Joyce’s literary experimentation with the fugue. And Timothy Martin has written extensively and published widely on the subject of Joyce and Wagner since the early eighties (see his *Joyce and Wagner* and “Joyce, Wagner, and Literary Wagnerism,” to name a few). In the essay, “Joyce, Wagner, and Literary Wagnerism,” Martin draws parallels between Joyce’s “Sirens” and Wagner’s *Die Meistersinger*. He argues that both “culminate in a tournament of song with two main performers” (i.e., Ben and Simon in “Sirens”), and both have a tenor and a bass “sing love songs” (107). Finally, both works show the attempt to “depict simultaneous but independent thought or action” (107). Zack Bowen, in *Bloom’s Old Sweet Songs*, also points out Joyce’s use of the Wagnerian leitmotif technique, arguing that the technique “is part of [the] thematic development [of Molly’s adultery]” (10).

³⁷ I am borrowing the word “sedimented” from Theodor W. Adorno, who uses the adjective to characterize the ossified, reified, and, thus, mechanical formulae and their function.

relationship.³⁸ It is as if Joyce invites the reader to tap into the strength of music, an art form favorably described by Adorno, in “Music and Language: A Fragment,” as “almost the opposite of a meaningful totality” (5). Following Adorno’s lead, Stuart Allen contends that music, despite its cognitive content, “is neither simply rational nor purely aleatory” (446).

As the “Sirens” overture appears to be a fractured fabric in which the flow of lived experience is sliced into episodic pieces, this catalogue not only engages our attention with fragments and pieces, but also promotes a retreat from combination- or selection-based cognition by privileging emotional senses and celebrating emotional connections. Descriptions like “horrid,” “pity,” a “pure, long and throbbing” call, and “fury,” signaling a spectrum of intense and depressing emotions, stimulate the imagination of human bond (11.4; 11; 12; 46). With the overture, we may surmise that Joyce desires a kind of representation that facilitates a constellation that escapes the confines of reason and valorizes affective landscapes. Of all the sentiments featured in the overture, none is more gripping than loneliness, the emblem of this episode intensified in unremitting repetition: “So lonely blooming”; “All is lost now”; and “I feel so sad alone” (11: 32; 22; 54). From a carnival of sounds to short staccato bursts of musical allusions that hint at passionate stories about love or the loss of love, Joyce succeeds in shifting focus from auditory awareness to affective apprehension, that is, an understanding based on emotions.

What appears to be a finite enumeration of narrative fragments in the overture gains momentum by asserting an invariant and infinite universality: the need for intimacy and companionship. Here finite perceptions are being playing off against an infinite truth (love),

³⁸ For instance, Stephen A. Barney, who distinguishes lists from stories in “Chaucer’s Lists” in the early eighties, asserts that “a list without a principle would seem bewildering if not pointless—we need to know what is being listed . . .” (191). Barney “call[s] the object, the ‘what,’ which a list explicates in detail . . . its *principle*: the list ‘buckler, helmet, greaves, gauntlets, byrnie’ specifies . . . the principle ‘armor,’ so for Barney a list is a “principled” structure. (191; 192)

which, later we shall see, Bloom finds to be spontaneous, instinctive, and elusive. While the finite intersects with the infinite, a vast variety of sounds blast off as a counterpoint to the message of the meager and deficient love Bloom receives from Molly. Bloom's failure to get enough love after the death of his son Rudy comes through strongly throughout *Ulysses*.

The trope of love continues to echo throughout the "Sirens" episode. In the main text, Joyce's sensitivity is directed to instances and moments when music or songs recalls tales of love. There are passages focusing on Simon Dedalus's piano rendition of *Goodbye, Sweetheart*, *Goodbye* and Ben Dollard's vocal performance of *Love and War*. In addition, Joyce offers Simon's riveting rendition of "M'appari" from Flotow's *Martha*. There is no shortage of love as an image or a theme in "Sirens." But I want to focus on an aspect of love that Joyce explores, namely its status as an event that changes the course of things. In "Sirens," the transformative promise of love, I argue, is communicated through a specific type of part-whole relation—in a situation where its constituent elements are found together by nonrelational contiguity. I use the notion of "nonrelational contiguity" to emphasize that the situation (i.e., the event of love) is the result of a web of chance encounters, and its emergence a product of chance.

I will examine the notion of love as an event through a close reading of the "M'appari" scene in which Simon sings impromptu the role of Lionel in "M'appari" in the Ormond saloon, while Bloom, Richie, Lydia, Lidwell, and Pat, who coincidentally convene in the Ormond bar, bear witness to a charm in Simon's voice. The nonrelational contiguity demonstrated in the "M'appari" scene—a point I will further develop later—is different from the one showcased in the overture. In the overture, the nonrelational contiguity is identified on the structural level, used to describe the absence of clear relation among the narrative fragments. In the "M'appari" scene, the nonrelational contiguity is teased out on the level of plot development. The plot is

built upon a sequence of contingent strands (mini-events): for instance, someone happens to sing a love song, and someone happens to dine or work nearby. The nonrelational contiguity here speaks to a series of chance-ruled events that account for the emergence of love. Foregrounding love as its thematic preoccupation, “Sirens” is as much about how love is conceived in imaginary worlds (e.g., opera and ballad), as about how love can possibly come into existence in real life and what counts as love’s condition of possibility. I will focus on the latter, which surprisingly receives little scholarly attention. Despite the device of nonrelational contiguity, the theme of love, particularly love as an event, is sustained. The device of nonrelational contiguity will bring into focus Joyce’s view of love as an unpredictable event and a perennial mystery.

Before turning to the discussion of love as a product of nonrelational contiguity in the “M’appari” scene, I want to turn to Joyce’s method of narration in this scene, a method that is consistent with his acute interest in experimenting with the configurations of lists, a primary focus in this chapter. The “M’appari” scene unfolds with a sequence of narrative turns comprising lyrics from “M’appari” and a mixture of views either from the omniscient narrator or from Bloom’s stream of consciousness.

In order to focus the action on Simon’s performance in the “M’appari” scene, it is necessary to consider passages that span several pages in “Sirens.” A very compressed version appears below:

— *... Sorrow from me seemed to depart.*

Through the hush of air a voice sang to them [. . .] like no voice of strings [. . .] touching their still ears with words [. . .] Good, good to hear: sorrow from them each seemed to from both depart when first they heard. . . .

Love that is singing [. . .] Bloom unwound slowly the elastic band of his packet. [. . .] Bloom wound a skein round four forkfingers, stretched it, relaxed, and wound it round his troubled double, fourfold, in octave, gyved them fast.

—*Full of hope and all delighted...*

Tenors get women by the score. [. . .] When will we meet? [. . .] Perfumed for him. What perfume does your wife? [. . .] Last look at mirror always before she answers the door. [. . .] How do you? I do well. [. . .] Hands felt for the opulent.

Alas the voice rose, sighing, changed: loud, full, shining, proud.

—*But alas, 'twas idle dreaming...*

Glorious tone he has still. [. . .] Jenny Lind soup: stock, sage, raw eggs, half pint of cream. For creamy dreamy.

Tenderness it welled: slow, swelling, full it throbbed. [. . .] Throb, a throb, a pulsing proud erect.

[. . .]

Bloom looped, unlooped, noded, disnoded.

Bloom. Flood of warm jamjam lickitup secretness flowed to flow in music out, in desire, dark to lick flow invading. [. . .] Language of love.

— . . . *ray of hope is . . .*

Beaming. Lydia for Lidwell squeak scarcely hear so ladylike the muse unsqueaked a ray of hopk.

[. . .]

— *Charmed my eye . . .*

Singing. *Waiting* she sang. I turned her music. Full voice of perfume of what perfume does your lilactrees. Bosom I saw, both full, throat warbling. First I saw. She thanked me. Why did she me? Fate. Spanish eyes. [. . .] Luring. Ah, alluring. (11.673-740, italics in original, but boldfaces mine)

I highlight the “M’appari” lyrics to unveil a pattern that is at work here—a paratactic strategy. This is seen in the way Joyce breaks the song apart on the pages. These pages have a structure that resembles the game musical chairs—the music starts and then suddenly stops, at which point players scramble to find empty seats. The music resumes, and the cycle repeats till the song ends. On Joyce’s pages, the space right after the “M’appari” lyrics becomes the space for one of two repeated occurrences. In the first the omniscient narrator makes a corresponding move echoing the “M’appari” lyrics, as seen in the narrator’s comment—“Good, good to hear: sorrow from them each seemed to from both depart when first they heard” (11.677-8). The omniscient narrator’s view falls in with Simon’s: “*Sorrow from me seemed to depart*” (11.673). Alternatively, the space after the “M’appari” lyrics becomes the place where Bloom unwittingly

makes a counter argument to Simon's statement, "*Full of hope and all delighted*" (11.685).

Preoccupied with Molly's four o'clock assignation with Boylan, Bloom sees a dandy tenor like Boylan, a man of strong sexual feeling, as a threat to his hope and delight. Here the "M'appari" lyrics are interlaced with Bloom's interior monologue. Bloom's stream of consciousness statements impart the sense of associativeness to this list-like structure.

Either a corresponding move or a countering move is a response to "M'appari." There is a consistent back and forth between Simon's singing and the omniscient narrator's narrating or Bloom's unvoiced opinions—a back and forth that develops the narrative of lost love and betrayal in this part of "Sirens." Such a narrative pattern is echoed by the commingling of Emmet's speech and Bloom's fart at the end of the episode, and thus can be seen as an overriding structural device of "Sirens." The alternation between lyric and narration—between a short line and long passages—forms a string of sentimental and non-sentimental utterances. Such a technique introduces the trope of parallelism, and shows the way the "M'appari" lyrics and their immediately succeeding passages are joined together by juxtaposition. The technique of juxtaposition is apparent when a vocal line from "M'appari" is immediately followed by some narration from the omniscient narrator's or Bloom's perspective, and then the song resumes, and it is also followed by some narration, so on and so forth. Such a chain of utterance indicates a recurrent pattern where the elements are closely linked. It brings to mind a list-like configuration.

Alongside Simon's passionate performance is the drama in which the omniscient narrator and Bloom (through his stream of consciousness) take turns responding to Simon's lamenting call. It is as if a singing voice is succeeded by a responding voice, or by a chorus of responding voices. Thus, what is being listed is a string of performances and passages that achieve the effect of call and response. From these pages, the narrative movement is governed by a call and

response principle. It is as if Joyce is making the point that while opera provides a powerful medium for the expression of lost love, other media and other human activities such as narratives and one's stream of consciousness can also achieve a similar dramatic effect of expressing and coping with the pain of losing love. Nowhere is this point made clearer than in Bloom's stream of consciousness, when bitter and wild imaginings are provoked by the Molly-Boylan rendezvous, a tryst that threatens to capsize Bloom's marriage. It is a passage that I cited at the beginning of this chapter:

Tenors get women by the score. Increase their flow.³⁹ [. . .] When will we meet? [. . .]
 Perfumed for him. [. . .] Stop. Knock. Last look at mirror always before she answers the
 door. [. . .] How do you? I do well. There? What? Or? Phial of cachous, kissing comfits,
 in her satchel. Yes? Hands felt for the opulent. (11.686-692)

A sequence of images appear in Bloom's imagination. A cluster of associative ideas render the extramarital affair histrionic and scandalous. A careful reader can hardly miss the subtexts of sexual prowess, sexual rivalry, and betrayal that figure in Bloom's narrative. Clearly, it is a passage of suppressed hurt, since we observe no stinging rebukes or thoughts of violent acts of Bloom's toward the adulterers. Rather, our attention is held by Bloom's imaginary account of the incremental missteps that lead one on the path to infidelity. Revealingly, the story of adultery, in Bloom's account, is framed in terms of pleasurable sensory experiences encompassing auditory bliss from a tenor's voice, olfactory satisfaction from perfume and a phial of cachous, and a faint trace of gustatory pleasure from kissing comfits. The scene of adultery that Bloom conjures up bristles with alluring details, which make the adultery itself a source of voyeuristic pleasure and vicarious excitement, and in turn makes Bloom's imaginary account a painful experience that

³⁹ Don Gifford, in *Ulysses Annotated*, explains that the use of this phrase ties in with "the popular belief that intense sexual activity increased a singer's vocal capacity, and that more singing increased sexual desire" (302).

betrays his jealousy, his impotent sexual being, and an unsettling self-perception. Bloom's sexual frustration is conveyed through his hands toying with an elastic rubber band, a glaring contrast to the adulterer's hands that feel for Molly's soft and warm bosom.

The image of a looped elastic band fittingly indicates Bloom's lack of mastery over his marriage. The loops and knobs not only hint at Bloom's tangled thoughts, but also imply a troubled heart ensnared in a tangled relationship: "Bloom wound a skein round four forkfingers, stretched it, relaxed, and wound it round his troubled double, fourfold, in octave, gyved them fast" (11.682-4).⁴⁰ This seemingly unconscious movement between stretching and relaxing the elastic band captures the indecisiveness of a divided consciousness—a struggle between allowing more room for freedom in marriage and maintaining a marriage through control. The band's elasticity makes it a circular band without fixed parameters. If the elastic band is the metaphor for Bloom's marriage, Bloom's hand gesture of compulsively binding his four fingers with it in the end is nothing short of a wishful thinking that Bloom has for his rickety marriage. The gesture alludes to a wish for some act of containment used as a substitute for real solutions. "[G]yved them fast," the omniscient narrator describes. The image of a gyve betrays Bloom's impulse to contain the marital mess, conflict, and damage (e.g., agreeing to Boylan's involvement in the concert tour, buying porn for Molly, turning a blind eye to her betrayal, and exploring questionable amorous relationships outside of his marriage), rather than confronting them.⁴¹ The hand gesture only intensifies Bloom's loose grip on his marriage. At the same time, what has been "gyved" fast can

⁴⁰ Blamires offers a persuasive reading of the winding and unwinding of the elastic band, arguing that the winding and unwinding alludes to the wandering of Bloom's thoughts (111).

⁴¹ Some scholars might hold different views on whether Bloom confronts his sexless marriage head on. I am aware that Janine Utell, for instance, brings a different perspective to the issue, and credits Bloom with making efforts to rekindle love's flame in several creative ways. She argues that "Instead of the conventional tales of love . . . Bloom is thinking about new stories, new ways of loving, and new ways of envisioning himself and the beloved other, his wife" (95).

also be Bloom's repressed emotions. The tightly bound fingers present to us a soul confined to a stressful and tormented state.

The Style of Nonrelational Contiguity

The narration that builds around the song "M'appari" proceeds with many shifts in perspective, as the omniscient narrator's narrative and Bloom's internal monologue are woven together with the confessional narrative of lovesickness from "M'appari." As a result, the reader moves among varying time schemes, shuffling between different centers of reality within different individuals. Zack Bowen has already pointed out that there is no plot similarity between Flotow's *Martha* and Joyce's "Sirens" (27). But the important element that is shared between Flotow's hero and Joyce's hero is the shadow of lost love that lies over their lives, which makes sense of the intertwining of Lionel's singing and pining voice and Bloom's narrating and lonely voice. With Simon's masterly rendition of "M'appari," Lionel's romance with Martha is brought to life, and Bloom's past courtship with Molly is called to mind. However, Joyce succeeds in setting up a stark contrast between the two heroes who face a similar predicament but achieve different outcomes: Lionel's longing and feelings are sung and made known, whereas Bloom's distress and his floundering marriage are kept secret. "Come ...! [. . .] To me!" sings Lionel with hope and determination at the end of "M'appari," whereas Bloom finds no resolution to his dilemma. In the universe of *Martha*, Lionel is joyfully reunited with his beloved Martha, whereas Bloom's future with Molly remains shrouded in ambiguity and uncertainty. Sailing through a waterway reverberating with the Sirens' seductive voices (e.g., Blazes Boylan and Martha Clifford), Bloom and Molly's marriage demands a leap of faith. Joyce does not lead us

through a series of resolutions in *Ulysses*. Unpredictability and uncertainty, Joyce seems to argue, are part of the human condition.

However glaring Bloom's loneliness is in the "M'appari" scene, Joyce never loses sight of the unexpected appearance or visit of love, encouraging his readers to look for its footprints and to look into the future with hopeful eyes, a future where love persists to flourish. This could not be more obvious than when the barmaid Lydia Douce and George Lidwell are flirting with each other and enjoying a shared moment of understanding while others cannot hear their conversation: "Beaming. Lydia for Lidwell squeak scarcely hear so ladylike the muse unsqueaked a ray of hopk" (11.711-2). Lydia's excited, high-pitched tone gives her away. Her conscious display of alluring femininity in front of Lidwell renders her barely-heard-squeaking voice a language of love in the Ormond bar. Moreover, Lydia's squeaky voice of seduction is overlapped with the muse's un-squeaky voice that sings about "hope" and "look" ("hopk"). The juxtaposition of Lydia and the muse (Simon) presents us with different languages of love—squeaky or un-squeaky—which make beaming interlocutors, and accentuates that love does not discriminate. The circle of love is not an exclusive club. One can argue that the affection felt between Lydia and Lidwell is not a minor event but a clear testimony to a new and blossoming infatuation, if not love. It is one of the unexpected twists Simon's incandescent performance entails.

Simon's "M'appari" represents an agent of change—an agent that brings changes to the otherwise humdrum state in the run-of-the-mill bar, where, before Simon sings "M'appari," images of disconnection, boredom, and futility appear to be related to people in the bar. There are awkward moments when Bloom dines with his friend Richie in silence (11. 523). At one point we find Bloom silently accusing Richie of being a liar for falsifying a memory (11.627).

Not far from Bloom's table, Lydia engages Boylan with a smile and with a trick of smacking an elastic garter against her thigh (11.413-4). But her eye-catching trick to seduce Boylan is met by his impatience and his abrupt departure from the bar, which entails a scene of disappointment and pointlessness: "why did he go so quick when I?" Lydia cannot but wonder why her trick fails to hold Boylan's attention (11.463). Feelings of dissatisfaction and frustration seem to dissipate after Simon sings "M'appari" to them: "sorrow from them each seemed to from both depart when first they heard" (11.677-8). It is important to recognize that the charms of Simon's voice are not the only reason for its transformative effect. His voice touches off a shared sensibility: it is an appeal to the captivation of love, whose appearance is linked to, or precipitates, a transformative occurrence—what Alain Badiou calls "event." I want to focus on the amorous event—the event in which a subject is transfixed and constituted by love—initiated by Simon's "M'appari," and to examine the emergence of other amorous events. To that end, I wish to draw a connection between Simon's rendition of "M'appari" in the Ormond saloon and a random assortment of Ormond workers and clients formed by chance.⁴² The accidental nature of the connection they form exemplifies a mode of nonrelational contiguity of happenings which I noted earlier.

⁴² For a meticulously careful and detail-oriented writer like Joyce, nothing accidental or coincidental should appear on his pages, except for the now well-known anecdote about Beckett, who was once in charge of writing down Joyce's dictation and unwittingly adding an extra phrase by mistake. The extra phrase, acknowledged by Joyce, was included in his novel. (The full story is documented in Richard Ellmann's *James Joyce*, p. 649 and Leland Monk's *Standard Deviations*, p.110.) It is hard to deny that Joyce writes with a specific design for his novels. But interestingly, Joyce foregrounds the figures of chance and coincidence in *Ulysses*, and contemplates the vicissitudes of life through them. Joyce uses the "Wandering Rocks" episode to delve into the questions of contingency and chance. "Wandering Rocks" consists of 19 disparate, disconnected scenes/vignettes. I have identified at least one contingent component or quality (e.g., a natural accident, a chance encounter, or a coincidence) in virtually every scene. I think it is apt to say that contingent occurrences, manifestations of chance, and depictions of unexpected accidents populate the pages of "Wandering Rocks."

I am drawing parallels between Joyce and Badiou because both appeal to truths that do not come out of an arena where all forces are aligned, or where the vicissitudes of life are eventually resolved into harmony. Rather, they show us that truth (e.g., love) comes through when an unexpected disruption occurs, or even when we least expect it. Love, as one of the truths, is found in the interval of relief and freedom from the expected and the predictable—an interval that interrupts or breaks the flow of continuity. Most important, love is a movement toward infinity. One begins to approach infinity through love.

To elaborate what I mean by this assertion, I will turn to Badiou's mathematically-inspired account of the "event," which offers us an insight into how truth (i.e., the amorous event in the "M'appari" case) is predicated upon a model of nonrelational contiguity rather than the "One" or the "Whole" that Western metaphysics is founded upon. The model of nonrelational contiguity frees us from reliance on and the dominance by the Whole to explain the emergence of truth. The same message is also indicated in Joyce's preoccupation with a list-like configuration constituted by an assemblage of disconnected parts and accidental relationships that undermines the primacy of totality. Also important for this discussion is Badiou's embrace of love as a significant element that provides an approach to the idea of the infinite. In the end, I seek to make a case that Joyce's vision of nonrelational contiguity—particularly the one that is defined by chance—affirms and further complicates his distancing himself from the pursuit of an all-inclusive, totalizing perspective, which is the focus of Stephen Dedalus.⁴³

⁴³ In "Mockery in *Ulysses*," James H. Maddox calls attention to Stephen's aspirations for a future knowledge that is the equivalent of "an ultimate discourse," a transcendental discourse that is "the form of forms, the form that contains the forms of all that he has perceived and experienced" (135). Stephen anticipates someday he will arrive at an "all-knowing self" (Maddox 135). Shelly Brivic's *Joyce through Lacan and Žižek* describes Stephen in the *Portrait* as an aspiring artist who is convinced that "one must either fill God's position or be a slave" (92). Stephen is driven by the goal of becoming a God-like artist whose knowledge can "encompass totality" (Brivic 92).

Badiou's "Event"

The "event" is parsed into four categories in Badiou's theoretical formulation: political, amorous, aesthetic, and scientific. This chapter foregrounds Badiou's valuing of the event of love (the amorous event). Badiou gives currency to the term "event" by considering a particular model of part-whole relationship, a model that is based on his account of mathematical ontology.⁴⁴ In Badiou's mathematical ontology, there is at least one element in a multiple that emerges unexpectedly as that which shakes up the world and brings change to the world. Moreover, this element effects the emergence of a truth. Such a transformative element is the genesis of an *event*, and its status as an event is not recognizable or recognized in a pre-evental site/world. Badiou's recognition of such an element proves to be pivotal, since it has the potential to initiate a new configuration, and thus is seen as a "rupture" that "renders a prior configuration obsolete" (*Handbooks of Inaesthetics* 12). The event in Badiou's terms can be characterized as an interrupting force, interrupting the order of a state and changing the course of things. The constituents of Badiou's event of love can be summarized as follows: the event of love is a break in time, a rupture; it is purely accidental and unpredictable; it is a revelatory moment; and it is a movement toward infinity.

Badiou's event of love finds its relevant expression in the "M'appari" scene, a scene that illuminates the emergence of an amorous event along with human subjects awash in loving feelings. The "M'appari" scene centers on Simon's "silky" voice, a voice that emerges from behind the bar door (11.791). It is a "wonderful" voice that unexpectedly wafts from the saloon to the bar and the dining area (11.791). In order to hear it clearly, Bloom, sitting with Richie at a

⁴⁴ In mathematical terms, there is at least one element whose *inclusion* in a multiple does not amount to its *belonging* to the multiple (Badiou, *BE* 85). "To be included" does not mean "to belong." To distinguish "inclusion" from "belonging," for Badiou, is to make visible an element that resides in a multiple but is not counted as a subset of the multiple. A relationship as such forms a unique model of part-whole relation.

table close to the door of the bar and dining room, gestures to Pat, the waiter, to “set ajar the door” (11.670). In “Sirens,” “M’appari” is not the only song that is sung in that late afternoon, but none equals Simon’s “M’appari” in the amount of attention and acclaim it garners. When Simon sings “M’appari,” the bar is suddenly thrown out of kilter, and everyone is drawn to his voice, becoming mesmerized by his voice.

One of the highlights of the “M’appari” scene is that no one in the bar and the dining room is insulated from the electrifying sensation emanating from Simon’s magnetic voice. As Simon passionately sings about Lionel’s affection for Martha, a tidal wave of love travels forward, advancing from the saloon to the bar and the dining area. It sweeps over Bloom and his fellow listeners in the bar: “Braintipped, cheek touched with flame, they listened feeling that flow endearing flow over skin limbs human heart soul spine” (11.668-9). What Simon serenades about is the initial attraction that draws one toward the other—the sign of the unexplainable allure that initiates and forges one of the most coveted human connections, romantic love: “*When first I saw that form endearing*” (11.665). Bloom, in his internal monologue, echoes these sentiments, and nostalgically immerses himself in the vision of being embraced by love, a vision recovered from the past courtship with Molly: “Singing. *Waiting* she sang. I turned her music. Full voice of perfume of what perfume does your lilactrees. Bosom I saw, both full, throat warbling. [. . .] Luring. Ah, alluring” (11.730-4). Bloom, temporarily lost in time, has a sure grasp of Simon’s love song, one that brings into focus the sweetness of romantic enchantment and alluring courtship. In Bloom’s monologue, the young Bloom, with a consuming passion, surrenders himself to the sweetness of seduction—Molly’s singing, her smell, her breasts, and her Spanish eyes. All of these captivating attributes are enumerated in the list of metonyms Bloom makes in his stream of consciousness—all allude to Molly’s alluring qualities. The list-

like structure here manifests its capacity to effectuate—to bring back fervent love and affectionate sensibility. Bloom’s stream of consciousness affirms that love proceeds from an encounter, the coming together of two people. Within the frame of memory lie Bloom’s affectionate tales about Molly’s beloved image and his joyful days with her. Memories of the loving event transcend marital conflict and the sense of betrayal and disappointment. The old Bloom relives the long-lost passion in his monologue.

The “M’appari” lyrics indeed awaken Bloom to the loveliness of the way in which he was once touched by the event of love—the loveliness of what Badiou identifies as an amorous intensity in *Logics of Worlds*: “at the peak of love, one is both beyond oneself and entirely reduced to the pure, anonymous exposure of one’s life” (32). As Peter Hallward rightly notes in his discussion of Badiou’s event of love, the energy of love “exceeds our conscious experience” (186). To be in love, Badiou emphasizes in *In Praise of Love*, is to enter a “Two scene,” involving a move from a single world to a world of Two in a post-evental condition: “[love] is a construction, a life that is being made, no longer from the perspective of One but from the perspective of Two” (23). Badiou expressly states that “What is universal is that all love suggests a new experience of truth about what it is to be two and not one. That we can encounter and experience the world other than through a solitary consciousness: any love whatsoever gives us new evidence of this” (*PL* 28). Love begins with an unexpected encounter: “the encounter brings forth the Two; it fractures solipsistic seclusion” (Badiou, *On Becket* 64). Love, Badiou notes, makes itself known “by the happiness of a new existential intensity” (*LW* 76). The awakening of such a loving existential intensity in Bloom—the memory of the intensity of living the life of Two instead of one—is one of the unexpected twists effected by Simon’s singing. As a transforming force in Badiou’s terms, the event of love allows Bloom to distinguish “the effects

of love” from “the ordinary run of affairs” (*BE* 233). The fond memories of Molly present an opportunity for Bloom to see the ordeal of sexual estrangement from Molly with new eyes. They allow Bloom to admit to what he shares with Molly in the past—the unexpected but fateful encounter in the musical chair scene—along with those that are responsive to the prospects of reconciliation with Molly. Most noticeably, Bloom’s proposal to Molly gets revisited many times throughout the day. This is what Badiou calls reaffirmation in a love relationship. Bloom’s memories of the proposal amount to a redeclaration of his love for Molly. Simon’s “M’appari” heightens Bloom’s awareness of one’s vulnerability and strength in the face of love. The parallel, or mirroring, between the emotional intensity of a lover’s confession in a light opera and an irresistible sexual attraction in a personal history discloses how Joyce sees the message of love being inclusive and universal.

It is important to emphasize that Badiou conceives of the amorous event as a staging of the “Two.” For Badiou, the presence of the “Two” is constitutive of a process approaching infinity: “the Two fractures the One and meets with (*éprouve*) the infinity of the situation. Such is the numericity of the amorous procedure: One, Two, Infinity. This numericity structures the becoming of a generic truth” (*Conditions*, 189). To put it simply, the amorous encounter enables the Two to approach infinity. The event of the loving encounter puts the loving couple in touch with the infinite. Hallward writes, “From being counted-as-ones (ones among others), love splits us into that part of a two from which we begin an investigation of the infinite (of everything that touches our love)” (186).

As the music progresses, the wave of sentimentalism about Lionel’s loss and longing mounts, but the song ends on a note of hope and felicity: “. . . ray of hope is . . . Each graceful

look . . . Charmed my eye . . .” (11.710; 724; 729). The theme of love as an empowering force clearly strikes a chord with the listeners in the Ormond dining room and the bar:

The voice of Lionel . . . sang again to Richie Poldy Lydia Lidwell also sang to Pat open mouth ear waiting to wait. How first he saw that form endearing, how sorrow seemed to part, how look, form, word charmed him Gould Lidwell, won Pat Bloom's heart. (11.717-20)

The vision of love at its finest finds its grandest advocate in the pronouncement that a “ray of hope” is “beaming” (11.710; 711). Love is the magic that makes one beaming and glowing (e.g., the Lydia in “Beaming. Lydia for Lidwell . . .”). Here, a contingent but transforming image such as love comes to the fore, painting a different color on life. Joyce does not intend a simple explanation of love, but maintains a level of idealism about love, one that draws attention to love’s irreplaceability and attractiveness in life. Indeed, the idea of love as a ray of hope and a beatitude that makes one beam with pleasure is folded into the “M’appari” scene.

Love’s welcome power to introduce amorous intensity into one’s life and to bestow felicity is love’s elemental nature. Such desiring nature explains the “event-ness” of love, and distinguishes love as one of Badiou’s generic procedures, namely a source of truth in his theoretical paradigm. Love embodies and reveals truth: “love is the truth procedure that, as compared with art, science or politics, although not necessarily the most common, is the most often *proposed* . . .” (Badiou, *Conditions* 181, italics in original). By the same token, to serenade about the elemental nature of love, as Lionel/Simon does, is to identify love as truth. In effect, the truth-imparting and truth-catalyzing quality we find in Badiou’s event of love is also embodied in Simon’s voice.

Simon's powerful rendition is significant because it succeeds in stirring an intense moment of feeling, a cathartic moment that releases its listeners from loneliness and listlessness. Equally significant is its revelatory power, which brings its listeners closer to truth—the truth about love as a timeless ideal and a universal law. Just as Simon's voice soars high and symbolically stretches into infinity, love's endurance reaches past time, place, generations, and genders:

It soared, a bird, it held its flight, a swift pure cry, soar silver orb it leaped serene,
speeding, sustained, to come, don't spin it out too long long breath he breath long life,
soaring high, high resplendent, aflame, crowned, high in the effulgence symbolistic, high,
of the etherial bosom, high, of the high vast irradiation everywhere all soaring all around
about the all, the endlessnessnessness (11.745-50)

It is as if the imagery of a bird cannot fully capture the aeriality of Simon's splendid voice. The omniscient narrator uses the word "high" with abandon to characterize his voice as boundless and free—soaring high in the "silver orb," in "the etherial bosom" and "around about the all." Such freedom and pervasiveness imbue the voice with the aura of transcendence. Particularly, it transcends time and history. The resounding word "endlessnessnessness," which concludes the passage, affirmatively *echoes* its transcendence with multiple *nesses*. The deep resonance of "endlessnessnessness" signals its persistent continuation into the future, crowning the voice with the glory of immortality. Descriptive terms such as "resplendent," "aflame," "irradiation," and "effulgence," although suggesting brightness and flamboyant colors, are nothing more than a set of abstractions, thereby reflecting the limits of human language—an instrument that falls short of offering a satisfactory portrayal of the transcendental and the infinite. For Joyce, the transcendental and the infinite exceed the confines of human reason.

The theme of love in “M’appari” stirs up the dormant passion in the listeners’ hearts. For instance, Lydia and Lidwell, Bloom notices, discover the alluring element in each other, and little by little display a sexual interest in each other: “George Lidwell, suave, solicited, held a lydiahand” (11.567). The sexual tension between the two soon becomes visible, as Bloom’s observation suggest, and their desire for the opposite sex is telescoped into the image of a seashell held at their ears: “Ah, now he [Lidwell] heard, she [Lydia] holding it to his ear. Hear! He heard. Wonderful. She held it to her own. And through the sifted light pale gold in contrast glided. To hear” (11.930-2). The tempting sound of the spiky shell, though a clichéd image, is calling both Lidwell and Lydia to suspend their judgment in deference to its enchantment and seduction.⁴⁵ The monotone of the shell, insulated from the changeable environment of a bar, is not in the grip of time. A few pages later, Bloom narrates a tale of the budding love between Lydia and Lidwell.

Significantly, Simon’s “M’appari” brings longing and desiring into circulation. The song not only illuminates Bloom’s stasis⁴⁶ and his unknown future with Molly, but also enables new human connections, particularly amorous relationships. The circulation of longing and desiring sparks romance between Lydia and Lidwell, and prompts Bloom to revisit some of his own firsts with Molly—some of the highlights in the early stages of their courtship. “M’appari” helps occasion amorous events in the Ormond bar where the occupants are spellbound by the image of “falling in love” embodied by Lionel and restaged by Simon. Indeed, through the song, love commands a presence at the bar. Lionel’s intimate profession of love establishes that Martha makes him surrender to the power of love and enhances his capacity to love more and to love

⁴⁵ Rabaté expresses a different point of view. He considers the shell to be a striking image that “metaphorizes the enchantment exerted by the Sirens on Lidwell” (86).

⁴⁶ Hugh Kenner, David Hayman, and Janine Utell all point out the presence of Bloom’s stasis in the “Sirens” episode, particularly in contrast to Boylan’s “progress” (making his way to 7 Eccles Street) (Kenner 65; Hayman 70; Utell 96).

fervently. However, to feel love or to fall in love puts one at risk of feeling lonely: “Alone. One love. One hope. One comfort me. . . .” (11.742). Sadly, loneliness is the price to pay, when the beloved is far away. Despite the inevitable loneliness, two is better than one, and the determination for love prevails. Strikingly, it is the captivity and the vulnerability under such a captivity that mesmerize the listeners. Lionel’s (or Simon’s) “M’appari” indeed throws into relief the economy of love.

Indeed, Simon’s “M’appari” reawakens a sensibility for human connection and intimacy. But the scientifically minded Bloom, though immersed in Simon’s music and recognizing his strong musical bent, scornfully reduces an enjoyable aesthetic experience to an arithmetic exercise—what he calls a game of juggling figures (11.832). “Numbers it is,” Bloom insists, “All music when you come to think” (11.830). In an effort to deny its transcendent status, Bloom is convinced that Simon’s vocal virtuosity, or music in general, is nothing more than an illustration of “musemathematics.” “Musemathematics,” Bloom states in a tone that reflects his distrust, “And you think you're listening to the etherial” (11.834; 835). Bloom names music musemathematics in order to derogate what is transcendental and otherworldly in it. Bloom’s theory of musemathematics not only treats music narrowly as an aggregate of numbers, but also notoriously reduces musical language to a set of manipulable formulas: “Always find out this equal to that” (11.832-3). Bloom appears to conceive a strong dislike for the sense of predictability and control or clichéd feelings that certain chords or scales evoke. Later in that afternoon before he leaves the Ormond hotel, his judgment of music as a pretentious but mechanical scheme culminates in the following disparaging statement: “Music. Gets on your nerves” (11.1182).

Seeing music through the lens of “musemathematics,” Bloom has his reason to mistrust it. But what takes place before he leaves the Ormond calls attention to something that is more subtle than the reasons Bloom lays out. Why does music get on Bloom’s nerves, as he claims? As will become clear, why Bloom distances himself from music is precisely what music makes manifest. It is the unpalatable revelation that love does not come easily. Along with that, we substitute unbridled desire for genuine love, or mistake the former for the latter.

The differentiation between love and desire is a matter of great importance to Joyce. There is a passage of paramount importance for this issue to which I would like to draw attention, a passage that upon first reading may seem remotely related to the issue of love versus desire, but actually engages us in thinking about the way auditory perception contributes to our recognition and understanding of true love. It is a passage of interior monologue in which Bloom expresses his disappointment at not seeing Simon’s face while he sings: “Wish I could see his [Simon’s] face, though. Explain better. Why the barber Drago's always looked my face when I spoke his face in the glass. Still hear it better here than in the bar though farther” (11.721-3). Bloom is convinced that seeing a singer’s face helps understand the song better, just as the barber rejects the mediation of a mirror in order to sharpen his visual and tactile perception. Bloom’s sentiment is well founded, and invites attention and contemplation. It reminds us that the “M’appari” scene is comparable to the scene of listening to music with eyes closed—of what Tim Ingold has called “passive hearing” (277). Ingold, in *The Perception of the Environment*, points out the crucial difference between hearing with the eyes shut and hearing with the eyes open, arguing that without the “visual steering of auditory perception,” listeners become “mere consumers of sound” (277). Hearing with the eyes closed becomes a passive activity, rather than active and engaged.

Hearing with the eyes shut makes the listeners “oblivious to the fact that [the sound] is being produced by players with instruments” (Ingold 277).

Ingold’s argument about “passive hearing” joins with a group of writers such as Igor Stravinsky and Adorno arguing that “We hear less well with the eyes closed” (277). Stravinsky, in particular, expressly writes about the laudable merits of visual and auditory perception working in tandem, maintaining that “The sight of the gestures and movements of the various parts of the body producing the music is fundamentally necessary if it is to be grasped in all its fullness” (72). For Stravinsky, passive hearing and “active listening,” to borrow Ingold’s terms, entail different levels of aesthetic experience. Hearing with the eyes open brings a greater immediacy to our sensory experience than hearing with the eyes closed, since one experiences both sound and body movement unfolding in front of them. More importantly, passive hearing constitutes a minor flaw, namely, a heightened susceptibility to reveries induced by the phenomenon of hearing without seeing. According to Stravinsky, those who listen with eyes closed “abandon themselves to reveries induced by the lullaby of its sounds” (73).

Something similar can be said of Bloom in “Sirens.” As we have seen, Simon’s “M’appari” evokes Bloom’s endearing recollections of Molly and the tender feelings associated with them. It encloses him in the circle of enchantment and heightens the intensity of Bloom’s affective consciousness. Within this circle of enchantment, affect seems to take on various forms such as love, infatuation, desire, etc. The emergence of the last two—desire and infatuation—is indicated in the way Bloom responds to the amorous atmosphere of the Ormond bar. Such an indication is provided by Bloom’s reveries about cheap thrills and his appetite for immediate affection, as shown in Bloom’s inordinate attention to the beer tap behind him and to the barmaid, Lydia. While Simon is still singing “M’appari,” Bloom temporarily tunes out because of the distraction

caused by the throbbing, gushing, and pulsing sounds behind him, a confluence of sounds that quicken his pulse and make his heart race:

Tenderness it welled: slow, swelling, full it throbbed. [. . .] Throb, a throb, a pulsing proud erect.

Words? Music? No: it's what's behind.

Bloom. Flood of warm jamjam lickitup secretness flowed to flow in music out, in desire, dark to lick flow invading. Tipping her tepping her tapping her topping her. Tup. Pores to dilate dilating. Tup. The joy the feel the warm the. Tup. To pour o'er sluices pouring gushes. Flood, gush, flow, joygush, tupthrob. Now! Language of love. (11.701-9)

Simon is singing, the tap running. There are two languages of love—Simon’s euphonious voice and the tap sound—that are vying for Bloom’s attention. When the gushing and throbbing of the beer tap come to prominence and drown out other voices and sounds, it is actually chanting the song of orgasm: oo-oo-o----o-o-o--o---o-o-----o--o-o----O-----o-o-o--o-oo-o-o-o-o--o-o. Alluding to the long and short “O” sound, Joyce plays with the letter “O” in an extravagant way. A sum of 27 O’s unapologetically constitutes a sensuous superfluity in the last cited passage.⁴⁷ The big “O” in the middle is where “the joy the feel the warm” reaches its climax. The movement of the mouth is imagined to be coordinated with the rhythm of the flow modulated by the “invading” of the concupiscent thrust (the symbol of “T”), and thus the uttering is dominated by the somatic. Indeed, it is the song of “O”/“Oh”—a language of lustful love. Here the language of love is the language of orgasm.⁴⁸ When Joyce mischievously writes, “Words? Music? No . . .”, the negation introduces a welcome vein of humor, since the sound “O”—having sexual overtones—is *both* a word (“Oh”) and music (“joygush”). For Joyce, it is not an either/or

⁴⁷ Obviously, there are lots of t’s in the same passage. However, 27 o’s outpoint 20 t’s.

⁴⁸ Don Gifford, in *Ulysses Annotated*, also examines the sexual implications of this passage. He particularly focuses on Joyce’s use of the “t-p verbs” (303).

decision. At the same time, while the music of orgasm is a joyful and primordial gush, the word “Bloom” stands by itself, in isolation from the rest of the passage. Poignantly, Bloom sings by himself the song of “woe,” living all the fun vicariously through imaginings. Illuminating in Bloom’s stream of consciousness is Joyce’s playful use of language and syntax along with his reliance on the effect of allusion. This aspect of Joyce resonates with Stein’s insights into language’s plasticity and the associative mind’s volatility, both of which will be closely examined and discussed in Chapter Four. As we will see, Stein in her list-like structures also plays with repetition and sound to engage our imagination and create sensuous effects. Like Joyce’s list of “o” and “t” sounds, Stein’s list-like configurations also present a sensuous erotica.

However short-lived it is, Bloom’s misguided fantasy for the beer tap along with floods of tenderness and passion is attributed to what is *behind* him—the initially heard and yet to be seen performance of the tap. This brings us back to the pure sensuality Stravinsky associates with hearing but not seeing. Seducing Bloom to indulge in reveries, the sound of the tap exemplifies what Ingold has observed in the case of hearing with the eyes shut—“musical sound appears abstract and incorporeal” when it is separated from “the bodily movement of its production” (277).

Returning to the song of “O,” we can hardly deny that it is desire that is at work here. Distinguishing love from desire, Badiou emphasizes that “love is connected with being and desire is connected with the object” (*Infinite Thought* 143). The correlation between desire and objects (i.e., manifestations/mediations of desire) is captured in the way the sounds of the beer tap plunge Bloom into a reverie of somatic pleasure. In Bloom’s reverie, the inviting sounds of the beer tap promise an instant, intoxicating, and unrestrained indulgence in sensuous pleasures and physiological intensity, but it does not constitute love or empower people to pursue true

love.⁴⁹ There is no denying that desire naturally comes into play alongside other phases of emotion in the course of love's development. "[T]he fulfillment of sexual desire," Badiou states, "functions like one of those rare material proofs . . . that love is more than a mere declaration of words" (*PL* 26). Certainly, desire and love are not mutually exclusive. But desire without love, Badiou suggests in *Manifesto for Philosophy*, is merely effective in creating "the syrupy love exalted in songs—loveless, truthless and encounterless love—constitutes the flaccid universal matrix" (57).

The close tie between desire and objects gets further developed in Bloom's reflection on his short-lived infatuation with Lydia. Long before her attraction to Lidwell becomes apparent, Bloom has been ogling Lydia. By the time Ben Dollard sings "The Croppy Boy" on the heels of Simon's performance, Bloom is already preoccupied with a sensational image of female sexuality embodied in Lydia, a barmaid whose flirtatious and frivolous mannerisms he once called "the old dingdong" (11.564). Using the language of sight, Bloom romantically poeticizes and fetishizes her lashes, gaze, heartbeats, breath, and curly golden hair: "A liquid of womb of woman eyeball gazed under a fence of lashes, calmly, hearing. See real beauty of the eye when she not speaks. [. . .] At each slow satiny heaving bosom's wave (her heaving embon) red rose rose slowly sank red rose" (11.1104-7).⁵⁰ A "dingdong"-turned-goddess Lydia becomes the object of Bloom's gaze and curiosity. She becomes Bloom's object of infatuation after Simon

⁴⁹ Following T. S. Eliot's view on memory's relation to love in *Little Gidding*, Stephen Sicari maintains that memory has positive effects on the formation of love: "Memory is the agency of the mind that can take the discrete moments of special consciousness and work on them until desire becomes love Memory frees us from the mere attachment to the various objects in the world that is desire by expanding love beyond desire" (199-200).

⁵⁰ Bloom's depiction of Lydia's bosom as "her heaving embon" recalls a passage he read in the pornographic *Sweets of Sin* earlier in the day: "her heaving embonpoint" (10.616). Bloom's superimposition of the image of a femme fatale on his imagining of Lydia illustrates the self-generated activity of erotic desire, that is, how erotic desire generates more erotic desires.

sings “M’appari.” Bloom, knowing himself well, recognizes this by remarking: “Infatuated. I like that?” (11.1110). Short-lived infatuation is not synonymous with love, but rather is associated with desire. Bloom attributes his moment of infatuation to distance and the objects that lie between Lydia and him: “See her [Lydia] from here though. Popped corks, splashes of beerfroth, stacks of empties” (11.1110-1). It is as if Bloom is given a limited frame of reference to gauge things, so he perceives things with imagination, rather than acting upon reason and intellect. Critically, “beerfroth,” which is included in his list of wastes, is recognizable not only literally as beer-foam, but also metaphorically as Bloom’s surging libido driven by Lydia’s hand movements behind the counter.

While Bloom makes sexually charged references to streams of beer gushing out of the tap, erotic desire and sexual seduction are embodied and reinforced in the materiality of the beerpull and its movement:

On the smooth jutting beerpull laid Lydia hand, lightly, plumply, leave it to my hands. All lost in pity for croppy. Fro, to: to, fro: over the polished knob (she knows his eyes, my eyes, her eyes) her thumb and finger passed in pity: passed, reposed and, gently touching, then slid so smoothly, slowly down, a cool firm white enamel baton protruding through their sliding ring. (11.1112-7)

Lydia’s touch is erotically charged, but for Bloom it is an attention-grabbing ploy that displays power and control (“she knows”). Furthermore, her caress concludes with a consummation of its own: the baton protrudes through the ring. The union of the baton and the ring only intensifies Bloom’s hunger for carnal pleasures, and induces a sense of urgency to bring an end to years of sexual drought.

Although closely watched by Bloom, the goddess-barmaid Lydia neither returns the gaze nor shows any interest in Bloom. Obviously, love or the event of love does not take place between Bloom and Lydia. Although a florid sensibility occurs in the amorous situation entailed by Simon's "M'appari," it is not "positively connected to the event," to borrow Badiou's words again (*BE* 335). Rather, it is *negatively* linked to the event of love. Here, what is "negatively" connected is that which "solely mark[s] the repetition of the pre-evental order of the situation" (Badiou, *BE* 336). Pure lust such as Bloom's in the beer tap scene remains fleeting, volatile, and impulsive. Bloom's lust is encountered *negatively*, because it is not sufficiently dependable to foster and facilitate positive change in the situation, much less a truth. Nor does it help change the way Bloom understands and recalibrates his amorous relationship with Molly. It does no more than repeat the pre-"M'appari" situation. Accordingly, it "has no relation whatsoever with the name of the event," and thus "[i]t will not enter into the new-multiple that is a post-evental truth . . ." (Badiou, *BE* 335). In conclusion, desire or lust is not sufficient to generate a love event.

This part of "Sirens" ends in Bloom's unpalatable epiphany that Lydia sets her eyes on Lidwell instead of him: "Ha. Lidwell. For him then not for. Infatuated" (11.1110). Bloom suddenly realizes that his self-flattering, narcissistic, and erroneous assumptions about Lydia's infatuation with him have no place in her emerging love event. Bloom's epiphany reminds us of how Simon's "M'appari" can lead to a revelation of truth: Lydia is not sexually interested in Bloom, and his fantasies about her are far from true love. The realization leaves Bloom less eloquent, and almost tongue-tied: "For him then not for." Moreover, the revelation is embarrassing enough for Bloom to silence the pronoun *me*. The unuttered and erased "me" signals self-denigration and self-effacement.

We have to remember that this is not the first time Bloom finds himself in the drama of triangulation, a sort of love triangle where he is denied a leading role. Being second place is not foreign to Bloom. In one of his monologues that contains the tenor-flower-cachous image, Molly is imagined to get all dolled up for Boylan and their afternoon rendezvous: “Perfumed *for him*” (11.688, italics mine). “For him!” is a phrasing that Bloom randomly picks up while flipping through the pages of the pornography, *Sweets of Sin* (10.609). But a line that affirms and validates the existence of the male adulterer in the pornographic story seeps into Bloom’s consciousness and how he thinks about himself. “For him then not for [me]” haunts Bloom like a curse. She (either Molly or Lydia) is always for other men, not him. Bloom’s passive role in the Molly-Boylan affair ironically finds a melodramatic counterpart as the inconsequential in the Lydia-George spark.

Coda

(The Multiple as an Alternative to the One in Western Ontological Thinking)

What should be emphasized is that Badiou’s event is subjected to a principle of chance. Throughout his oeuvre, Badiou emphatically states that the event “is purely hazardous,” and “cannot be inferred from the situation” (*BE* 193). As described in his book, *Ethics*, the event “is itself beyond all the predictions and calculations that our understanding is capable of” (23). Therefore, the birth of an event does not count on the total effects of the existing units in a given situation (a multiple). In addition, it does not take a homogeneity of elements to bring a Badiouian event into existence. Rather, what is accentuated is the unexpected eruption of the evental element, an element that is, in mathematical terms, not counted toward the total number of the subsets of a set in the pre-evental situation. Critically, an event that hinges on chance and

an aleatory, incalculable intervention⁵¹ points to the element of *errancy* and the presence of *excess* as its conditions of existence. Indeed, both register instability and changeability. A Badiouian event and a Joycean nonhierarchical and anti-universalist assemblage are not structured in a specific sequence of constituent parts. Both present a collection that is incalculable and far from definitive and fixed. The combination is permanently subject to chance which is beyond the reach of deliberate intention and methods and calculated machinations. Here, the contingency of Badiou's event sheds light on the nature of our ontological being as multiple and fragmentary. For Badiou, love enables us to cross the barrier between finitude and infinity.

To sum up, the process of randomly enumerating past encounters with Molly or her alluring qualities subtly evokes the long-lost passion in Bloom. Listing shifts the way Bloom understands his amorous relationship with Molly by sharpening the intensity of Bloom's affects, and in turn bringing him closer to his beloved. The list, in Bloom's stream of consciousness, obviously does not effect an immediate reconciliation between Bloom and Molly. But it marks, if not magnifies, how the *event* of love reenters Bloom's life through a reawakening of his sexual desire for Molly. Significantly, the *event* of love is the moment when Bloom realizes that "Two" is better than "One." In Bloom's tenor-flower-cachous list, we recognize that ideas and images are linked associatively. This part of the narrative is threaded together through a series of nonrelational sketches that point us to different patterns of interpersonal relationship. Examined separately, those disjointed details in Bloom's stream-of-consciousness not only offer a microcosm of Bloom's struggles and temptations, but also function as a point of orientation guiding the readers through the twists and turns of the story. Most importantly for this argument, the succession of details, taken as a whole, translates into a type of listing that has expository

⁵¹ An "intervention," in Badiou's terms, refers to any procedure that recognizes a multiple as an event. (BE 202)

value. In each detail, we see recurring ideas in association with a character get developed and amplified. This indeed accentuates the multidimensional quality in Joyce's list.

Chapter Three

The Poetics of Cataloguing and Sociopolitical Criticism in *The God of Small Things*

In Arundhati Roy's award-winning novel, *The God of Small Things*, the image of a clamorous railway station that matches the bustling energy of a post-Independence nation is distilled into the following language: "Scurrying hurrying buying selling luggage trundling porter paying children shitting people spitting coming going begging bargaining reservation-checking" (284). What comes into view is the frantic patterning of piling on gerunds without punctuation, a humorous patterning that allows its readers to slip into a moment of energy that implies optimism. In this list, a paratactic series of gerunds brings to mind the midday clatter of a high-traffic station, dramatizing the public space as an uproarious circus and a modern pandemonium. Remarkably, the list conjures up a scene of everydayness bursting with vitality and movement. Poised on a page containing a paragraph of simple, direct prose and several sequences of sentence fragments, the gerund list has been crafted in a way that not only draws attention to its formal quality, but also foregrounds a painful irony. In the novel, this scene of everyday franticness in an ordinary environment is actually the backdrop against which a merciless event unfolds: a forced separation of a school-age son from a divorced mother. For this reason, the playfulness and exuberance of the listing style offers a counterpoint to the sadness and hurt resulting from the torn relationship. Such a narrative detail as the gerund list matters, for it is where the public intersects with the private, so as to ironize a false sense of normalcy that obscures a troubling case of human misery involving forced abandonment. With this in mind, it would be a mistake to simply reduce the gerund list to a passing moment in life, while the motif of a family in crisis is conspicuous by its absence. The list here is a revealing example of a narrative property that is less about what is apparent than what is implied and left unstated. Critically, it exemplifies a list's ability to mean more than what it seems to represent.

Scholars such as Aijaz Ahmad, Pranav Jani, and Alex Tickell have alerted us to Roy's stylistic playfulness and linguistic dexterity in *The God of Small Things*. Others have mapped Roy's affiliations with other writers, and suggested literary influences to help explain her literary techniques and artistic creativity.⁵² I want to add to their scholarship, stressing the extraordinary role lists and catalogues play in Roy's novel, and suggest that Roy takes seriously an ordinary enough device such as listing and uses it to introduce complex topics. The implications of her lists are far too complex to be seen only in terms of stylistic vividness or literary influence. Recently, there has been work theorizing lists and catalogues as a form in contemporary fiction, developing new ways of thinking about the list as a manner of social engagement. Rebecca L. Walkowitz takes the lead, charting a path for a new understanding of the function of lists. Using Kazuo Ishiguro as an example, Walkowitz argues that *The Remains of the Day* is structured by a "list" of anecdotes offered by Stevens, an English butler (232). She further argues that lists and catalogues can be seen as the site of exercising a comparative reading. In her account, to see a list as a framework for a comparative method is to take advantage of the multiple ways of arranging and rearranging items in the list. Different ways of assembling Stevens' anecdotes allow room for different outcomes and meanings—an aspect that the novel invites its reader to think critically about.

The issue of permutations and combinations of a list is not my concern here. Rather, I intend to emphasize Roy's use of lists and catalogues as a springboard for exploring sociocultural issues. Especially, Roy is outstanding in bringing to the fore many ways in which the list is valued as an interstice between aesthetics and politics. Thus, I seek to augment the scholarly debates by suggesting that the catalogue or list in Roy is an ideological and social

⁵² See most recently Monika Fludernik, Madhu Benoit, and Murari Prasad; also see the essays by Cynthia Vanden Driesen, K. Ratna Shiela Mani, and Amar Nath Prasad collected in R. K. Dhawan, ed., *Arundhati Roy: The Novelist Extraordinary*.

matrix crisscrossed with a network of aesthetic and political tensions, and I wish to theorize the value of Roy's novel as a particularly radical form of the intersection of literary form and political critique. Roy's lists and catalogues, most notably, serve as a method of both interruption and connection, rather than a sheer mimetic description in her narrative framework. The enumerative form in Roy is a mode of expression that actually advances narrative structure. It is a type of interruption that is not necessarily anti-narrative, and that bears both symbolic and political weight.

The God of Small Things at first seems like a traditional narrative structure, but it is punctured by diverse discourses including listing and number-counting; it is a novel rich with both practical and literary lists. Among the various lists are a set of definitions from a dictionary entry, a piece of singsong verse, an inventory of merchandise from a pickle factory, and an enumeration of ingredients in a recipe, to name a few. Roy's extensive use of lists and catalogues is characteristic of her style. It at once generates curiosity and reinforces a strong sense of a list as significant in its own right. Roy's imaginative use of the listing form, as we will see later, prompts us to probe further and think past the common perception of it as simple itemization. A list is not inherently subversive or explicitly politically charged, but when read in conjunction with the sociocultural context from which it emerges, it can be socially relevant and politically engaged—as is evident in Roy's case—in interrogating social relations of domination and subordination. Strikingly, Roy turns lists into the lever and the fulcrum many forces weigh on. Figured as a fulcrum of political resistance to hierarchical relations and ideological prejudices, lists utilized by Roy furnish a model of political criticism, whose status comes close to what Fredric Jameson calls “the informing presence of the extraliterary, of the political” (45) in works of postcolonial literature. Both Roy's investment in finding language for representations of

division and institutional exclusion and Jameson's engagement in debates over the political status of literary work reveal their awareness of the subversive nature of literary forms.

The examples of listing styles that are featured in this chapter either are based on the characters' consciousness or represent the narrative judgment of the author. My focus is not only on textual details that take on the form of a list in *The God of Small Things*, but also on Roy's use of the trope of listing to present the mind of a character. Consciousness is the locus of the list, and the list, as a stylistic strategy, illuminates the interiority of the characters. Central to the use of listing as the representation of a stream of consciousness is Roy's interest in ordinary people's lived experience and lived realities. In a 1997 interview with Taisha Abraham, Roy makes unmistakably clear that what motivated the writing of *The God of Small Things* was not the ambition to give an account of "what happened," but rather the vision of telling "how what happened affected the people that it happened to" (90). Roy foregrounds characters' perceptual experience and mental associations with those perceptions to place us in close proximity to her characters, who are socially powerless and whose personal tragedy in life advances our understanding of the personal as politics.⁵³ While drawing attention to the interiority of ordinary individuals, Roy's enumerative forms bring into view the list as a mode of representation that illuminates social content. Julie Mullaney rightly notes that Roy is concerned with "the intermingling of public and private histories" (25). I wish to take her argument a step further, arguing that Roy's ability to reveal the inevitable intertwining of the personal and the public exemplifies a type of social criticism at its most effective. Particularly, the list acts as an illustration of how sociocultural conditions impinge upon ordinary people. It is a narrative device

⁵³ In an interview posted on a website

<http://www.raghu.myehome.in/books/arundathi_roy_on_her_life.pdf>, Roy states that her novel sheds light on "A pattern . . . of how in these small events and in these small lives the world intrudes. And [how] the world and the social machine intrude into the smallest, deepest core of their being and change their life."

invested with critical ability—a conceptual tool that translates a predilection for certain patterns of classification into a broader concern for hierarchical relations in a world of divisions.

As I explained in the introduction, lists mean a textual category that includes various types of listing in succession, expressed in either a horizontal or vertical fashion. I do not wish to attempt a comprehensive discussion of all types of listing in Roy's novel, but what makes the lists discussed in this chapter representative, and fascinating, is a multilayered character that is incongruent with their appearance of simplicity and objectivity, as well as their illumination of the sociopolitical issues the novel grapples with. A pickle inventory in a child's mind, for instance, used as a metonymic link to a social taxonomy, creates an opportunity to direct attention to the problematic of taxonomic essentialism in the Hindu caste system. It is a detail of its own that creates a contact point pushing open interpretive boundaries. An Untouchable foreman's enumeration of non-sentient objects, serving as a rhetorical tool, helps conceptualize "division" and "separation" in a caste-ridden society. To take another example, two assessment checklists are used to frame a discussion of racial hierarchy, mental decolonization, and historical shame. Roy's appropriation of the enumerative form in this instance conjures up a very specific image of the colonial past where the list-creating impulse is coterminous with colonial rule and shares space with colonial politics. All of these examples suggest Roy uses lists as narrative agents which help stage debates about the relationships among identity, institutions, and history.

Mammachi's Product List

Roy situates her story in a world of dichotomies; the struggle between the small and the big is developed in lockstep with the rivalry between the ordinary and the popular throughout *The*

God of Small Things.⁵⁴ Strategically, to situate her story in the world of rigid dichotomies is to develop a sensitivity to the small and the ordinary that extends beyond sentimentalism. In this world, attention to the small and the ordinary helps bring critical scrutiny to what is considered as big and popular. Early in the novel, Roy focuses on things habitually relegated to the realm of the small and the ordinary, in the belief that “Little events, ordinary things, smashed and reconstituted. Imbued with new meaning. Suddenly they become the bleached bones of a story” (32). Her assertion provides a valuable point of departure for exploring how an element as ordinary as a list can be reconstituted with new meaning.

The first step in giving fair consideration to Roy’s practical list is to recognize its narrative function. In examining a list of pickle products,⁵⁵ embedded in a scene from *The God of Small Things*, we discover that the listing form serves as a switch—the switch between states of consciousness—and as the nexus of the literary and the social, both of which constitute a list’s narrative importance.⁵⁶ The pickle list I will consider here occurs in the middle of a scene of child molestation that engages a minor victim named Estha in an improper sexual act at a movie theater. As the Lemondrink Man clasps his hand around the boy’s hand and moves it on his penis,

⁵⁴ Roy also examines other sets of dichotomies in the novel, such as “nature” and “civilization.” The motif of nature and civilization coming into conflict is pursued from the very beginning of the novel. Civilization’s unwelcoming side poses a threat to nature, which is captured in the troubling image of “the frog-stained road” travelled by railroad trains (Roy 82). Additionally, the novel presents civilization as a deadly entrapment, which is best illustrated in the vision of the following destruction of harmless insects: “Dissolute bluebottles hum vacuously in the fruity air. Then they stun themselves against clear windowpanes and die, fatly baffled in the sun” (Roy 3). There are times when nature takes over control and outpoints, if not defeats, civilization: “Boundaries blur as tapioca fences take root and bloom. Brick walls turn mossgreen. Pepper vines snake up electric poles. Wild creepers burst through laterite banks and spill across the flooded roads” (Roy 3).

⁵⁵ Alex Tickell recognizes Roy’s literary debt to Rushdie in her use of the pickle imagery. Tickell traces the use of pickles and preserves as a theme back to Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*, where pickles/chutneys register Rushdie’s engagement with history.

⁵⁶ The narrative status of listing here shows its affinity with what Suzanne Keen names “narrative annexes” in her *Victorian Renovations of the Novel*. As Keen argues, “narrative annexes may appear to disfigure the structure they alter, but they at the same time reveal Victorian novelists’ creative responses to the capacities and limitations of their form. Annexes . . . never stop the plot, but serve the story by modifying the story-world” (1).

the list is the child's silent recounting of his grandmother's pickle products in listing form, the desperate effort to distance himself from a traumatic moment:

PICKLES*Mango**Green pepper**Bitter gourd**Garlic**Salted lime***SQUASHES***Orange**Grape**Pineapple**Mango***JAMS***Banana**Mixed fruit**Grapefruit marmalade*

(Roy 99)

The day Ammu brings her twins to the first cinema hall in Kerala to watch the movie *The Sound of Music* is the day one of the twins, Estha, falls prey to a grown man's molestation. The scene of perversity begins to unfold as the Lemondrink Man invites Estha to stay behind the Refreshments Counter to tell a story, the story of Estha's grandmother. While leaning on storytelling as the agent of seduction and downfall, the Lemondrink Man manipulates the situation to his advantage by offering Estha a free lemon drink as an exchange for forced participation in his masturbation. As fear roils in Estha, the least of his concern at this hellish moment is to finish the drink: "Stickysweet lemon bubbles of the drink he couldn't drink. In his head he listed his grandmother's produce" (Roy 99). From this point on, Estha's supposedly cheerful trip to the movie theater is overcast by the shadow of sexual transgression, and his innocence is lost to the pedophilic acts committed by the Lemondrink Man.

The inventory in question is discussion-provoking in terms of the moment when it erupts into the narrative fabric. The molestation context magnifies the inventory as a product of Estha's cognitive dissonance. Estha temporarily *switches off* the disturbing context of a sexual assault by recalling his Mammachi's product list. The inventory thus works as a trope for temporal arrest

that registers an act of dissociation from the immediate experience of sexual molestation. Martin Price's insights into the implications of temporal arrest in narratives, though published in the seventies, still have resonance today: "The arrest of time is the intimation of meaning, a sudden ascent above the stream of events and the uncertainties that beset him so long as he remains immersed in that stream. . . . these moments are a freedom from the conditional, the determined, the horizontal flow of time" (85). The pickle list is clearly legible as a mental event, a move Estha's mind makes in response to the immediate situation. Considered in relation to Price's assertion of the temporal arrest, the pickle inventory signals a shift in consciousness. More precisely, the shift transfers Estha into different dimensions. It is a moment of slipping out of clock time. Such a sudden transition points to Estha's desire to rise above the disturbing and lewd context of a sexual assault. The list represents Estha's effort to block out his fear of the Lemondrink Man's sexual urges, a mechanism to transcend the current situation. It uncovers the way Estha negotiates a sexual transgression and endures the Lemondrink Man's improper sexual behavior, and it constitutes a sudden, sordid, intimation of one meaning of adult sexuality.

Roy prioritizes the pickle list as a stylistic strategy to represent Estha's stream of consciousness, a temporal realm separate from the space-time continuum where the molestation takes place. Using the list to indicate a shift in consciousness is worth close attention, for it establishes the inventory as a textual detail that has its narrative function beyond signaling temporal arrest. The list itself is a textual cue that alludes to what Peter Stockwell, David Herman, and most recently Patrick Colm Hogan characterize as "deictic shift," a change of deictic center. The notion of "deixis" is part of the linguistic investigations that started with Karl Bühler and were later adopted and revitalized by scholars interested in cognitive science, language, or narratology. Etymologically considered, the word "deictic" has the meaning of

showing, and it is a type of showing that is context-based. Deictic elements (e.g., I, you, here, then, now) provide a frame of reference that helps determine the meaning of an utterance.

Central to the deictic shift is the idea of a switch of the spatiotemporal continuum from one to another, from “the here and now of the current interaction to the alternative space-time coordinates” (Herman 270).

While no explicit mention is made of temporal deictics (“then” or “now”) or spatial deictics (“here” or there) in the molestation scene to “prompt a shift from one set of space-time coordinates to another” (Herman 272), the sudden emergence of the inventory suggests that the deictic center is changed in the sense that it relocates Estha to another realm of imagination, which is associated with the image of home. As a metonym for Mammachi’s pickle factory, the inventory directs Estha back to the circle of the familiar and the known. Images of pickles, squashes, and jams temporarily insulate Estha from a “free bottle of fizzed, lemon-flavored fear” (Roy 100). The pickle list does not magically change what has happened to Estha, but it is to stage a new and fugitive perceptual deictic center in Estha’s mind—a mental representation that “involves an imagined temporary relocation of viewpoint as a deictic shift” (Stockwell 128). No less significantly, the process involves not only a shift in perspective—shifting from a perspective that focuses on his hand moving on the Lemondrink Man’s penis and “sticky sweet lemon bubbles of the drink” to “his grandmother’s produce” (Roy 99)—but also a change in cognitive activity from an act of perception to a process of associations. To read the pickle list as staging a deictic shift is to see it as a detail that resembles a revolving door, or a transit point, where an alternative spatiotemporal zone is introduced or indicated, and where an unadorned element can complement narration.

A list of pickles, squashes, and jams is introduced, in the molestation scene, to highlight a strategy of diffusing emotional intensity, but it also sets the stage for a larger inquiry into social relations of power and control. Roy uses the same set of images to interrogate the establishment of rigid and definitive categories. With a careful deliberation on the social backdrop against which the list is read, the reader will find Estha's reflexive pickle listing exposing the intersection of the literary and the social. This is not the first time in the novel that the pickle list has played a role in an event that highlights differential power relations in a highly bureaucratic society. Indeed, the pickle list acquires emblematic significance in a sociocultural context that valorizes a caste-based hierarchy. As we will see, it not only demonstrates humanity's tendency to put things into categories and to regulate relations in a closed system, but it also becomes an index of how a transgressor who breaks social codes gets disciplined and punished. The pickle list registers the way in which forces and energies are mobilized to safeguard a privileged taxonomy and to discipline those who disrupt the stability of existing taxonomic codes.

The twin motifs—"boundary-guarding" and "discipline"—become obvious earlier when the pickle list appears in conjunction with the "jam-jelly question" recounted near the first of the novel. It is a question that the Kochamma family, owner of Paradise Pickles & Preserves, cannot resolve.

What lies at the heart of "the jam-jelly question" is the controversy over what government officials call a product of "ambiguous, unclassifiable consistency" (Roy 31). The product that the Indian officials banned was banana jam, a product they described as "neither jam nor jelly. Too thin for jelly and too thick for jam" (Roy 30-1). The Food Products Organization, a government agency, issues a ban on the Kochamma family's banana jam based on the product's unclassifiability. It is a move made in the interest of uniformity. Yet it is also meant to do the

double work of protecting the legitimacy of the status quo while guaranteeing the exclusion of the unclassifiable from the marketplace. For local authorities who keep a tight rein on public discourse, there is no available category for a product that falls between jam and jelly. Nor is there any tolerance for creating any confusion between jam and jelly. The prohibition of Mammachi's banana jam illustrates how the State apparatus prohibits and annihilates social space for ambiguity, liminality, or commingling. The bureaucratic injunction on the banana jam condenses the fundamental attitudes towards the strict taxonomy that is already in place. It is manifest in its commitment to defending the established categories against any attempt to challenge long-standing rules. It is also seen in its insistence on a unified classificatory system to prevent any taxonomic troubles. Government's firm belief in the clean distinctions between jam and jelly points to institutionalized and bureaucratized forms of classification that are sheltered from attack. Their belief in the either/or logic becomes ossified into an ideological straitjacket that reinforces an essentialist view of "identity" (i.e., what a thing is and how it should be defined). Tellingly, the injunction represents an implied social center of power that demands acts of conformity, keeps quotidian interests aligned, and rules by coercive force. Indeed, a narrative detail such as the pickle list helps focus attention on how the intrusive force of the *big* impinges upon the domain of the small and the private.

The controversy surrounding the pickle list unveils classification as an ideological battleground that creates tension between the individual and the state, or the self and the order of the culture. The rigidity of food categories in a commercial taxonomy like the pickle list directs attention to a state-promoted view of ambiguity and intermingling as socially impermissible and socially dangerous. The same can be said of the prevailing social taxonomy that thrives on the inviolable caste division between Touchable and Untouchable. Even in her early discussion of

the pickle list, Roy links it emblematically to the country's social rules: "Looking back now, to Rahel it seemed as though this difficulty that their family had with classification ran much deeper than the jam-jelly question. . . . They all broke the rules. They all crossed into forbidden territory. They all tampered with the laws that lay down who should be loved and how. And how much" (31). It will be the end of the novel before readers fully understand this comment. In the novel, the laws of caste not only police interpersonal relationships, but also prohibit an intermixed caste category. They show no mercy to any transgressor who sets out to blur or overstep caste boundaries. The cruel death of the Untouchable foreman at the pickle factory, Velutha Paapen, at the end of the novel attests to this. Velutha's untimely death sharpens our sensitivity to the senseless hierarchical division of social relations and its corrupting influences. Velutha has a consensual sexual relationship with Ammu, daughter of Syrian Christian parents, which makes him the target of murderous hatred. After the exposure of his assignation "night after night" (242) with Ammu, Velutha is brutally beaten by Touchable Policemen, and dies shortly after he is taken to the police station. It is clear that death's executors are the Touchable Policemen in the novel, whose acts of persecution and revenge against an Untouchable stem from fear, from "Man's subliminal urge to destroy *what* he could neither subdue nor defy" (Roy 292, italics mine). Critically, the pronoun "what" which Roy does not name is not so much the sexual transgression itself as it is the Untouchable's uncontrolled sexuality. It is Untouchable men's desire for Touchable women that the Touchable Policemen most fear. To put it simply, Velutha is socially dangerous not only because of his disregard of the caste system, but also because his sexual potency and virility introduce the possibility of miscegenation. Velutha is dangerous because he is a sexual being who desires and touches a Touchable woman. What arouses fear is this primordial power, a threat that can compromise distinct markers of difference

and similarity, and thus destabilize the caste taxonomy. This is clearly shown in Mammachi's view of Velutha and Ammu's trans-caste sex as a despicable case of contamination, a view that reduces Ammu to a disgraceful woman who "defiled generations of breeding" (Roy 244).

In many ways, Velutha is a liminal figure in the novel, a figure who defies attempts to label him or to assign him a fixed and absolute category. Velutha occupies a precarious position at the intersections of different systems of stratification: he is an Untouchable foreman at a Touchable-owned factory; he is a Communist in a Christian-Paravan household; he is a man with gaudy, blood-red fingernails that are charged with androgynous suggestion; and most of all, he reciprocates the loving embrace of a Touchable woman.⁵⁷ Any assignment of him to an accustomed, existing social category would rather seem heavy-handed policing. In Velutha, caste, ideological, and gender boundaries are transgressed, and ambiguous categories introduced. The presence of liminality is significant because it intensifies a taxonomic system's arbitrariness, absoluteness, and constructiveness, a human invention designed to impose order and limits. In addition, it makes manifest the caste taxonomy's inertia and outdatedness—what the official taxonomic system is lacking. The liminal identity reveals how deficient or insufficient the institutionalized classification is at catching up with the shifting nature of fluid identities.

Velutha's List of Non-Sentient Objects

Estha's pickle inventory, whose first order of business is to keep two or more things starkly distinguishable, prods the reader to think critically about the issues of control, policing, and

⁵⁷ Devon Campbell-Hall, in "Dangerous Artisans," makes a related point, when she observes accurately the socially hybrid nature of Velutha. Campbell-Hall recognizes how Velutha's roles as an Untouchable and a skilled artisan embody the force of "the disruptive catalyst, enabling challenges to the status quo" (47). She observes that Velutha's unique manual skills place him in "a virtual position of social hybridity," a position that does not "fit neatly into socially-defined categories," and thus "[threatens] the traditional social hierarchies of established communities" (47).

hierarchy. Interestingly, this pickle list that functions under the ideological sanction of authorities is set in contrast to another type of list that Roy introduces later in the novel, a list that connotes ideas of flight and liberation. It is a string of single words lodging in Velutha's mental reality, composed after a distressing and tumultuous scene of confrontation. It expresses Velutha's complex feelings about caste segregation and the debilitating effects of caste conflict. Velutha's list appears right after Mammachi, the old matriarch of the Ayemenem House, confronts Velutha for his sexual transgression. She insults Velutha and spits at him, shouting threats at the "untouchable," who had dared to undertake illicit love with her Syrian-Christian divorced daughter, Ammu.

As he [Velutha] walked away from the [Ayemenem] house, he felt his senses had been honed and heightened. As though everything around him had been flattened into a neat illustration. A machine drawing with an instruction manual that told him what to do. His mind, desperately craving some kind of mooring, clung to details. It labeled each thing it encountered.

Gate. He thought as he walked out of the gate. *Gate. Road. Stones. Sky. Rain.*

Gate.

Road.

Stones.

Sky.

Rain. . . .

The machine drawing began to blur. The clear lines to smudge. The instructions no longer made sense. The road rose to meet him and the darkness grew dense. (Roy 269-270)

Velutha's list is summoned to bring order out of chaos, which offers an important thematic parallel to Estha's pickle list. Estha's list, as I have discussed earlier, is a representation of consciousness, a consciousness that seeks survival. Estha's visceral desire to survive the emotional turbulence during a sexual exploit finds its simple expression in the form of listing.

Estha, unable to stage a defensive response, distracts himself with thoughts of a pickle list. Seen in this light, list-making is a course of action, particularly in Estha's case, a coping strategy.⁵⁸ That the list represents a consciousness seeking a brief respite from fear and insecurity is echoed by Velutha's object list. Velutha's impulse to present the immediate is his survival tactic. He surrenders himself to sensations and perceptions of a visual character, while different forms of sensory experience work in tandem to divert him from Mammachi's insulting speech. Velutha's list of objects operates as emotional anchorage in an otherwise precarious and humiliating situation. But unlike Estha, who makes a list in an effort to detach himself from reality, Velutha seeks to retain a sense of reality through list-making and labeling. Sensing his steep descent into disaster, Velutha is quick to fixate on the details of the trivial and the everyday, and uses them as points of orientation to get clarity: "He knew where he was going. He noticed everything. Each leaf. Each tree. Each cloud in the starless sky. Each step he took" (Roy 269).

The object list registers the flux of Velutha's consciousness, mirroring what he literally perceives. But in contrast to the pickle list that is primarily rule-governed, the object list gives the impression that it is composed in a free style. Furthermore, the object list is collage-like, as a succession of seemingly unrelated concepts evokes the technique of collage. Although seemingly random, the sequence of the nouns points to a progression—to how Velutha's attention moves from man-made objects (gate and road) to natural components (stones, sky, and rain). It marks a pattern of advance from the manifestations of civilization that establish borders, to the intransience of elemental, non-human entities that are not born with sociopolitical inhibitions or inscribed with cultural meanings. Such a pattern of advance corresponds to Velutha's ongoing pursuit of individual liberty and an egalitarian society free of deleterious social constraints.

⁵⁸ Commenting on the use of lists, the omniscient narrator of *The God of Small Things* at one point emphasizes lists' practical and cognitive function, saying that lists are used to "order chaos" (144).

Symbolically, to “[walk] out of the gate” is to defy the Ayemenem community which holds him in bondage. It is also to denounce a community that denies him hopes and dreams for a better future. Velutha notices “gate” and “road,” two opposing constituents of an antithesis. Whereas the “gate” articulates an analog to “border” and a mechanism of “policing,” the word “road,” which indicates a route to travel or escape, projects Velutha’s deep desire to move beyond the bounds of acceptable behavior for the Untouchable. The sight of a road seems to put him in a forward and adventurous turn of mind, as the image of a road points to a new possibility along with a new beginning, that is, a different future. Roads nearly set no limits; one travels as far as the road takes one. Roads are not the best allies of a circumscribed world.

Velutha’s object list concludes with things in nature, a conclusion indicative of a connection to the world of the simple. Clearly, Roy draws attention to Velutha’s unfeigned simplicity by accentuating his identification with nature, a sphere that neither closes him in nor shuts him out. Nature embodies the values of inclusion and equality, as seen in a stretch of wild paradise along the Meenachil River, a paradise composed of the river, swamp, and a dilapidated but luxuriantly vegetated quarter. This untamed lot embraces Velutha as one of its own: “he belonged to it. [It] belonged to him. The water. The mud. The trees. The fish. The stars. He moved so easily through it” (Roy 315-6). Velutha’s planetary sensitivity renders him as an idealistic dreamer who is deeply drawn to nature’s nurturing bosom and lively vibrancy. The object list that gestures toward Velutha’s biophilic and nature-loving character articulates a response to a political community that is blinded by its caste belief and unable to free itself from bias.

One important aspect of Velutha’s enumeration is that his list is not simply psychological but allegorical. Velutha’s object list achieves a different significance, as it emerges as an allegory

of the perverse dynamics between Touchable and Untouchable. Here it offers an example for thinking about the intersection of narrative strategy and political critique. Operating on a number of allegorical levels, the object list provides us with a metaphorical way of discussing the issue of separation and the challenges of reconciliation. Printed separately and vertically, these five nouns are literally presented in the context as unassimilable, unmerged, and isolated. This sequence of stand-alone words may be read to allude to the issue of disunion in a society. The typography Roy employs here informs the way we read the interpersonal relationships as fractured, and further prompts us to consider communal strife based on caste differences as macabre. Noticeably, the way these five words are laid out on the page puts emphasis on the absence of linkages. This makes all the more visible the presence of gaps, the sense of incomprehension, and the quality of unrelatedness. The visual space of the object list is divided horizontally with each noun occupying a line. Such division parallels a hierarchical relationship pattern that is hostile to cross-class bonds of unity and obstructs connections. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of the underdeveloped or undeveloped images suggests more the rivalry of discrete frames of reference than the unity of these five images.

Making us aware of the difficulties of integration, the absence of linkages among the verbal images recalls Henri Bergson's account that it is *not* isolated verbal images but thought-movement that enables us to arrive at a degree of cognitive understanding (125).⁵⁹ In *Matter and Memory*, Bergson states that "between two consecutive verbal images there is a gulf which no amount of concrete representations can ever fill. For images can never be anything but things, and thought is a movement" (125). In other words, it is a succession of qualitative shifts between images and words expressing some kind of relation that makes a speech intelligible and

⁵⁹ In *Matter and Memory*, Bergson considers consciousness as a continuous flow or progress (125).

receivable. Examined through Bergson's theoretical lens, these five linguistic units coexist without "those parts of speech, of which the precise function is to establish, between images, relations and shades of meaning of every kind" (Bergson 124). The reign of the disconnected verbal images in Velutha's object list foregrounds the absence of thought-movement, bringing into view the suppression of relationship and the primacy of separateness. Other than the lack of the continuous flow of consciousness, the nature of labeling itself—the absence of a unifying or combining force—also renders these five linguistic units distant and isolated. The act of labeling demonstrates the knowledge of what a thing is, but it does not extend to constructing meaningful relationships and connections. Symbolically, the object list renders inadmissible any form of assimilation.

The lineation of Velutha's object list resonates not only with the separation between social castes created by long-standing social customs and institutional practices, but also, by extension, with the divide along political, party, and religious lines. For Roy, it is not simply the diversity of political orientations and opinions that fractures a community. A community, or a nation, suffers because of bitter internecine rivalries and malicious feuds. In a recent interview, Roy expresses this sentiment with candor: "Because Kerala is so riven with internecine politics, everybody disagrees with everybody else. There are hundreds of factions, and eventually everything remains frozen in a sort of political rigor mortis [sic]" (Roy and Barsamian 3). It is the ever-expanding and ever-subdividing categories of political identity and persuasion that potentially tear apart the fabric of society. Reflecting on the disunity in a nation stays at the forefront of Roy's historical awareness. Dramatizing various stages of social unrest and political upheavals in Kerala, Roy portrays a region entangled in political discords in the post-Independence era.

Roy uses the listing space that displays the ascendancy of fragmentation over unity to advance the theme of political disquietude that clouds prospects for national unity. In *The God of Small Things*, a regional nexus such as Kerala is nonetheless a microcosm of a nation broken up by sociopolitical agendas and ideological interests. In substituting one ideology for another, the Kerala community experiences each change as that which vies to establish control over their minds. Roy discerns vast difference among ideological paradigms, and compares any political action that is based on ideology to an obstacle race: “An obstacle race, with a prize at the end” (64). The race analogy contributes to a cluster of symbolic overtones: politics is debased to a species of spectatorship spurring excitement and tension with runners competing for recognition and managing to win with one formula. Political engagement and enthusiasm devolve into a competition that further widens the schisms among opposing groups. The Kerala community finds it hard to cut loose from the oppression of ideological shackles and shibboleths.

Roy explores the list’s political valence which is often masked by the surface simplicity of its presentation. Both the object list and the pickle list call attention to a hierarchized society, a society that valorizes hierarchy in industry and social caste. Roy, however, is concerned with a hierarchized classification system that is found not only in the legacy of caste divisions, but also in a perverse vision of reality that enables racial hierarchies. The question of hierarchized classification is further pursued in conjunction with the issue of race in the novel, as Roy turns a critical lens on the legacy of India’s colonial past, a past that entails a postcolonial subject straddling two cultures. Postcolonial writers’ interrogation of white supremacy and racial hierarchy is nothing new. Nor is their attempt to situate the colonial legacy in relation to postcolonial existence. Roy is no exception. She also reflects on the issue of internalized inferiority and the imperative of mental decolonization, yet what sets her apart from other

postcolonial writers is her persistent concern with the political function of style in a work of literature—particularly her different uses of the trope, the list, to make inroads into various terrains of colonial contestation. As we shall see, Roy appropriates the listing form and turns it on its head by exposing the narrowness of the types and forms of human categorizations. In the next two listing examples, representations of the tension between form and content play out the limitations of the list, a tension that is connected with the larger cultural concern with the practice of listing. In order to understand the list as in some sense a *colonial* trope and its instrumentality and political implications in the context of India's colonial history, it is necessary to revisit a past when listing was both an institutional practice and a conscious effort central to colonial dominance.

Enumerative Form and the Strategy of Imperial Control

Roy's heavy deployment of practical lists as a stylistic strategy awakes the memory of how lists and catalogues, at their broadest, were once political instruments in India's colonial past—instruments that marked the presence of the imperial power, and that existed as an extension of the imperial gaze seeking to turn the unknown, alien, and abstract (e.g., population, languages, customs, religions, and resources) into data and descriptions. List-making serves administrative needs and political ends. To collect, catalogue, and compile is to literally buttress colonial interests, economic or otherwise, in a foreign land with empirical knowledge that is documentable, analyzable, and usable. Consequently and no less significantly, the creation and formulation of lists and categories flatten colonial localities into systems of definitions and generalizations. Listing is thus a great reminder of the ways knowledge is amassed and compiled

by imperial functionaries and civil bureaucracies to exercise and maintain a measure of control in a distant country.

The implications of list- or catalogue-making as a strategy for British imperial control is traced and explored in Thomas Richards' *The Imperial Archive*. According to Richards, the British Empire's practice of gathering knowledge of its colonies along with making lists out of the knowledge serves political agendas. To "collect and collate information" about its colonies is to solve the issue of ruling from afar: "They took censuses, produced statistics. They made vast lists of birds. Then they shoved the data they had collected into a shifting series of classifications" (Richards 3). Central to the procedures of British imperial dominance are collecting information and creating taxonomies, both working hand in hand. The accretion and ordering of knowledge does not necessarily facilitate further expansion of the Empire, but it establishes the authority of Britain as the colonial center. "Knowledge," Richards forcefully argues, operates "not as the supplement of power but as its replacement in the colonial world" (5). It comes as no surprise that lists and catalogues of information, for the British Empire, becomes a convenient form of reading and interpreting its distant territory.

One example of knowledge that starkly and purposefully acts as the agent of colonial control is the knowledge produced by the Survey of India, an institution of British rule that accords with the aim of compiling Indian data to facilitate administrative governance and colonial rule. In the early nineteenth century, Peter Gottschalk notes, British surveyors from the Survey of India would check off lists "indicating the social and natural phenomena they were meant to record" (174). In the British metropole, as Bernard S. Cohen has pointed out, "There was widespread agreement that this society [India] . . . could be known and represented as a series of facts. The form of these facts was taken to be self-evident, as was the idea 'that

administrative power stemmed from the efficient use of these facts” (4). Revealing is the assumption that the mysterious Other, the colonial space, can be methodically approached and strategically overseen through the building of lists and catalogues. A set of methods and activities in association with the survey⁶⁰ of India becomes a political means of domination in the colonial world. Lists and catalogues in this particular colonial context are political expedients, used with political motives.

The practice of conducting surveys has a long history in India. We may take conducting censuses as an example. According to Cohen, “By 1881 [the Government of India] had worked out a set of practices that enabled them not just to list the names of what they hoped would be every person in India but also to collect basic information about age, occupation, caste, religion, literacy, place of birth, and current residence” (8). Cohen continues to argue that “what was entailed in the construction of the census operations was the creation of social categories by which India was ordered for administrative purposes. . . . [The censuses] also objectified social, cultural, and linguistic differences among the peoples of India” (8). As a population is reduced to numbers, categories, and facts, these different ordering structures treat the inhabitants as a totalizable social collective. “The census,” Cohen concludes, “represents a model of the Victorian encyclopedic quest for total knowledge” (8). Tellingly, the production of surveys and censuses not only reveals how generalization leads to the establishment of types and categorizations, but also engenders a type of rationality based on acts of inquiring, collecting, sorting, and analyzing. The terms that we associate with surveys (e.g., generalization, reason, and objectivity) are echoed in two of Roy’s enumerative forms, which I will call her “assessment

⁶⁰ “In the context of colonial India,” Cohen explains, “the concept of the ‘survey’ came to cover any systematic and official investigation of the natural and social features of the Indian empire” (7).

checklists.” They are the two lists that consist of question-and-answer pairs, designed to elicit “yes” or “no” responses.

It is important, of course, to recognize that the listing practice is a testimony that human existence cannot do without some level of selecting and ordering. In addition, listing, at its most effective, can embody the vigorous and unrelenting energy that is invested in the creation of types and categories. Below are Roy’s two checklists, and both prove illuminative of this. Both lists highlight the use of the (a) (b) (c) notation that captures the impulse to compress what we perceive and believe into an easy formula, a formula that foregrounds a system of differentiation. At the same time, both lists probe the relationship between type and stereotype, and display Roy’s awareness of the slippage between them. The first checklist occurs after the molested Estha returns to the unfinished screening of the twins’ favorite movie *The Sound of Music*. While the twins, Estha and Rahel, are drawn magnetically to the screen, and, particularly, to the cinematic images of “clean children” cuddling on a “clean bed” and singing “a clean song” (Roy 101), the movie elicits in the twins’ minds a few questions:

- (a) *Did Baron von Clapp-Trapp shiver his legs?*
He did not.
- (b) *Did Baron von Clapp-Trapp blow spit bubbles? Did he?*
He did most certainly not.
- (c) *Did he gobble?*
He did not.

(Roy 101, italics in original)

This set of questions and answers, like the object list and the pickle list, is internally experienced. It is a psychological response to the *white* fantasy world on the big screen, a response that focuses on the differences that set Baron von Trapp apart from the twins. Most

importantly, at the center of this catalogue is a reductive and stereotypical reading of race that plays up the differences between whites and South Asian Indians. A second set of questions and answers, assembled a little further down the same page, ironically projects the glaring contrast between “refined” European civility and “amusing” Indian vulgarity. But it is given to us from Estha’s own perspective. It is Estha’s imaginary monologue, the shame-ridden Estha ventriloquizing Baron von Trapp:

Baron von Trapp had some questions of his own.

- (a) *Are they clean white children?*
No. (*But Sophie Mol is.*)
- (b) *Do they blow spit bubbles?*
Yes. (*But Sophie Mol doesn't.*)
- (c) *Do they shiver their legs? Like clerks?*
Yes. (*But Sophie Mol doesn't.*)
- (d) *Have they, either or both, ever held strangers' soo-soos?*
N . . . Nyes. (*But Sophie Mol hasn't.*)

“Then I am sorry,” Baron von Clapp-Trapp said. “It’s out of the question. I cannot love them. I cannot be their Baba. Oh no.”

Baron von Clapp-Trapp couldn’t.

(Roy 101-2, italics in original)

Here the list of questions and answers becomes a vantage point for us to see how differentiations are made and types built. In a simple gesture of going through a checklist, some general ideas of a group of people are formed and proposed. The first checklist which centers on the twins’ and other Indians’ behavioral patterns builds a profile that stereotypes a specific group of people. In the preceding chapters, we learn that random behaviors such as shivering legs, blowing spit bubbles, and gobbling are identified by the twins’ mother, Ammu, as clerks’ behaviors: “Ammu hates them [Estha and Rahel] blowing spit bubbles. She said it reminded her of Baba. Their father. She said that he used to blow spit bubbles and shiver his leg. According to

Ammu, only clerks behaved like that, not aristocrats” (Roy 80). Ammu’s loathing of shivering legs, blowing spit bubbles, and gobbling signals the consciousness of class. For her, they are issues of class. But for the twins, these undesirable behaviors are as much class issues as racial issues: as the second checklist indicates, they behave “like clerks” and are grouped in opposition to “clean white children.” From the context in which both checklists are built, we realize that both lists are the twins’ shamed response to their non-white, non-western mannerisms. Accumulated in both lists are nuanced signs of denigrating what they practice daily as unremarkable.

Through the two checklists, Roy shows that a system of differentiation can easily become an ideologically charged game that exhibits the regulatory functions of classification—policing functions that have been identified by David Spurr as “assigning positions, regulating groups, and enforcing boundaries” (63). Here we understand why Ammu chides Rahel loudly over her spit bubble in public, as lower-class behaviors are incompatible with their aspiration as Syrian Christians for high social standing.⁶¹ But there is an interesting twist on these two checklists. It is Estha, who inhabits Baron von Trapp’s position and privileges a particular viewpoint. The fact that these two assessment checklists are from Estha, not Baron von Trapp, further complicates Spurr’s observation of the regulatory functions of classification. Roy adds an unsettling dimension to Spurr’s observation by introducing the theme of internalized inferiority. We should not forget that it is the *white* fantasy world on the screen that inspires Estha’s negative thoughts—thoughts that force him into an unpleasant assessment of himself. While losing in fantasy to his favorite movie, Estha relapses into profound pessimism. His assessment discloses a

⁶¹ According to Alex Tickell’s *Arundhati Roy’s The God of Small Things*, Syrian Christians hold on to the belief that the first Hindu converts to Christianity were from Brahmin families (19). Tickell writes, “Traditionally, the [Syrian Christian] community has preserved its high social standing by a custom of strict endogamy . . . and a careful observation of many of the social restrictions of upper-caste Hindus” (19).

hidden weight of despair that is approached only by indirection. The two checklists bring into visibility the extent to which a post-Independence subject is plagued by self-doubt induced by a submission to white ideological dominance.

Both checklists embody Estha's mesmerization with a white fantasy and his internalized inferiority, which imbue the trope with the postcolonial function of showing the internalization of the colonial gaze. In the second checklist that foregrounds Estha's ventriloquism, Estha denies love to himself with disarming (and unsettling) straightforwardness. It reflects an unwittingly subjugated mentality in colonial politics, and displays the image of what Simon Gikandi terms "a degenerative alterity" (202), a mind that feels alienated, if not hostile, to its indigenous cultural experience. This is seen in Estha's loss of racial pride over some innocuous, unwitting habits and his reductive conclusion that *white* is identified as the supreme value and that the image of *clean* is reflected in the image of his mixed-race cousin, Sophie Mol, who is "Loved from the beginning" (Roy 129) and whose "eyes were bluegrayblue. Her pale skin was the color of beach sand" (Roy 137). Important light is cast by the enumerative discourse utilized by Roy on postcolonial subjects' ongoing struggle with mental emancipation after decolonization. The emphasis on the practice of listing is to reveal the phantomlike presence of mental control that outlives the Empire and its imperial bureaucracies and administrative practices. Particularly, manifestations of Estha's doubt about selfhood make it imperative to exorcise the lingering specter of imperial colonization. As Ann Laura Stoler asserts, "No one would claim that colonial effects were confined to areas of physical conquest alone" (10). Significantly, Roy's two checklists reveal that the list takes on a double image—of a space projecting Britain's strategy for colonial control in the past and of a space for social analysis of how self-doubt becomes a familiar phase of emotion identified in postcolonial subjects.

The catalogue also gives us clarity about an impressionable and self-conscious mind that is condemned to self-censorship. Not only do the prospects of validating Estha's cleanness gradually recede, but also Estha, the object of scrutiny, begins a self-questioning process that is marked by painful self-negation. Those imaginary evaluative questions push Estha further into thinking of himself as nonexistent, as the nonexistent word "Nyes" indicates at the close of the four-question evaluation.⁶² At its most basic level, of course, the word shows Estha's initial denial of the humiliation of the Lemondrink man's pederasty. It betrays the victim's judgment of himself as somehow guilty. And it then is assimilated to the metaphor of clean-dirty which has been assigned to the distinction between white and Indian in the checklist. But it may go even further than that. Estha's simple efforts of differentiation poignantly reveal what it is like to question oneself into non-being. Evidently, Estha's sense of worthlessness has grown more acute. On the other hand, the coinage of "Nyes," registering the quaint hybrid of "no" and "yes," points to an ambiguous identity that is difficult to categorize, an identity that cannot fit into the space associated with a positive or negative response. Symbolically, to choose between yes and no—to choose to respond with a definitive answer—is to ignore and deny one's development of double-consciousness as a result of historical forces and social conditions. On the social scene, Estha is sentenced to living under the spell of what W. E. B. Du Bois calls "double-consciousness."⁶³ On a personal level, the ideal institution of cleanness that is closely associated with the concept of white becomes an inner tribunal that wields its control over Estha.

⁶² Literally, "Nyes" is an adequate response, since only one of the twins holds the Lemondrink Man's *soo-soo*, so it is both "no" and "yes."

⁶³ In "Souls of Black Folks," W.E.B. Du Bois states that "It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness? An America, a Negro, two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (25).

Scholars have engaged questions about the objectivity of classification, and some have argued that classification is value-loaded, if not manipulative. Illuminating in this regard is Spurr's treatment of classification as a kind of rhetoric. In *The Rhetoric of Empire*, he writes, "the nature of classification itself [is] a rhetorical procedure by which Western writing generates an ideologically charged meaning from its perceptions of non-Western cultures" (62). Spurr's account posits the operation of dividing and naming as a form of representation that produces effects that are far from objective but rather mystifying. It would be problematic to consider classification as a value-free procedure. Roy certainly takes on the question of objectivity in association with classification, but she approaches the issue from a different angle. She moves between different classifications present in the catalogue forms to take a stand on the issue of objectivity. We may again take Estha's two checklists as an example. Estha's thought stream takes the form of a behavioral checklist—a tool of scientific assessment. In appearance, the (a) (b) (c) notation that exemplifies serial thought lends the listing structure an orderly and objective look, as if the sequence of questions has been codified and institutionalized as standards of behavioral evaluation. It is, however, the sense of objectivity and rationality that distracts us from what is significant. At bottom, Estha's checklists project a white fantasy that elevates whites and denigrates Indians, based on an oversimplified classification of random behaviors. It makes sense to consider Estha's lists of questions and answers as a rudimentary form of racial classification that reinforces the view of India as a manageable totality. What Estha unthinkingly rehearses in both lists is sweeping generalities that narrowly defines a race by its behavioral tendencies and treats these tendencies as defining, innate, and absolute characteristics, that is, as essences. Roy's re-creation of the fallacy of this view, through two seemingly objective

checklists, sheds light on what has been mystified, that is, the distinction between what is nature and what is social category.

Roy presents the checklists as a deceptively objective form. She brilliantly uses the tension arising from the incongruity between a formulaic mode of expression and silly, childish contents to create a sense of absurdity, and, most importantly, to work against the valuing of a classification as a product of nonbiased observations and procedures. We can't help thinking that the allusion to "claptrap" in both checklists suggests the two lists of questions and answers we encounter here represent less an exemplary instance of rational and objective discourse than a sort of *claptrap* that ought to be called into question. In light of these two examples, Roy's checklists, designed to convey some type of classification, emerge as a radical form that signals her rhetorical intensions. However methodically and systematically developed, classifications and categories do not necessarily embody the value of objectivity. What seems to be structural thought may be a vehicle for something else. Roy herself demonstrates the ways lists and catalogues can be exploited or even manipulated. In her novel, the catalogue form is used to open the discussion on the issue of racial hierarchy. Roy plays with a presumably objective form, and ties the form to a racialized discourse in an effort to unmask the nature of racial distinction, a distinction that is more often than not masqueraded as objectivity, as absoluteness.

As the name "Baron von Trapp" comically becomes "Baron von Clapp-Trapp," the play on the homonym "claptrap" makes all the more conspicuous Roy's effort to satirize the nonsensical creation of a perfect, idolized image, to reject the nonsense of Baron von Trapp's racialized perspective, and by implication, to ironize the folly of claiming racial superiority. Specifically, Roy takes issue with the myth of how white values and Indian ways are mutually exclusive, and how therefore one race fares best *without* the other or *with* the subordination of the other—the

origin of racial bigotry and the basis of racial hierarchy. The issue of internalized racial inferiority cuts across both listing examples, rendering both lists a significant trope for cultural location through which we recognize “identity and knowledge as locationally and historically produced” (Friedman 137). The space of the list condenses the knowledge of difference and division in postcolonial culture into a hierarchical view of race, “marking the specific cultural location of a character within the larger society” (Friedman 137).

Coda

A field of scholarship on lists or catalogues gives prominence to the idea that these structures can no longer be laminated to a diagram-like translation of physical objects. They are not necessarily oriented toward mimesis. Nicholas Howe, for example, explores catalogues’ extraliterary functions in encyclopedias and poems produced in the Middle Ages. He demonstrates that an unassuming element such as cataloguing emerges as an aggregate of ideological values. The listing device is anything but value-neutral. The idea that lists and catalogues operate on multiple levels is not alien to the postcolonial writer Arundhati Roy, whose creative use of lists illustrates that the enumerative form, even when aesthetically insipid, goes beyond sheer classification, and serves as a hinge to direct the focus of attention to larger concerns of caste, race, and imperial colonization. Particularly, her lists resonate with a history in which the enumerative discourse was constitutive of colonial politics in colonial India. Roy, unquestionably, takes us beyond the narrow conception of a list as ornamental to a terrain where the catalogical form not only functions as a site of meaning making, but also marks a site of political investment. Placed at the intersection of the formal and the political, lists and catalogues

in Roy's novel achieve considerable power as an allusion to humans' tendency to make divisions, draw boundaries, and engage in conflict over the divisions and boundaries.

As the listing form gains currency on the literary scene and perhaps becomes a more common practice in fictional narrative, it becomes increasingly clear that listing is as much a relevant trope that complements an aesthetic event, as a political strategy that raises consciousness of modes of oppression.⁶⁴ *The God of Small Things* demonstrates that no matter how the enumeration gives an impression of simplicity, its critical value is its engagement in sociopolitical dialogue which challenges the authority of a privileged taxonomy.

⁶⁴ Here I am thinking of a list of mixed sources of white noise in the supermarket scene from Don DeLillo's *White Noise*. The narrator deploys the listing strategy to describe what he calls "a dull and unlocatable roar" in the supermarket: "I realize the place was awash in noise. The toneless systems, the jangle and skid of carts, the loudspeaker and coffee machines, the cries of children" (36). The list represents the invisible but palpable existence of white noise on a miniature scale, permeating the supermarket. At the same time, the list also alludes to the monotony of capitalist lifestyle and the overproduction of consumer culture.

Chapter Four
Cataloguing as Playful Pedagogy:
The Sense and Sensation of Movement in Gertrude Stein

One of the hallmarks of the early twentieth century was the increasing sense and speed of movement—whether in airplanes, architecture, painting, or words. Since then, much attention has been devoted to pursuing, expressing, and capturing the presence, in Gertrude Stein’s words, of the “vitality of movement” (“Portraits and Repetition” 103). The successful take-off of the 1905 airplane designed by the Wright brothers is among a succession of revolutions in mind and intellect. Modernist designer Frank Lloyd Wright’s 1909 Frederick C. Robie House, a landmark architectural project of the Prairie School, is marked by the design of living and dining spaces as free-flowing space. In the Robie House, while the fireplace straddles the living and dining rooms, a gap at top of the fireplace structure is designed to allow the unobstructed movement of air. Furthermore, the gap yields the illusion of a continuing space that is meant to inspire the feeling of connectedness in its occupants and guests alike. Wright’s modernist influences and preoccupation with freedom and innovation provide an example of the sense of movement incorporated into architectural thinking. Strikingly, the eagerness to celebrate movement to push further the boundaries of imagination was found on both sides of the Atlantic as exemplified by the stridency of the Italian Futurist movement. Concerned with generating and expressing creative energy in the present, the pursuit of *movement* in various arenas and across disciplines associates the image of movement with revolution, creativity, and modernity. Around the same time, an aesthetic foregrounding the idea of moving emerged into prominence, but it promotes a different mode of movement. Rather than discussing movements created by a force or entity travelling through space or measured by time, painter-critic Clive Bell embraces the power and impact of visual forms that are “aesthetically moving” (8). In Bell, the idea of movement takes

on a different dimension and another significance, since the trope of *moving* is invoked to convey the quality of provoking aesthetic emotions, a quality that remains Bell's focus of interest. This affective movement that yields a passionate, moving aesthetic experience is identifiable in what he calls "Significant Form" (8). In his 1914 book, *Art*, Bell offers a theory of visual art that builds on his assertion of Significant Form as the pivotal quality, intrinsic and peculiar to all works of visual art.

Gertrude Stein also deploys the same vocabulary to articulate the status of visual arts as a transformative agent, while recognizing the moving quality as both essential and decisive to artistic creation. In her reminiscence, she and her brothers, Michael and Leo Stein, were emotionally moved by Jean-François Millet's oil painting, *Man with a Hoe* (*Lectures in America* 65). Bell's and Stein's accounts of affective movement facilitate the comprehension of a reproduction of powerful feelings in the viewer, illustrating that arts transcend mere realism. While sharing with Bell a similar sentiment and aesthetic sensibility toward the moving quality in artworks, Stein takes the discussion of movement in another direction. Her focus extends beyond its affective dimensions to an ontological one—movement reified in *the entity as existing*, seen in the liveliness and vitality in *the entity as existing*. In "Pictures," one of her lectures in America written in 1934, published in 1935, Stein identifies Leonardo da Vinci's *The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne* as the first artwork that engages her in thinking the question of movement in paintings. For Stein, this oil painting renders visible the way a painting *moves*. Such a movement, Stein clarifies, is not "the effect of moving," but "an internal movement, not of the people or light or any of these things but inside in the oil painting" ("Pictures," 86). Used to characterize an irreducible appeal of the twentieth-century oil paintings, this internal movement is exactly what makes an oil painting an oil painting, according to Stein. This untranslatable

quality compels us to acknowledge that the oil painting has its own existence, an existence that is not defined by its resemblance to or imitation of reality. “It has a life of its own,” declares Stein (“Pictures” 63).

Meanwhile, Stein’s awareness of movement as a cultural phenomenon, not simply as an artistic feature, is clearly sketched out in her memoir of 1937, *Everybody’s Autobiography*, where she, with hindsight, asserts that in the realm of modern arts “Ever since Cezanne everybody who has painted has wanted to have a feeling of movement inside the painting not a painting of a thing moving but the thing painted having inside it the existence of moving” (311). The movement referenced here and in Stein’s work can be understood as the rhythm of everyday life and the feeling of a thing or person as existing, as Stein informs us in her lecture “Portraits and Repetition” (108). Stein’s open pronouncement of a vibrant character in modern paintings arrived twenty years later than Bell’s theory of Significant Form, but her attentiveness to the *moving* quality as an inspiring presence, in fact, had already been vividly present in her early work. As one of the preeminent figures, Stein not only had her finger on the pulse of avant-garde art movements that created and constituted the vibrancy of her era, but also showed, early on, an interest in imagining the kinetic in various ways. Movement as a trope is central to Stein’s literary production, because it metaphorically gestures toward forces of instability and registers notes of defiance in her artistry, an artistry that is drawn to the value of spontaneity and the expression of vibrancy. Additionally, movement also serves as a trope for Stein’s poetic works charged with verbal movement. The excitement gained from the verbal movement is what Stein pursues, a matter deeply related to her response to an intellectually and artistically vibrant era and her early preoccupation of creating the contemporary composition. Thus, how words can be the occasion of movement and thrive in movement is what Stein contemplates and tries to

illustrate in her work. Seeing Stein as a quester for movement, in this chapter I am concerned with the array of routes she takes in search of the embodiment, manifestation, and sensation of movement, and the way Stein uses the trope of listing to examine and interrogate the implications of movement and to provide it with a shaping principle.

Clive Bell's commitment to the idea of emotion-stirring forms is shared by Gertrude Stein, and at the same time his assertion of the subject of painting as secondary and less important is also shared by Stein. As Angela Leighton has pointed out in her book, *On Form*, Bell abstracts form from subject matter, suggesting his espousal of the separation of form and content. As for Stein, the subject (people, objects, or landscapes) in painting is reduced to instruments or vehicles for artistic expression: "these things are only the way . . . an oil painter makes an oil painting" ("Pictures," 84). With that said, Stein holds a different view of the relationship between form and content, when it comes to writing. The tendency of delinking form from content in the literary act is something Stein would be unsympathetic to.

Stein's position on the issue of form and content is documented in Samuel M. Steward's memoir collected in *Dear Sammy: Letters from Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas*. Taking Steward for a stroll in the French countryside, Stein confided that she "[does] not like creation without intention" (Steward 57). "You have to have something in mind," Stein insists, "some intention, or your creation is just words, just playing with words. That is the trouble with most of the writing being done today" (Steward 57). For Stein, a work without intention sadly renders its creator-writer an instrument producing empty and lifeless words, or relegates the writer to a player of verbal charades and linguistic games. Stein's insistence on making intention integral to literary production might have had surprised those who had, early on, publicly derided and

taunted her writing as childish nonsense and meaningless absurdity.⁶⁵ Aside from the issue of creation without intention, Stein is equally dismayed by writing practices that demonstrate content without form. Playing a decisive role in both her aesthetic judgment and artistic practice, the coupling of form and content and the union between creation and intention are emphasized in tandem: “If you had included the content in the form and the creation in the intention,” Stein concludes, “then you would have made something” (Steward 57). Significantly, what Stein diagnoses and what she sees as a problem in her fellow writers’ work is exactly what she steers clear from in her own work. Stein’s attention to these two aesthetic principles is important to our reading of Stein’s experiment with forms, particularly in the context of her preoccupation with the act of list-making. These two principles help set the scene for a discussion of the intimate relationship of form with content in Stein’s work.

Listing as a literary technique assumes high visibility in Stein’s oeuvre. Her literary lists are scattered throughout her poetic works and frequently found in her dramatic texts, her readers encountering varying listings which are alternately simple, daring, expressive, and elliptical. Facilitating a wide range of literary experiments, Stein’s listing is used as a teaching strategy, a pedagogical method to engage her readers in serious contemplation of movement, and simultaneously shows us the ways the catalogical form—the list—gives impetus to a fresh political critique of the issues of categorical thinking, gender, sexuality, and national identity. The intertwining of the listing form and movement comes into focus as follows: First, two

⁶⁵ See for instance Wyndham Lewis, in his essay “Tests for Counterfeit in the Arts and The Prose-Song of Gertrude Stein,” dismisses her composition as “a form of clowning” (53), and does not hesitate to infantilize Stein by stating that “she writes usually so like a child—like a confused, stammering . . . child” (52). Or, Robert E. Rogers sees madness in Stein’s *Tender Buttons*. He considers Stein’s work as the embodiment of “anarchy in art” (31). Even Stein scholar and sympathizer Michael J. Hoffman in his 1976 book, *Gertrude Stein*, while acknowledging the pleasure and excitement found in Stein’s language experiment, admits that “In treating language so cavalierly, Stein runs the danger of a maddening polysemy” (65).

vertical lists of names in Stein's dramatic work, *Four Saints in Three Acts*, emerge as a visual framework that provides ways of thinking and questioning notions of monumentalization and conformity. Using the visual qualities of these two lists, Stein animates a critique of rote movement found in everyday living. While problematizing rote movement, she draws attention to the distinction between playful movement and dead monument. Second, an erotic list characterized by listed words arranged in visually suggestive shapes in an early portrait, "Sacred Emily," works as a psychological mirror that reflects how Stein embraces a female body as a sensuous, sexual, and empowering agent. In showcasing this erotic list, Stein brings awareness to the cyclical movement of a life force and the tidal movement of sexual desire. Third, the same erotic list functions as a philosophical critique that problematizes the mind-body divide, as Stein contemplates the mastery of mind over body in the realm of anatomy. Fourth, a throne-like listing consisting of noun phrases in incrementally repetitive sequences in "Sacred Emily" offers a visual vocabulary that helps probe the questions of aesthetic production and writerly identity. Finally, listing becomes an aesthetic foundation for Stein to discuss and celebrate the notion of "moving words," thereby illustrating the great value of words' plasticity and volatility. I will examine in detail each of these examples and others in the pages that follow. As it turns out, I will argue, the topic of moving words is meant to foreground a correlation between moving words and a rising nation (America). The scope of Stein's discussion on moving words surprisingly implicates issues about aesthetic creation, the status of American writing, and her confidence in being an American writer. In the process, the implications of a "moving" language are widened, crossing from the aesthetic to the political.

Listing as a Critique of Rote Movement

Read against the backdrop of emergent Western modernism, the interest in *movement* was shaped and framed by the contemporary reality of Stein's day where a mechanical-industrial-commercial culture became the norm that changed and charted people's ways of living and patterns of thinking. As David Harvey notes in his book, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, "the modernism that emerged before the First World War was more of a reaction to the new conditions of production (the machine, the factory, urbanization), circulation (the new systems of transport and communications), and consumption (the rise of mass markets, advertising, mass fashion) than it was a pioneer in the production of such changes" (23). The fast- and ever-changing material conditions of everyday life at once repulsed and seduced the people of the early twentieth century.

Stein's envisioning of movement emerges from her awareness of the cultural forces that obstruct or stifle creative impulses, and coincides with a preoccupation with opening up new possibilities of thinking outside the confines of established cultural idioms and unsettling stereotyped categories. In that sense, Stein's vision of movement assumes a defiant character. It is noteworthy that Stein's discussion of Cezanne's artistic breakthrough in *Everybody's Autobiography* illustrates that the existence of "moving" is analogous to breaking the mold or breaking out of the old shell.⁶⁶ In Stein, the pursuit of "movement being existing" (*EA*, 311) or the state of being "living" and "alive" (*EA*, 312) is a counterforce to the monolithic and the decayed. Equally important is Stein's vision of movement as comparable to a responsive and receptive state of mind that raises the stakes of freedom beyond the physical and spatial. Stein's attention to the state of being "living" and "alive" as movement stems from her alertness to the

⁶⁶ See pages 311-312 in *Everybody's Autobiography*.

state of imprisonment—be it physical, psychological, spiritual, or intellectual—manifested in artistic, cultural enterprises and social institutions.⁶⁷ Stein’s resistance to forms of imprisonment chimes in with popular views of movement as rule-breaking, uninhibited, and infinite in the early twentieth century. Such a cultural sentiment finds its best expression in the Italian Futurists’ interest in “dynamic sensation” (“Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto,” 296).

In the example that follows, Stein probes the tensions between rote movement and imaginative movement, through which she draws attention to categorical thinking, one of the culprits causing a cultural imprisonment that circumscribes man’s faculty for lively creation. The example—two vertical lists—from Stein’s play *Four Saints in Three Acts* illustrates Stein’s view of categorical thinking as rigid, prescriptive, and incongruent with the spirit of openness and volatility found in the pursuit of movement. Through a visual rhetoric, Stein shows disapproval of the act of monumentalizing things in the past. Particularly, monumentalization goes hand in hand with reified thinking, thereby assuming a form of imprisonment that Stein calls into question.

Saint Therese	Saint Ignatius
Saint Matyr	Saint Paul
Saint Settlement	Saint William
Saint Thomasine	Saint Gilbert
Saint Electra	Saint Settle
Saint Wihelmina	Saint Arthur
Saint Evelyn	Saint Selmer

⁶⁷ Stein offers several examples of mental imprisonment. For starters, man’s reliance on religion would not contribute to the creation of the pictorial: “Deserts do not make painters but they make charm and religion” (*EA*, 108). Stein contends that religion traps man in the past. Comparing American and English writers, she states that “in England the dead are not dead because they are connected with the others living, in America the dead are dead there is no connection with those left living. That has a great deal to do with deserts and religion” (*EA*, 110). Another example of intellectual imprisonment is Stein’s belief that pictures should escape from “the prison of framing” (*EA*, 312). Furthermore, Stein observed in a critique that “quite naturally and now . . . all peoples are asking to be imprisoned in organization” (*EA*, 312).

Saint Pilar	Saint Paul Seize
Saint Hilldaire	Saint Cardinal
Saint Bernadine	Saint Plan
	Saint Giuseppe

(*Four Saints*, 585-6)

As “Any one can see that any saint to be” (*FS*, 585), the saints are ultimately reduced to two lists of names that visually represent two headstones, as it were, within the work. In this case, listing is unfavorably linked to the monumental and the reified. The headstone image is evocative of a form of the burial that boasts the reign of the decayed and the finite. Although the monument is meant for commemoration, each name risks degeneration into a cipher without specificity as all the saints collapse into “one” identity, having in common the title of “saint.”⁶⁸ Consequently, this use of the listing form engages us in questioning the relationship between saints and acts of commemoration, and further asks us to contemplate the implications of monumentalizing as rote and unfree movement at variance with imaginative and free movement facilitated, for example, by a lively stage play.

Taken together as a display of a community of saints, names in the lists are laid out one by one in an orderly manner. The symmetrical design of the lists consisting of vertical and horizontal lines leaves us the impression that the whole structure seems to be framed in the same way as specimens are collected and assembled. While the two columns of names take on a template-like quality, a listing that showcases a roll call reinforces the sense of uniformity and rigidity. Both dry and dull lists of saints’ names bring to our attention the fact that the stories of saints are often absorbed into historical accounts, often get flattened in our memory, and are often reduced to the presentation of a monument, a reductive cultural symbol. This list of names

⁶⁸ Stein writes, in *Four Saints*, “Four saints later to be if to be if to be to be one to be” (585).

constitutes an undifferentiated ensemble, as the monument effortlessly replaces the stories of saints and usurps the status of the saints.

Interestingly, what is echoed throughout the two lists is the word “saint,” a cultural label that subsumes a select few under one distinct category. It is also a social identity of such significance that society builds monuments in its name. However, Stein’s skepticism, or distrust, of using monuments as a public act of commemoration is suggested by the sufficiently chilling statement further down the same page: “No saint to remember to remember. No saint to remember” (*FS*, 586). Whereas the stone monument is purposefully erected to invite man’s gaze and summons man to realms of reminiscence and contemplation, Stein’s unsettling and pungent response to the monument bears a sobering message that the past is diminished into a dead and unintriguing symbol that can only send us into bouts of amnesia about the past. Moreover, individual legacy and inspiring legend would fade into oblivion, when the building of the monument validates the absorption of personal history into common consciousness expressed in the form of a stone monument or a porcelain doll (“Saint Ignatius could be in porcelain actually in porcelain standing”). Striking is Stein’s depiction of Saint Ignatius as a porcelain figurine that stands unaccompanied. The aloneness coupled with the glossy appearance proves illuminative of a displacement from its peculiar spatiotemporal continuum, amplifying a disconnection, estrangement from the surrounding culture that produces the figurine. With his fame for determined effort fading into the background, it comes as no surprise to find that Saint Ignatius is diminished into a glossy commodity, an addition to a morass of mass-produced knick-knacks or overpriced collectables in consumer culture. It is worth noting that high-modernists found it hard to identify with the interests of the mass-produced culture of capitalism, as Douglas Mao informed us in his book, *Solid Objects*. Although he did not directly name Stein as exemplary of

high modernism's opposition to the pleasure of owning mass-produced items, he did conclude that hostility to mass production is endemic in the high modernist circle, asserting that "Virtually all promoted the carefully crafted work of art as an alternative to the fruits of mass production and mass marketing" (18).

Stein's stringent view undermines any idealized image and formulaic presence of a monument. As a matter of fact, Stein offers a complex reading of a monument in her portrait of Braque: "a monument is not mind and munificent" ("Braque," *Geography and Plays*, 148). While being a testimony to the past, a monument does not offer more than what a human mind – working as a natural, iridescent prism – can contribute. Rather, it short-circuits our imagination and objectifies concepts of memory and commemoration, both of which simply induce stereotyped responses and knee-jerk ways of commemoration. The monument figuratively becomes our aloof and unimaginative relation to past events and historical figures.

Significantly, such a cultural artifact as a monument remains an overdetermined symbol that has been idealized to consolidate and invoke memories. But ironically there are no memories to call up or reinvigorate, since the Saint Therese in *Four Saints in Three Acts* fails to recognize the names of other saints. Here, Stein heightens our awareness of monuments' limitations and seeks to ease us out of the accustomed mode of commemorating, but is there a desirable form of commemoration? By introducing saints' names in two columns, Stein highlights the dullness of lifeless, monumentalized artifacts in comparison to lively creation. The desire for lively creation reigns high in *Four Saints*, and becomes the guiding principle that drives the play. Technically, Stein withholds both a narrative structure and a plot development. The dramatic text is rather pulled away from being the narrative in preparation for the arrival of saints. The type of play that Stein had in mind, the kind of dramatic text that Stein molded *Four Saints* into, does not deliver

a story but a *landscape*, as she argues during her American lecture tour. In Stein's own account, "The landscape has its formation and as after all a play has to have formation and be in relation one thing to the other thing" ("Plays," 125).⁶⁹ What ought to be stressed here is that Stein's dramatic works are works of *relation*, expressions of relationship.⁷⁰ Stein's handling of a detail (an element) in her play as part of a landscape or a piece of the landscape is meant to synchronize the viewer's immediate emotions and the play, which spares the viewer the stress of establishing a sense of familiarity.

Central to our understanding of Stein's plays in general is her conception of *landscape* as a vehicle that allows her to execute her theory of a dramatic representation that leads to the culmination and completion of excitement. An essential feature of Stein's landscape is framed in the following terms: "A landscape does not move nothing really moves in a landscape but things are *there*" ("Plays," 129, italics mine). No matter whether the thing is *there* or *here*, we learn that relationship in the theatrical framework is a spatial concept, at least in Stein's plays, and is defined spatially. Being *there* is meant to register immediate presence and instantaneous knowledge.

By implication, Stein's play about four saints does not devolve into a dead monument that engages no imagination and exerts no attraction, but exists rather in the present moment as a landscape whose meaning is conferred by the active imagination of the viewers. The play is

⁶⁹ In theory, Stein's *landscape* does not bear any explanatory or interpretive value. In terms of function, its appearance in the play does not help develop or facilitate the narrative progression. In other words, the landscape neither drives nor suspends the narrative.

⁷⁰ "[T]he landscape not moving but being always in relation, the trees to the hills the hills to the fields the trees to each other any pieces of it to any sky and then any detail to any other detail" ("Plays," 125). To put it in a simple way, the excitement viewers get from watching Stein's plays derives not from plot twists or action-packed narration. Rather, the excitement is induced by the collision and contact between dramatic details which express relationship. The excitement is also staged by the internal dialogue among generic forms, as Stein aspires to compose a landscape that brings together poetry, portraits, and description.

invested with Stein's enthusiasm to create an opportunity for reciprocity, that is, to offer the audience a creation that enables viewers themselves to be creative in their reception of it. Sitting off stage, the audience ventures to take up views that are both subjective and multiple, imaginings unleashed. The values of giving and receiving are also expressed in the readers' understandings and interpretations of the saints. Here I concur with Norman Weinstein's assertion in *Gertrude Stein and the Literature of the Modern Consciousness*: "[Stein's] theater turns away from naturalism to enter a realm of high fantasy or romance. Rather than attempting to simulate social reality on stage, she uses her talents to create an alternative, imaginative reality" (72). The alternative and imaginative reality in Stein's dramatic work that Weinstein refers to, I believe, opens up an avenue for Stein to deviate from public discourse that confers specific images and meanings on saints, particularly female saints:

Saint Therese could be photographed having been dressed like a lady and then they taking out her head changed it to a nun and a nun a saint and a saint so. . . . [She was] Made to be coming to be here. (*Four Saints*, 588)

Imagine that Saint Therese poses for a photograph, an action which couldn't be any more ordinary. But in the course of its accomplishment, this overfamiliar event inevitably reveals its hidden and unappealing dimensions. Pivotal to our understanding of this photo shoot is that a duplicated image or simulacrum (a photograph) rests on a foundation of imposition, subjugation, and deprivation. Stein tellingly unveils this foundation by casting a female figure as the object of attention and placing her in the position of the subordinate. In the photo scene, Saint Therese earns attention because she is properly attired as a lady, the epitome of the feminine image. The term "lady," as a social category, evokes honorable virtues. On the other hand, the photographed Saint Therese can also be seen as exemplary of an experience that domesticates females to acts

of passivity and obedience, and accustoms them to being designated as having certain qualities. Stein's use of a passive verb tense ("been dressed like") signals the exercise of control over Saint Therese and sheer imposition of the gender characterizations of the gaze. The passive verb tense enacts a spectacle that features the heroine's prescribed role as doll. It accentuates the heroine's loss of autonomy and subjectivity.

There is much to note in this photo scene: we are uneasily aware of the progression from a highlighting of Saint Therese's desirable femininity to a welcoming of a de-sexualized figure ("nun" and "saint"). The latter symbolically denies Saint Therese use of her sexuality. Revealing and compelling is Stein's unguarded look at the social shackles of ideology that chain Saint Therese to these polarities of identity: she is either a socially creditable lady or a sexless, pious female. Rehearsing what might be the typical characterization of Saint Therese in public discourse, Stein alerts us to the imprints of monolithic preconceptions and entrenched stereotypes, which we strive hard to resist.

Thinking back to a dead monument as a choice of representation in the public sphere, we become well aware of what Craig Owens refers to as "reified codes and conventions" (13) found in modes of representation. As a different type of representation than the monument, Stein's play *Four Saints* presents *presentness in action* and *immediacy in instantaneous action* that entails competing viewpoints and areas of emphasis on the viewers' part. All of them would be easily lost in the material space of a monument. As Stein ventriloquizes the voice of Saint Ignatius Loyola, the desirable form to engage the viewer in responsive and expressive acts is an art form that pays close attention to the actual dynamics of seeing, knowing, and understanding:

A saint to be met by and by and by and by continue reading reading read read readily. [. . .]
Never to be lost again to-day. / To-day to stay. (*Four Saints*, 597)

Indicated is the recognition of artistic endeavors—reading as emblematic of artistic activities—as an influential presence that engages readers in the process of production of meaning. Arts mediate and facilitate free and imaginative movement.

By implication, Stein's *Four Saints*, breaking the writing protocols of a dramatic text, exerts its continuing impacts.⁷¹ The lyric drama insists on the value of apprehending in the instant, and devalues the inclination to wait for the plot to unfold. For Stein, a disengagement from preoccupation with plot development allows more room for an engagement with the actual present. Stein emphatically asserts that “The business of Art as I tried to explain in *Composition as Explanation* is to live in the actual present, that is the complete actual present, and to completely to express that complete actual present” (“Plays,” 104-5).⁷² Stein's dramatic work allows her viewers to experience instantaneous apprehension of what is seen on stage. Such an experience translates into an opportunity to bring into play man's faculty for taking in the palpable but wordless apprehension and taking pleasure in wordless comprehension. In Stein's literary galaxy, the artistic bypasses the mind to the intuitive or the spirit. As she explains in a 1934 radio interview, intelligibility is not defined by how well one can verbalize what (s)he sees, but by simply “understanding enjoyment” (89). Stein holds and promotes the belief that “if you enjoy [*Four Saints*] you understand it” (“A Radio Interview,” 89). The viewing experience, to Stein's mind, discourages a pattern of passivity that inevitably involves memory and memorization. Clearly, the grounds for apprehension do not involve the quickness of an intellectual mind, the sharpness of a critical eye, and the exquisiteness of an aesthetic taste. It is

⁷¹ *Four Saints* is a play of relation without a clear storyline or plot development. It unconventionally dispenses with a cast list for the stage play, sequentially numbered acts and scenes, and stage directions. Technically, this dramatic work hangs poised between different generic principles and practices.

⁷² As Thomas Dilworth and Susan Holbrook have observed, “For some, an imperfect understanding of language would provoke anxiety, but for Stein the strangeness of the foreign afforded relief from the linear grinds of plot, speech, line. As content slipped into the background, the concrete aural qualities of words emerged, transporting her out of story and into a kind of continuous present” (4-5).

simply encountering the new and the quaint without any preconceptions. It is the pure form of joy that belongs to the realm of the intuitive. The freshness that this enjoyment brings indeed translates into creative energy, and conjures up the presence of lively creation that the viewer experiences with imagination. As Clare Brant rightly notes, “Stein changed narrative into process” (7). Stein’s imaginative paradigm, I argue, embraces the mobile/mutable in place of the monumental as integral to encountering and understanding moment-to-moment revelation.

The twin ideas of creative energy and lively creation work in tandem to nurture and sustain the vision of living in the present. As two harmonizing manifestations of cognitive freedom, both stand in direct contrast to the formulaic undertakings of monumentalization. In principle and in practice, Stein’s artistic efforts cater to neither aestheticizing known judgments nor romanticizing the past. Rather, they are marked by a disclosure of epistemological crises, among which are man’s habits of relying on ready-made images and concretized ideas to make sense of the past and to conceptualize the unseen. Such a pattern of intelligibility renders knowledge reified. More importantly, it alienates man from the pleasure and satisfaction of tapping into creative energy. It follows that man is coerced into repeating known meanings based on the existing images. Indeed, a ready-made image becomes an ornament that fades into irrelevancy. For example, if an artistic project on saints is in the making, it is not concerned with resuscitating the untarnished and protected image of the dead or imparting some historical truth about the dead.⁷³ Rather, the project considers the saints as a gateway to instantaneous knowledge gained through their immediate presence in the project. On this understanding, the state of being living or alive assumes a new significance through a fresh and instantaneous look at the saints. Hence,

⁷³ The reason is pretty simple: for Stein “Anything dead is dead” (*EA*, 110).

what should be kept alive is the ways and opportunities of exploring the interlocking connections between seeing, knowing, and understanding.

Judged by the work she produced, Stein gives heed to any cultural constructions that do a disservice to people by facilitating the treatment of entities in the past—whether it be humanity or otherwise—as cultural icons and sacrosanct symbols. There are times when Stein uses listing forms to meditate on issues such as how established cultural representations shape our imagination of the past and fall short of inspiring the living to tap into moment to moment revelation. I believe this is one of the epistemological issues explored in Stein’s important play *Four Saints in Three Acts*. From intense scrutiny of an example drawn from *Four Saints*, we can learn that the form of listing gives Stein the leverage she needs to critique the function of cultural institutions, and in turn presents list-making as a site of offering a critique of the development in modern society.

Through listing, Stein indirectly comments on art’s status to bring the past into the present moment for the sake of engaging our imagination in the present rather than for the sake of perpetuating some idealism and nostalgia we hold for the past, an idealism of displacing time-bound entities from a reality of vicissitudes and contingencies to a realm impervious to the passage of time. In his discussion of the social implications of museums and monuments, Didier Maleuvre in *Museum Memories: History, Technology, Art* makes a similar assertion that the artworks in the museums exemplify that “Living historical existence turns into historiographic timelessness” (57). Museums help “raise artworks above flow of historical becoming” (Maleuvre 57).

Listing's Typographical Playfulness Facilitating Cognitive Movement

Stein's essay, "Composition as Explanation," seeks to help her readers understand that the question of how writing happens shapes her early ideas of how to become a creative writer "who make[s] writing as it is made" (SW 516). Surely enough, how writing happens, in part, hinges on a writer's distinct compositional methods. It is this "how" (empirical methods) that distinguishes one work from the other, one writerly mind from the other. The question of "how" in Stein would not be addressed fully without a further understanding of Stein's enjoyment of making lists, and her handling of listing as a protean representational strategy that brings attention to the erotic and the sensuous as essential to self-expression and self-definition. As I noted at the beginning of the chapter, listing in Stein is used to serve and accomplish visual functions. Stein deploys listing as a vehicle for communicating visual pleasure and sexual sensations, and uses the listing process to imagine a female body as sexually attractive and intellectually stimulating. Moreover, she validates and valorizes female bodies as a source of pleasure. In an attempt to liberate us from a dogmatic way of *looking*, Stein sees female bodies and body parts through the lens of physical pleasure, and shows the erotic and the sensuous as a form of knowledge.

The listing pattern that takes center stage in the following discussion is a case of repetition with variation. Not only does it engage us in thinking in visual terms, but it compels us to recognize the fact that visual components exert descriptive power. The listing helps open up a conversation about the power of a female body. It introduces an important perspective from a woman poet, who teaches women, both young and old, not to fear or loath, but to embrace the instinctual power of one's own body. Significantly, while catalogue writing lends itself to various interpretations and to a variety of uses, listing, with Stein, is an empowering instrument.

Its provocative visual power leads us to the road of exercising cognitive practices, and in turn we learn, know, and understand the erotic and the sensuous, and bravely claim female sexuality.

Listing operates on the visual level, as is the case in the following example embedded in the 1913 poem “Sacred Emily”:

Next to barber.
 Next to barber bury.
 Next to barber bury china.
 Next to barber bury china glass.
 Next to barber china and glass.
 Next to barber and china.
 Next to barber and hurry.
 Next to hurry.
 Next to hurry and glass and china.
 Next to hurry and glass and hurry.
 Next to hurry and hurry.
 Next to hurry and hurry.
 Plain cases for see.
 (lines 99-111)

Appealing to your eyes, the listing structure amplifies its visual effect by drawing attention to its typographical arrangement. Invested with strong pictorial characters, the listing structure in question arrests our attention by its graphic pun on female genitalia. Its erotic connotations appear as the shape of “3” alludes to the floral image of female genitals. It seems obvious that Stein intentionally arranged words into a silhouette of the outer labia along with the opening of the vagina through the careful choice of typography. The irregular contours on the right account for the fatty folds of skin and tissue on the outside, and the middle indentation signals the vaginal opening on the inside. The erotic sense is reinforced and retained by careful choice of words such as “barber bury” (alluding to something covered by hair, perhaps pubic hair) and “china”

(recalling porcelain vases with an opening).⁷⁴ The erotic reading of the printed shape as female external genital organs is further confirmed, as well as foreshadowed, by the sensuous image of “Center prinking petunia,” twenty-four lines back. Anatomically, the outer labia (the long lips) resemble flower petals, inducing paroxysms of jouissance in the speaker. “Sacred Emily,” apparently, is a poem that features erotic pleasure and flirtatious playfulness in association with female sexual experience.⁷⁵ Strikingly, Stein wants the readers not to overlook the visual quality of the embedded, listing structure, especially as the speaker adds such a hint as “Plain cases for see” at the end of the seemingly literal listing. Plain as it may seem to be, a succession of “Next to’s” unfolds a floral shape that foreshadows and prepares the idea of “Next to a bloom,” few lines down. Suggested is that the partner *blooms*, but the reference to “a bloom” also alludes to their gratifying sexual consummation. Equally important and intriguing is what follows the blooming (indicated by the pronouncement of “Next to”), though we are not told what exactly comes after the orgasmic pleasures. But given the visual nature of this listing structure and its emphasis on “cases for see,” there is reason to believe that the speaker experiences something visually as a result of female orgasm. What is pivotal here is that whatever she *sees* constitutes a knowledge gained through, or communicated through, an embodied form of sexuality, whatever this may be. Stein affirms as normal the libidinous passions aroused by visual gratification.

It is evident that before the passage starting with “Next to’s” is pared down to four words, Stein wants her readers to “see” provocative elements beyond verbal constructs and curious variations and repetitions. In the best and simplest sense, “Sacred Emily” is exciting for the

⁷⁴ In her introduction to *Geography and Plays*, Cyrena N. Pondrom provides us with thoughtful close reading of “Sacred Emily.” Thinking along the lines of erotic pleasure, Pondrom considers “a series of repetitive lines beginning ‘Next to barber’” as suggestive of “the rhythms of arousal” (xlvi).

⁷⁵ Linda Wagner-Martin’s evaluation of “Sacred Emily” sounds a similar note in her book *Favored Strangers* where she notes that the poem contains sexual punning and assumes sexual dimension. And Brenda Wineapple, in *Sister Brother*, also alerts us to Stein’s “sexual awakening” over her first trip to Granada, Spain (368).

mischievous challenge that it repeatedly poses to the readers: learn to see/read beyond the obvious, the habitual, and the prescribed. For instance, Stein's clever use of the word "philip" in line 3 catches our attention. The emergence of "philip" not only disrupts the orderly sequence of intransitive verbs ("Come go stay"), but also sharpens our attention to the image of a lip, and by extension, the flesh. The word "philip" can be seen as a portmanteau, consisting of two parts "phil" and "lip" or "feel" and "lip." With the Greek "phil" meaning "loving," the first pair serves as an index of love or obsession with lips. Both pairs have the undertones of the obsession of the lip. With an emphasis on the pun on "philip" at the end of the sequence, Stein intimates the attractiveness and seductiveness of the lips. It is as if the sensations of the flesh come into life through the feeling of the lips. There are also the recurring references to the color pink ("a coral neck" and "Pink coral") and lips ("do lip sing" and "a little song") that unmistakably allude to the desirability and covetability of female sexuality embodied in and transmitted through female sexual organs. Certainly, the recognition of the sounds the lips make and the tricks the lips do renders the sexual organ zestful and lively. Tied to the musical imagery, female sexual organs are treated as an active agent, showing signs of an intricate entity that has a mind of its own. The body's expressiveness recalls a distinctive character that Carrie Noland observes in the works of performance artist Laurie Anderson: "the body appears not merely as a surface of inscription" (196). In *Poetry at Stake*, Noland rightly states: "the body [is treated] as a passive receiver of codes, [but] the body might instead be a kind of apparatus possessing its own code" (196). Stein has her own way of documenting this unique code of a female body. Let's return to the first half of the "Next to" listing—a sequenced chain involving "barber," "bury," "china," and "glass"—that encodes erotic tension.

What drives and dominates the first half of the “Next to” listing is a steady, placid tone of enumeration. About midway through the listing, the enumeration is fractured by the sporadic occurrence of “hurry.” While switching easily among linguistic references that are well-defined (“barber,” “bury,” “china,” and “glass”), the speaker’s thought seems arrested by something unidentifiable signaled by the word “hurry.” In contrast to words that evoke the image of an object or action, “hurry” does not call to mind anything tangible and substantial, but rather is shrouded in ambiguity and uncertainty. Still, “hurry” assumes an abstract mode of representation that works to translate undecipherable feelings into known conceptions or judgments. What is revealing about “hurry” is its irregular emergence in the passage. Its irregularity heightens our awareness of its mysteriousness and elusiveness. “Hurry” gestures toward the realm of unreason. The image of *haste* recalls our previous reading of the shape of the lines as suggesting female genitalia. While the shape offers a kind of cove beaten by the coming and going of feisty waves, “hurry” is the rhythm and movement of sexual currents in disguise. What is lurking behind this seemingly vapid structure of listing—what is vying for attention—is the abstract and erratic rhythms of raw sensations, which is implied in the intermittent, unpredictable interruption of “hurry.” The words such as “hurry” that present the speaker’s private, erotic feeling are perhaps rather euphemistic.

As the passage takes a different turn at the midway, it makes a shift in focus: the tidal movement of desire comes to the fore as a sensational scene unfolds. Indeed, intervals of trance are wedged between moments of lucidity, between breath-turns of enumeration. The alternation between enumeration and elation helps illuminate an existence on the boundaries of complete sobriety and half awakening—on the borders of taking reins and losing control. The point to linger over in the word “hurry” is that it underscores and symbolizes the cusp between the

rational and the irrational. It points the way to the orbit of the unintelligible and trans-rational, a realm that Stein's listing calls into play. Stein's juxtaposition of cognitive and affective space renders their differences clearly.

Logic and language rules are rendered insufficient for the cognitive process of apprehending instinctual drives released by and rushing through the body. It is possible that to find a word that captures the unanticipated moment or intense feeling is not without difficulty, and the closest expression available is the word "hurry." If we are to consider "hurry" as an expression of convenience, it typifies the limits of man's use of language and defies man's use of analytical reasoning to comprehend or decode the trans-rational. It is as if the speaker undergoes an experience she cannot fully pinpoint or process. Those delirious moments can only be condensed in the word "hurry."

Listing as Counter-movement to the Enlightenment

It should be stressed that the captivating imagination of a female body as supple and playful is mapped against the seriousness of a textual body represented by a list that features anaphora. The sense of seriousness derives from the invocation of "next to," a relational phrase unmistakably evincing the rational and intelligent side of humanity. We are no stranger to the relational phrase "next to," as it signals man's conscientious judgments made regarding the placement and positioning of an object, or event, in a space-time continuum. Thus, what are we to make of the curious intersection between the sensuous and the serious, between a sensational event and an orderly schema? What questions occupy Stein's mind, as she arranges this "Next to" enumeration in a visually suggestive shape on the one hand, and, on the other, consciously opts for an organization structured around a cognitively structured pronouncement "next to"?

In the “Next to” list, man’s capacity for logical thinking and *rational discernment* signaled by such spatial terms as “next to” is matched by a body’s sensuality and sensational responses conveyed through a sexually suggestive shape sketched out with the help of “next to.” The congruity of the two only makes all the more intriguing the intention of bringing together the intellect and the flesh. Admittedly, Stein wants us to read the two together, while protesting the mind-body separation. Furthermore, she situates her accounts of sexual pleasure in the wider intellectual framework supplied by the history of the mind-body opposition.

A little more than two decades ago Jane Gallop alerted us to the ill effects of the mind-body split as well as the mind’s hostility to the body: “Rather than treat the body as a site of knowledge, a medium for thought, the more classic philosophical project has tried to render it transparent and get beyond it, to dominate it by reducing it to the mind’s idealizing categories” (3-4). Gallop struck to the heart of the matter, but she was not the first to address the problem. If we *turn the clock back to 1913*, almost a century earlier, the anti-Cartesian sentiment can also be found in Stein’s poem “Sacred Emily.” Particularly, the mastery of mind over body in the field of anatomy gives Stein a close-up look at the issue of the mind-body duality, compelling her to contemplate the identical problem. Once a medical student at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Stein was no stranger to how a human body and its body parts are dissected and closely examined on the examining table. In her first two years at medical school, Stein received the highest grade in anatomy (Mellow 40). In 1902, before quitting medical school to venture into the field of writing at full throttle, Stein completed a research paper on human neuroanatomy.⁷⁶ In the course of her research Stein engaged in constructing a model of the

⁷⁶ For a fuller account of this history, see James R. Mellow’s *Charmed Circle: Gertrude Stein & Company* (40 & 45-6), Elizabeth Sprigge’s *Gertrude Stein: Her Life and Work* (40-1), Bruce S. Schoenberg’s “Gertrude Stein’s Neuroanatomic Investigations: Roses or Thorns?”, and Steven Meyer’s *Irresistible Dictation: Gertrude Stein and the Correlations of Writing and Science* (88-92).

embryo brain stem, which familiarized her with anatomical procedures and perspectives. Working closely on the topic of the brain stem gave Stein a firsthand understanding of the trappings of the field of anatomy along with its patterns of discipline, thought and culture. Few would question that such an intense laboratory experience literally offered Stein the opportunity to glimpse the scientific world she was then part of, including the process of acquiring knowledge, the powers of reasoning, how a body is approached, and how intellectual activities associated with the discipline of anatomy give rise to patterns of intelligibility.

The body we picture with the aid of anatomical knowledge is not the body Stein writes about. The body that exemplifies a web of intricate relations and is inscribed with systems of connections is not what Stein is interested in. In anatomy, the body becomes an inscribable terrain that registers a perception of relationships and kinships defined by categories and understood through classificatory divisions. Such a methodical reading of the human body can be traced back to Bichat's pathological anatomy in the early nineteenth century. Bichat's anatomy provided a type of knowledge generated from "a diagonal reading of the body carried out according to expanses of anatomical resemblances that traverse the organs, envelop them, divide them, compose and decompose them, analyse them, and, at the same time, *bind them together*" (Foucault 129, italics in original). Focusing on the study of tissues and the systems constituted by the tissues, Bichat ushered in a new anatomical paradigm of reading the human corpse. His "tissual analysis," a form of perception, "makes it possible to draw up general pathological categories" (Foucault 129). As Michel Foucault points out, "[Bichat] rediscovers not the geography of the organs, but the order of classifications" (130). This epistemic shift renders anatomy an exemplar of the mind's effort to divide and subject disparate elements under categories and groupings. Tellingly, anatomy exemplifies an institutional fascination with the

body, and what the anatomist models for us is an objective, dispassionate, and dissociated relationship with the human body. Stein, by contrast, suggests the need to see beyond the body's anatomical existence and its biological endowment. The body that preoccupies Stein is the one that can “lift belly,” or is imagined to “lift belly,” a body that is no longer trapped in the stereotypical ways of receiving meanings and definitions in biological terms. It is a body that is imagined in every way possible. This is the body that Stein is concerned with and we know little about from anatomical knowledge.

Standing in opposition to the dissected, examined body, anatomists strive for a systematic reading that underpins the profession, reducing an organism to a diagram and a schematic order that supply factual details and pragmatic knowledge. The epistemological paradigm erected by the anatomists embodies a conquering mentality trapped in the thrill of exercising the powers to name and then to control. The act of pursuing the knowledge of the body followed by the act of definition sets the mind in opposition to the body. The act of diagramming where each body part resides is freighted with the intention to domesticate the body through the intellect. As Francis Barker has astutely pointed out in *The Tremendous Private Body*, the body is treated “as the object of a science which in knowing it will master it, and in healing it will accommodate it to labour and docility. On the one hand the dumb flesh, and on the other the mechanism, which can be understood, repaired and made to work” (72). The mind-body divide is a matter of the body as the Other of the mind. In anatomy, the body becomes the objectified that is inscribed with biological and social codes. The conquering mentality and the reductive quality dovetail with what Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno astutely observe in the age of Enlightenment: “The multiplicity of forms is reduced to positions and arrangement, history to fact, things to matter” (4). As we saw earlier, Stein surprises us with a graphic pun on female genitalia. Stein’s

celebrations of the body include the extraordinariness of female sexual organs, but never the suggestion that she agrees to use the body as a means or instrument to satisfy man's appetite for intellectual curiosity. Instead, her depiction of the body facilitates the imagination of an organism as physically active and artistically creative registered in a simplicity of its rhyming movement.

Closely examining the sound pattern of the "Next to" passage, we notice that Stein places unexpected stress on the /a/ sound by returning to it on a regular basis: /ə/, /I/, /a/, /æ/, /æ/, /a/, /I/, /I/, /a/, /I/, /I/, /I/, /i/. The regular recurrence of the /a/ sound contributes to a steady, rhythmic movement. If /a/ is used as a stop, then Stein gives us the pattern of breathing. The rhyming pattern synchronizes with the breathing pattern, as /a/ is introduced as breathing space, a pause. The regularity here, depicted through poetic form and speech, points to the natural rhythm of the body and the nature of the body. In showing aspects and activities of the body that cannot be easily seen, measured, and quantified, Stein suggests that the body facilitates its own creation that is not necessarily linked to reproduction or ailment. Her emphasis falls on the force of life embodied in the tremor of the female body and the tempo of breathing. Not only is the body's complexity comparable to, or even greater than, the complexity of man's artistic creation, but also the body is a mystery that cannot be solely decoded in a scientific way. If the knowledge of anatomy limits the way we understand the female body, it is the very same reason why we can't *see* the contours of female genitalia.

The regularity of the sound pattern here is reminiscent of the regularity of the syntactical pattern seen in the repetition of the phrase "Next to." The repetition suggests lyric-lines driven by an enthusiasm to maintain a pattern of utterance that comes close to an incantation or a ritualistic recital. The repetitive, incantatory quality resonates with the resilient, unremitting

power recognized in the life force, a familiar trope that Stein seems to tap into. Coupled with the previously noted pun on female genitalia, the presence of the life force indicated here is *not* meant to reinforce the idea of the indissoluble connection between women, childbirth and motherhood. Rather, the focus should be reproductive power in general. If an analogy is invoked here, the emphasis falls on the inexhaustibility of artistic creation and production.

The “Next to” list exposes the intertwining of erotic and political discourses. Aside from the sensuous image and pleasurable aspects that a female body is associated with, Stein’s deployment of the phrase “cases for see” at the line-end helps raise important criticisms of the ways female bodies are *looked at*, examined, and portrayed. As the word “case” takes on an additional meaning, the whole listing structure takes on a different dimension: “case” as a clinical term that places knowledge and male authority above female bodies and needs. Capitalizing on the slippage of meaning in “case,” Stein skillfully links a female body as the object of gaze to its medical value. The phrase “cases for see” calls to mind the reading of female body parts or female bodies as medical “cases” that are under close scrutiny. The seeing part is reserved for medical purposes, an iconological representation of female genitals preserved for anatomical purposes. By implication, Stein’s visual representation, comparable to an anatomy of female genitalia, magnifies a long-existing, slanted view and limited understanding of a female body filtered through the lens of selected medical interpretations and clinical procedures.⁷⁷

Stein’s list also gives us intellectual clarity to the extent that she reconsiders the division between the senses and the intellect. Elsewhere in “Sacred Emily,” our attention also comes to fasten on the moment of teaching through the tactile stimulation of tickling: “Tickle tickle tickle you for education” (line 112). Interestingly, the pronoun “you” could be used to address the

⁷⁷ For other extended discussion of the anatomical themes in Stein’s work in 1911-12, see Lisa Ruddick’s engaging and intriguing essay, “A Rosy Charm: Gertrude Stein and the Repressed Feminine,” which centers on the presence of the repressed female body.

reader or to the speaker's addressee-partner. Occurring against a backdrop of an increasingly erotic activity, the tickle gesture is at once the writer's attempt to stir the readers' imagination and a nonverbal code for sexual foreplay that initiates sexual arousal. Devoid of any intrusive and invasive tendency, the sound "tickle" repeated thrice disarms all suspicion and opposition. It calls forth a sense of closeness, and puts the lover and the reader alike under the speaker's seductive influence. The whole scheme of seduction becomes inviting. While the language itself serves to evoke a ticklish sensation in the speaker's female-bodied lover and the readers alike, the same ticklish sensation forces the listener/the addressee (the lyric "you") to direct attention to her/his own body, her/his bodily experience. A body has its material existence along with its physiological responses and instinctual reactions ("Cow come out cow come out and out and smell a little"), all of which are suggested in lyric form. Since tickling is *for* the purpose of education, the purposeful act of tickling indeed raises a tantalizing prospect. The exact wording here ("tickle you for education") conjures up the image of proximity to something that is yet to be known and learned. Of more fundamental importance, however, is the acknowledgement of teaching and learning through tactile perception. To reach out to and embrace sensations and perceptions of a tactile character is to explore new modes of apprehension that are not associated with visual or auditory experience. Critically, the handling of a female body as a teaching platform does not project a demeaning, didactic, or prescriptive image of a female. Rather, it is a reading of a female body that takes on an existential perspective, since it ties in with a learning of how the female body can yield sexual pleasure. Moreover, such a daring reevaluation of a female body as sensuously pleasing and sexually conscious becomes integral to her affirmative self-definition ("So great so great Emily," line 141). The effort to please the senses and the recognition of giving oneself to a primal order of experience help illuminate the significance of

using tactile sensibility to facilitate an epistemological gain and entail knowledge of a female body.

The coquettish and provocative nature of this tongue-in-cheek remark about tickling nicely and skillfully ties in with Stein's unusual orchestration of words and various sentence lengths. Although the verse progresses with some curious variation, those variations and permutations do not anchor the relational phrase, "Next to," to either a spatial or a temporal context. It is highly possible that Stein intentionally alienates her signifiers from the either/or binary. Rather interesting is that by assembling an unclassifiable group Stein suggests a spatiotemporal continuum that marks the coexistence of space and time in our daily experience and consciousness. The de-categorized mixture becomes the very vocabulary that stays close to lived experience and the quotidian in Stein. Grouping unrelated words illuminates the texture of daily life where we weave in and out through a range of decisions and choices and where we spend time juggling trivialities and things of great significance. It is a slice from the life in an elemental fashion.

Prioritizing Moving Words over Sequence and Textual Movement over Rote Movement

Stein's dramatic use of "next to" forces us to reassess the value of our readiness to think in sequential terms. Repeating words like "next to" thrusts upon us a logic of progression predicated on the principle of sequentiality. But the repetition of "next to" only generates a false sense of regularity, since what immediately follows Stein's "next to" is a quaint catalog of a person, an action, and an object—a mixture of signifiers that prove to destabilize meaning and frustrate our expectation for coherence. It is also worth noting that the repetition of letters in the sequence of alphabets (b, bb, bbc, bbcg) comes to a halt four lines into the passage. The

sequence is ruptured and disintegrates after *bbcg* is succeeded by *bcg*. It seems as if Stein introduces the sequence only to break it down. Collectively, Stein presents an unflattering portrait of the sequential pattern of thinking as a rote movement, which awakens us to the fact that the habit of setting up things one by one, the habit of seeing things in a sequential manner can be monotonous, lifeless, and even stifling. Overall, the over-repeated phrase, “next to,” gives rise to an element of criticism, laced with irony.

Our reliance on linear reading or linearity is called into question as the notion of sequentiality is deconstructed by a hypothesis a little farther on: “Suppose a selection were reverse” (line 114). Since the selection is not context-specific, it would make no difference if it is reversed. More pertinently, line 114 of “Suppose a selection were reverse,” having a double meaning, indicates the changing method of picking out words. It gives salience to the ascendancy of the act of combining words over the act of selecting words.⁷⁸ What I am emphasizing here is that the negation of sequentiality is confirmed through ample evidence of Stein’s exploring laws of *textual movement*. In Stein, textual movement replaces sequential movement as the focus of attention. By textual movements, I specifically mean the ones that are considered, built, and organized along two axes: equilibration and distribution.

In “Composition as Explanation,” Stein differentiates equilibration from distribution in the following statement: “And now one finds oneself interesting oneself in an equilibration, that of course means words as well as things and distribution as well as between themselves between the

⁷⁸ In the essay, “Constructing the Meaning in the Modernist Text,” Cyrena N. Pondrom has highlighted Stein’s concern with the laws of combination and selection. Pondrom argues that Stein’s early portraits exhibit the tendency to “privilege the axis of combination in language and minimize the axis of selection” (116). It was not until around the *Tender Buttons* period, Pondrom asserts, that Stein “reversed that attack upon the foundations of language,” “exploding the rules of combination and makes selections from a colorful and diverse semantic field” in the “Object” and “Food” sections (116). In both sections, the act of selection takes precedence over the act of combination. We arrive at similar conclusions, but her approach is different from mine.

words and themselves and the things and themselves, a distribution as distribution" ("Composition as Explanation" 521). Taken together, the two statements nudge us in the direction of taking notions such as distribution and equilibration to be selecting and combining methods in writing practice. It is noteworthy that the way Stein selects and combines words reflects her conviction in the delight in working with a buildup of curiously mixed entities. The *mixture*, a key word in Stein's literary paradigm, allows for the possibilities of the moving words and accentuates the slippage of language.⁷⁹ It should be clarified that the "mixture" of which I am speaking here is concerned as much with *what* Stein puts together as with *how* she lays things out. Therefore, we may well take Stein's "mixture" literally as a combination of unrelated impressions, a concoction of contradictory or incompatible elements, and technically as a demonstration of the techniques of equilibration and distribution.⁸⁰ Critically, "mixture" is an organizing principle that pushes meaning in multiple directions.

In practice, Stein's literary lists rest on a foundation of *mixture*. What I mean by this is that Stein not only appropriates equilibration and distribution as two discursive methods while making her own lists, but also brings together the two axes under one roof, while creatively moving between them, creating what I call the poetics of mixture. Such an effort is made to designate Stein's work as a zone of artistry where visionary possibilities and immediacy converge. To be precise, it is through intersecting equilibration and distribution in unpredictable and unusual ways that Stein accomplishes the sense of movement in the words. I would argue that the *moving words* in Stein's literary framework can be seen as signifiers being dislodged

⁷⁹ Catherine Stimpson and Lisa Ruddick talk about the slippage quality in Stein's language, but from alternative perspectives.

⁸⁰ Johanna Frank's essay, "Resonating Bodies and the Poetics of Auralities; Or, Gertrude Stein's Theater," focuses on Stein's dramatic texts, and alerts us to the display of the mixing quality in her dramatic work: "It is well acknowledged that her plays constitute a curious body of dramatic literature. They run the gamut from one act to multiple acts and often consist of word lists, single sentences, or narrative stage directions" (503).

from their fixed meanings and positions.⁸¹ Each selected signifier operates on both axes to invalidate calculable possibilities of interpretation.

To fully explore Stein's poetics of mixture, I turn to modern linguistic models with similar linguistic interests, with no intention to establish intellectual influence or indebtedness among them, but to probe the intricacies and implications of Stein's literary practice. Stein's linguistic model of distribution and equilibrium is congruent with the long-standing linguistic investigations that start with Saussure, were made a powerful model of human thought by Roman Jakobson, and were later reappropriated and revitalized by Roland Barthes.⁸² Her notions of equilibration and distribution anticipate the two axes of syntagm and system/paradigm in Jakobson's linguistic analysis and Barthes's semiological analysis, but the keen interest in how the principles of combination and selection actually operate didn't get developed into a full-fledged linguistic study till Jakobson and Barthes, where both principles receive detailed treatments.⁸³ Building on Saussurean linguistic analysis and terminology, Barthes, in *Elements of Semiology*, succinctly sketches out the difference between syntagm and paradigm (system)⁸⁴:

[E]ach linguistic unit is like a column in a building of antiquity: this column is in a real relation of contiguity with other parts of the building, for instance the architrave (syntagmatic relation); but if this column is Doric, it evokes in us a comparison with other architectural orders, the Ionic or the Corinthian; and this is a potential relation of substitution (associative relation). (59)

⁸¹ In his astute analysis of *Tender Button*, Neil Schmitz also makes a similar argument: "The proper noun is stripped of its property, loses its fixed position both in space and the lexicon" (126).

⁸² Randa K. Dubnick also points out the similar linguistic concerns Stein and these linguists share, such as a relation of comparison and of contiguity, but I argue differently from Dubnick in the way I read Barthes' semiological account of Saussure's linguistic formations and the way I apply it to Stein's literary projects.

⁸³ I do not mean that Jakobson and Barthes are intellectually indebted to Stein and her ideas of distribution and equilibrium.

⁸⁴ Even though "paradigm" and "system" are interchangeable in Barthes, I will use "paradigm" rather than "system" from this point forward in my study to avoid any conceptual confusion.

For Barthes as for Jakobson, the syntagm is built upon the relation of contiguity, a vertical fashion of combining words or things. And the paradigm puts emphasis on the relation of comparison/similarity, a horizontal fashion of selecting words or things. This is clear in one of Barthes's diagrams that shows the difference between syntagm and system. We may take as an example a formalized gastronomic event that often comprises an assemblage of different parts, such as a sequence of dishes chosen during a meal. The syntagmatic associations are analogous to "the vertical reading of the menu" (Barthes, 63). If it is a western four-course meal, it consists of four syntagmatic units including an appetizer, a soup, an entrée, and a dessert. In other parts of the globe, the syntagmatic units would be arranged and combined differently. At root, syntagm translates contiguous relationships into combinatory practices.

As for the paradigmatic variations, they are comparable to "the horizontal reading of the entrées in the food system" (Barthes, 63). Under the entrée category, a selection of paradigmatic units could include grilled sirloin, coconut chicken, seared salmon, and barbecued pork loin. For another example, the horizontal reading, or synchronic study in time, can be applied to another paradigmatic context where you pick out your appetizer from a range of selections—cheese sticks, fried calamari, or chicken wings, while a variety of appetizer items are set in front of you. On the whole, a paradigmatic structure is category-based and category-informed. It embodies humanity's desire to generate categories and showcases their practices of comparison.

With all these in mind, I want to outline in detail how Stein brings life to lists through equilibration and distribution, formulas that gather the transgressive impulse to disrupt logical and chronological sequence. The formulas foreground a system of signs that moves between the synchronic- and diachronic-ordering structures in a criss-crossing rather than linear fashion. The

following type of listing from *Tender Buttons* exhibits the place where the vertical and the horizontal fashions intersect:

One taste one tack, one taste one bottle, one taste one fish, one taste one barometer. This shows no distinguishing sign when there is a store. (*SW*, 504)

Signifiers such as “tack,” “bottle,” “fish,” and “barometer” have different lexical meanings; each has its referential value, so a proposal to classify them under one category would run into great difficulty. However, when they are all linked to “taste,” each becomes a taste-related item in the paradigmatic context where they are assembled to form a “taste” group or a “taste” cohort. A “taste” paradigm comes into existence because the word “taste” serves as the connective, the major link formed between “tack,” “bottle,” “fish,” and “barometer.” Interestingly, each “taste” varies due to the pairing it is in. Stein establishes an unexpected equilibration.

At the same time, Stein’s attention to the axis of equilibration is folded into a listing structure which is itself a *distribution*. The listing is comparable to a sequence of choices the speaker makes, as she enumerates one possibility after another. The enumerative fashion indicates a succession of actions in time. As Barthes explains, “The syntagm presents itself in the form of a ‘chain’” (64). The list in question foregrounds a combinative feature in the syntagmatic chain. Stein adroitly brings to the fore a juxtaposition of syntagmatic units, which not only define a particular syntagm of various components, but also, importantly, highlight a collective found in the same place, as the amusingly intriguing punch line informs us (“This shows no distinguishing sign when there is a store”). The store setting would be the syntagm where a measure of coherence is found.

In the process of sketching out the workings of the two axes in the example from *Tender Buttons*, I am all too conscious of the fact that the listing example does not privilege a reading

that processes the two ordering structures one at a time. Rather, in this list, syntagm and paradigm are present simultaneously: the two frames of reference coexist to the extent that neither of them outshines or overpowers the other. It is as if one written transparent slide is superimposed on the other, and the result of it is a sight of astigmatism. Such a dis-alignment or mis-alignment not only obscures and confuses the connection between the individual word and its neighboring words, but also allows Stein to circumvent a time-bound and space-oriented perspective. Marked by the suppression of syntax and the valorization of individual words, the textual movement of criss-crossing in this listing structure is choreographed with a view to complicating the typology of equilibration and distribution. By criss-crossing, I mean that Stein ruffles the textual surface by making the boundary between equilibration and distribution porous. In the “taste” listing, what seems to be a clear succession of decisions and choices and what seems to be a montage-like continuity are defamiliarized by the quaint combination of images representing parts of reality. As a result, we are compelled to constantly and irresolutely oscillate between syntagm and paradigm, distribution and equilibration, contiguity and comparison.

It is a case that privileges nonsensical pleasure over the force of conscious reasoning. It also forces us to see how the ordinary structures of language shape what we think. The juxtaposition of “taste,” “tack,” “bottle,” “fish,” and “barometer” doesn’t seem to lead up to any specific meaning. It is a totality that defies one single interpretation. The experimental mixture of the two axes facilitates what Carl Van Vechten calls, “a thousand of channels for [the reader’s] mind and sense to drift along, a thousand, instead of a stupid only one” (34). Playing up the qualities of suggestiveness and multiplicity in language—the two qualities that scholars have long identified in Stein—the cooperative relationship between distribution and equilibration reinforces the impression of language as chameleon-like and evasive. At the same time, the distribution-

equilibration structure embodies a mode of perception that is marked by contingency and flux. A similar argument is offered in Stein's lecture, "Portraits and Repetition," in which she states, "We inside us do not change but our emphasis and the moment in which we live changes. That is *it is never the same moment* it is never the same emphasis at any successive moment of existing" (115).

Stein does not abandon the laws of combination and selection but uses these two methods in an unexpected way. Words she assembles use the processes of combination and selection in ways that defy the rules of grammar and logic. Stein disrupts our expectations by changing the items these rules would prescribe. The products of her choices are unexpected. Such a vision is in line with a collage-like arrangement found in modernist paintings and modernist artistic movements, in which spatial and temporal contexts are emptied out. Stein's work largely abandons our expectations derived from the dictation of language. Stein is aware that we are bound to expected patterns, the patterns of thought we associate with combination and selection, and that even the way we think is conditioned by the two senses of these acts.

Listing as a Manifestation of Intuitive Energy

Elsewhere in the poem "Sacred Emily," visual components continue to be the guiding force that leads the way through the poem's thematic concerns, such as the close connection between writing and saintliness, to begin with. The following example illustrates how poetic lines with distinctive visual characteristics can be the site of personal statement on the status of writing as sacred and comparable to saintliness, and beyond that it helps us think through issues such as the experience of writing as both sacred and sensual in Stein.

Pale

Pale
 Pale
 Pale
 Pale
 Pale
 Pale
 Near sights.
 Please sorts.
 Example.
 Example.
 Put something down.
 Put something down some day.
 Put something down some day in.
 Put something down some day in my. (lines 240-254)

This visual example calls to mind Mabel Dodge Luhan's description in her memoir, *European Experiences*, of how Stein waited in the middle of the night for her writing materials to congeal and manifest themselves. According to Luhan,

Gertrude always worked at night. After everyone was asleep she used to sit at Edwin's table next door writing automatically in a long weak handwriting – four or five lines to the page – letting it ooze up from deep down inside her, down onto the paper with the least possible physical effort; she would cover a few pages so and leave them there and go to bed, and in the morning Alice would gather them up the first thing and take them off and type them. Then she and Gertrude would always be so surprised and delighted at what she had written, *for it had been done so unconsciously* she'd have no idea what she'd said the night before! (328, italics mine)

The process of creation for Stein, in Luhan's depiction, assumes an esoteric quality. The process is mysterious in the sense that the inspiration seems to come from a source that is unknown and unknowable. Luhan claims that Stein wrote automatically in her villa, but Stein herself has more

than once asserted that she did not use automatic writing. Stein clarified it by stating that “College experiments pure and simple, that’s all they were. My teacher William James was interested in whether the unconscious mind could furnish messages, any sort of messages from what he called ‘the summer-land,’ and so Leon Solomons and I tried to test whether the un- or sub-conscious could produce writing under certain conditions of fatigue or reverie, or distraction. But I, I always knew what I was writing, it was not automatic” (Steward, 26). Clearly, what Luhan describes in her memoir should not be prematurely designated automatic writing. In fact, what is gripping about Luhan’s account is her observation of a writing that was “done so unconsciously,” an observation that suggests writing as a state, if not a trance, in which human consciousness is temporarily out of reach. What is sure is that writing is a complex process that involves more than just simply listening to and repeating what others have said. Writing, for Stein, can be organic and intuitive in the sense that it is as if only by feeling the power of creation can Stein write. The listing example quoted above is a reference to a delay in action found in the process of writing, suggesting writing as a process that demands patience and waiting. It reminds us that the energy of writing goes both ways—comes from without and flows from within.

As the word “pale” reverberates persistently in the space of seven lines, it seems as if an extraordinary psychological condition settles in. But at this juncture we are unsure whether the pale experience is introduced *to* the speaker or *by* the speaker. Upon further reading, we quickly learn that the speaker experiences writer’s block, waiting anxiously for a contact with the visionary (“Put something down some day in my hand writing,” line 258). The incrementally repetitive sequences spanning the lines 240-258 dramatize a pleading tone (“Put something down. / Put something down some day. / Put something down some day in. / Put something down some

day in my. / In my hand. / In my hand right. / In my hand writing. / Put something down some day in my hand writing”). Indeed, the struggle to write is palpable.⁸⁵ The undesirable state of waiting in anxiety speaks to the precarious nature of writing. But perhaps it is the element of precariousness that captures Stein’s imaginative mind, and furthermore helps expand her imaginative horizons. Stein once boldly commented on the birth of a sentence in *How to Write*: “There is no use in preparing for it” (180). She wants us to understand that the spontaneity, surprise, and liveliness of an artistic work are in part attributed to writing’s precariousness and unpredictability.

On the other hand, there is a hint of playfulness in the fractured syntax of “put something down some day in my hand writing,” if we read it in isolation from the context of writer’s block. What we encounter here is a stream of thought that is forced to be lengthened into several fractured pieces of unfinished and delayed utterances till the central image of handwriting is revealed. Such purposeful prolongation conjures up a sensible being that embraces each instant. This incremental revelation coincides with moment to moment living.

Strikingly, the interaction between the white space and black words invites us to envisage the listing structure as a throne from a side view. The visual image the text makes—the throne symbolism—stages the prospect of consecration where the ideas of writing and saintliness intersect.⁸⁶ Stein’s poem offers this throne-like structure as a figurative extension of her embrace of saintliness, and writing as a kind of religious symbol. Writing assumes this significance because it makes possible and available a sacred occasion. The image of writing as the agent that

⁸⁵ Carefully examining Stein’s early work such as Q. E. D. and her first notebooks, Ulla E. Dydo, in “Gertrude Stein: Composition as Meditation,” discerns Stein’s “struggle to comprehend her perceptions [and] her struggle to write them” (43). Dydo concludes that “Throughout the years, struggle characterised [Stein’s] writing. [. . .] Even when her perception was not painful, writing was a struggle” (43).

⁸⁶ Using Stein’s *Four Saints in Three Acts* as an example, Linda S. Watts, in *Rapture Untold: Gender, Mysticism and the ‘Moment of Recognition’ in Works by Gertrude Stein*, shows the parallel between the saint and the genius in Stein.

facilitates the creation of sacredness is also offered in the context of letter writing, a mode of writing that helps frame the idea of unity, oneness. Stein writes, “Cordially yours. / Pause. / Cordially yours. / Not sooner together. / Cordially yours. / In strewing, in strewing. / This is the way we are one and indivisible” (lines 64-70). “Cordially yours,” the distinctive marker of epistolary etiquette, not only highlights Stein’s daily routine in real life, that is, letter or postcard writing, but also suggests the poem “Sacred Emily” functioning as a love letter dedicated to *or* created by a sacred female named Emily, as the title indicates. Sacred Emily is sacred because writing consecrates an amorous relationship and brings her to the state of oneness. “Sacred Emily” is a letter that celebrates the addresser-addressee unity and commemorates the consummation of oneness.

If there is a heightened sense of religiosity in the process of literary production, it amounts to a call for leaving the self behind, an attitude that brings the poet close to the realm of “secular sanctity.”⁸⁷ The withdrawal of one’s self would be, in Stein’s theoretical framework, the dissolution of *identity* and the valorization of *entity*. For Stein, a successful work involves a trade-off between “identity” and “entity” at the time of writing. In her 1936 lecture “What Are Master-pieces,” she makes it clear that a text which is a masterpiece does not involve memory and identity: “the master-piece has nothing to do with human nature or with identity, [sic] it has to do with the human mind and the entity that is with a thing in itself . . .” (88).⁸⁸ In Stein, identity comes with the baggage of memory, a mechanism Stein reacts against. While discussing her early portraits, Stein repeatedly claims that a conscious and strenuous resistance to the influence of “remembering” is part of her writing process: “the making of a portrait of anyone is

⁸⁷ Donald Sutherland advances the idea of secular sanctity in Stein in the following language: It is important “to live in the real present, where everything that came before [Stein] was attended to, not in a provisory way but completely, and with the finality of a Last Judgment” (127).

⁸⁸ Interestingly, Stein’s emphasis on her masterpieces as an identity-free continuum finds its counterpart in T.S. Eliot’s impersonal theory of poetry.

as they are existing and as they are existing has nothing to do with remembering any one or anything” (“Portraits and Repetition” 104).⁸⁹ The act of remembering imposes presumptions and preconceptions on the instantaneous perception of the object, and in turn obstructs an immediate understanding of the object of the portrait in the present.

In the hopes of staying close to the presentness of the object, Stein keeps at bay a lived past that can easily encroach on the present as well as the moment-to-moment consciousness. Stein channeled much energy into exploring and thereby developing a way of communication that is not mediated and induced by memory but harnessed by instant perception (and multiple impressions): “when I was completely emptied of knowing that the one of whom I was making a portrait existed I had made a portrait of that one” (“Portraits and Repetition” 106). Collectively, the aforementioned passages suggest an expansion of the definition of saintliness: in Stein, saintliness is perceived or achieved through a form of art that captures the moment “when the things themselves are actually existing” (“Portraits and Repetition” 101). Simultaneously, the ideal of saintliness is found in one’s ambition to retain the lively energy, the protean state, and the volatile character of the portrayed seen from outside. Saintliness is intuition at work. The throne-like listing structure helps establish and articulate Stein’s view of artistic production as an analogy for saintliness. In “Sacred Emily” Stein pursues the sense of saintliness with undiminished vigor, and in consequence at one level it is a poem about the analogy between an imaginative mind and a religious sanctity that goes into craftsmanship.

Intuition versus Intellection

⁸⁹ As Stein reemphasizes in *Everybody’s Autobiography*, “That is what makes today today that there is very little remembering done” (138).

In Stein's creative acts, the imperative of detachment from the mind that relies on recollection is actually a somber response to the struggle between intellection and intuition. The need to be detached from a rigidly structured frame of mind is as important as one's concentration on a fluid and porous consciousness ready to absorb and be immersed in a visionary moment. As Richard Bridgman's *Gertrude Stein in Pieces* notes, Stein would choose intuition over rationality, associating "Understanding, rationality, mechanism [sic]" with "organization" (283). "Lucid and complete explanation," Bridgman continues, "could be more misleading than hints" (283). Stein in the poem, "Not Slightly," contemplates her most powerful formulation about poetry, that is, her handling of instinct as the creative force. Under the subtitle "Instinct," the speaker repeats three times,

Instinct or reason.
 Instinct or reason.
 Instinct or reason.
 Round and about.
 Round.
 About. (296)

The speaker repeats three times "Instinct or reason," as if choosing between the two is an uneasy decision that weighs on her. With the presence of the conjunction "or" that renders instinct and reason of equal weight, the question of which should be of more important becomes debatable. However, the fact that "instinct" precedes "reason" in the order of presentation indicates the order of preference and of importance. It speaks to the result of the duel between the two: Stein's prioritizing of instinct over reason as the guiding principle of her aesthetic judgment. Indeed, the heightening of intuitive sensation makes room for hermetic and eccentric descriptions such as

“Egg be takers” (line 4) or “Pay nuts renounce” (line 71) in one’s imaginative sphere.⁹⁰ The spontaneity and volatility from the instinctual realm account for literary expressions such as “Parts of place nuts” (line 5). Intuitive intensity is the driving force enabling Stein to create literary works that she considers contemporary, experimental, and unorthodox. It allows her to embrace varying sources of inspiration and forms of creativity coming from all directions (“Round. / About”). Stein’s unreserved assertiveness about the instinctual brings satisfaction. Not only is meaning spreading and widening, but also the focus of analysis is constantly shifting and multiple.

In considering the implications of intuition and instinct as they relate to inspiration and creation, it is important to reflect on the curious lines “Round and about./ Round. / About.” Interestingly, with the phrase “Instinct or reason” repeated thrice and with no new words added, the movement of thought in the space of three lines operates in a circuitous fashion. The sense of circularity extends into the next 3 lines. The expression of “Round and about” is easily linked to the idea of going *round about* something, which renders it an alternative form of circularity that Stein mimes. It is an extension of the circuitous process that mirrors what has already been stated. However, the emphasis is not so much on the speaker going round about her subject with the same words, as a pun that suggests claiming a sexual identity, that is, a self that is awakened by the pleasures and desires that sexuality and sensuality bring. In particular, the word “round,” a spatial image, resonates with the sound “or” in the previous lines in the way which “or” can be seen as a pun for “O,” a round-shaped figure as well as the sound of pleasure or excitement. The reference to “round” and “about” brings into sharper focus the sensations, pleasures, and desire that the sound “O” evinces.

⁹⁰ Cyrena N. Pondrom recognizes “Pay nuts renounce” as an encoding of “a renunciation of the phallic world” (Introduction, xlviii).

Stein's intuition leads her down the path to creating a mosaic writing characterized by an atomizing effect. While ideas are arranged in fragments and pieces, they still carry meaning and bear significance. In Stein, writing is beyond the task of piecing ideas together logically, patching them together artistically, or documenting them sequentially. The ultimate goal of writing is to create "a sentence in thinking," as Stein asserts in *How to Write* (212). In that sense, the most important aspect of Stein's instinctive writing, as she demonstrates in the aforementioned example, is the validation of lacunas or gaps—appearing at the level of lexicon, syntax, or a passage. Stein's openness and appeal to lacunas does not sit well with reasonable/rational writing in which a coherent body of thought is built, ironclad arguments marshaled, and a conclusion drawn. Different from rational writing, instinctive writing allows for incompleteness, indirectness, and suggestiveness. Moreover, there is room for secrecy and misunderstanding (*How to Write*, 212; 240).

The struggle between intellection and intuition also becomes conspicuously palpable as we read through the throne passage quoted previously. Clues to the intellection-intuition struggle are found in the following lyric lines—"Please sorts. / Example. / Example" (lines 248-250)—inserted into the lyric passage. The introduction of them makes an impression of a rational, dogmatic turn of mind that intervenes to halt the creative process that puts instinctual power first. In terms of the tone and texture of this verse-paragraph, the insertion of the two jarring words, "Example. / Example," in the middle of a struggle to write proves nothing but obtrusive and disruptive. Given that the word "example" is a laboratorial word that has close association with knowledge that can be repeated and reproduced, to seek or resort to examples is to operate at the level of intellection. Disturbingly, the struggle-to-write scene appears to be interrupted by a second voice, a rational voice bent on calling upon the authority of precedents that more often

than not become stable and concrete examples.⁹¹ As it forces its way in, the voice of reason harnesses the speaker with the operation of a logical mind of unbending precision. With its unsympathetic response and the pretension of critical method (“Please sorts”), the voice of reason tends to exercise control over emerging alternatives that deviate from the dominant, demanding conformity to mainstream values. Over the long span of the fifteen lines, Stein acknowledges her struggle with a haunting voice that marshals its authority and command by emphasizing examples. This disclosure suggests the overwhelming presence of the dominance of the mind.

In the poem “Not Slightly,” included in the same collection *Geography and Plays* as “Sacred Emily,” Stein proceeds to restate her decision about not following or resorting to literary precedents. The speaker in “Not Slightly” emphatically announces a break from the past: “No there is no example in this” (294), and is adamant about her determination to write in a way that is not inherited from the past, or to write about things that might not have a place in literary tradition: “I don’t know instances” (296). Stein’s dismissal of *examples* is symbolic of breaking with all precedent. What she offers is unprecedented, and there are no examples to be found in the writing of any other person. In “Pink Melon Joy,” Stein asserts that her writing uniquely animates a mosaic of qualities and strategies involved in her creative processes: “It is chance. An accident. A resemblance. An offspring. An intuition. A result. A repetition” (372). Stein’s openness to the aleatory is the foundation of her aesthetic. Chance not only gives momentum to her poetry, but also keeps changing in appearance. The catalog just quoted is a hint of all the possibilities that chance makes itself known. Chance is not circumscribed. This parade of

⁹¹ On the topic of various voices drifting in and out of “Sacred Emily,” Marianne DeKoven’s book *A Different Language* identifies moments when the speaker claims her voice, and argues for some of the “speech fragments” in the poem as voices that come of everyday conversation on social and private scenes.

possibilities at once dramatizes the way Stein characterizes her composition, and prepares the readers for a vision of writing that does not conform to existing poetic conventions. In sum, Stein makes diversity and plurality features of prime importance, which is clearly seen in the literary forms as divergent as the plays and poems displayed in *Geography and Plays*.

Stein may not have found the idea of “examples” desirable, as examples are commonly set up for imitation, and accompanied by notions such as *model*, *template*, and *case in point*, all of which indicate a high degree of concreteness, and are geared toward a reductive version of generalized operations. If the word “example” bears negative connotations for her, it is because the word evidences the operation of intellectual power that transforms abstractions into stable forms or concretized ideas, all of which are inconsistent with Stein’s expressed desire for words and sentences to be revitalized and released from a static and stagnant state.⁹² It is Stein’s mission to restore the vitality and vibration of English words and sentences. As Peter Nicholls notes in *Modernism*, Stein’s early work shows that her “focus of attention travels consistently away from meaning to the texture of writing” (202). Stein’s texture of writing is seen in the way in which one word is placed next to another. It relies on semantically and aurally experimental relationships between words, through which meaning becomes instable and fluid. All of these result from Stein’s sensitivity to the external world and her embrace of intuition.⁹³ Stein verbally shared with Samuel M. Steward her thoughts on the relationship between lively writing and intuition, while strolling around the countryside:

⁹² In *Narration*, Stein states that “they [words] began to detach themselves from the solidity of anything, they began to excitedly feel themselves as if they were anywhere or anything . . . and in this detaching and in this moving it is being in its way creating its existing” (10).

⁹³ According to Linda Wagner-Martin, Stein’s first use of intuition as a way of writing traces back to her first year at the Harvard Annex. Under George Santayana’s influence, Stein “tried to write as intuitively as she could” (Wagner-Martin, 33). Santayana’s philosophy class influenced her perception of writing. Richard Bridgman also comments on the workings of intuition in Stein. He points out that Stein’s play *Doctor Faustus Lights the Lights* solidly sends out the message of “the superiority of instinct and intuition” (290).

[T]he creative act is wonderful. Remembering is not the way of creative thinking and writing. Creating is not remembering but experiencing. It is to look and to hear and to write—without remembering. It is the immediate feelings arranged in words as they occur to me. But only a minority, a very small number, of artists reveals a sensitivity to materials and to the world in general. That is, I mean, acting according to their experiencing and to be really living and creating. I am always a part of the picture as a writer. (24-5)

Apparently, literary creation, in Stein, involves personal and direct contact with the surrounding world. It also engages in a nebulous and indescribable process that allows the inner self to tap into “the immediate feelings arranged in words” (Steward, 24). While words are mobilized to translate the state of immediacy, creative writers possess the capability to receive the message of the world intuitively. Stein prefers intuition to intellection. Particularly, her work is meant to effect immediate experience.⁹⁴ To that end, the disciplined tendency to make things orderly and structured is kept in check.

Elsewhere in “Sacred Emily,” Stein builds up the motif of the antithesis between rationality and the refusal to filter writing through rational mechanisms, rejecting any form of ideological mediation. Stein deploys a humorous rhetoric in which “Near glass” (line 231) is hardly admirable in comparison with “Near sights” (line 247). To read “Near glass” and “Near sights” side by side is to bring into relief the problem of mediation. As the word “near” indicates a kind of closeness, proximity, we are drawn to “sights” (an analogy of scenery, eyesight, vision, and the viewing experience) more than to “glass” (an allusion to an object set between the viewer and the viewed). “Sights” is pursued in preference to “glass,” because to perceive through a type of

⁹⁴ When I speak of the workings of intuition in Stein’s writing, I am not suggesting the practice of automatic writing, which Stein herself emphatically denied, and Stein critics have long debunked.

mediation such as a magnifying glass, a mirror, a window, or eyeglasses deprives the viewer of the pleasure and excitement of direct contact and immediacy. Mediations diminish the powers of discernment. “Glass,” by extension, suggests preconceived judgment or any a priori set of aesthetic principles and strict credos.

Stein articulates with intelligence and subtlety in the essay, “France,” that “The special scenery which makes the blameless see and the solitary resemble a conversation is not that which resembles that memory. There is no necessity for furthering the regulation of the understanding” (229). Stein’s aesthetics distances a rationality that instructs a creative mind to work within certain established parameters, and, most importantly, a rationality that becomes attached to memory. Stein endeavors to bring into view “an expression when contemplation is not connecting the object that is in position with the forehead that is returning looking” (“Portrait of Constance Fletcher,” 159). For a *forehead* that keeps throwing a backward glance, memory takes command. The effort to throw a backward glance yields nothing meaningful and valuable. For Stein, a rejection of dependence on memory is rewarded with creativity and new ideas. Memory is a mental straitjacket that foils Stein’s efforts to move beyond the known, the predictable, and the overdetermined. When it comes to the matter of artistic creation, Stein acknowledges that the process of composition involves a conscious effort to de-program what the preexisting concepts of the thing have left in her mind. One’s preexisting knowledge gathered from the memory mechanism gets in the way of one’s immediate experience with the thing itself. Stein’s awareness of the imprint of preexisting concepts makes it imperative that she should keep at bay a mode of representation that can only re-create a “resemblance” of the thing.

At the same time, meaning is a backward glance. We assign meanings to things, and we refer to these *a priori*, remembered judgments when we *combine* words to predicate a statement

about the qualities of an object. When Stein states in the above-mentioned quote from “Portrait of Constance Fletcher” that an *expression* does not link the object to its *a priori* meaning, she alludes to the fact that the identity between the object being signified and the mode of its signification is disrupted and dissolved, which results from the way she puts words together. Stein exclaims with pleasure that “This has not any meaning” (“Portrait of Constance Fletcher,” 159). Stein seeks immediate apprehension of the object untainted by remembering and a priori patterns, disrupting the combination process by putting emphasis on *selecting* words from the lexicon. She achieves that in the following passage from “Portrait of Constance Fletcher” which abruptly shifts syntactical style from combination to selective axes: “Oh the bells that are the same are not stirring and the languid grace is not out of place and the older fur is disappearing. There is not such an end” (159). Significantly, the coexistence of selected words (words being simultaneously present) takes precedence over a cut and dry assertion produced through acts of combining words.

It should be clarified that within Stein’s literary framework the mind’s creative power is not rendered lawless and cavalier. Her detached relationship with rationality does not cancel out the fact that in practice writing is very much a conscious act and a conscientious decision for Stein, who discloses in “Patriarchal Poetry” that “Selecting that that to that selecting that to that to that all that. All and and and and and and it it is very well thought out” (*Gertrude Stein: Writings 1903-1932*, 596). Writing is a task that one can never do without acts of selection and combination. Quite the contrary, writing is done with a combination of attentive vigor and innate artistry. With Stein, rationality is neither the means nor the end of writing. It is simply an acquired mechanism that happens to have a part in the compositional and rhetorical choices she made. As Steven Meyer, in *Irresistible Dictation*, astutely notes,

So attentive herself to the difference the slightest distinctions make, Stein requires that her readers also . . . forget everything they know. Each grammatical and rhetorical choice must be felt to pose questions, must be understood as having been a choice at all, to keep it from being automatically registered and thereby dismissed. (138)

The tension between intellection and intuition is metonymic of a larger state of discord in Gertrude Stein's private life: a familial breakup tinged with sibling rivalry. Gertrude's celebration and affirmation of her own talent and creative energy were greeted with her brother Leo's skepticism and disapproval of her aesthetic sense and sensibility. Unvoiced mistrust and bitterness smoldered on for a while. By the year 1913 when "Sacred Emily" was composed, Gertrude's relationship with Leo had been filled with tension. Their sibling dynamics had already been tilting toward intense rivalry and an unmitigated rift.⁹⁵ With Gertrude's growing confidence in herself as a genius-writer and Leo's inimical ridiculing of her work, their intimate rapport and long-developed bond had eroded. In 1913 the tension reached a peak, and Leo returned to Paris from Florence to make final arrangements about his possessions at 27 rue de Fleuer, and moved out of the studio in the winter.⁹⁶ His departure marks the point where he and Gertrude severed themselves from each other's life. Caught in the midst of this troubled relationship, Gertrude processed her reaction to and contemplation of such familial discord into "Sacred Emily." Suggestive in its implications and in the associations it enables, the word "example" is skillfully deployed with the intention to bring attention to an analytical mind that depends on knowledge gained through cognitive reasoning. The demand for "example," for

⁹⁵ It has been widely known that Leo Stein's degrading and disparaging comments on Stein's "Portrait of Mabel Dodge at the Villa Curonia" are documented in his letter to their mutual friend Mabel Weeks dated 4 February 1913: "Gertrude and even Alice have the cheek to pretend that they understand this (which I can do in part sometimes) but as Gertrude thought it very nice and I had very sarcastical intentions we evidently didn't understand it the same way" (49).

⁹⁶ See James R. Mellow's *Charmed Circle: Gertrude Stein & Company* for a detailed account of this history (205).

literary precedents, belongs to the analytical and stoic mind which finds its embodiment in Leo Stein, a man of principle and strong character. According to Steven Watson's *Strange Bedfellows*, Leo is distinguished by the following characteristic: "Whatever he saw through his gold-rimmed spectacles prompted theoretical discourse" (36). It does not come as a surprise that a man with the wide knowledge Leo possessed would not suspend conceptual understanding. Predictably, Gertrude's preoccupation with intuitive recognition conflicted with his aesthetic and intellectual tastes.

The succeeding lyric lines after "Put something down some day in my hand writing" (line 258) reveal how Stein steers clear of the example-conscious model and proposes to seek organic ways to produce works with the view of releasing words, sentences, and syntax from their stable and monolithic status. By organic, I do not mean the Romantic preoccupation with organic form or any specific theoretical principles of formulating or shaping literary work. Rather, the word alludes to a rejection of creative power dictated or hamstrung by poetic conventions, principles, and precedents. Stein writes, "Pearls. / Real lines. / Shoulders. / Upper states. / Mere colors" (lines 267-271). The poetic strength of these paratactic fragments comes from the unusual perspective that produces them. Stein has words arranged in a queue, presenting the string of noun-phrases as uncertain, ambiguous, and evasive. Those qualities convey the idea that language is constantly in flux. At the same time, the fractured syntax redirects attention to words themselves. She finds momentum for her poetic projects in *words* themselves, a topic I will take up in the next section. Revealing here is the role that intuitive forces play in Stein's creative and imaginative life. Allowing a creative mind to work intuitively is intrinsic to Stein's imaginative power. In her long poem "Patriarchal Poetry," Stein astutely differentiates between two types of poetry: "Patriarchal Poetry in assemble" and "Patriarchal Poetry moss roses" (597). In

association with organic imagery, “Patriarchal Poetry moss roses” proves communicative of spontaneous and generative forces unleashed through an intuitive mechanism. Stein urges us to replace “Patriarchal Poetry in assemble” with “Patriarchal Poetry moss roses,” since artistic creation is not the same as mechanical production. It is not gauged by how adroit we are at assembling things. Ultimately, it is driven by the internal logic of its writer, and it is the principle of *free movement* that takes charge.

Moving Words

Quite often, Stein turned to elemental building blocks (the word itself, suffixes, a compound word separated into its individual units, etc.) for newness and inspiration. For Stein, words themselves carry weight because of their plasticity and volatility.⁹⁷ In his discussion of the geography of the sentence in *Tender Buttons*, William H. Gass articulates and explains this facet with clarity:

Words can be moved about like furniture in their sentences; they can be diced like carrots (Stein cuts up a good number); they can be used in several different ways simultaneously, like wine; they can be brushed off, cleaned and polished; they can be ingeniously joined, like groom and bed, anxiety and bride. Every sentence is a syntactical space (a room) in which words (things, people) act (cook, clean, eat, or excrete) in order to produce quite special and very valuable qualities of feeling. (146)

For Gass, it is not surprising that domestic activities such as mending, sewing and cooking, whose images are invoked in Stein’s *Tender Buttons*, “are metaphorically measured against the art of writing and found to be structurally the same” (146). More than that, structural nuances

⁹⁷ Similarly, John Malcolm Brinnin’s *The Third Rose: Gertrude Stein and her World* (1959) points out “the ‘plastic’ potentialities of language itself” (129) in Stein.

and varieties on the lexical level commonly elicit affective resonances on the reader's part, as Gass reminds us at the end of his account.

As I have mentioned earlier, Stein recognizes the movement of the words, arguing that “the words . . . have a different feeling of moving” (*Narration*, 9). However, the emphasis is not on a representation of words' physical actions. Stein is not concerned with the physical movement that describes or reveals the movement of a word. When it comes to a portrayal of *moving* words, she does not try to imitate the appearance of movement. Despite the fact that we find concrete examples that are informed by their pictorial value, Stein's handling of words as the agent to convey movement⁹⁸ is less graphic-extreme in comparison with her avant-garde contemporaries such as the Italian or Russian Futurists who visualized movement through radical typographical arrangements. Stein did use a concrete poetry to suggest something (as I have examined previously), although she did not use words to capture movement. She was cognizant that her work belongs to the domain of literature rather than plastic arts.⁹⁹ In her, the movement of the words is not movement in physical space. Nor is it portrayed pictorially or quantitatively. As a result, it does not involve a visualization of movement. In Stein, the movement in question is not a physical condition. Rather, it manifests itself *textually*. It is the textual movements enacted by syntagmatic and paradigmatic relationships, characterized by their dialogic relations, and

⁹⁸ Other than the movement of the words, the *movement* referenced in Stein's criticism can be generally understood as follows: the rhythm of everyday life, the rhythm of personality, and the feeling of a thing or person as existing, as Stein informs us in the lecture “Portraits and Repetition” (108). But at this juncture, I am focusing on the movement of words that captures Stein's attention. On a related note, in the same lecture, Stein acknowledges various modes of the movement of words in different periods of writing. For example, there are poems that exemplify the movement that is associated with “color and not so closely connected with talking and listening” (114).

⁹⁹ From a different angle, DeKoven also arrives at the same conclusion. In the essay “Gertrude Stein and Modern Painting: Beyond Literary Criticism,” DeKoven argues that “Stein is pointedly aware in *Picasso* that writing and painting are different means for expressing [a new vision of reality]” (180). Fundamentally, DeKoven wages a polemic against the characterization of Stein's writing as literary cubism (181). As early as 1967, Allegra Stewart also points out Stein's awareness of the different functions painting and literature serve (77).

mobilized by their pairing, that revitalize the words. In other words, the movement of the words is understood as textual relationships among constituent parts, and therefore the movement is identified through close reading, particularly close reading of constituent segments such as the listings in my case study.

Moving Words and a Rising Nation

However, the value of the moving words does not end there. Stein takes the argument a step further by alluding to their political significance in the context of nation-building, particularly for a young nation like America:

[I]n England the words even when they were most active were words that expressed arrested motion or a very slow succession. In the American writing the words began to have inside themselves those same words that in the English were completely quiet or very slowly moving began to have within themselves the consciousness of completely moving, they began to detach themselves from the solidity of anything, they began to excitedly feel themselves as if they were anywhere or anything (*Narration*, 10)

The imperative of claiming or restoring movement in the words, in Stein's rhetoric, can be interpreted along national lines and explained with reference to a reverence for a national literature, as the moving words are the harbinger of the rise and soaring of a national literature. Stein denaturalizes the view of English writing as authoritative and standard by setting it against a rising paradigm that has shaken up the language landscape with the "moving" words. This paradigm, namely the American model, makes the English language alive to intense emotions, thoughts, and fantasies. It brings the English language back to its zestful days that are full of vitality and possibilities. If the stability or "solidity" of the English language reflects a state of

linguistic ossification and paralysis, Stein makes it clear that it is exclusively through a divorce from “a settled language” used by the British that words can regain the capacity for “creating its own existing” (*Narration*, 10).¹⁰⁰ Indeed, the payoff of the linguistic detachment is covetable and immeasurable, because it entails the prospect of obtaining the vantage point of imaginative autonomy, whose existence makes words “[begin] to excitedly feel themselves as if they were anywhere or anything” (Stein, *Narration*, 10).

The scope of Stein’s discussion of language implicates issues about aesthetic creation, the status of American writing, and the confidence of being an American writer.¹⁰¹ Thus, the implications of a “moving” language are widened, crossing from the aesthetic to the political. In Stein’s account, linguistic alienation from British influences brings the excitement of feeling free, adequate, and independent. The self is endowed with the privilege of experiencing the Heideggerian sense of residing in the house of being.¹⁰² This comes from a clear understanding that the two nations use and imagine words differently despite sharing the same language system. Certainly, the emphasis on *difference* is at the heart of Stein’s argument, but we should not overlook the message of national pride that comes through strongly here. The restoration of the movement of words not only marks the difference between English and American writing, but also implies a validation of the success of the English language that has been Americanized on

¹⁰⁰ Interestingly, Ulla Dydo at the beginning of her introduction to *A Stein Reader* documents Whitman’s contemplation of the close connection between language and artistic autonomy. Whitman once tried to urge America to cut the linguistic umbilical cord: “Walt Whitman jotted down notes for *An American Primer*, a lecture he never delivered. It declared speech in America free of the rules of the English mother tongue, and claimed ‘liberty to carry out the spirit of the laws [of language], even by violating them, if necessary.—The English language is grandly lawless like the race who use it—or, rather, breaks out of the little laws to enter truly the higher ones’” (1).

¹⁰¹ It is important to note that Jahan Ramazani’s 2009 book, *A Transnational Poetics*, considers Stein as the exemplar of a transnational writer whose work can’t be readily placed “under the single-nation banner” (23) and “cannot always be read as emblematic of single national cultures” (25). Many elements in Stein do appeal transnational readers, but recent scholarship emphasizes Stein’s highly American roots.

¹⁰² Here I am thinking of Martin Heidegger’s contemplation of language as “house of being” in .

another continent. The language is brought to life and surpasses itself in an American setting, because the words “[arrive] in every kind of a way” (Stein, *Narration*, 12). As Stein declares, “[the American] wants what he has to say to be exciting, and to move as everything moves, not to move as emotion is moving but to move as anything that really moves is moving” (*Narration*, 6), her forceful pronouncement expresses high confidence, through which we witness how an American writer affirms and exalts her inner experience with the language she uses as a tool. Stein’s insistence on linguistic difference uncovers her favorable perception of her own national identity. Developed along national boundaries, Stein’s speech of linguistic confidence, or linguistic prowess, has its political resonance, not only because it makes possible a self-assertive spirit riding on a great measure of self-elevation, but also because it symbolically parts ways with American high modernists such as T.S. Eliot, who were capable of the elegance and precision of pure English.

Stein’s positive appraisal could not have come at a better time. Her open and direct celebration of American writing during her lecture tour at the University of Chicago in 1935 arrived in the wake of the culture wars of the twenties in the U.S.¹⁰³ Her heartening appraisal of American writing is in tune with the cultural climate fostered by her fellow progressive writers in America, around the time Eliot’s *The Waste Land* (1922) was first published in Britain. Writing in a similar tone, the American writer Baker Brownell comments on the new American writing in his 1918 essay in the little magazine entitled *Others*: “Words are fluid and beautiful things which the increasing rationalization of grammar surely is freezing. The ‘others’ evidently are trying to

¹⁰³ Michael North’s book *The Dialect of Modernism: Race, Language & Twentieth-Century Literature* (particularly chapter six) provides detailed and astute accounts of the wars between a cultural force institutionalized by the academic establishment and its counterforce initiated by a new generation of young writers in the U.S. The former urged some type of linguistic cleansing with the attempt to preserve English speech in its purity at the height of high modernism, and the latter favors the new American writing.

break through the encrustation and immobility that has gradually grown about the cooling language, and with some success.”¹⁰⁴ Brownell’s and Stein’s examples are the voice of a cultural awareness that identifies the importance of the alignment between what Michael North calls “the success of the literary avant-garde and the linguistic independence of the United States” (128). Significantly, Stein’s rigorous attention to structural particularities on the lexical level is not exclusively understood as a romantic view of the words acquiring “a different feeling of moving” (*Narration*, 9). It becomes a matter of self-assertion and patriotic pride. “Literature is self-validating,” as Salman Rushdie asserts (14).

The motif of self-assertion brings our attention back to the poem “Sacred Emily,” whose listing form is used metonymically to suggest a self-affirming process and creative processes. While analyzing the listing structure running from lines 259 through 277 in “Sacred Emily,” I propose to read the poem as an analogy to a liberating process, a process of releasing Stein’s own creative voice.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in North, p. 130.

Conclusion

Resonating with the cultural paradigm that privileges the parts over the whole in the Twentieth Century, Stein, Joyce, and Roy experiment, in their various ways, with different combinations of parts and fragments in a list. Stein creates literary assemblages of sensations, forces, and movements as an act of representation that celebrates the beauty of encounters between human and nonhuman, perceptible and imperceptible objects. Her list-like structures not only give salience to the playfulness and plenitude of the abstract forces permeating her lived experience, but also present a world of rhythms and activities where humans do not necessarily take center stage. Her practice of cataloguing exemplifies a listing style that is not limited to a simple enumeration.

Echoing Stein's attentiveness to the fluidity of the mind, Joyce's non-sequential lists about perception and affect also project a mobile consciousness that does not follow a strict sequence. For Joyce, listing is a device which is used to bring forth a succession of imaginary frames that is disjointed and fragmentary on the stage of the mind. Joyce's list-like assemblages prompt us to consider the mental images and ideas randomly assembled in the stream of consciousness to be a form of cataloguing. Furthermore, these nonhierarchical and episodic assemblages that mirror a character's stream of consciousness highlight the primacy of love and stage the *event* of love.

Roy also explores the interplay between the listing form and the stream of consciousness, but in a different way. Literally, Roy's characters enumerate items in the mind. Listing in Roy's novel is a way to group and organize things into some kind of order that represents emotions and ideas. Moreover, her lists are charged with social concern and political intensity; the listing form proves to be value-laden. Finally, we return to Stein, whose preoccupation with lists, series, and the play of linguistic signs renders her lists intellectually challenging and visually suggestive.

Her verbal and stylistic patterns that are marked by repetitions not only compel richer readings, but also offer us new ways of thinking about repetition as a type of listing.

Stein's assemblage of encounter and perception, Joyce's assemblage of mental associations and seductive moments, Roy's practical lists, and Stein's radically experimental lists all illustrate the way twentieth-century combinatorial models valorize a state of multiplicity rather than unification. Putting lists and catalogues to different uses, these three writers enlarge the existing parameters of the list by offering us a broader definition of cataloguing.

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