UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN TRINITY COLLEGE

“Say it simply [...] say it simplier”: Samuel Beckett and Gertrude Stein's aesthetics of writing worser.

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DECLARATION

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Summary

The introduction to this thesis makes clear the need for a reconsideration of Gertrude Stein's influence on the aesthetics of Samuel Beckett through a redressing of the lacuna that is Stein's role in Beckett's developing aesthetics; in particular his post-1937 transition to a bilingual English creative praxis. The introduction explains how its methodology privileges a reading of Beckett and Stein that preferences the quantifiable aspects of literary analysis in the form of literal readings that note grammatically specific technical approaches adopted by both authors throughout their respective writings.

Chapter One demonstrates the extraordinary comparability of Stein's aesthetics to those articulated by Beckett in his own writings on language throughout the early 1930s, most of which are neatly summarised in the 1937 Kaun letter. It makes explicit the full extent of their aesthetic compatibility, conducting a thorough exploration of their respective writings on language and delineating the numerous aspects of language with which they are dissatisfied. The chapter also outlines the theory of renarration as a narrative strategy that this thesis forwards as a central technique adopted by both authors to actualise the desired semantic tearing concordant with their aesthetic praxes in English.

Chapter Two initiates the comparative study of Beckett and Stein's respective renarrative praxes by comparing this technique of renarration in Stein's *The Making of Americans: Being a History of a Family's Progress* and Beckett's *Watt*. The chapter provides practical examples from both texts that illustrate the methods adopted by both authors as they attempted to act on the articulations of dissatisfaction with the English language discussed throughout Chapter One.

Chapter Three will focus on a further, equally integral facet of renarration in the work of both authors; namely on smaller scale instances of renarration in the form of repeated words, phrases or sentences. The chapter specifically focuses on the role of the major grammatical modifiers of "verbs," "adverbs," "nouns," and "adjectives."

Chapter Four focuses on the lesser modifiers; "pronouns," "conjunctions," "determiners," "prepositions," and "punctuation marks." Each section loosely isolates the relevant modifier, compares particularly pertinent examples of manipulations of the term, while also examining the effect of manipulation on the modifiers themselves and on surrounding words in the sentence.

Chapter Five opens with a study of the role played by error in the writings of both authors, delineating techniques harnessed by both authors that encourage the appearance of error into their writings. The concluding section of the chapter makes clear the inherently bilingual nature of Stein's writings by exploring her bilingual and multi-dialectical orthography. Following this, the chapter situates Stein's bilingual English writings in the context of Beckett's own bilingual poetics; specifically in relation to the development of Beckett's bilingual English throughout *Watt*.

The conclusion brings together the central arguments of this thesis. It illustrates how the reconsideration of Stein's influence on Beckett's developing aesthetics, together with the comparative study of their respective stylistic praxes, demonstrated throughout this thesis, works to reassess previous critical readings regarding the importance of Stein in the context of Beckett's aesthetics and, in particular, in the context of his evolution of a bilingual English writing practice.

I am afraid we are not rid of God because we still have faith in grammar.
—Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols.*

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ABBREVIATIONS

TITLES OF BECKETT'S WORKS

C	*Company*
Dis	*Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment*
HII	*How It Is*
Ill	*Ill Seen Ill Said*
MD	*Malone Dies*
M	*Molloy*
TFN	*Texts for Nothing*
Watt	*Watt*
WWH	*Worstward Ho*

TITLES OF STEIN'S WORKS

AABT	*The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*
EA	*Everybody's Autobiography*
GP	*Geography and Plays*
HTW	*How To Write*
MOA	*The Making of Americans*

Introduction

It's of me now I must speak, even if I have to do it with their language.[1]

The following excerpt from Beckett's letter to Axel Kaun, dated July 9 1937[2] has become a stalwart of critical studies and accounts of Beckett "The Esthetic Explorer,"[3] as Ruby Cohn classifies him in her introduction to *Disjecta*:

> It is indeed getting more and more difficult, even pointless, for me to write in formal English. And more and more my language appears to me like a veil which one has to tear apart in order to get to those things (or the nothingness) lying behind it. Grammar and style! To me they seem to have become […] irrelevant […]. Since we cannot dismiss it all at once, at least we do not want to leave anything undone that may contribute to its disrepute. To drill one hole after another into it until that which lurks behind, be it something or nothing, starts seeping through—I cannot imagine a higher goal for today's writer. [...] At first, it can only be a matter of somehow inventing a method of verbally demonstrating this scornful attitude vis-a-vis the word. […]
> Perhaps Gertrude Stein's Logographs come closer to what I mean. The fabric of the language has at least become porous, if regrettably only quite by accident and as a consequence of a procedure somewhat akin to the technique of Feininger. The unhappy lady (is she still alive?) is undoubtedly still in love with her vehicle, if only, as a mathematician is with his numbers; for him the solution of the problem is of very secondary interest, yes, as the death of numbers, it must seem to him indeed dreadful.[4]

[1] Samuel Beckett, *The Unnamable*, ed. Steven Connor (London: Faber and Faber, 2010), 36.
[2] Hereafter referred to as "Kaun 1937."
[3] Ruby Cohn, "Foreword" in Samuel Beckett, *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment* (London: Calder Books, 2001), 11.
[4] Samuel Beckett [hereafter 'SB'] to Axel Kaun [hereafter 'AK'], 9 July 1937, *The Letters of Samuel Beckett: Volume 1 (1929-1940)*, ed. Martha Dow Fehsenfeld and Lois More Overbeck, tr. Viola Westbrook (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2009), 518-19. For a more extensive excerpt from Viola Westbrook's translation of the letter see Appendix: 1.

Cohn is right to observe that "Almost every critic has cited this letter in connection with Beckett's post-war writing."[5] Yet while it is acknowledged as a major critical document that delivers key insights into the development of Beckett's aesthetics during and after the 1930s where many of the aesthetics outlined throughout this letter are successfully actualised, the segment quoted above, along with the letter as a whole, remains something of an enigma. While critics have acknowledged the critical importance of Beckett's expressed desire in Kaun 1937 to tear at language as an indication of his changing aesthetics, they have tended to neglect the fact that Beckett specified he wished to do so in a manner akin to that already achieved by Gertrude Stein. The lacuna that is Stein's role in Beckett's developing aesthetics impedes critical understanding of what is undoubtedly a key facet in the development of Beckett's bilingual *œuvre*; restricting our understanding of certain practical aspects of Beckett's evolving aesthetic praxis during this period when he was attempting to, as Mark Nixon puts it, "get away from Joyce."[6]

This thesis redresses this critical lacuna in our understanding of Beckett's aesthetic evolution by arguing for Stein's influence on Beckett's transition from a "monolingual polyglot"[7] whose work showed definite stylistic assonances with that of Joyce, to a "bilingual Anglophone"[8] writer; a transition that ultimately facilitated his evolution into a "bilingual Francophone"[9] author and self-

[5] Cohn, *A Beckett Canon* (Ann Arbour: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 89.
[6] Mark Nixon, "'Silly Business'—Beckett and the World of Publishing," in *Publishing Samuel Beckett*, ed. Nixon (London: The British Library, 2011), 2.
[7] "Le monolinguisme polyglotte (1929-1937)," Chiara Montini, *"La bataille du soliloque": Genèse de la poétique bilingue de Samuel Beckett (1929-1946)* (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2007), 20. Throughout this thesis I make use of Montini's typology for Beckett's career as a bilingual writer. Her study focuses on the broad sweep of his bilingual trajectory whereas mine is more concerned with the evolution of specific syntactic manipulations.
[8] "Le bilinguisme anglophone" (Montini, *"La bataille du soliloque,"* 95).
[9] "Le bilinguisme francophone" (*Ibid.*, 177).

translator. The thesis delineates the mutuality of Beckett and Stein's aesthetics of language and their creative praxes in English through a comparative study that encompasses major works from both authors' English *œuvres*,[10] focusing primarily on their fictional output. It traces and compares the trajectory of both authors' engagements with linguistic representation in English, and is specifically concerned with the technique of repetition and a grammar led adaptation of the repetitious act I will define as renarration.[11] This thesis will explore the extent of this aesthetic overlap, conducting the first full-length comparative study of Beckett and Stein's aesthetics and writings. In addition to enacting this comparative study of the fictional output of Beckett and Stein, and arguing, in the process, for the comparability of their aesthetics of language apropos the technique of renarration, this thesis posits Stein as a figure both suitable for and deserving of consideration as one of Beckett's most prominently

[10] Because Stein did not self-translate, a comparative study of their writings in or between French is both inappropriate and redundant. With the exception of 1938s *Picasso* (Stein's first published work in French, the English versions being a translation enacted by Toklas), Stein wrote alost exclusively in English. That said, as Chapter Five will make explicit, according to Montini's terminologies Stein can be classified as a bilingual Anglophone or indeed a polylingual Anglophone writer. Comparing her writings in English with Beckett's nascent bilingual Anglophone works, together with the English versions of his bilingual Francophone writings will constitute the body of this comparative study. Chapter Five of this thesis will make the case for considering Stein a bilingual Anglophone writer (Stein, *Picasso*, (Paris: Christian Bourgois, 2006)).

[11] This term has seen previous use in the area of contemporary performance theory, specifically in relation to what David Shirley and Jane Turner classify as "themes related to a sense of *loss* or *trauma* as well as notions of *blankness*, *presence*, *embodiment*, and *fracture*." In his essay "Location, Location, Location: narrative and blankness in recent British drama" from the same essay collection, John F. Deeney, speaking of Douglas Coupland, observes "one of the features of Coupland's fiction is how the figures in his novels come to be determined by their need to tell stories, to 're-narrate' themselves." This thesis deviates from Deeney's interpretation and instead defines renarration in a strictly literal sense as repeated passages of text that are accompanied by grammatical modifications to the repeated text. See Shirley and Turner, "Introduction" to *Performing Narrative: narration, 'denarration,' fracture and absence in contemporary performance practice*, ed. David Shirley and Jane Turner, (Manchester: Manchester Metropolitan University, 2013), ii-iii; emphasis in original; and John F. Deeney, "Location, Location, Location: narrative and blankness in recent British drama," in *Performing Narrative: narration, 'denarration,' fracture and absence in contemporary performance practice*, eds. Shirley and Turner, 1-11.

discernable literary influences; one that is of particular relevance to the evolution of his bilingual *œuvre*.

This thesis forwards as its central premise that the aesthetics and creative praxes of Beckett and Stein are comparable to such a degree that Stein's influence on Beckett's developing aesthetics is without question. Previous critics gestured towards this Steinian influence, but have continually fallen short of making an assertive declaration that Beckett not only read and encountered Stein's work, but learnt from it, and that her writings served as a technical example or functional blueprint against which to situate his evolving writerly praxis in English.[12] This thesis moves beyond the reductive and confining approaches that have thus far prevailed in the reception and subsequent critical analysis of Stein's work, particularly in the context of its comparability with

[12] As early as 1981, for example, Marjorie Perloff acknowledged the stylistic comparability of their writings by situating them within the same strand of modernist poetics. Perloff identifies a thread of dissatisfaction with received language and linguistic representation running through the works of Beckett, Stein, Ezra Pound, Arthur Rimbaud and William Carlos Williams. While it is hardly ground-breaking to make such a statement about Beckett, it is certainly innovative to consider him as inhabiting an alternative strand of modernist aesthetic to that of his once mentor James Joyce. That said, Perloff's study has done little to alter the extant conception among Beckett scholars that situates Stein as a marginal figure in the Paris Beckett inhabited in the 1920 and 1930s. Perloff's decision to place Stein and Beckett's respective attitudes towards and frustrations with language and linguistic representation in tandem is characteristically incisive, but it is an observation Beckett himself hinted at in Kaun 1937, declaring Stein's "logographs" as being "closer to" the aesthetics of language he was seeking to articulate in his fictional output. Yet, while Perloff places Beckett and Stein within the same strand of modernist poetics, when she briefly examines their work in tandem, she settles on a somewhat tenuous point of stylistic dissimilarity, not stylistic approximation (Marjorie Perloff, *The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to* Cage (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1999), 206). In her introduction to *Disjecta*, Ruby Cohn gestures towards the comparability I am proposing by referring to the Stein connection as one that *might* have been (*Dis*, 11). Porter Abbott's research into Beckett and Stein's writings largely concerns cognitive narratology and while his initial comparative hints at the potential for a sound Beckett-Stein connection, the essay itself develops into an extended study of the films of Michael Heineke and the writings of Jeanette Winterson (Porter Abbott, "Garden Paths and Ineffable Effects: Abandoning Representation in Literature and Film," in *Towards a Cognitive Theory of Narrative Acts*, ed. Frederick Luis Adalma (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010) 205- 26). James Knowlson comes closest to claiming a definite connection between the two when, in *Images of Beckett*, he states that in transitioning to writing in French Beckett was *perhaps* hoping to achieve something along the lines of Stein's logographs (Knowlson, *Images of Beckett*, photographs by John Hayes, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 37). The first and final chapters of this thesis will make Knowlson's assertion concrete by detailing Stein's own attitude to writing in English, making a certainty out of what is, for Knowlson, a possibility, albeit an acutely observed one.

Beckett's own. It identifies such attitudes as historically inaccurate and limited readings that have not only inhibited our capacity to link Stein and Beckett, but have impeded a full appreciation of Stein's aesthetics. Such studies situate Stein's writings as the products of a narcissistic, infantile author incapable of linguistic innovation beyond that accorded her within the realm of feminist and queer theory.[13] Instead, this thesis contests the longstanding entrenched readings

[13] Critical readings of Stein's work from the 1920s to the present day have tended overwhelmingly to employ Stein's biography in the form of extrapolated anecdotes relating to her personality as a means of, supposedly, illuminating her work. Janet Malcolm, for example, asserts "of all writers she [Stein] may be the one whose work most cries out for the assistance of biography in its interpretation. The 'it' and the 'I' are never far apart" (Janet Malcolm, *Two Lives: Gertrude and Alice* (New Haven: London: Yale University Press, 2007), 36). Further still, as Lucy Daniels observes:

> Many contemporary discussions and parodies of her work mix up judgements about Stein's body with imputations of mental illness or insanity, and babyishness [...] they called her insane, indolent, infantile, fat, Jewish, female. And they directly transposed these judgements to her writing (Lucy Daniels, *Critical Lives: Gertrude Stein* (London, Reaktion Books, 2009), 140-1).

Contemporary examples of the above include Wyndham Lewis' account of Stein as a "capable, colossal authoress [who] relapses into the rôle [sic.] and mental habits of childhood" (Wyndham Lewis, "The Prose-Song Of Gertrude Stein," in *Time and Western Man* ed. Paul Edwards (Black Sparrow Press, 1993), 60). Further still, as an "idiot-child [...] that [...] throws big, heavy words up and catches them; or letting them slip through its fingers, they break in pieces; and down it squats with a grunt, and begins sticking them together again" (*Ibid*., 60). Robert McAlmon's account of Stein in *Being Geniuses Together* as a "sluggish, but virile" writer who appeared on the streets of Paris in her "uniform" and weighed less than the American Amy Lowell; the focus here being on Stein's appearance and mannerisms, as opposed to her writing: "But one thing was certain, Amy [Lowell] did weigh a good deal more than Gertrude" (Robert McAlmon, *Being Geniuses Together: 1920-1930*, revised with supplementary chapters and an afterword by Kay Boyle (Baltimore: London: Johns Hopkins University Press), 204).

This practice has continued to the present day with Janet Malcolm labelling *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* the product of a decision "at the age of fifty-eight [...] to (so to speak) prostitute herself" (Malcolm, 8-9). Further assertions, such as Malcolm's rather baffling claim that Stein's "charm was as conspicuous as her fatness" (Malcolm, 29) trace a distinct and distasteful line from the criticism of Lewis and McAlmon through to the present day writings of Elaine Showalter. In *A Jury of her Peers: American Women Writers from Anne Bradstreet to Annie Proulx*, Showalter demonstrates the extent to which disturbing notions regarding Stein's celebrity, her sexual orientation and her ethnicity are conflated to create what is a virulently homophobic, anti-semetic portrait. Referring to Stein as "the pet Jew of a Nazi collaborator," Showalter perpetuates Lewis and McAlmon's sizeist conflation of figure and *œuvre* by referring to her as "the Empress Who Had No Clothes—a shocking sight to behold in every respect" (Elaine Showalter, *A Jury of her Peers: American Women Writers from Anne Bradstreet to Annie Proulx* (London: Virago Press, 2010), 254). Further still, Stein's domestic arrangements are scrutinised in a manner that differs sharply from her (male, heterosexual) contemporaries, with Showalter asserting that Stein "solved the problems of creativity versus domesticity and leisure versus drudgery by taking a wife who did all the work" (Showalter, 254).

regarding the esoteric and inaccessible nature of Stein's work, prioritising a language-focused methodology that exposes Stein's writings to direct and pragmatic comparatives with Beckett's own. This thesis forwards an analysis of their writings that favours qualitative linguistic readings over metaphorical abstractions, references to coteries, philosophies, or theoretical approaches that—irrespective of their theoretical compatibility with either author—tend to obscure the authorial texts that constitute the primary focus of this study. In short, this thesis compares Beckett and Stein's writings by focusing on the comparability (in linguistic terms) of the primary texts themselves. Through such a text-focused reading of Beckett and Stein's writings, this thesis argues that their respective efforts at responding to a mutually identified problem—that of received language and linguistic representation in English—led them to develop similar attitudes towards received language, and to search for practical methods of destabilising and challenging the delimiting effect of English grammar and received language on their efforts at fictional composition. Subsequently, this thesis proposes that both Beckett and Stein adopted an identical stylistic technique in the form of literary renarration.

To see Beckett distinguishing his aesthetics from the work of Joyce, as he does in Kaun 1937, and instead situate his preferred aesthetics as closer to the work of Stein can and has been read through the lens of the conflicting coteries

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For a more detailed delineation of Stein's idiosyncratic critical reception see Daniels's recent biography of Stein *Critical Lives: Gertrude Stein*. For pertinent and critically insightful analyses of the impact of celebrity culture on Stein's critical heritage see Timothy W. Galow, *Writing Celebrity: Stein, Fitzgerald, and the Modern(ist) Art of Self-Fashioning* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) and Karen Leick's *Gertrude Stein and the Making of an American Celebrity* (New York; London: Routledge, 2009). And for more generalist studies on the impact of modernist coteries see Sean Latham's *Am I a Snob?: Modernism and the Novel* (Ithaca: London: Cornell University Press, 2003), and Jonathan Goldman, *Modernism is the Literature of Celebrity* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011). In the case of Beckett, see Matthew Feldman and Mark Nixon (eds.), *The International Reception of Samuel Beckett* (London: Continuum, 2009).

of the Stein and Joyce circles on the Parisian Left Bank. This is a major factor as to why the Stein connection has been largely neglected by Beckett scholars; the connection with Joyce is just too easy, too well established, and too well documented to ignore. Similarly, the assertion of a Stein connection is—given the extent of the animosity between the Joyce and Stein circles—a steadfastly off-limits prospect; one made all the more difficult by the distinct lack of reading traces in relation to Beckett's reading of Stein's work. Remarking on the "relativity of the material traces of his reading"[14] that are discernable in Beckett's library Nixon and Dirk Van Hulle acknowledge the inherent limits and dangers of relying solely on extant material: "what is still present is evidently useful, as long as it does not blind us to the numerous intertexts that have left no trace."[15] Unlike Stein, whose archive exists more or less intact (down to shopping lists) in the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Yale University, we do not possess a comprehensive record of Beckett's library or reading interests prior to World War Two. Nixon and Van Hulle's caution regarding the "relativity of the material traces of his [Beckett's] reading"[16] displays exceptional critical self-awareness and it is important to bear this relativity in mind when it comes to considering the role Stein played in Beckett's developing aesthetics.

In Kaun 1937 Beckett expresses a desire to "tear apart" the "veil" of "my language" "in order to get to those things (or the nothingness) lying behind it."[17] Along with tearing, he expresses a similar, though slightly more procedural and precision-dependent, desire to "to drill one hole after another into it [language]

[14] Nixon and Dirk Van Hulle, *Samuel Beckett's Library* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 53.
[15] *Ibid.*, 53.
[16] *Ibid*.
[17] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 518.

until that which lurks behind, be it something or nothing, starts seeping through."[18] The terms Beckett uses here, and throughout Kaun 1937 as a whole, are of particular interest, and it is in the interest of this comparative study to engage with them in a practical level as opposed to merely applauding their descriptive efficacy. Throughout this thesis I will adopt a neo-pragmatic approach that prioritises language and grammar focused comparative readings in order to i) unravel what it was about language that Beckett found so dissatisfying in 1937, ii) delineate how this desired "literature of the non-word"[19] was actualised practically in his writings and iii) make explicit, in the process, why it was that Stein's writings provided some consolation to Beckett in his search for this "very desirable literature of the non-word"[20] by showing how the technique Beckett made use of to initiate these semantic tears was already seeing extensive use throughout the works of Stein.

This presents the comparability as something more than a convenient stylistic grouping but as a significant technical and aesthetic overlap, a stylistic confluence in the writings of two major modernist authors whose work has heretofore not been considered as being so aesthetically proximate. While this thesis is concerned with establishing areas of comparability between the writings of Beckett and Stein, references will be made, where necessary, to areas of distinct stylistic difference; particularly in relation to the final written output

[18] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 518.
[19] Specifically "Literatur des Unworts." A precise translation of this German neologism is difficult. Westbrook translates this phrase as "literature of the non-word" whereas Martin Esslin translates is as "literature of the unword"(*Dis*, 173). For convenience, throughout this thesis I will adopt Westbrook's translation, as in her rendering of "des Unworts" as "non-word" she arguably allows for the coining of neologisms that, technically speaking, are complete word units, but that nevertheless make little semantic sense; thus a word that does not effectively function as a word because it inhibits the relaying of semantic certitude (SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 515; 520).
[20] *Ibid.*, 520.

or to specific divergences in the actualisation of their respective aesthetic intentions. Rather than mould the texts into an overarching theoretical perspective that marginalises and does a disservice to the complexity of both authors' work, this thesis will instead prioritise linguistic comparability over favourable or popular theoretical models generally associated with each author on their own, and to comparative studies in general. The approach adopted by this thesis must necessarily adapt itself to the respective texts considered throughout the study. This is reflected in the structure of this thesis which analyses given texts by each author through sectional breakdowns largely focusing on aspects of language structure or linguistic techniques common to the work of both authors. The comparative study will thus be directed by what Beckett refers to in Kaun 1937 as "the fabric of the language,"[21] therefore enacting a comparative study that is determinedly concerned with stylistics and the technical skills of both authors. Such an approach does not allow perceived differences between the authorial personae to distract from the comparability of the prose. In addition, wherever possible this thesis will seek to demonstrate that the majority of such critical inferences regarding the differences between Beckett and Stein are based on critical assumptions that have arisen as a result of confusing an authorial personae with the author's written output.

Largely leaving aside quibbles over the Stein lacuna in scholarly research into this letter and the issue of the critical lacuna in relation to Stein and Beckett's aesthetic overlap in general, this thesis will focus on delineating the mechanics of the word-storming or logoclastic enterprise proposed by Beckett in Kaun 1937 and on Stein's role therein. Rather than focus on the metaphoric,

[21] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 519.

geographic, or indeed the economic, and with a view to teasing out Stein's role in Beckett's transition towards a bilingual writing praxis, this thesis will focus on the lexical and syntactic aspects of the so-called bilingual turn that occurred in Beckett's writings from roughly 1937 on, focusing in particular on how this was first effected in the English language. The thesis will i) posit Stein's role not only in the German Letter but in Beckett's aesthetic praxis in general as that of a suitable mechanical guide or influential model upon/ against which Beckett could develop his "literature of the non-word"[22] and ii) demonstrate their comparability through a detailed comparative study that specifically focuses on the comparable nature of aspects of Beckett's nascent bilingualism in English with Stein's own curious idiolectic writings by means of their shared adoption of the technique of renarration as a means of subverting standard, grammatically orthodox English dialect.

In Kaun 1937, as quoted previously, Beckett speaks of a desire to tear at the fabric of language, to challenge and undermine it with a view to enacting acts of violation against it. Stein's name emerges as a writer whose work has "at least"[23] succeeded in making language porous. But what does any of this actually mean? What is "the fabric of the language," and why did Beckett envision Stein to have succeeded in exposing "that which lurks behind"[24]? How, in a practical (that is to say, linguistic, pragmatic, and grammatical) sense, does one *tear at* language? What does "torn" language look like? What aspects of Stein's writing indicated to Beckett that "the fabric of the language has at least become

[22] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 520.
[23] *Ibid.*, 519.
[24] *Ibid.*, 518.

porous"[25]? How did Beckett know to identify this phenomenon of lexical porosity in Stein's work? If the effect of Stein's resultant prose on so-called "standard English" was one of exposing a porosity Beckett wished to emulate, how so? And where else could their work be considered aesthetically proximate? If, by 1937, Stein's "logographs" represented the apex of such attempts at tearing or drilling, what exactly did Beckett see in Stein's writings that he thought indicated such a tear or perforation in the "fabric of the language"?[26] And what are the implications—in terms of critical reception or otherwise—of conceiving of language as a "veil" or fabric-like substance? How does language display textile-like porosity and what does it mean (in a practical sense) to drill holes into the veil of language? Further still, is it possible to identify specific and concrete examples of this porosity without recourse, as Tram Nguyen does, to "manner[s] theorized by Deleuze decades later"?[27] Can this so-called porosity Beckett identified in Stein's work be delineated in a clear and systematic manner? What was it about Stein's writings that so chimed with the aesthetics he delineates throughout Kaun 1937? What aspects of her writings indicated to him a path he could follow, or similarly pave in his own way? How did Beckett go about achieving and actualising this tearing in his own work, if, as both Nixon and Tyrus Miller similarly observe: "Beckett's aesthetics, formulated in 1936-1937 [were] only creatively expressed after 1945"[28] and "Beckett only gradually, in his late works, achieved the radicality of language that these remarks [in Kaun 1937]

[25] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 519.
[26] *Ibid.*, 519.
[27] Tram Nguyen, "Porosities: Aesthetic correlations between Gertrude Stein and Samuel Beckett," *Samuel Beckett Today/ Aujourd'hui* (25) 2013, eds. Jürgen Siess, Matthijs Engelberts, and Angela Moorjani (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2013), 45-57.
[28] Nixon, *Samuel Beckett's German Diaries 1936-1937* (London: Continuum, 2011), 4.

would imply was his goal."[29] These are the core questions this thesis will seek to ascertain concrete answers to in the form of solid textual evidence that makes explicit not only the extent of the overlap between Beckett and Stein's technical approaches to writing in English, but that clearly delineates how this technical approach could be said to render "the fabric of the language"[30] porous or semantically torn.

Stein's *Tender Buttons* famously opens with the oxymoronic "Object" "a carafe, that is a blind glass,"[31] a piece that also contains the line "the difference is spreading"(*TB*, 11). Prominent Stein critic Richard Bridgman comments on the appropriateness of this opening, noting that "with this beginning, Gertrude Stein at once defends and illustrates her new method of representation."[32] The resolution towards non-representation is thus present from the onset through the metaphorical implications of "blind glass[es]" as a means of reading *Tender Buttons*. But such readings, while useful, again invite an engagement that is metaphorical rather than literal, as in my preceding observation regarding the metaphorical aptness of "blind glass[es]." In order to study the work of both authors in tandem in a way that not only enables close comparison but sheds light on the mutuality of their aesthetics across the entirety of their *œuvres*, a method of comparative analysis that is methodical in its capacity to both define and identify points of so-called linguistic tearing, one that does not recourse to metaphor when discussing same, will be more beneficial both for the reception of Stein's proximity to Beckett's aesthetics and for a general reappraisal of her

[29] Tyrus Miller, *Politics, Fiction, and the Arts Between the World Wars* (Berkeley: Los Angeles: London: University of California Press, 1999), 185.
[30] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 519.
[31] Gertrude Stein, *Tender Buttons: The Corrected Centennial Edition* (San Francisco: City Lights, 2014), 11.
[32] Richard Bridgman, *Gertrude Stein in Pieces* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 127.

prowess as a writer of considered technical accomplishment. This thesis will thus privilege a methodology that preferences the quantifiable aspects of literary analysis in the form of literal readings that note grammatically specific technical approaches adopted by both authors throughout their respective writings. This is reflective of this thesis's larger aim to parse how Stein actualised this porosity throughout the fabric of her language in a literal manner, and indeed how, in Beckett's case, the fabric of his language subsequently came to be "torn" so effectively in a similar manner in his own writings.

When comparing Beckett and Stein's aesthetics it is important to maintain an awareness of two things. First, Beckett likely encountered early-to-middle period examples of Stein's writing and thus, when he refers to her logographs he is likely referring to works from this period.[33] This not only confirms the acuity Beckett brought to his reading of Stein, it also neatly situates Beckett's reading of Stein as coinciding with the period wherein she herself attempted an attack on language in the distinct form of displays of "nominalistic irony"[34] Beckett calls for throughout Kaun 1937; texts that saw Stein make use of a distinctly logographic writerly praxis, even if she herself did not use this term. Second, while Beckett theorised his desired aesthetics in advance of producing the writings that actualised these theories, and did so privately in the form of a personal letter, Stein theorised her writings to an extensive degree, did so for a significant period after these key pieces of literature had already been written, and did so for a public audience and readership as opposed to in a private letter.

[33] For a delineation of the potential Stein texts that Beckett may have had in mind when classifying Stein's work as logographic, see Georgina Nugent-Folan, "'Ill buttoned': Comparing the representation of objects in Samuel Beckett's *Ill Seen Ill Said* and Gertrude Stein's *Tender Buttons*," *Journal of Beckett Studies* 22.1 (April 2013), 54-82.
[34] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 520.

Thus, while Beckett was an aspiring "logo-clast"[35] engaged in "doing nothing,"[36] Stein was an equally iconoclastic "logo-clast"[37] with a significant *œuvre* to her name and over thirty years of experience. In addition to her work as a practitioner of atypical English grammar, Stein was also an accomplished and committed theorist of language and grammar; a self-confessed "grammarian"[38] who published and lectured widely on the subjects of English and American language, literature, and grammars. This is important to stress from the perspective of a comparative of Stein's aesthetics with Beckett's as it changes our perception of Stein from being a somewhat unskilled author or an "unhappy lady [...] in love with her vehicle" who made ground "by accident."[39] Instead, it shows her to be an author who possessed a masterly understanding of the English language and, concordantly, an extreme control over her medium. Furthermore, Stein's theories of English grammar are self-reflexive in that they draw from and refer to her own fictional writings. Despite her reputation for esotericism, Stein displays a remarkably cogent and persuasive understanding of how language operates and what it is about this method of operation she finds faulty. Indeed, as I will argue throughout Chapter One of this thesis, only through such an extensive understanding of the function of grammar within language systems could Stein have developed the masterful methods of subverting the English language that made her work stand out among her contemporaries as the only one capable of, as Beckett puts it, making "the fabric of the language [...]

[35] SB to Mary Manning Howe, 11 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 521n8.
[36] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 520.
[37] SB to Mary Manning Howe, 11 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 521n8.
[38] Stein, *How To Write* (New York: Dover Publications, 1975),109.
[39] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 519.

porous."[40] Unlike Beckett then, who in 1937 was by his own admission "doing nothing,"[41] in her essays and lectures on language Stein is speaking about and theorising already written texts, as opposed to speaking about a yet-to-be actualised aesthetics of language. Thus, whereas Beckett's writing in Kaun 1937 is prescriptive and projects forward to his aspired future writings, Stein's is retrospective and looks back over work she has already completed.

Throughout this thesis I will adopt the word form as my unit of analysis. As Elena Tarasheva demonstrates in her cross-genre study of "short stories written by established writers in English [...], research articles by established researchers in English [...] political speeches in English delivered by outstanding personalities,"[42] the word form is an ideal standardised unit suitable for analysing different types of linguistic text with a view to identifying the specifics of a given genre or author. It allows for comparabilities of style to be clearly identified and delineated, as is the aim of this study. This approach is highly compatible with rhetorical accounts of repetition, as summarised in Madeline Frédéric's study of repetition in linguistics and rhetoric *La répétition: Étude linguistique et rhétorique*.[43] For ease of comparison across the different grammatical modifiers, and for consistency of approach across Chapters Three and Four, I have adapted Madeline Frédéric's "Classification des différentes figures de répétition relevées par la rhétorique"[44] to serve as a structural blueprint for the comparative studies of the various modifiers discussed

[40] *Ibid.*, 519.
[41] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 520.
[42] Elena Tarasheva, *Repetitions of Word Forms in Texts: An Approach to Establishing Text Structure* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), 13.
[43] Madeline Frédéric, *La répétition: Étude linguistique et rhétorique* (Max Niemer Verlag Tübingen, 1985).
[44] Frédéric, *La répétition: Étude linguistique et rhétorique*, 74.

throughout this thesis.[45] Frédéric's table, in tandem with Elena Tarasheva's pragmatic approach to the study of repetition, constitute the methodological backbone of this comparative. The analysis in each section will prioritise and highlight notable occurrences of the following specific techniques associated with repetitive writing:

> i) Phoneme repetition with sound relation only, or with both sound and semantic relations.
>
> ii) Single word or phrasal repetitions with modification of semantic content, without modification of semantic content, or containing a mixture of the two.
>
> iii) Examples where that which is repeated is the semantic content alone; by means of specific rhetorical techniques that impact upon semantic content; namely, synonymy and antonymy,[46] epanalepsis, epanorthosis, pleonasms, and tautology.[47]

Chapter One is pivotal to this thesis through its analysis of Beckett and Stein's respective writings on language and its redressing of Stein's relationship with and understanding of her medium. The texts covered throughout this chapter represent Beckett and Stein's most deliberate attempts at articulating their respective aesthetics of language, together with their accounts of their efforts at achieving and realising these aesthetics. They represent their most pointed engagements with the problems of linguistic representation and their frustrations with received language. This chapter will make clear that there are

[45] A reproduction of Frédéric's table of repetitions is to be found in the Appendix where it has been translated for ease of reference. See Appendix: 2.
[46] Though not included in Frédéric's table, I have allowed for the study of antonyms as a subsection of the section on synonyms because they appear with a conspicuous frequency throughout the writings of both authors.
[47] Thorough delineations of these terms are to be found in Bernard Dupriez, *A Dictionary of Literary Devices*, translated and adapted by Albert W. Halsall (New York; London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991).

grounds for making an assured connection between Beckett's attitude towards language as expressed in 1937 and with Stein's own mature, and—by the 1930s—well deliberated, aesthetics of language.[48] Chapter One will systematically demonstrate the extraordinary comparability of Stein's aesthetics to those articulated by Beckett in his own writings on language throughout the 1930s, most of which are neatly summarised in the 1937 Kaun letter.

By situating pertinent extracts from Kaun 1937 in the context of Stein's own aesthetics of language and showing how the two are complimentary, Chapter One will not only serve to better understand the kinds of writing that spurred Beckett away from Joyce,[49] and towards Stein's so-called "logographs," but also further detail the extraordinarily proximate relationship between Beckett's desired aesthetics and Stein's aesthetics as they stood prior to 1937.[50] While Stein's name appears in a passage that contains reserved praise for her logographs, it comes at the culmination of a lengthy and detailed diatribe against the English language. A key frustration articulated by Beckett in Kaun 1937 involves his desire to achieve in English what he felt he was at the time only achieving by accident in German:

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[48] I think a further reason this connection has not been noted by critics of Beckett is largely to do with the double-bind of their unfamiliarity with Stein, together with the enormity of her extant *œuvre*.

[49] Aside, of course, from the authors mentioned by Nixon and Van Hulle in their methodical attempt at assigning reading traces to key points in the letter in *Samuel Beckett's Library* (145); thus attempting to figure out what Beckett was reading prior to its composition, and which (primarily philosophical) thinkers may have spurred or influenced certain of the points he makes throughout. This will be returned to in Chapter Five.

[50] This serves to maintain thematic coherency between the authors while also keeping in mind one of the primary aims of this thesis; to explore Stein's influence on Beckett (not vice versa) and the comparability of her writings with the aesthetics he delineated throughout the 1930s and later actualises in his mature writings.

> Only from time to time do I have the consolation, as now, of being allowed to violate a foreign language as involuntarily as, with knowledge and intention, I would like to do against my own language, and [...] shall do.[51]

Beckett's comment here reflects his desire to commit acts of sabotage against the "grammar and style"[52] of the English language, and to do so consciously, deliberately, and not out of ignorance. Indeed, throughout Kaun 1937 Beckett goes to great lengths to express his frustrations regarding grammar and the rules that accompany standardised English. This chapter will make explicit the full extent of their aesthetic compatibility through conducting a thorough exploration of their respective writings on language with a view to outlining the comparability of their respective understanding of how language functions and the numerous aspects of language with which they are dissatisfied. The chapter will demonstrate that both Beckett and Stein share a similar understanding of how language functions, that they both refer to language as a medium strongly affected by habit, and demonstrate strong awareness of the influence of habit on language use, and that they both express profound dissatisfaction with received language in standard English dialect. The concluding section of Chapter One will outline the theory of renarrative praxis that this thesis forwards as a central technique adopted by Beckett and Stein to actualise the desired semantic tearing that is concordant with both authors' aesthetics praxis in English.

Chapter Two initiates the comparative study of Beckett and Stein's respective renarrative praxes by comparing this technique of renarration in Stein's *The Making of Americans: Being a History of a Family's Progress* and Beckett's *Watt*. These two texts are both unique in each author's *œuvre* and yet

[51] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 520.
[52] *Ibid.*, 520.

they will be shown to have remarkable similarities. Both texts display examples of unique English-language idiolects and contain examples of writings that embrace multi-dialectical styles. This chapter will provide practical examples from both texts that illustrate the renarrative methods adopted by both authors. The chapter argues that both authors initiated this "tearing" at language by attempting to verbally demonstrate the insufficiencies of the medium through the use of lengthy and permutative renarrations that succeed in actualising definite instances of semantic tearing throughout their writings

Both *Watt* and *The Making of Americans* can be said to contain lengthy passages that extensively document their respective authors' struggles to attain a mode of linguistic representation that conveys the dissatisfaction with language articulated throughout Chapter One. In essence, both texts are narratives about the impossibility of narrative, texts that interrogate in a practical manner the key issues regarding linguistic representation in English articulated by both authors throughout Chapter One. The chapter examines both artists' approach to testing the limits of their medium and their respective interrogations of the efficacy of linguistic representation through the technique of renarration. While the chapter will predominantly focus on these two texts, where necessary or appropriate, reference will be made to other texts by both authors.

Chapter Two delineates Beckett and Stein's shared success in terms of enacting deliberate violations against the English language in the form of repetitions and repetitive permutations that defy and defer the capacity to derive normative semantic or syntactic sense from language or narrative. While this method is shown to be effective in enacting a tearing at the "fabric of the

language"[53] through repetition, the concept of efficiency is certainly not one that springs to mind in relation to either *The Making of Americans* or *Watt*. This is important because in Kaun 1937 Beckett specifies "language is best used where it is most *efficiently* abused."[54] *Watt* is a sprawling and, at times, laboured, narrative with a concluding line that ensures a deferral of the capacity to discern intentionality apropos meaning; a text that ends with a statement that ostensibly disallows or indefinitely defers the capacity to cement meaning apropos any of the symbols (linguistic or otherwise) contained therein by declaring itself a book that apparently contains "no symbols where none intended."[55] Stein's *The Making of Americans* is similarly difficult, though far lengthier, containing what Stein refers to as "the complete gamut of variation"[56] in her history of "every kind of human being that ever was or is or would be living."[57]

Building on the previous chapter's emphasis on the role of repetition in renarration throughout *The Making of Americans* and *Watt*, Chapters Three and Four focus on the role of grammatical modifiers in iterations that, in line with Beckett's pronouncement in the Kaun 1937, can be said to be significantly more "efficient"[58] in their application of techniques of renarration than those discussed previously. Chapters Three and Four will focus on a further, equally integral facet of renarration; on smaller scale instances of renarration in the form of repeated words, phrases or sentences. While this has naturally been touched off throughout Chapter Two, Chapter Three goes into significant detail

[53] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 519.
[54] *Ibid.*, 518; emphasis added.
[55] Beckett, *Watt*, ed. C. J. Ackerley (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), 223.
[56] Stein, *The Making of Americans: Being a history of a family's progress* (Normal: London: Dalkey Archive, 1995), 474.
[57] Stein, "The Gradual Making of the Making of Americans" in *Look at Me Now and Here I Am: Selected Works 1911-1945*, ed. Patricia Meyerowitz (Chester Springs: London: Peter Owen, 2004), 86.
[58] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 518.

in relation to the role of specific grammar modifiers in the re-telling or renarration of events and attempts to systematically delineate the various methods both authors adopted in their attempts at renarration in this respect. These smaller scale repetitions will be shown to employ grammar modifiers to interrogate the subjects of their individual sentences on a more discrete, understated, stylistically nuanced, and—arguably—more effective level than the lumbering repetitious meanderings found throughout *Watt* and *The Making of Americans*.

Both Chapters Three and Four focus on specific grammatical modifiers then. My primary understanding of the noun "modifier" or the verb "to modify" comes in the form of the grammatical modifier and its role in the modification or delimiting of words through its appearance in proximate contact with the source or "head" term. This then is the literal understanding of the grammatical modifier and it can be extended to encompass the functional role played by grammar as a facilitator of communicative efficacy: "modifier, *n.* [...] A word, phrase, or clause which modifies another; (now) *esp.* an element within a noun phrase which characterizes more specifically what the head [term] refers to."[59] The *OED* definition of the verb "to modify"[60] similarly presents the act of modification as an activity that seeks to attain further specificity for a set head item by means of the proximate deployment of grammatical modifiers so as to delimit or qualify the head term. Grammatical modifiers are thus understood to be terms used attributively that delimit the sense of a so-called "head" term or

[59] "modifier, n.". OED Online. March 2015. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/120654?redirectedFrom=modifier& (accessed April 13, 2015).
[60] "modify, v.". OED Online. September 2015. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/120655?redirectedFrom=modify (accessed December 07, 2015).

noun. Nouns themselves fall under this category, as do adjectives, pronouns, prepositions, verbs, adverbs, determiners, conjunctions, and punctuation.

The very particular and controlled approach to engendering repetitive narratives outlined in Frédéric's table of repetitions, wherein a head term is repeated with various modifications and alterations, is also analogous to Tarasheva's interesting observation regarding the effect of repetition on nouns, an effect that sees "the naming complex [...] repeated with pre-modifying phrases which name different aspects of the concept."[61] This approach, wherein modifiers and pre-modifiers are variously attached to a recurring noun (or equivalent head term) is the aspect of renarration that will be focused on throughout Chapters Three and Four. As such, both involve proceeding by means of what the figure in *The Unnamable* refers to as "aporia pure and simple"(*U*, 1); that is to say, renarration enables the development of technical strategies through which one can induce and invite aporia into both the syntax and semantic foundations of the text. Finally, it is important to note that while the above definitions of the grammatical modifier make explicit the role modifiers play in delimiting and making specific the semantic remit of the term against which it is attached, as will gradually emerge over the course of this thesis, grammatical modifiers as they are employed by both Beckett and Stein frequently tend to do the opposite, making language and these delimited terms appear less certain, less specific, and less distinct.

As Tarasheva notes above, the repetition of set words in a pattern wherein the words themselves remain constant but are encircled by different modifiers serves to draw out different, often contradictory elements of the

[61] Tarasheva, *Repetition of Word Forms in* Texts, 58.

words meaning; thus exposing the frailties in the semantic structure of these foundational aspects of linguistic exchange. This specific and aporetic effect of renarration involving modifiers will be examined in detail throughout Chapters Three and Four across all the major grammatical modifiers; taking in, where necessary, any notable variants on this strategy of writing. The modifiers examined throughout Chapter Three constitute what Ann Banfield classifies as the "'productive' or 'lexical' categories, that is, those 'open class' categories to which new members can be added [...] Noun, Verb, and Adjective/ Adverb, language's so-called content words."[62] The chapter will move methodically through these major grammatical elements, beginning with verbs and adverbs and moving to examine nouns and adjectives.[63]

Comparing Beckett and Stein's aesthetics of language, and the study of the respective strategies they adopted when it came to inciting tears or fissures in the semantics of the English language acquires a new level of difficulty when considered in relation to the lesser modifiers, terms that themselves already bear only tenuous relation to reality, themselves "lack[ing] highly specific semantic content, having only cognitive syntactic features."[64] Chapter Four will focus on these lesser modifiers; the pronouns, conjunctions, determiners, prepositions, and punctuation marks that Banfield refers to as "non-productive modifiers."[65] Each section loosely isolates the relevant modifier, compares

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[62] Banfield, "Beckett's Tattered Syntax" in *Representations* 84 (1) (University of California Press, 2003), 15.
[63] In the case of particularly large or complex categories such as nouns and verbs, these categories have been extended to incorporate the grammatical modifiers that appear most regularly in tandem with same and from which they derive their functionality; hence, the section on nouns incorporates an analysis of adjectives and the section on verbs incorporates an analysis of adverbs.
[64] Banfield, "Beckett's Tattered Syntax," 17.
[65] *Ibid.*, 15.

particularly pertinent examples of manipulations of the term in the writings of both authors, while also examining the effect of manipulation on the modifiers themselves and on surrounding words in the sentence. Wherever possible, preference will be shown for literal readings of the passages in question, so as to determine the specific strategies adopted by both authors in the crafting of particularly interesting examples of lexical and syntactic uncertainty through renarration.

Chapter Five opens with a study of the role played by error in the writings of both authors. Lexical errors, together with the concept of writing "worser" or of the "worst worst,"[66] are familiar refrains for Beckett scholars and hold particular associations with *Worstward Ho*. The act of writing "worser"(*WWH*, 97) has been co-opted as a useful thematic guise through which one can appreciate this peculiar facet of Beckett's later writings, as a useful metaphor for the seemingly deliberate acts of semantic or syntactic sabotage identifiable throughout his later prose in particular.[67] The first section of Chapter Five will delineate the comparability between Beckett's aesthetics of failure and what we could term Stein's aesthetics of de-creation so as to make explicit the remarkable proximity between Beckett's so-called "fidelity to failure"(*Dis*, 145) and Stein's similar pursuit of error and the inexact throughout her writings.

This section delineates techniques harnessed by both authors that encouraged the appearance of error into their writings; deliberate incitements

[66] Beckett, "Worstward Ho" in *Company etc.*, ed. Van Hulle (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), 95.
[67] Much like the technique of repetition (discussed in Chapter Two), the concept of error has been subject to a variety of useful theoretical and thematic renderings. I am less concerned with error as a metaphor or philosophical abstraction, and more interested in delineating specific examples from the works of both authors that show them to be employing language in a way that can be said to be lexically "incorrect" and give rise to the errors of the kind I will presently detail throughout both their writings.

towards pejoration in English. The section will delineate varieties of error identifiable in the writings of both authors; be they in the form of incorrectly spelled words, grammatical neologisms, or forced errors brought about by syntactic manipulations or the deliberate conflation of atypical semantic associations. These variant forms of error will be conflated and shown to achieve decidedly similar results in terms of enacting semantic subversions or disturbances brought about by the manipulation of grammar and syntax. This section will posit certain syntactic and semantic errors as deliberate authorial strategies employed by both authors to tear at "the fabric of the language."[68]

The concluding section of Chapter Five makes clear the inherently bilingual nature of many of Stein's writings by exploring her bilingual and multi-dialectical orthography. Following this, the chapter will situate Stein's bilingual English writings in the context of Beckett's own bilingual poetics; specifically in relation to the development of Beckett's bilingual English throughout *Watt*. This final section of Chapter Five aligns itself with aspects of Montini's conception of bilingual writing as forwarded in her study *"La bataille du soliloque": Genèse de la poétique bilingue de Samuel Beckett (1929-1946)*. The first section briefly outlines the salient aspects of Montini's theory of a tripartite evolution of Beckett's bilingual poetics and establishes the ways in which my study contributes to this theory, but also differs from it. In this section I make clear my understanding of the concept of bilingual writing and specifically my interest in the study of bilingual syntaxes as opposed to what I have identified as being the primary interest of other studies, that of bilingual inter-text or bilingual semantics. In this section I also advance the theory that Beckett's development of a bilingual

[68] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 519.

poetics is directly analogous with aspects of Stein's own writings in, through, and against the English language. I propose that just as Beckett himself developed a method of writing bilingually in English, Stein similarly constructed a versatile, syntactically complex, and semantically esoteric *œuvre* while writing in an exclusively Anglophone dialect, a mode of writing that may be termed "multi-dialectical writing." In this section I will elaborate on my positioning of Stein as a multi-dialectical Anglophonic writer, situating her writings as stylistic precursors to the bilingual aesthetics of Beckett's post-1937 writings and specifically as an influence on the lexical manipulations seen throughout *Watt*. The chapter concludes by exploring the potential role Stein's logographic English writings may have played in the development of Beckett's bilingual aesthetics throughout *Watt* and thereafter. I propose that the particular mode of multi-dialectical writing Stein adopted served as an aesthetic pivot that Beckett employed in his progression away from the polyglot, Joyce-indebted, pre-1937 texts to the bilingual Anglophone and later bilingual Francophone writings that emerged post 1937.

Finally, the conclusion brings together the central arguments of this thesis. It illustrates how the reconsideration of Stein's influence on Beckett's developing aesthetics, together with the comparative study of their respective stylistic praxes, demonstrated throughout this thesis, works to reassess previous critical readings regarding the importance of Stein in the context of Beckett's aesthetics and, in particular, in the context of his evolution of a bilingual English writing practice.

Chapter One

Grammar Bound: writings on language.

This is a sentence. [...] It is a sentence (*HTW*, 197).

I. Language as a fabric.

i) "Language appears to me like a veil which one has to tear apart."[69]

In Kaun 1937 Beckett presents language as a fabric and expresses a desire to "tear apart" the "veil" of language.[70] In doing so Beckett gives material body to otherwise wholly conceptual structures of language and does so through the metaphor of a material traditionally associated with hosiery, domesticity, and craftwork. Stein regularly took advantage of this same metaphor, referring to language as a fabric-like substance on numerous occasions, most notably throughout *How To Write* where it functions as an effective and versatile aid to her theorising of language and grammar.[71] Conceiving of language as a fabric-like

[69] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 518.
[70] *Ibid.*
[71] Undoubtedly, this is not a particularly unique or original approach to talking about language, on either Beckett or Stein's part. While it is a concept not confined to these two authors alone, what is of particular relevance to this study is how Beckett and Stein's respective use of this same metaphor has been variously received by critics. The following contrasting study of their varying critical reception in relation to the same metaphor will serve as a representative example of this varied critical reception. While Beckett's commentary has, I think, universally been read as a metaphor employed to represent language and the nuances of linguistic structure, scholars of Stein have instead identified her fondness for similar such materialist metaphors as being indicative of an author who considered her words to be "babies, the live creation of tenderness and work"(Ulla Dydo, *Gertrude Stein: The Language That Rises: 1923*-1934 (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2003), 332-3). Dydo suggests "Stein's art is the product of their [Stein and Toklas's] love" with her writings being at times analogous "to Toklas' stitchery"(*Ibid.*, 333). Stein's rendering of language as a fabric-like substance has led critics to subject her work to readings Beckett's work has, thus far, never been subjected to. This vastly differing approach towards the same metaphor when employed by different writers cannot and should not be rationalised by differences of sex; with Beckett's "fabric" read in the context of his engagement with the aesthetics and philosophy of language and Stein's "fabric" read through an alternate field of references that denotes all references to "fabric" merit immediate comparison to the act

material and making use of terms more commonly associated with hosiery or knitting than with sentence parsing allows Stein to usefully apply her knowledge of other media to both her analysis of language, and her subsequent attempts at de-hierarchising language or remodelling it in a manner that better reflects her subjectivities of perception regarding "the words that made whatever I looked at

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of knitting or "writing and landscape as embroidery"(Dydo, *Gertrude Stein: The Language That Rises*, 333).

To my knowledge no critical interest has been shown in equating Beckett's reference to the fabrics of language with the activity of embroidery or knitting. Yet despite noting as she does in the passages quoted from above that while Stein "likens her work to Toklas' embroidery while also distinguishing it from hers"(*Ibid.*, 333), Dydo later classifies Stein's recurrent references to fabric and material in a short piece that is actually titled "Article" as

> cutting out, seamstress fashion […] put[ting] together a verbal collage from a "cut out kind of apron" and a man's formal cutaway coat. […] [C]ompos[ing] into still lifes domestic detail that women might observe at a birthday party—clothes, food, flowers, all in decorative formality (Dydo, *A Stein Reader* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1996), 276).

That language is a central subject matter of this piece should surely be apparent from title alone (again, the piece is called "Article"), yet the dominant critical reading here reduces the textile references to domestic pursuits, as opposed to considering the potential insights that can be gained from conceiving of textile as a metaphor for text. Similarly Dydo's analysis of *How To Write* in *Gertrude Stein: A Language That Rises* focuses on "the evidence in her work of the changes wrought in the daily life by the actuality of house and dog"(Dydo, *Gertrude Stein: The Language That Rises*, 325) with the general claim that "the impact of the house [at Bilignin] on Stein's life and her work was enormous"(*Ibid.*, 328.). While there is undoubtedly some use to this reading (As indeed it is useful to consider the impact and influence of Beckett's house at Ussy-sur-Marne, or his childhood home Cooldrinagh, on his writings, as Eoin O'Brien does in *The Beckett Country: Samuel Beckett's Ireland* (The Black Cat Press, in association with Faber and Faber, 1986), and as Knowlson similarly does throughout *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett*, (London: Bloomsbury, 1997)) in this instance, however, it is confined to the benefits it can bring to explicitly feminist readings of Stein, or of related studies into representations of female space, domesticity, and female creative pastimes wherein the name of Stein's dog (Basket), for example, comes to be of import for its "many meanings and compound forms relating to domestic objects that allow word play"(Dydo, *Gertrude Stein: The Language That Rises*, 332):

> There were flower baskets, fruit baskets, market baskets, wire salad baskets, muzzles, hilts, and "basket" with sexual implication. There were basket hares, basket chairs, wastebaskets, workbaskets, wicker baskets. A baby basket, by a shift of stress familiar to any English speaker, becomes Baby Basket (*Ibid.*, 332).

In addition to being tedious, such readings set gender-specific limits and supposedly gender-specific interests (such as the above bizarre preoccupation with the adaptable nature of baskets in the domestic sphere) on Stein's writing that her male contemporaries were and are not subjected to. Readings that prioritise domesticity or domestic tasks do so at the expense of the more interesting issue of Stein's linguistic prowess. They also deflect attention from the central characteristic she and Beckett both identify as being a singularly problematic characteristic of linguistic expression—the word is not a complete thing in and of itself, one must continually remember "that it is but what she meant"(*HTW*, 63).

look like itself."[72] Rather than referring to language through the structuralist terminology of sign, signified, and signifier, Stein's conceptualising of language as material or fabric makes it more transferrable from an inter-arts perspective; it makes the language and its constituent parts *tactile*, in much the same way as paint is for the visual artist, or the inherently physical material utilised by sculptors.

Rather than seeing Stein's use of textile metaphors indicative solely of the importance of female space and the domestic sphere throughout her fictions,[73] I propose that Stein's conceiving of text as textile is instead evidence of her acute awareness of and engagement with the materiality of language. Conceiving of language as a fabric presents it as a medium that can be altered, cut, sewn, and re-sewn at will. This hands on approach to the semantic and syntactic manipulation of language is conveyed in a relatively straightforward manner by Stein in the form of simple declarative statements positing her sentences as being "in sewn grammar"(*HTW*, 48). Stein frequently refers to writing as a form of stitching or speaks of sentences that contain "tears": "Grammar pause pause pauses paused partly perfectly does stitch have meant"(*HTW*, 55-6); "Not grammar but sewed change"(*HTW*, 73); "What is a sentence with tears. Is she using red in her tapestry red in her tapestry"(*HTW*, 32). Stein even goes so far as to substitute the terms "grammar" or "language" for "embroidery," making this connection between language and fabric—of language as a fabric—explicit: "Embroidery consists in remembering that it is but what she meant"(*HTW*, 63).

[72] Stein, "Portraits and Repetition," *Look At Me Now And Here I Am*, 113.
[73] For a scholarly analysis of role of domesticity in Stein's work see Dianne Sacho Macleod, *Enchanted Lives, Enchanted Objects: American Women Collectors and the Making of Culture 1800-1940*, (Berkeley: Los Angeles: University of California Press; 2008).

Presenting language as fabric creates the opportunity to compose sentences such as the one below, wherein the repeated words, grammars and syntax immediately challenge your ability as a reader to *make sense* of what is before you:

> In sewn grammar. How do you do. Grammar make with James James with names names called couple of identations [*sic*] referring does with discolour demur once below so as sought seek copied inclined to amount name near (*HTW*, 48).

In the above example Stein makes a relatively straightforward sentence inaccessible by employing two techniques in tandem—repetition and homophonic rhyme. The nouns "James" and "names" rhyme but are also linked by set relationality as "James" is a subset of the larger category "names." The clause "with James James with names names" sees these two separate but related terms repeated in immediate succession by means of the preposition "with," with "with" fittingly appearing with both sets of names. This is followed by a phrase containing a somewhat esoteric but nonetheless decipherable phrase: "called couple of identations [*sic*] referring does with discolour demur once below so as sought seek copied inclined to amount name near"(*HTW*, 48). The double repetition of the two separate but related terms "with James James with names names" are "[a] couple of identations [*sic*]" that are "discolour[ed]" through the atypical single word repetition. These repetitions "name near" their initial set terms and they do so literally—"James" is "name[d] near" "James," but also "name[d] near" "names." In addition to such a literal act of "nam[ing] near"

they are also semantically proximate because they are hyper-[74] and hyponymic;[75] "James" is a "name" and "James James" are examples of the two "names names" that follow in close succession. Stein's deliberate misspelling of indentation as "identations [*sic*]" provides a visual counterpart to the indentation she creates in the semantics of the sentence while also cleverly introducing homophonic assonance with the word "identity." The sequence plays on the notion of identity and how one can create indentations on an identity through the technique of near or proximate repetition, be that literal word-for-word repetitions or through synonyms or close misspellings—all of these are examples of what Stein calls "nam[ing] near"(*HTW*, 48).[76] That Stein refers to "indentations" and to items being "discolor[ed]" can also be considered evidence that she herself was theorizing this linguistic activity through the medium of the visual and sculptural arts; discolouring and indenting the representative facilities of a set linguistic medium through the modification and reworking of its constituent parts "in sewn grammar"(*HTW*, 48).

Beckett and Stein's respective employment of textile metaphors when referring to the nuances of grammar indicates their acute awareness of the material facets of language together with a willingness to engage with their medium on a visceral (and consequently both literal *and* material) level. It is the

[74] Hypernyms are superordinate words with broad categorical meanings. In this instance "name" is the hypernym. "hypernym, n.". OED Online. December 2015. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/248746?redirectedFrom=hypernym (accessed February 24, 2016).

[75] Hyponyms are subordinate words with a more specific meaning than the hyponym (superordinate) term applied to it. In this instance "James" is the hyponym that falls under the more general superordinate category that is "names." "hyponym, n.". OED Online. December 2015. Oxford University Press.
http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/90539?redirectedFrom=hyponym (accessed February 24, 2016).

[76] This is a particularly successful technique for Stein, one that combines grammatical modification with repetition—what I am terming "renarration," to be discussed shortly in section IV.ii of this chapter.

literal conceiving of their material *as* material by presenting it in material terms. Both authors devote singular attentions to the materiality of the English language, an attention made manifest in their recurrent tendency to comment on the material nature of the linguistic medium both in their fiction and non-fiction writings. Commenting on the title of "Article," an unpublished Stein piece from 1913, Dydo makes the following observation, showing why her work can, at times, be said to represents the pinnacle of contemporary Stein scholarship: "The title that refuses to name a subject forces us to attend to words."[77] A similar effect is induced at several points throughout *How To Write*, but instead of focusing attention solely on a title and single word, as is the case in Dydo's analysis of Stein's "Article," *How To Write* forces similar attentions over lengthy passages that tirelessly relay different grammatical terms to the neglect of any other efforts at narrative.

How To Write contains a multitude of direct engagements with the materiality of the English language in the form of direct references to grammar. This straightforward confrontation comes in the form of equally straightforward references to grammar such as "This is a sentence. [...] It is a sentence"(*HTW*, 197). "This is a sentence" proclaims itself a sentence while also presenting itself as the subject of a "sentence." A sentence is a collection of words and yet the term denoting it is itself merely a single word, so the word "sentence" is a paradoxical example of a word sentenced to always gesture towards a meaning but never itself embody that meaning; unless of course it is included in a sentence. The above passage then becomes a meta-commentary on the sentence-like structure of a sentence, using the word sentence within a sentence to draw

[77] Dydo, *A Stein Reader*, 276.

attention to its status as a sentence. In addition to such relatively simple statements Stein includes sentences that list the constituent parts of sentences—"A sentence is made of an article a verb and a noun"(*HTW*, 155)—and sentences that query the nature or functionality of their composite terms; as in the following examples, all of which focus on nouns: "A noun is the name of anything. [...] A noun is the name of everything"(*HTW*, 130); "What are nouns. Can you see the plural in nouns [...] This is a noun"(*HTW*, 207). Beyond nouns Stein also deals with verbs, asking questions of their functionality and looking to ascertain examples that convey this functionality: "What is a verb. [...] This is a verb. Do be used this is a verb"(*HTW*, 153). As such, through statements such as "a difference between a verb a noun a part and an article and a particle and a name"(*HTW*, 207) and "the own owned own owner (*HTW*, 131)" Stein appears to be trying to delineate the differences between these set items, in the knowledge that simple definitions are insufficient and unsatisfactory.

Stein also presents different examples of the constituent parts of sentences, as in her listing of different "articles": "A grammar. A an article. A an article. A the same. A and the. An and the. The this that not. The this that and an an ended. [...] Articles are a an and the. An article in an and the. An a man and the"(*HTW*, 129-30). She creates sentences out of lists of grammatical terms alone and follows these lists with simple interrogatives of the terms she has just listed:

> Adverb adjective and noun.
> Verb adjective and noun.
> Participle adverb and noun.
> Participle adverb verb adverb and noun.
> What is a participle verb adverb and noun (*HTW*, 118).

> Renown. They made their renown. This makes them like. This makes them like it that they made this which is what has made for them their renown (*HTW*, 128).
>
> Verb noun and participle.
> Verb noun and participle and preposition.
> Every one knows whatever what ever evidently what ever, what ever is by this with a separation that does not stop. [...] Thinking separately does unite a verb to be additional in a participle. [...]
>
> Nouns as nouns (*HTW*, 167).

Such a listing of "sentences" that are literally composed of the nominal terms for the grammatical particulars of sentences is a conscious attempt at making her reader hyper-aware of the technics at work within any given sentence; whether these terms are made explicit, as they largely are in the above excerpt, or not. The "grammar and style"[78] of the sentence is always on show in this exposed, almost brutal, approach to demonstrating how materially dependant—or, as Beckett puts it, how "terrifyingly arbitrary"[79]—these terms are unless they are invested with a certain meaning.

When taken for their lexical value alone, Stein exposes the fundamental conflict between the names of the terms and the items these terms themselves signify. Nouns and nominal signifiers are just one example of the grammar units Stein considers ineffective. She presents them as approximations or the indications of a "sense" of an object, as opposed to the object proper; lexical inexactitude modelled for the majority; a way of eliminating difference, of standardising, and of making otherwise quite different items indistinct:

[78] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1,* 518.
[79] *Ibid.,* 518.

"Grammar opposite have harboring all particles of inevitable [...] with whether it is partaken of inexactitude modeled [*sic*] at mainly"(*HTW*, 65).

Units of grammar are similarly incorporated in a less overt but nonetheless relatively explicit manner by Beckett.[80] The "narrator/ narrated"[81] in *How It Is* observes the functional title given to terms as they operate within the "natural order"[82] of a sentence unit, showing an acute awareness of the changes that occur within a sentence as the sentence progresses by naming the clausal functions of "subject" and "object": "sudden series subject object subject object quick succession and away"(*HII*, 7). Sentences tend to pan out in this very pattern, with subject appearing before object and both occurring in "quick succession." This sentence reads then as a literal description of the material happenings of the clausal unit, but one that sacrifices the body of the narrative to instead focus on the clausal unit *as narrative*. The narrator of "Text for Nothing VI" comments on whether nouns are singular or plural and in particular on the assurance provided by the "admirable singulars" Purgatory and Hell: "I was, I was, they say in Purgatory, in Hell too, admirable singulars, admirable assurance"(*TFN*, 27). Observing that words such as "Purgatory" and "Hell" are singular is an act that invites the reader to pay close attention to the sentence as it is pronounced across the page in a further acknowledgement of the medium in use. In "Text for Nothing II" Beckett notes the occurrence of the superlative,

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[80] The pedagogic nature of aspects of Beckett's prose has also recently been covered by Juliet Taylor-Batty in *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 146-176, and Anthony Cordingley in "Beckett and 'l'ordre naturel': The Universal Grammar of *Comment c'est/ How It Is*," *Samuel Beckett Today/ Aujourd'hui* 18, ed. Van Hulle and Nixon (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2007), 185-200.

[81] Cordingley's term. *Ibid.*, 185.

[82] As Cordingley outlines, in his essay "Beckett and 'l'ordre naturel': The Universal Grammar of *Comment c'est/ How It Is*," the historical aim of the natural order was to "isolate on the page [...] the maximum number of words playing a syntactical role within the sentence consistent with minimizing graphic ambiguity."(*Ibid.*, 193).

thereby drawing attention to rhetorical techniques within the narrative and their failure to capture the events at hand: "Never had the sea so thundered from afar, the sea beneath the snow, though superlatives have lost their charm"(*TFN*, 9). His noting of the ineffective nature of the "superlative" can be compared to Stein's similar criticism in her *Lectures in America*, discussed shortly.[83]

In the following example from *Texts for Nothing* the speaker shows a comparable awareness of the changes that correlate with the movement of grammatical units within a sentence as the sentence transitions from beginning to end: "The words too, slow, slow, the subject dies before it comes to the verb, words are stopping too."[84] Similar such instances of narrative self-awareness occur elsewhere in the *Texts for Nothing* in relation to commentary on verb tenses used during specific sentences: "We have not long, that's the spirit, in the present, not long to live"(*TFN*, 13); "We were, there we are, past and gone again"(*TFN*, 14).[85] What is interesting in the second of these examples is that the observation accords to a change in verb tense and not just the nominal observation of a change from past to present or vice versa. An almost identical process occurs in *How To Write*, with Stein similarly listing the grammar functions *as they function* in the sentence: "Begin a participle by their stretches. Transitive and intransitive aid obeyed with joy. [...] The complement in grammar"(*HTW*, 119).

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[83] See Stein "Poetry and Grammar" in *Writings 1932-1946* (New York: Library of America, 1998), 328.

[84] Beckett, *Texts for Nothing and Other Shorter Prose, 1950- 1967*, ed. Nixon (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), 8.

[85] Further examples from Beckett: "plethoric reflexive pronoun"(*Watt*, 4n1); "No no, I'll speak not of the future, I'll speak in the future, as when I used to say, in the night to myself, Tomorrow I'll put on my dark blue tie [...] and put it on, when night was past"(*TFN*, 12); "a little less so of no matter what no matter how no matter when a little less of to be present past future and conditional of to be and not to be come come enough of that on and end part one before Pim"(*HII*, 31).

While Stein uses terminology that places particular focus on distinct grammar units, Beckett instead tends to use terminology that links the individual words to their role within the given sentence unit. For example, where Stein uses the term "noun" or "verb," Beckett uses the term "subject" or "object." This not only indicates a different method of parsing language, it also hints at differing aesthetic interests. Stein's listing of these grammar units by name (noun, adjective etc.) indicates an interest in the units of a sentence as opposed to the sentence as a unit. Beckett's listing of the units in terms of their functionality within a sentence suggests—at least in the examples quoted thus far from *How It Is* and *Texts for Nothing*—that he was conceiving of them in terms of their role within the larger functional unit of sentences; that is, he was concerned with the overall unit as opposed to the constituent parts of the unit. This correlates with Beckett's general tendency to keep his narratives semantically coherent, a point Perloff observes: "Beckett does not violate syntax; on the contrary, he uses a simple declarative sentence or noun phrase."[86] Stein, in contrast, appears less concerned with making semantic (or syntactic) sense and therefore takes her analysis a step further than Beckett's;[87] neglecting to attend to the syntactic coherency of the sentence unit in favour of the esoteric "logographs"[88] Beckett identifies in the 1937 Kaun letter as being a step—but perhaps for him a step too far—in the right direction.

In addition to the examples discussed previously, which show Beckett and Stein displaying an awareness of specific traits of their medium, both authors incorporate commentary on the writing process and the effect of grammar on

[86] Perloff, *The Poetics of Indeterminacy*, 206.
[87] Perloff observes: "Stein explodes all syntactic rules, relying on relational metonymic structures to create a particular impression"(*Ibid.*, 206).
[88] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 519.

the process of narrative into their narratives. This is accomplished through their use of narrators that appear extremely self-conscious of, if not wholly uncomfortable with, the act of narrating. *The Making of Americans* contains a plenitude of references to events being under narration, to the act of narrating, and to the effect of narrating and narration on both the narrator and the narrated subjects. The narrator of *The Making of Americans* regularly complains about needing a break from the narrative, expresses reluctance to continue the narrative, eagerness to move forward with the narrative, and even despair regarding the state of the narrative as in the lines

> Sometimes I am almost despairing [...] I am really almost despairing, I have really in me a very melancholy feeling, a very melancholy feeling, I am really then despairing (*MOA*, 459-60).
>
> I am saddened with this thing. [...] I who am suffering and suffering because of this thing. I am in desolation and my eyes are large with needing weeping and I have a flush from feverish feeling (*MOA*, 729)[89]

[89] The following can be considered a cursory selection of the manifold references to be found throughout the text that either directly address the reader or articulate frustrations relating to the act of narration: "[Y]et, please reader, remember that this is perhaps not the whole of our story either [...] and so reader, please remember, the future is not yet certain for her, and be you well warned reader, from the vain-glory of being sudden in your judgement of her"(*MOA*, 15); "No let them read the story-books we write for them"(*MOA*, 29); "Bear it in your mind my reader, but truly I never feel it that there ever can be any such a creature, no it is this scribbles and lined paper that is really to be to me always my receiver,—but anyhow reader, bear it in your mind—will there be for me ever any such a creature,—what I have said always before to you, that this that I write down a little each day here on my scraps of paper for you is not just an ordinary kind of novel with a plot and conversations to amuse you, but a record of a decent family progress"(*MOA*, 33); "Now to begin again [...] As I was saying"(*MOA*, 86); "To begin again then"(*MOA*, 113); "All this will come out slowly as it is written down about them"(*MOA*, 116); "As I have been saying"(*MOA*, 120); "As I have just been saying"(*MOA*, 149); "as it will now be written of them"(*MOA*, 165); "and there will be later a history of all of such kinds of them"(*MOA*, 174); "And so to commence again"(*MOA*, 180); "There will now be a history of her"(*MOA*, 201); "I like to tell about it better in a woman because it is clearer in her and I know it better, a little, not very much better"(*MOA*, 205); "I am writing for myself and strangers. This is the only way that I can do it"(*MOA*, 289); "[T]hen it all grows confusing [...] sometimes all of a sudden I lose the meaning out of all of them I lose all of them [...] and there is no meaning"(*MOA*, 335); "I am having uncertainty in my feeling and always more and more I am certain"(*MOA*, 337); "it is often very confusing"(*MOA*, 345); "mostly every one is puzzling to me"(*MOA*, 357); "To explain again"(*MOA*, 358); "Now I tell it when now I am still puzzling it"(*MOA*, 361); "I will tell it, a little confusing it as I tell it, for it is so that I now know it"(*MOA*, 369); "This is a sad thing. [...] This is a very sad thing"(*MOA*, 453); "I am beginning now a little description"(*MOA*, 455); "Sometimes I am almost

In this way then the text bears similarities to both *Texts For Nothing* and *Malone Dies*, in particular the recurrent reference to events being recorded ("it's noted"(*TFN*, 21; 22)) or the many instances where Malone deliberates on the state of his dwindling pencil lead ("So little by little my little pencil dwindles [...] So I write as lightly as I can. But the lead is hard and would leave no trace if I wrote too lightly"[90]) or when he is prevented from writing because he has dropped the tiny instrument:

> Ah yes, I have my little past times and they
>
> What a misfortune the pencil must have slipped from my fingers (*MD*, 49).

Much like the narrator of *The Making of Americans*, Malone loses track of his narrative ("What was that I said?"(*MD*, 4)), grows bored, despairs, or complains

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despairing [...] Always now I am despairing"(*MOA*, 458); "I am beginning to have in me despairing melancholy feeling"(*MOA*, 459); "Already I have given a history of many men and women. Sometime I will be giving a history of all the rest of them"(*MOA*, 479); "I have not been very clear in this telling"(*MOA*, 486); "Perhaps this description that I have been just making has a little after all to do with something in this writing (*MOA*, 507); There must be much alteration all through in this writing of preparing to be describing"(*MOA*, 507); "I have been doing a great deal of waiting"(*MOA*, 514); "I am altogether a discouraged one"(*MOA*, 548); "I feel it and I brood over it"(*MOA*, 564); "This is a comforting thing in being a great author inside one that always even with much lonely feeling and much sighing in one and even with not pleasantness inside any one just then when it is a very sombre burden then "(*MOA*, 593); "I am fond of saying but am now a little tired of repeating"(*MOA*, 597); "I am enjoying having curious feeling about every one, I like every bit of repeating I am hearing, I get an awful sinking feeling when I find out by an accidental hearing, feeling, seeing repeating in this one and then saying if it had not been for this accidental thing I would not have know this repeating"(*MOA*, 611); "Alas, I say then, alas I will perhaps not really ever be knowing all the repeating coming out of each one"(*MOA*, 611); "I always was very halting in realising ways of living, ways of feeling, ways of living. I am learning but not really grasping these things in me, that is certain"(*MOA*, 621); "I am now being taught by some one"(*MOA*, 621); "I am beginning again, not from the beginning this time that is certain"(*MOA*, 637); "And then I am very much regretting I do not yet know everything"(*MOA*, 658); "Really I like it very well that I am not really certain, that mostly not any one is really certain. It is a nicely disturbing feeling, this thing"(*MOA*, 663); "Quarrelling is to me very interesting"(*MOA*, 665); "I am then one in a way certainly one knowing everything"(*MOA*, 685); "I will now be continuing the history [...] To begin then"(*MOA*, 692); "As I could be saying"(*MOA*, 700); "This is the ending of this way of telling about being having been and being in Alfred Hersland and Julia Dehning"(*MOA*, 719); "I do ask some, I would ask every one, I do not ask some"(*MOA*, 723); "No one will listen while I am talking"(*MOA*, 726); "I am saddened by this thing"(*MOA*, 729).

[90] Beckett, *Malone Dies*, ed. Peter Boxall (London: Faber and Faber, 2010), 49.

about the writing process. He repeatedly refers to his narratives as tedious ("What tedium"(*MD*, 11; 13)), and occasionally, commends a particularly well-turned phrase ("Very pretty"(*MD*, 19)) or pauses to acknowledge a particularly sanguine mood ("I pause to record that I feel in extraordinary form"(*MD*, 86)). Like Stein's narrator throughout *The Making of Americans*, he similarly acknowledges a distinct lack of understanding regarding his narratives—"I have tried to reflect on the beginning of my story. There are things I do not understand"(*MD*, 14)—and, perhaps accordingly, much like the narrator of *The Making of Americans*, Malone's "notes have a curious tendency [...] to annihilate all they purport to record"(*MD*, 88). In both *Malone Dies* and several of the *Texts for Nothing* the narrators, like Stein's narrator in *The Making of Americans*, set themselves particularly difficult prescribed narratives to aspire to tell to completion: "While waiting I shall tell myself stories, if I can"(*MD*, 4); "there's going to be a story someone's going to try and tell a story"(*TFN*, 11).

In *Texts for Nothing* the narrator—again, in a direct address that acknowledges the writing process—reminds themself to remember to include a question mark: "what's this trouble now, don't forget the question mark"(*TFN*, 24). Though the noun "question mark" is present, the actual punctuation mark that signifies the question in question is absent from the text; a clever turn seen again in *How It Is* in the form of an ever absent parenthesis mark: "end of first lesson second series rest and here parenthesis."[91] Stein includes commentary on the beginning of sentences as they begin: "A sentence the one that began is the one that without it it is a refrain from without reference to a noun. A sentence makes it do"(*HTW*, 149); "Every sentence has a beginning. Will he begin. Every

[91] Beckett, *How It Is*, ed. Édouard Magessa O'Reilly (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), 57.

sentence which has a beginning makes it be left more to them"(*HTW*, 26). The beginnings of various paragraphs receive similar attention, as when the observation "Now this is a new paragraph"(*HTW*, 28) occurs at the beginning of a new paragraph. Again, however, the "this" is unclear and to the reader can be seen as referring to the pronoun itself (a word unit, not a paragraph), to the sentence as a whole (a sentence, not to a paragraph) or as a pronoun whose referent is the paragraph that contains it (a paragraph that comprises of two relatively short sentences and so one that pushes at the semantic limitations of the term "paragraph").[92] Such actions on the part of both authors again return attention to the process of writing and the materiality of the text; with the act of representing in language continually highlighted as being an artificial and perpetually inaccurate process. It also shows both writers to be thinking sculpturally in terms of how the text looks on the page, a point that will be returned to presently.[93]

Moving on to more complex examples, in the following excerpt Stein continues the tendency noted previously of providing examples for her "articles" of grammar, but she also introduces examples that are not as readily classifiable:

> A noun. Horace.
> A verb. Coaling.

[92] The descriptive qualities of the sentences "This is now some description"(*MOA*, 309) or "This description then is a description of this one"(*MOA*, 677) are similarly questionable.
[93] Stein is particularly vocal on English orthography in relation to punctuation, as can be seen from the following excerpt: "The first and the most the completely most uninteresting is the question mark. [...] I always found it positively revolting and now very few do use it. Exclamation marks have the same difficulty and also quotation marks, they are unnecessary, they are ugly, they spoil the line of the writing or the printing and anyway what is the use, if you do not know that a question is a question what is the use of its being a question. The same thing is true of an exclamation. And the same thing is true of a quotation. [...] So there are the uninteresting things in punctuation. Aside from the uninteresting items uninteresting in a way that is perfectly obvious, and so we do not have to go any farther into that. There are besides dashes and dots, and these might be interesting spaces might be interesting"(Stein "Poetry and Grammar" in *Writings 1932-1946*, 316-17).

> A preposition. With him.
> An article. The.
> A sentence. The coaling that they did when he was with them they were there with them (*HTW*, 135).

Stein displays lists of key grammatical terms followed by examples of each term. Horace is a noun in that it names a person or thing called Horace. Coaling functions as a verb, but more commonly as a noun. The preposition "with" is accompanied by the pronoun "him," thus showing both a straightforward example of a preposition ("with"), as well as providing an example of a preposition acting according to its functional role within grammar as a governor of nouns or pronouns ("with" appears "with him"). This is followed by the definite article, listed as an example—*the definite example*—of an "article."

Following this is the similarly definitive and self-declarative sentence "A sentence," but this sentence is followed by a sentence that bears little resemblance to the traditional understanding of sentence as a set of grammatically connected words in speech or writing (*OED*): "A sentence. The coaling that they did when he was with them they were there with them"(*HTW*, 135). The figures described, or rather the activities of the figures described are oblique and presented in a recursive manner: "they did when he was with them they were there with them"(*HTW*, 135). If we connect this statement with the preceding list of the noun "Horace," the verb "coaling," a preposition "with him" and the article "the," then the "he" of this sentence could be understood as referring to "Horace." First the "he" figure (Horace, ostensibly) is described as being "with them" while "they" were coaling. With that established, the sentence then concludes with the somewhat unusual observation that "they were [also] there with them." As third person plural pronouns, "them" and "they" would

usually be taken as referring to the same group of previously mentioned people, but these people have not been mentioned previously. As a result, Stein orchestrates a grammatical double bind wherein the "they" figures appear to be described as being present with themselves, an observation that is self-evident in the same vein as *Murphy*'s "sun shone, having no alternative on the nothing new";[94] albeit drawing out the referents inherent to pronominal forms as opposed to straightforward object nouns. But Stein turns even this self-evident agreement on its head, through the simple manipulation of these simple pronouns so as to cleverly suggest a disjunction, however slight, between the pronouns "they" and "them." Though they may ostensibly refer to the same figures, in the context of this sentence, they are not *exactly* the same; just as the words "they" and "them" are not quite the same words, differing in their final letter. Rather than provide assurance in the form of nominal or pronominal security then, it serves to undermine the term and, as a result, the phrase "they did when he was with them they were there with them"(*HTW*, 135) remains indeterminate.

Beckett too displays a marked awareness of and sensitivity to the pronominal grammars of his texts and, particularly in the later fictions, the grammars of his narrating subjects. A similar interrogation of pronouns and the exchange that occurs between different pronouns within the one sentence occurs in *Texts For Nothing* in a passage that sees a dialogue established between personal pronouns over the exchange of pronouns:

> If at least he would dignify me with the third person, like his other figments, not he, he'll be satisfied with nothing less than me, for his me.

[94] Beckett, *Murphy*, ed J. C. C. Mays (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), 3.

> When he had me, when he was me, he couldn't get rid of me quick enough, I didn't exist, he couldn't have that, that was no kind of life, of course I didn't exist, any more than he did (*TFN*, 17-8).

This passage concerns a first person narrator—"me"—speaking of a third person figure—"he"—who appears to be an author-figure or a figure in charge of assigning pronouns to "figments" within this and other texts. The first person "me" narrator is lamenting the loss of third person pronoun and states an explicit desire to regain the third—and thus lose the first—person pronoun. The "me" figure refers to the "he" figure as once being like him "like me" in that "he" was also in command of a first person pronoun ("he had me [...] he was me"). However in that instance the "he" figure, then a "me" figure," quickly cast off the first person pronoun—"he couldn't get rid of me quick enough."[95]

In inviting her readers to struggle to make sense of her prose, Stein asks her readers to question anew how representative the terms she uses are when they appear elsewhere in other contexts; when they *appear* to make sense. Beckett presents a similar invitation throughout the he/me exchange from "Text for Nothing IV" above. It is a very simple inquiry into the nuances of a transition from first to third person ("When he had me, when he was me, he couldn't get rid of me quick enough, [...] of course I didn't exist, any more than he did"(*TFN*, 18)), but the ramifications in terms of the identities of the figures alternately narrating or being narrated are extreme. In the examples discussed above from both authors, the sentence is presented less as something that necessarily has to make semantic sense and more as a proposition in a language that is, as the definition states, logical or artificial; making sense only within a very small range and

[95] Beckett enacts similar such permutative sentences throughout certain passages of *Watt*, wherein conclusions are reached that make sense only within that particular sequence or passage. This will be further discussed in Chapter Two.

subject to change or a revision of terms at any moment.[96] The sentence is presented as a hypothesis composed of composite terms with Stein at pains to highlight the artificiality of the linguistic exchange by placing emphasis on the hypothetical nature of her material. That Stein elects throughout to make her propositions both highly artificial and gnomically recursive demonstrates an eagerness to draw attention to the artificial nature of the terms employed by all those who wish to make semantic sense in standard dialect English. As noted previously, while Beckett's writing can and does tend to make more semantic sense than Stein's, the pronouns in the he/me passage are nevertheless under significant semantic strain. By presenting the events in an excessively literal manner they query the events that would have been expunged from a more grammatically correct or narratively acceptable version of these events; ultimately drawing attention to both expressions as "propositions" made in "an artificial [...] language"(*OED*).

Stein's writing on language throughout much of *How To Write* possesses a visceral attention to her medium that is a characteristic of her fictional work in general; one that has seen her treatment of language in early pieces such as *Tender Buttons* repeatedly compared to that of a visual artist with paint.[97] Her

[96] The *OED* describes "sentence" as "A correctly ordered series of signs or symbols that expresses a proposition in an artificial or logical language." Of course the term "correctly" is here open to debate, but the statements explored over the course of the previous pages are clearly designed to place strong emphasis on sentences as logical suppositions or propositions within an artificial language; or rather, within a language that is at pains to stress its artificiality.

[97] A comparative discussion on the active and influential role played by the visual arts in the aesthetics of both authors is beyond the scope of this thesis. For a cursory analysis of same, one that focuses in particular on their shared interest in the late landscapes of Cézanne, see Nugent-Folan "Personal Apperception: Samuel Beckett, Gertrude Stein, and Paul Cézanne's *La Montagne Saint Victoire*," 'Beginning of the Murmur: Archival Pre-texts and Other Sources,' *Samuel Beckett Today/ Aujhourd'hui* 27, ed. Mark Nixon and Conor Carville (December 2015), 87-102. Also indispensible are: Fionnuala Croke ed., *Samuel Beckett: A Passion for Paintings* (Dublin: National Gallery of Ireland, 2006); S.E. Gontarski ed., *The Edinburgh Companion to Samuel Beckett and the Arts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014); Knowlson's *Damned to Fame* (1996) and *Images of Beckett* (2003); Nixon's chapter on "Beckett and the Visual Arts" in *Samuel Beckett's*

treatment of the medium is decidedly atypical and invites comparisons with her contemporaries in the visual arts and their similar engagements with the materials of their medium. Certainly, Stein's work acquires a sculptural quality throughout certain passages in *How To Write* on account of the attention she pays to the shaping of her words upon the page; at one point, for example, the word "Grammar"(*HTW*, 67) is listed thirteen times in close succession. This is followed on the successive page by a further seventeen close repetitions of the word "Grammar"(*HTW*, 68). Such heaped reiterations of the term serve to make the effect of its repetitions almost sculptural with the word taking up quantities of visual space on the page. This is a concerted attempt by Stein at bringing her medium to the forefront of her work, one that succeeds in doing so in a far more concise manner than her previous effort at same throughout *The Making of Americans*, a work so large one cannot but be aware of the medium. By drawing explicit attention to the fibres of the sentences as the sentences operate Stein concocts a situation similar to early cubist paintings that incorporated text; works that, as Perloff notes, confront the reader with a dilemma over "which is 'real'—the letters and musical symbols or the shifting and partial appearances of human forms and objects?"[98]

II. Dissatisfaction with language.

i) "It is indeed getting more and more difficult, even pointless, for me to write in formal English."[99]

German Diaries, 132-161; Lois Oppenheim ed., *Samuel Beckett and the Arts: Music, Visual Arts, and Non-Print Media* (New York; London: Garland Publishing, 1999); Erik Tonning's *Samuel Beckett's Abstract Drama: Works for Stage and Screen 1962-1985* (Oxford: Lang, 2007).

[98] Perloff, *The Poetics of Indeterminacy*, 72.

[99] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 518.

Beckett and Stein display a marked dissatisfaction with received language in their non-fiction writings and throughout much of their fictional works.[100] Prior to 1937 their attentions are largely confined to the English language[101] and several major variants of standardised English dialect they respectively employ; that is, American English, British English and Hiberno-English.[102] Beckett's expressions of dissatisfaction occurred during a period of creative stasis; a period spent, by his own summation, "doing nothing."[103] In the late 1930s, with few publications to his name and what Nixon described as a "desperate need to be published"[104] Beckett was accompanied by hard-to-lose social and aesthetic connections with Joyce and a corresponding urge to establish stylistic difference between himself and his once mentor.[105] That said, his non-fiction writing from this period seems largely to consist of complaints against established or fellow emerging authors without really articulating in these diatribes how he would go about doing things differently. Seán Kennedy nicely captures this

[100] It is difficult to classify Stein's *How To Write* as being entirely non-fictional, but it is also not correct to call it purely fictional as it is an engaged and deliberate theorising of English language usage.
[101] Although Stein's work has been translated into French on her behalf in periodicals as early as 1928s *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie américaine* (ed. by Eugene Jolas), and in book form in 1929 with the publication of *Morceaux choisis de la fabrication des américains*, Stein's first written and published book-length composition in French did not appear until 1938s *Picasso* (Robert A. Wilson, *Gertrude Stein: A Bibliography* (New York: The Phoenix Bookshop, 1974), 148; 146; 39). In the case of Beckett, as Stephen Stacey notes, prior to his permanent relocation to Paris in 1937, "English—albeit an increasingly idiosyncratic form of English—had up to that point been his preferred language for literary prose." Stacey, "Translating for Sense: Samuel Beckett's writing in English, French and English," paper presented at "Samuel Beckett and the 'State' of Ireland III," University College Dublin, 3 August.
[102] I am largely referring here to Beckett's non-fiction writings up to and including 1937 and not to his post-1945 non-fiction essays of works of fiction or non-fiction in French.
[103] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1,* 520.
[104] Nixon, "Beckett Publishing/ Publishing Beckett in the 1930s," *Variants: Textual Scholarship and the Material Book* (6), ed. Wim Van Mierlo (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2007), 209-220; specifically 217.
[105] For a thorough delineation of this particular period in Beckett's publishing history see Nixon's essay "'Silly Business'—Beckett and the World of Publishing" and John Pilling and Seán Lawlor's "Beckett in Transition." Both are to be found in Nixon ed., *Publishing Samuel Beckett*, 1-9; 83-95.

contraindicative situation with the phrase "iconoclasts need their icons."[106] Kennedy is speaking here of Beckett's engagement with the Irish literary scene between the years 1929 and 1956, but this willingness to "usefully complicat[e] any reading of Beckett as merely aloof from Irish affairs"[107] can be extended to Beckett's engagement with authors on mainland Europe too, and indeed more generally to the mammoth hold the "grammar[s] and style[s]"[108] of English were exerting on his capacity to write in the latter half of the 1930s.

Stein declares herself similarly "miserable"(*HTW*, 30) and includes words that indicate personal disillusionment, frustration, difference, and self-doubt over whether a written item is "correct"("Is that a possible tense"(*HTW*, 106)). In contrast, these expressions of dissatisfaction occur during a particularly active and financially rewarding period in her writing life, a time when she was on the cusp of achieving mass recognition and a certain renown in the public sphere; albeit for the more accessible *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* as opposed to her more difficult writings. Stein promotes herself throughout these publications and lectures from the early 1930s as a theorist of language and of atypical grammars in particular, a topic Beckett never broached as publicly or in as much detail as Stein does. Stein's role as a theoretician of grammar is important, as her theories were largely self-reflexive, referring back to, and elucidating, her own writings. Throughout these lectures and essays Stein is relentless in her interrogations of the English language and specifically whether the words she has used—correct or incorrect—really capture what she it trying to communicate. This is made explicit in her 1934 lecture "Portraits and Repetition":

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[106] Seán Kennedy, "Beckett Publishing in Ireland, 1929-1956" in *Publishing Samuel Beckett*, 59.
[107] *Ibid.*, 59.
[108] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 518.

> Words which were the words that made whatever I looked at look like itself were not words that had in them any quality of description. [...] The words or word that make what I looked at be itself were always words that to me very exactly related themselves to that thing the thing at which I was looking, but as often as not had as I say nothing whatever to do with what any words would do that described that thing.[109]

Stein's theorising of English language also extends to English literature as can be seen in the lecture "What is English Literature":

> If it described what it sees how does it. If it describes what it knows how does it do it and what is the difference between what it sees and what it knows. And then too there is what it feels and then also there is what it hopes and wishes and then too there is what it would see if it could see and then there is what it explains. [...] And how has English literature done it.[110]

These sentiments are also to be found throughout *How To Write*, albeit in the more acute format that is typical of the text as a whole; in this example the "it" queried has been reduced from English literature and language to the unadorned pronoun "it":

> It looks like it.
> What looks like it.
> Discouragement looks like it. [...]
> If they look like it (*HTW*, 19).

An initial statement ("It looks like it.") is first queried ("What looks like it.") then followed by an instance of self-commentary noting a feeling of discouragement at the noted inability to connect "it" the word with "it" the referent ("Discouragement looks like it."). This is immediately followed by a challenge to the initial assertion, one that makes the term's capacity to "look like it"

[109] Stein, "Portraits and Repetition," *Look At Me Now And Here I Am*, 113.
[110] Stein, "What is English Literature," *Look At Me Now And Here I Am*, 33.

conditional through the introduction of the conjunction "if" ("If they look like it" (*HTW*, 19)). This important nuance is indicative not only of Stein's innate suspiciousness regarding the filaments of language, but it is also a relatively straightforward example of the method she devised to counteract the certitude of grammar; namely, the use of repetition and grammatical modification in a way that sees an initial statement repeated in a near-repetition that manages to undermine the semantics of the phrase, a technique that will be extrapolated in detail at the end of this chapter.

Beyond the *Lectures in America* which were composed to be delivered orally and to a largely non-specialist crowd, Stein's *How To Write*, composed three years earlier in 1931, contains perhaps her most engaged analysis of language. In "What is English Literature" from *Lectures in America* Stein delineates what she perceives to be the difference between Chaucerian English, Shakespearian English, and English in the 19th century through to the present day. In "*Narration* 1" Stein outlines the difference between British and American English, as she understands it. In *How To Write*, her focus is on the grammatical components of language—nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verb, adverbs, and punctuation. It is an extended study of language functionality. Using the voice of a fictional Alice B. Toklas in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* Stein refers to it as her "treatises" on language: "Later on much later she wrote her treatises on grammar, sentences, paragraphs, vocabulary etcetera, which I ["Toklas"] have printed in Plain Edition under the title of How To Write."[111] It is composed of eight studies or essays on various aspects of language ranging from grammar, vocabulary, sentences, paragraphs, and narrative. The essays are highly esoteric

[111] Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (London, Penguin, 2001), 226.

and can be considered a strong example of Stein's tenet of explaining her theories of writing through the process of composition that links form and content rather than through straightforward explanatory statements; a method most accessibly expressed in the lecture "Composition As Explanation" published in 1926 by the Hogarth Press. Its particular focus can be aptly summarised by the following line found in the third essay "Arthur a Grammar"; *How To Write* then, is "a grammar of grammatical phrases"(*HTW*, 56). As the title suggests, Stein is largely concerned with how to engage in the act of writing, but the text has broader concerns; being in fact an almost forensic analysis of how language operates.[112]

Language is presented as highly constrictive throughout both *How To Write* and the *Lectures in America*. This is made explicit in *How To Write* in the form of the straightforward assertion: "Now then a sentence is a sentence"(*HTW*, 202).[113] With enviable virtuosity Stein demonstrates how easy it is to confuse the reader by manipulating that which has been heard and reworking it in printed text; demonstrating in the process her facility for the manipulation of language—making sentences of sentences through the manipulation of sentences. In her essays and lectures from the early 1930s Stein goes to great lengths to demonstrate that words and their associated meanings are worn out and no longer embody their referent. In this way, Stein presents sentences as artefacts

[112] To this end, one of the concluding essays in the text is even titled "Forensics." As well as illustrating my point in relation to the intensity of the attention applied to the language, it also shows the interesting merger of language and science for Stein, a topic Stephen Meyer covers in detail in his monograph *Irresistible Dictation: Gertrude Stein and the correlations of writing and science* (California: Stanford University Press, 2001).

[113] In addition to playing continually on the dual meaning of sentences as sentences, Stein has a marked tendency to use conflict-laden imagery, describing grammar as a military conquest, an occupied body of language wherein set rules and regulations are imposed and made law: "Grammar is occupied allowances"(*HTW*, 74). Stein reinforces this violent imagery by referring to sentences as prisons: "A sentence of a vagueness that is violence is authority and a mission and stumbling and also certainty and also certainly also a prison"(*TB*, 40).

composed out of unsubstantiated titbits that are not factual, but are presented as being so; they are "sentenced" to a set meaning irrespective of the existence of alternate meanings or interpretative potentials. Stein declares herself (or rather, the English language) to be "grammar bound"(*HTW*, 65), with the grammars of the language restricting what can be said.[114] To be "grammar bound"(*HTW*, 65) presents grammar and, by extension, language as a "sentence." It implies that the language user is tied to the structural aspects of language; that they act as a sort of inhibitor to a freer mode of expression. Stein plays on the dual meaning of the term "sentence" throughout the entirety of *How To Write.* In doing so she acknowledges the limiting nature of the linguistic medium, continually drawing attention to what Beckett, in Kaun 1937, refers to as "that terrifyingly arbitrary material of the word surface."[115]

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[114] This strongly suggests the influence of her mentor William James, specifically his criticism of the "absence of a vocabulary for subjective facts" in his lectures on "The Methods and Snares of Psychology" in a section titled "the Misleading Influence of Speech":

> The cardinal passions of our life, anger, love, fear, hate, hope, and the most comprehensive divisions of our intellectual activity, to remember, expect, think, know, dream, with the broadest genera of aesthetic feeling, joy, sorrow, pleasure, pain, are the only facts of a subjective order which this vocabulary deigns to note by special words. The elementary qualities of sensation, bright, loud, red, blue, hot, cold, are, it is true, susceptible of being used in both an objective and subjective sense. [...] But the objective sense is still the original sense; and still to-day [*sic*] we have to describe a large number of sensations by the name of the object from which they have most frequently been got. [...] This absence of a special vocabulary for subjective facts hinders the study of all but the very coarsest of them. Empiricist writers are very fond of emphasising one great set of delusions which language inflicts on the mind. Whenever we have made a word, they say, to denote a certain group of phenomena, we are prone to suppose a substantive entity existing beyond the phenomena, of which the word shall be the name. But the *lack* of a word quite as often leads to the directly opposite error. We are then prone to suppose that no entity can be there; and so we come to overlook phenomena whose existence would be patent to us all, had we only grown up to hear it familiarly recognised in speech. It is hard to focus our attention on the nameless. (James, "The Methods and Snares of Psychology," in *The Principles of Psychology: Volume One* (New York: Dover, 1950), 194-195.)

[115] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 519.

Stein's apparent difficulties in establishing a space for herself within the English language is palpable throughout these essays and lectures.[116] It was a

[116] In her opening lecture on Narration, delivered in Chicago in 1934 ("Narration 1"), Stein establishes a distinction between English and American literature. The lecture, she states, is concerned "with English literature and what it is and American literature and what it is"(Stein, "Narration 1," *Narration* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2010), 2). Stein sees an intrinsic link between the literature of a country and that country's cultural and societal idiosyncrasies. Her interest is anthropological in that she wishes to "know what English literature is in connection with English life and what American literature is in connection with their life and their lives"(*Ibid.*, 2). This anthropological reading of a nation's literature informs a core tenet of Stein's aesthetics of language, and of the distinctions she established between English and American literatures. Though they share the same "language"(that of English) the literatures of England and America are, to her mind, "completely" different: "Although they [English and American literature] completely differ one from the other and they use the same language to tell everything that can be happening it is naturally very naturally not at all the same thing"(*Ibid.*, 2). In a development on a theme pursued throughout the more widely disseminated "What is English literature," Stein lays out the distinguishing features (as she sees them) of English language and literature in order to demonstrate how American language and literature diverges.

Stein's analysis of language difference is acute and the factors she identifies as distinguishing factors in the establishing of linguistic or dialectical borders still comply with the two key methods linguists today employ when speaking about differences between dialects and languages. These are: 1) The role of national borders and 2) Structural differences. Stein accords huge import to the role played by national borders in distinguishing between the dialects of American and British English. England's national borders are continually returned to throughout the first lecture with England's status as an island necessarily making these borders more immediate: "English literature [...] has been determined by the fact that England is an island"(*Ibid.*, 3). Further still, and in line with the anthropological perspective she brings to the argument, English literature is not only defined by the national borders, but by English culture: "English literature was a description of this [English] daily life that they lived every day"(*Ibid.*, 4). Thus, English language and literature have grown to reflect the English nation and its peoples. In this understanding Stein is explicit: "The English write their narrative in English because that is the language they have made to tell of a daily life lived every minute of the day"(*Ibid.*, 6)

In line with Emerson's call to establish a literature of the Americas (an essay she is overtly engaging with throughout the *Narration* lectures, most explicitly at the onset of "Narration Four"), Stein asserts that American literature, though written in English, must adapt to reflect the American peoples:

> Now the Americans also tell their story in English, but as they have no daily life every minute of every day and as the language is written down so much any and every day they can not change that language and still they have nothing to say no narrative to tell about living every day no narrative to soothe any one who is living every minute of every day"(*Ibid.*).

The peoples of different nations, Stein states, "come to do the same things in a different way in a way so different that every one could come to know this thing know that it was a really different way and so of course a different way that had come to stay"(Stein, "Narration 1," *Narration*, 5). And more succinctly: "Americans and English use the same language but the Americans have not a daily living as any Englishman does and can have"(*Ibid.*, 5).

Compared to other countries, the national borders in America were set rather abruptly and, rather than developing over generations to reflect (as Stein argues) the people on a national level, and the language was imposed in a similarly abrupt manner. In the case of America, because the nation was presented with an already set and standardised language in the form of British English, they could not alter the words of the language they have found themselves using:

discomfort likely exacerbated by her socio-cultural milieu as the child of German-American first generation immigrants.[117] In this context, much of Stein's

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> At any other time at a time when everybody and everything is not being written all the time it would have been an easy thing to make the language the Americans are using another language but now it is almost impossible to do this (*Ibid.*, 6).

The result, then, according to Stein, in the face of this unalterable vocabulary, was to instead acquire differential meanings and implications for that vocabulary: "the pressure of […] the American nation has forced the words to have a different feeling of moving"(*Ibid.*, 9): "Little by little it does not change the words they use continue to be all the same and yet the narrative they have to tell has nothing whatever to do with the narrative the English have and had to tell"(*Ibid.*, 6).

Stein describes a situation that is much like the similar tensions between British English and Hiberno-English: "Two nations having the same words all the same grammatical construction have come to be telling things that have nothing whatever in common"(*Ibid.*, 7):

> The Americans were not at all that way they did not live their own life at all no not at all in that way and they had it to say that they lived their own life in their own way and they had it to say it with the words that had been made to tell a nation's story in an entirely different way as the nation who had made the language had the entirely different story to tell (*Ibid.*, 9).

Just how legitimate Stein's claim is regarding the extent of the difference between English and American language and literatures is less important than the fact that these lectures and essays make explicit her understandings of English language and literature as she saw it, and how she consequently positioned herself as a writer in relation to this establish English language and literatures of England and the emergent language and literatures of the Americas, repeatedly emphasising that the two are wholly different: "And now think how American literature tells something. [...] This is quite definitely not the same not the same as in English writing"(*Ibid.*, 6).

Indeed, in "What is English Literature" Stein makes explicit her belief that English literature—that is, the literature of England, a literature written in British English—is of little interest to her and is of little relevance to her: "There is then also the English people's history of their English literature but then after all that is their affair as far as I am concerned, as I am deeply concerned, it is none of my business"(Stein, "What is English Literature" from *Lectures in America*, found in Stein, *Writings 1932-1946*, 196). In contrast, American English, the language she lays claim to, is a language of changed and changing associations; one wherein the lexical forms may be similar or identical to British English, but wherein the semantic associations have been modified to reflect the idiosyncrasies of the American peoples so that while the languages ostensibly remain largely the same, "our [American] use of it [the English language is] so different"(Stein, "Narration 1," *Narration*, 12). Again, this is noteworthy not so much for its acuity in terms of distinguishing between American and British English, but for how Stein interpreted these differences in a manner that appears to justify her radical experiments with the English language; she saw it not only as a relatively "newer" form of the language, but one in which such semantic modifications were not only permissible, but essential to the establishing of a body of literature that reflected the American peoples.

[117] As a polylingual infant Stein was thus in a unique position compared to her schooled contemporaries (whose second and third languages were acquired early adulthood, as opposed to infancy and childhood). A significant portion of her infancy and childhood was spent in a non-Anglophone environment: thus, her first language was German, her second was French, her third language was English. Indeed she only began to be systematically schooled in English upon her return to America from Europe in September 1879 ("New York, Passenger Lists, 1820-1891," index and images, FamilySearch (https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.3.1/TH-1-16950-15095-39?cc=1849782&wc=MX6L-N68:165863101 : accessed 17 Jun 2014), 420 - 15 Sep 1879-5 Nov 1879 > image 325 of 1171; citing National Archives, Washington D.C.) and, as documented by Janet Hobhouse, her command of English grammar remained imperfect until her 20s. These

seemingly endless capacity to question and subvert the rules of acceptable speech appears less the product of self-consciously adopted iconoclasm and more along the lines of a practical querying brought about by a strong sense that there was always more than one way to say something; an awareness that grammars varied not just from language to language, but from dialect to dialect. Stein's upbringing ensured she was innately aware of the existence of alternate expressions for every term used ("There are different ways of making of, of course"(*HTW*, 134)). As a proficient speaker of several languages, Stein had an apparently innate scepticism ("a doubt a day"(*HTW*, 48)) of the idea that there could only ever exist one way to say something. Raymond Federman makes the same observation in relation to Beckett: "One can indeed wonder how often in the process of translating himself Beckett had to confront the *poverty* of certain French and English words in comparison with their equivalent in the other language."[118]

This is perhaps one of the most straightforward and cursory connections between the two, with both spending a considerable amount of time remonstrating against the inefficacies of the English language. Their dissatisfaction with standard English (irrespective of dialect) manifests most obviously then in the form of straightforward expressions of same; specifically

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expressions of frustration regarding the rules surrounding grammar were no doubt truthful admissions of the frustrations and self-doubt Stein would have felt while learning the language.

Stein and her siblings grew up speaking different languages to their parents and grandparents, with regular code-switching between at least three languages from infancy onwards. Though a detailed study of Stein's infant and adolescent polylingualism and its impact on her adult literary writings is still outstanding (and sorely needed), references to it have been made in all major Stein biographies, though they vary greatly in their accounts of her childhood. See Hobhouse, *Everybody Who Was Anybody* London: Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1975), 5; Nadine Satiat, *Gertrude Stein* (Flammarion Grandes Biographies, 2010), 22, and Brenda Wineapple, *Sister Brother: Gertrude and Leo Stein* (Lincoln: London: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 15; 424n.

[118] Raymond Federman, "The Writer as Self-Translator" in *Beckett Translating / Translating Beckett*, eds. Alan Friedman, Charles Rossman and Dina Sherzer (London: Penn. State University Press, 1987), 11; emphasis in original.

regarding how language—in particular, nouns, pronouns and other key grammatical units contained within the bodies of sentences—impacts upon their attempts at capturing or relaying events through language. For example, while Beckett declares the grammars and style of formal English "irrelevant"[119] in 1937, in 1931 Stein was referring to writing as a task that was, at times, discouraging, and to sentences as items that caused her to sigh: "Discouragement looks like it"; "Sentences make one sigh"(*HTW*, 19; 32). In 1937 Beckett refers to language as a "terrifyingly arbitrary material,"[120] Stein similarly and repeatedly referred to grammar as an arbitrary and ineffective medium throughout her lectures in the early 1930s, going so far as to declare herself "miserable" about sentences in 1931, noted previously: "I am very miserable about sentences. I can cry about sentences but not about hair cloth"(*HTW*, 30). Further still, just as Beckett states that it is "getting more and more difficult, even pointless for me to write in formal English,"[121] Stein also questioned her commitment to the English language as in the following sub-clause from *How To Write*: "why why bother"(*HTW*, 63).

Stein's frustration with the grammar rules that accompanied these "different ways of making of"(*HTW*, 134) is manifestly evident throughout her writings, as when she remonstrates against the capricious rules that deem that "into is not as agreeable as in and to": "What is a sentence. A sentence is however afterwards. Having thought that into is not as agreeable as in and to"(*HTW*, 117). Many of her comments throughout *How To Write* read like self-directed notes of someone in the process of acquiring a language: "It is different to say it looks like

[119] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1,* 518.
[120] *Ibid.,* 518.
[121] *Ibid.,* 518.

it and it seems like it"(*HTW*, 188). The rules of English grammar are presented as being fickle and tedious by Stein, with prescriptive notions imposing themselves on language users and instilling self-doubt drawn from the need to be "grammatical every day"(*HTW*, 48). Stein's scepticism towards adhering to the grammars and syntax of a single language appears to be almost intrinsic to her relationship with the English language. She associates the stagnancy and reluctance to innovate she identified in contemporary English language users as being the result of the security and all-round functionality provided by adhering to a standard mono-dialect and correspondingly, to a "sentence": "A sentence is a part of the way when they wish to be secure. A sentence is their politeness in asking for a cessation. [...] A sentence is an allowance of a confusion"(*HTW*, 134). It is fair to say that Stein displays the kind of detatched interest in the mechanisms of her medium that the Beckett of 1937 could only hope to similarly achieve, declaring English grammar to be "simple" at a time when Beckett, in contrast, found himself impaired and restricted by English "grammar and style"[122]: "English grammar is interesting because it is so simple. Once you really know how to diagram a sentence really know it, you know practically all you have to know about English grammar."[123]

The connection between noun and object is made, Stein notes, "by [figurative] stretches": "A noun is made by stretches. From there to there is a noun"(*HTW*, 121). Further still, the act of hearing and representing in another medium serves to make a "sentence" of a "sentence," as she puts it in the following example:

[122] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 518.
[123] Stein, *Look At Me Now*, 89.

> A sentence is made of their having heard. A noun is made sink sunken. A noun. With with ever which is sent. A noun. With wither they will at all. [...] A noun. Made with their being rosy. Verb. Inclosed. Adjective Made Receptively [*sic*] (*HTW*, 120).

Punning on the dual meaning of "sentence," Stein opens with a reminder that what you think you hear makes a sentence of the received linguistic content. It sets limits on the received language; assigning meaning and thus making "sentences." While Stein may claim that "a sentence is made of their having heard"(*HTW*, 120) she is equally aware that just as it is not always easy to discern what has been seen, it is not always easy to ascertain exactly what has been heard: "A sentence is one thing and remembering what he said is another thing"(*HTW*, 155).[124]

Just as Beckett observes in "Recent Irish Poetry," that "the new thing that has happened" is in fact "the old thing that has happened again, namely the breakdown of the object"(*Dis*, 70) Stein also observes that this same crisis of the word is cyclical. In her lecture "What is English Literature" she elaborates on her theory that throughout the history of the English language, several such periods

[124] "Rosy," for example, in the sentence "Made with their being rosy" quoted above, has multiple meanings and can function as an adjective, adverb, and verb. Tellingly, just as one could not hear the capital letter in the term "Rosy," one thing that cannot be "Made Receptively" when receiving language is the orthographic idiosyncrasies of a given dialect. The terms "Made" and "Receptively" are here capitalised despite this being orthographically atypical in standard English. This emphasises the problem of receptivity and language, highlighting aspects of grammar Stein considers unnecessarily stringent or limiting. Any decision that involves fixing the term to one set meaning will serve to impose a sentence on the potential meanings available to that sentence. "A noun," for example, is set in stone, or "made sink sunken"(*HTW*, 120) when it is confined to a set lexical form. Verbs become lexically "Inclosed" or delimited. And while one may endeavour to select an appropriate "adjective"(and thus to "Ma[ke] [it] Receptively" as the line an "Adjective Made Receptively"(*HTW*, 120) suggests), the aberrational capitals draw attention to integral problem faced by both Beckett and Stein; namely, how to truly create or de-create using received language without transgressing the rules and orthographies of a singular grammar. Orthography, specifically Stein's use of a bilingual orthography, will be further discussed in Chapter Five.

of crisis and revolution have taken place. Stein refers to earlier periods in the history of the English language as being "drunk with nouns":

> Think of all that early poetry, think of Homer, think of Chaucer, think of the Bible and you will see what I mean you will really realise that they were drunk with nouns, to name to know how to name earth sea and sky and all that was in them was enough to make them live and love in names, and that is what poetry is it is a state of knowing and feeling a name.[125]

In stark contrast to these previous periods of nominal inebriation and immediacy where the noun was truly present as "the name in origin"(*HTW*, 145), we are now, Stein argues, in a state of crisis wherein the connection between word and object is disputed. Rather than experience events in their immediacy we are presented solely with imitations of events and expressions. Stein displays an acute understanding of this problem of representation through what Beckett classified as "apperception" although she herself presents the issue as inherently ontological: "One cannot come back too often to the question what is knowledge and to the answer knowledge is what one knows."[126] Her attempts to disable and subvert the apperceptive process is epitomised in her justification of the famous, but often mocked phrase "rose is a rose is a rose is a rose"[127]:

> Can't you see that when language was new—as it was with Chaucer and Homer—the poet could use the name of a thing and the thing was really there. [...] And can't you see that after hundreds of years had gone by and thousands of poems had been written, he could call on those words and find that they were just wornout [*sic*] literary words.[128]

Stein refers to linguistic signs as dead items, a "specimen" that once held an innate capacity to captivate in terms of their ability to convey an object,

[125] Stein "Poetry and Grammar," in *Writings 1932-1946*, 328.
[126] Stein, "What is English Literature," in *Writings 1932-1946*, 195.
[127] Stein, *Geography and Plays* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 187.
[128] Stein, *Look At Me Now And Here I Am*, 7.

image, or expression: "A sign is the specimen spoken"(*TB*, 42).[129] Stein details how words no longer convey vivid and vibrant meanings, but rather have become fixed and fossilized, or, as Stein puts it in the following descriptions of "A chair" and "Breakfast" from *Tender Buttons*, "preserved," "authorised" "imitations": "A regular arrangement, the severest and the most preserved is that which has the arrangement not more than always authorised"(*TB*, 20); "An imitation, more imitation, imitations succeed imitations"(*TB*, 42). These core nominal forms, she states, are mere "imitations"(*TB*, 42) and her task as a writer is to not only demonstrate that this is so, but to seek out alternative ways to present them and explore the impetus behind our desires to employ them in narrative. Or as she puts it in *Tender Buttons*, to show "that there is wearing": "Practice measurement, practice the sign that means that really means a necessary betrayal, in showing that there is wearing"(*TB*, 20).

Similarly, throughout Beckett's fictions, older words, or rather, the same words when expressed in an earlier temporal period, are considered to have had a more immediate or vivid meaning when they were expressed *then* as opposed to when they are expressed *now*. For example, in *How It Is*, the narrator/narrated implies that older versions of white were whiter, that older blues were bluer: "the white there was then"(*HII*, 37); "the blue there was then"(*HII*, 61). *How It Is* and *Texts For Nothing* contain further references to "old words," "old stories," and "old things":

[129] Stein frequently uses imagery derived from science or scientific analysis when it comes to her writings on the state of language, such as referring to nouns as "specimen[s]" or to them as being "preserved"(*TB*, 42; 20). This can be linked to Stein's graduate research in the areas of psychology, zoology, and medicine. Both Meyer and Wineapple provide lengthy accounts of her research in Johns Hopkins and Harvard Annex and its subsequent influence on her later writings. See Meyer, *Irresistible Dictation*, and Wineapple, *Sister Brother: Gertrude and Leo Stein*, 64-115.

> the same old stories, the same old questions and answers (*TFN*, 5);
>
> Another thing, I'll call that another thing, the old thing I keep on not saying (*TFN*, 29);
>
> my day my day my life so they come back the old words always (*HII*, 34);
>
> the dust there was then [...] the depth of dust there was then (*HII*, 37);
>
> of an ancient voice ill-spoken ill-heard murmur ill some ancient scraps (*HII*, 116).

English grammar, the stringent rules surrounding felicitous language use, together with the combined effect of "hundreds of years [...] and thousands of poems"[130] have led to meanings becoming cemented over time so that once evocative poetic words such as "rose," "sea," and "moon" are now merely over-determined "wornout [*sic*] literary words [...] just rather stale literary words."[131] In the writings of both authors these terms are now anything but natural, a stance Stein vehemently defends throughout her 1934 lecture tour of America:

> The excitingness of pure being had withdrawn from them [nominal terms in English]; they were just rather stale literary words. Now the poet has to work in the excitingness of pure being; he has to get back that intensity into the language.[132]

This was to remain a core tenet of Stein's aesthetic credo right up until "A Transatlantic Interview–1946" conducted shortly before her death in 1946:

> You had to recognise words had lost their value in the Nineteenth Century, particularly towards the end, they had lost much of their variety,

[130] Stein, *Look At Me Now And Here I Am*, 7.
[131] *Ibid.*
[132] Stein, *Look At Me Now And Here I Am*, 7.

> and I felt that I could not go on, that I had to recapture the value of the individual word, find out what it meant and act within it.[133]

The directness with which Stein addresses this issue, together with the articulate encapsulating of what was, for her, a core aesthetic concern and one she resolutely adhered to throughout her writing life does much to dispel any such critical notions regarding Stein as a writer of nonsense verse.

Both Beckett and Stein appear suspicious of the naturalness of this so-called "natural order"(*HII*, 14) of language, making a distinction between the natural in terms of the learned, and the natural in terms of reality and lived experience. Acknowledging that "there are different ways of making of, of course"(*HTW*, 134), Stein not only queries the primacy of received language but rather, much like the character of Pim in Beckett's *How It Is*, she openly challenges the idea that the learnt or received is the "natural order more or less": "I learn it natural order more or less"(*HII*, 14). This querying of the primacy of the "natural order" wherein the "natural" is a pre-established and pre-approved "definitive" word is much the same complaint fielded by Beckett in "Recent Irish Poetry" when he bemoans the perceived nullity of "celebrat[ing] the cold comforts of apperception"(*Dis*, 70). The above excerpts indicate that Stein could easily have been included among the group of (exclusively male) artists Beckett praised in 1934s "Recent Irish Poetry" for their awareness of what he classifies as a "rupture of the lines of communication"(*Dis*, 70):

> The artist who is aware of this may state the space that intervenes between him and the world of objects; he may state it as no-man's land,

[133] Stein, "A Transatlantic Interview–1946" in *A Primer for the Gradual Understanding of Gertrude Stein*, ed. Robert Bartlett Hass (Los Angeles: Black Sparrow Press, 1971), 18-19.

> Hellespoint or vacuum [...]. A picture by Mr Jack Yeats, Mr Eliot's "Waste Land," are notable examples of this kind (*Dis*, 70).

Beckett makes a distinction in this essay between the artists who are aware of this "rupture of the lines of communication" and create work that illustrates "the space that intervenes between him and the world of objects" and those who instead "celebrate the cold comforts of apperception"(*Dis*, 70). Stein makes a similar distinction between those who make use of nouns freely without questioning the relationship between these nouns and their referents in "Poetry and Grammar":

> Nouns are the name of anything and anything is named [. . .] but do they go on just using the name until perhaps they do not know what the name is or if they do know what the name is do they not care about what the name is.[134]

In her fictional writings from the 1920s and 1910s Stein actively sought out alternate forms of expression so as to avoid the recourse to "apperception"(*Dis*, 70). Whereas much of her writing has been classified as deliberate and self-conscious acts of iconoclasm, Stein argues quite conclusively that her approach to renaming names is already in operation among the larger groups of language users in the form of "slang": "A noun has been the name of something for such a very long time. That is the reason that slang exists it is to change the nouns which have been names for so long."[135] Stein uses the straightforward example of a man who "may be born Walter and become Hub"[136] but elsewhere extends these simple colloquial revisionist approaches to renaming with more extreme acts of nominal substitution that, she argues, may

[134] Stein, "Poetry and Grammar," in *Writings 1932-1946*, 325-6
[135] Stein, *Look At Me Now And Here I Am*, 126.
[136] *Ibid.*

potentially alter the identity of the individual concerned: "People if you like to believe it can be made by their names. Call anybody Paul and they get to be a Paul call anybody Alice and they get to be an Alice perhaps yes perhaps no."[137]

Throughout *Tender Buttons* Stein enacts a determined investigation of the remit of the noun so much so that in "Poetry and Grammar" she refers to the technique she employed throughout as "a way of naming things that would not invent names, but mean names without naming them."[138] *Tender Buttons* focuses on what can loosely be described as "Objects, Foods [and] Rooms"[139] with Stein referring to *Tender Buttons* as a text that emerged from a situation wherein words which were the

> words that made whatever I looked at look like itself were not the words that had in them any quality of description. [...] the words or words that make what I looked at be itself were always words that to me very exactly related themselves to that thing at which I was looking, but as often as not had as I say nothing whatever to do with what any words would do that described that thing.[140]

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[137] The most obvious example of this deliberate nominal switching with respect to proper nouns is *The Autobiography of Alice B Toklas*, but Stein exacts a similar investigation in *Four in America*, a less well-known piece wherein she explores the relationship (if any) between the names and identities of the figures of Henry James, George Washington, Wilbur Wright and General Ulysses S. Grant asking whether "Henry James" could have been a successful military general, "George Washington" a novel writer, and so on. Stein, *Look At Me Now And Here I Am*, 123. In addition, see Stein*, Four in America* (New Haven, CT; Yale University Press, 1947).

[138] This description is so compatible with the *OED*'s definitions of "logograph"(the term Beckett uses to classify Stein's writings) that it could be considered synonymic. *Tender Buttons* is thus an example not only of cubist writing, but also, I am suggesting, of esoteric logography; esoteric because, as Stein puts it, again in "Portraits and Repetitions" the "words or words that make what I looked at be itself [...] as often as not had as I say nothing whatever to do with what any words would do that described that thing"(Stein, *Writings 1932-1946*, 303). For a reading that posits *Tender Buttons* as the Stein text that best fits Beckett's description of her work as "logographic" in Kaun 1937 see Nugent-Folan, "'Ill buttoned': Comparing the representation of objects in Samuel Beckett's *Ill Seen Ill Said* and Gertrude Stein's *Tender Buttons*," 54-82; Stein, *Writings 1932-1946*, 330.

[139] For a comparative study of Stein's representation of objects throughout *Tender Buttons* with similar objects found throughout Beckett's writings, see Nugent-Folan, "'Ill buttoned': Comparing the representation of objects in Samuel Beckett's *Ill Seen Ill Said* and Gertrude Stein's *Tender Buttons*," 54-82.

[140] Stein, *Writings 1932-1946*, 303.

In describing objects in words other than the word they are already known or defined by, Stein is thus attempting to locate the right words (what is "the word") to describe a pre-existent set of words; highlighting on a primary level the insufficiency of the "arbitrary material of the word surface."[141] If "a petticoat" is better conveyed by the sentence "a light white, a disgrace, an ink spot, a rosy charm"(*TB*, 24) then, by repercussion, the initial source noun is denoted as insufficient; the noun "petticoat" does not fully convey itself or what it is. Perloff aptly summarises the effect of this process by noting that the objects in *Tender Buttons* "serve as false leads, forcing the reader to consider the very nature of naming."[142]

In learning the grammars of a language, one learns to disregard the gradations that exist within any given word:

> Essentially grammar has no use for distinctions had no use for distinctions now had it. To grammar it is the same thing whether they are urgent or whether they are useful. Do you see. Grammar leaves repetition to their nouns (*HTW*, 109).

Rather than fitting the object exactly, as Stein argued it may have done in the past, these terms today achieve tenuous connections at best. They "make use of names" as opposed to fully inhabiting them: "Grammar reaching makes use of names"(*HTW*, 95). Taking this further, Stein presents grammar not as an exact likeness but as a relational or asymptotic likeness: "Grammar is the same as relative"(*HTW*, 49). In the same way that relative pronouns, adverbs or conjunctions refer back to an antecedent clause and attach a subordinate clause to it, grammar refers back to an antecedent object, place, or thing, and attaches

[141] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 518.
[142] Perloff, *The Poetics of Indeterminacy,* 102.

to it a subordinate word form deemed appropriate, sufficient, or definitively representative. Grammar is the subordinate structure connecting the language user to an antecedent, inter-medial reality and Stein identifies grammar as an always inexact rendering of the object at hand: "What is the difference between resemblance and grammar. There is none. [...] Grammar is resemblance"(*HTW*, 59). If grammar is resemblance then the linguistic portrayal of the real is only ever a relational and—at best—an asymptotic resemblance, if even: "A sentence says you know what I mean"(*HTW*, 34).

Grammar and sentences have little in reality to do with "pure experience" or expressing the thing as-it-is using "the word or words that make what I looked at be itself."[143] These alternative words are notable because rather than being apperceptive they "as often as not had nothing as I say nothing whatever to do with what any words would do that described that thing."[144] With this idea of grammar as "inexactitude modeled [*sic*] at mainly"(*HTW*, 65), together with the problem of words no longer capturing any of the vivacity of the objects they refer to, comes the associated problem of items being too similar: "A noun is alike. They are all alike. It does not make any difference with what they are all alike"(*HTW*, 152). Taking this further Stein makes the provocative assertion that these words are so alike as to be interchangeable:

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[143] Stein, "Portraits and Repetitions" in *Writings 1932-1946*, 303.
[144] *Ibid.* In addition to Beckett's commentary on the techniques of "apperception" versus the act of "state[ing] the space that intervenes between him [the artist] and the world of objects"(*Dis*, 70), Stein is very close here to James's critique of a general reliance on the tendency "to describe a large number of sensations by the name of the object from which they have most frequently been got," discussed previously (James, "The Methods and Snares of Psychology" in *The Principles of Psychology: Volume One*, 194-95). And indeed, both Beckett and Stein's identifying of the delimiting effect a set lexicon has on the act of expression is thoroughly explored throughout the second essay of Derrida's *Dissemination*, "The Double Session"(Derrida, *Dissemination*, tr. Barbara Johnson (London; New York: Continuum, 2004)).

> Why can almost any word and any word which they know they can go and they can put in into any sentence in this way. In what way can they put any word that they know into any sentence which is what they allow. Any sentence (*HTW*, 198-9).

This would appear to justify or enable the kind of subversive nominal substitutions evident throughout works such as *Tender Buttons*, works that explicitly engage with and explore the effect such substitutions have on semantics. "Why write in nouns?"[145] Stein asks. Instead of putting up with stale nominal structures, why not attempt to rename them, as she attempted to do *Tender Buttons*, to "mak[e] it [the object or food item] be a thing that could be named without using its name."[146] While the resultant text may not have fully actualised Stein's aesthetic aspirations, the impetus that led her to attempt to find other words to apply to existent words and to deem certain items unsatisfactorily named or unnamable points to a larger dissatisfaction with language systems that places her assessment of the English language in direct complement with Beckett's own.

Abiding by grammar rules out of convention or simply because they are standardised and recommended for best language practice within a set dialect—as Stein puts it "to be on account of grammatical every day. Ever and even ever mainly (*HTW*, 48)"—is seen as something of an excuse by Stein:

> Grammar grammatical grammatical fickle fickle in an instance with a doubt a day. This is to be on account of grammatical every day. Ever and even ever mainly (*HTW*, 48).

Stein reiterates this sentiment a number of pages later in the essay with the lines "grammar includes excuse felicity"(*HTW*, 55-6). One meaning for "felicity" is an

[145] Stein, "Poetry and Grammar" in *Writings 1932-1946*, 313.
[146] *Ibid.*, 330.

intense happiness derived from a specific source. This interpretation invites us to place the statement in a biographical context and situate it alongside the many comments throughout Stein's autobiographies on the joy she took from language, grammar games, and sentence diagramming in particular: "I really do not know that anything has ever been more exciting than diagramming sentences."[147] A further derivative of "felicity" involves finding the appropriate term or terms for an expression you were seeking to express.[148] Citing grammar as something that encourages or excuses recourse to "appropriate" and felicitous expression sounds curiously like Beckett's comment that his contemporaries were "celebrat[ing] the cold comforts of apperception"(*Dis*, 70). Stein is citing the tendency towards linguistic apperception as being enabled and encouraged by proper or "felicitous" language use; what Beckett in *How It Is* refers to as statements "very pretty but not right something wrong something quite wrong"(*HII*, 96). The need to be grammatically correct is portrayed by Stein as a fickle enterprise that induces recurrent self-doubt. Similarly, Beckett's comment in Kaun 1937 seem to suggest the need for permissions or allowance: "Only from time to time do I have the consolation, as now, *of being allowed to violate* a foreign language as involuntarily as, with knowledge and intention, I would like to do against my own language."[149]

Grammar is conveyed as being militaristic, a sentence imposed upon the capacity to express; setting prescriptive limitations on linguistic expression: "Sentences are called sentences. In reading sentences they are called

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[147] Stein, "Poetry and Grammar" in *Writings 1932-1946*, 314.
[148] "A happy faculty in art or speech; admirable appropriateness or grace of invention or expression. [...] A happy inspiration, an admirably well-chosen expression." "felicity, n.". OED Online. June 2015. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/69058?redirectedFrom=felicity (accessed August 21, 2015).
[149] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1,* 520; my emphasis.

sentences"(*HTW*, 143). The requisites of grammatically correct sentences exert their authority over language and language users such that they begin to "think in sentences" and either experience dissatisfaction with their output, as Beckett did, or operate through "apperception"(*Dis*, 70) as Beckett did not wish to do. Indeed Stein makes a similar criticism of the tendency to rely on apperception in her observation that "If you think in sentences you are not easily pleased"(*HTW*, 149).

Polite or subservient nominal exclamations such as "yes" or "yes please" are queried as Stein asks—both of herself and of the reader—why one feels compelled to "please" through sentences and through an adherence to "an authority in sentences":

> Yes please. Why yes please. Why please. Why to please. Yes please, why yes please, why please, why to please. An authority in sentences. Why please why not please why yes please why to please why as to a place to piece why it pleases (*HTW*, 124).

The functionality of the extant grammar rules are so pleasing that Beckett observes one can—as he argues Stein does—become absorbed in their application so that "the solution of the problem is of very secondary interest."[150] But while Stein acknowledges the pleasantries of grammar, she also presents them as inanities, as can be seen from her emphasis on the "pleasant" nature of exchanging conversational pleasantries, and the tendency to rely on stock phrases or commonly used expressions (indicated by the phrase "as they say") in conversation: "One and one makes two. How pleasantly. Everything is pleasant as they say. Come here as they say"(*HTW*, 118).

[150] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 519.

It is easier to "think in grammar"(*HTW*, 61) or to " think in sentences"(*HTW*, 149) as Stein puts it, thinking in a corrective manner that sees "words come before the mind [...] [t]his makes instant grammar"(*HTW*, 66). This sees the language user confine their thoughts and potential lexicon to *other* words, or more specifically in *other peoples'* words; "thinking as they thought" as Stein vividly describes it: "Thinking in words. [...] Thinking as they thought"(*HTW*, 142). These exchanges require less effort and involvement on the part of the observer, with the individual subsuming the grammars of the majority for the sake of facility: "Successions of words are so agreeable. It is about this"(*HTW*, 39); "Thinks in grammar. It is easier to know that a vocabulary can say so"(*HTW*, 61). Similarly, in the preceding examples, Stein draws attention first of all to the "agreeable" nature of words situated in succession—"successions of words are so agreeable"(*HTW*, 39)—but her comment after—"it is about this"(*HTW*, 39)— again gestures towards the method she has developed for manipulating language. If successions of words are so agreeable, then they are also malleable and tractable. Manipulating the semantics and syntax of a sentence can enable the writer to capitalise on the influential role proximate terms play in terms of meaning-making in sentences.

This profound dissatisfaction with received language intimates the presence of a certain "unnamable" factor that cannot be captured through language, or at least cannot be captured through language as it is employed in standard usage. "As one says this one feels that"[151] Stein observes in "What is English Literature," making this disjunction or deficiency in language visually explicit through the distinction (however slight) between the determiners "this"

[151] Stein, "What is English Literature" in *Writings 1932-1946*, 205.

and "that." Later still in the same lecture Stein elaborates, noting how "the phrase no longer said what they [English speakers] thought and they were beginning not to think about what they thought."[152] Beyond solely articulating dissatisfaction with over-determined "fossilised" nouns such as "rose," Stein interrogates the psychology of the language user then and the psychological impact of language use, all the while displaying an overall scepticism regarding the language users' capacity to invest belief in the functionality of their medium.[153]

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[152] *Ibid.*, 218.

[153] For Stein, nouns are not merely the names of objects, places, people and things, they also indicate a certain mind-set, an acceptance of things as they are (Beckett's "apperception"(*Dis*, 70)) and a contentment with things being set and "in place"(*HTW*, 121). Indeed, in a line that perhaps gives a stark insight into the authoritarian nature of Stein's language schooling as a child and young adult, she specifies that this attitude evolves from a situation wherein "they are scared and in place": "A sentence has a noun a noun is not only a name it is a manner, and reply. In so far as they mean noun they are scared and in place"(*HTW*, 121).

As a student of William James, Stein was attuned to the psychological impact of language habits when it comes to expressing oneself through language. Prior to her career as a literary author, Stein produced a number of scientific papers outlining aspects of her research into the psychology of the human mind in the *Psychological Review*. Her first publication (jointly attributed to her and her lab partner) was titled "Normal Motor Automatism." It details how she, together with her lab partner Leon Solomons, made use of a planchette and attempted to "determine the limits of normal automatism, and, if possible, show them to be really equal to the explanation of the second personality; and incidentally to study as carefully as possible the process by which a reaction becomes automatic" (Solomons and Stein, " Normal Motor Automatism," *Psychological Review* 3:5(Sep, 1896), 492-512). Stein's second (though the first attributed solely to her) was titled "Cultivated Motor Automatism; a study of character in its relation to attention." In this second experiment Stein devised a situation wherein she "attempted to examine the phenomena of normal automatism by a study of normal individuals," but this time specifically in relation to their response to stimulation, external influence and manipulation through the use of a modified planchette that "allowed the operator to move it, and guide the subject without his knowledge. By lightly resting my hand on the board after starting a movement I could deceive the subject, who sat with closed eyes, as to whether he or I was making the movement, and I could judge also how readily he yielded to a newly suggested movement" (Stein, "Cultivated Motor Automatism; a study of character in its relation to attention," *Psychological Review* 5:3 (May, 1898), 295-306). More interesting, for the purpose of this comparative, is an earlier experiment Stein took part in that was later written up and attributed solely to her research partner Solomons—Meyer records Stein as being "an experimental subject" in this inquiry (Meyer, *Irresistible Dictation*, 55). Stein and Solomons collaborated on this piece titled "The Saturation of Color"(Solomons, "The saturation of colors," with Gertrude Stein, *Psychological Review* 3:1 (January 1896), 50-56) and published in the then newly founded *Psychological Review*. The investigation concerns "whether least perceptible differences of colour saturation obeyed Weber's law"(Solomons, "The Saturation of Colors," with Gertrude Stein, 50). Weber's law, or Weber's Law of "Just Noticeable Differences" states that, simply speaking, the size of the just noticeable difference is a constant proportion of the original stimulus value (*OED*). That is to say, if you present two spots of light of equal intensity, and alter one spot until you can "just notice" the difference, the variation in intensity is the "just noticeable

There is a distinct sombreness at times to Beckett and Stein's respective reflections on the success or failure of their literary endeavours; with both referring to certain aspects of their respective works or writings as failures. Looking back on the logographic project that was *Tender Buttons* for example, Stein categorised it as part-failure[154] for the simple reason that in attempting to rename names, she was merely repeating the naming process that she had identified as problematic in the first place; or, as she puts it in "Poetry and Grammar," "in coming to avoid nouns" "nouns still have to be mentioned."[155]

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difference." Weber's law can be applied to a range of sensory modalities such as brightness, loudness, line length and, in the case of Stein and Solomons, colour intensity. Stein and Solomons studied two different colors spinning on a wheel, and varied the intensity of both colours until the subject was unable to tell the difference between them—the objects, or rather, the colours red and blue, become indistinct: you are unable to tell what either one is. That is to say, they attempted to find the exact moment when one colour (represented by a word) was no longer that colour and was instead just noticeably another colour (and another word). The problem here then, is not only what colour this colour now was, but what word could exist that could conceivably describe or define it. In other words, was there a word for the "just noticeable," the "almost" or the "asymptotic" colour? That the subject matter of this experiment into the "just noticeable difference" of colour later came to hold a distinct relevance to her literary writings is made explicit in the following excerpt from "Portraits and Repetitions," a lecture composed thirty-nine years after her expermients in Harvard: "One of the things as I said that made me most anxious at one time was the relation of color to the words that exactly meant that but had no element in it of description"(Stein, "Portraits and Repetitions" in *Writings 1932-1946*, 304).

While this formal approach to the study of the human mind came to an end following her decision to leave Harvard for Johns Hopkins and later, for Europe, these three experiments show definite correlations between Stein's early scientific studies and the intellectual impetus that fuelled her literary writings. Meyer also asserts this in his study of Stein's interactions with the sciences by noting that "her own neuroanatomical researches at the turn of the century continued to play a critical role"(Meyer, *Irresistible Dictation*, 54) in Stein's intellectual life. Stein's interest in the "just noticeable difference" results in a writing that, while often esoteric, is also exceedingly precise. This is manifest in the close attention she pays to the relationship between language and the language user; asking what they do, or what they think they do, when they make use of grammar: "What do they apply. This to that"(*HTW*, 115); "How can they think that they think that they mean this"(*HTW*, 17). In these simple combinations of determiners, pronouns, and prepositions, Stein effectively reduces the application of grammar to a near mathematical formula—applying "this" to "that" and querying how "this" can be said to mean "that." Classifying language use as the application of "this to that" is much the same then as Beckett's observation in *Watt* of the tendency to "saddle them with meaning and a formula"(*Watt*, 65). Indeed the study of Weber's Law involves just such an application of formulae. Solomons outlines their interpretaton of the formulae specific to Weber's law on page 52 of the essay (Solomons, "The Saturation of Colors," with Gertrude Stein, 52). A more contemporaneous engagement is to be found in H.E. Ross and D. J. Murray's *E.H.Weber on the tactile senses*, (Hove: Erlbaum (UK) Taylor & Francis: 1996), 9-12.

[154] "This book is interesting as there is as much failure as success in it." Stein, "A Transatlantic Interview–1946," *A Primer*, 31-2.

[155] Stein, "Poetry and Grammar" in *Writings 1932-1946*, 325.

Both authors indicate that language rules have impeded their capacity to write, with their efforts at composition largely comprised of time spent "approaching and reproaching half after noon. They are preoccupied with practically suppressing dismay with advantage this is why why bother"(*HTW*, 63). All this is enacted not in an attempt not to find the *right* word, but the *authorised* word for any particular statement.

Rather than seeing Stein as a writer of nonsense prose, these excerpts from *How To Write* posit Stein as a writer who attached a profound communicative incapability to language and was deeply engaged in much the same endeavours surrounding the discrediting of the word as Beckett both articulated in 1937 and later attempted to realise in his fictional writings. This strongly suggests Stein shared many of the unenthused if not outright dismissive attitudes towards language that Beckett articulated throughout much of his key non-fiction writings from the 1930s and thereafter. Stein uses phrases such as "why why bother"(*HTW*, 63), refers to herself, previously noted, as being "miserable about sentences"(*HTW*, 30) and repeatedly queries both the efficacy of linguistic description and the relation between language and the language user, between "them with themselves"(*HTW*, 125). According to Stein the grammars of the English language—nominal or otherwise—are simply unable to fully capture and convey the intensities of lived experience: "If there could be that which is contained in that which is felt there"(*TB*, 37). Reversing the clauses here makes the sentence more accessible and so it reads almost like a plea—if only language could capture and fully convey the emotions its author intended it to, if only "that which is felt" "could be that which is contained in that." But this is clearly not the case for Stein who can now be said to share a highly compatible,

comparably negative, and disillusioned view of language to that articulated by Beckett. The following section will examine the frustrations both authors articulate regarding the counterproductive effect of habit on their attempts to divert from the grammars of standard English dialect.

III. The habits of grammar and style.

i) "I am having it as a habit."(*HTW*, 106).

By declaring herself "grammar bound"(*HTW*, 65) Stein identified an impediment to linguistic expression that was similar in its inhibiting effect to the English "grammar and style"[156] Beckett bemoans throughout Kaun 1937. This mutual recognition posits both artists as inhabiting a place of aesthetic similitude, or more precisely, of aesthetic stasis wherein both are "bound" by the grammars they are seeking to subvert or eradicate. While Beckett's exasperation is clearly evident in this letter, so too is his uncertainty regarding how to move forward with his writing. In contrast, in the case of Stein, this epithet is less a complaint or grievance and more a statement of aesthetic intent. Stein presents herself as an author both bound by grammar and grammar bound. By playing on the dual meaning of "bound"—as a form of bondage or boundary and as a movement towards something—Stein acknowledges what was for her a technical approach central to her writing and one that would ultimately allow her to circumvent the limitations of her medium by manipulating the sinews and fabric of language itself so as to undermine and, ultimately, render them ineffective. In other words, Stein had developed a technique of attacking

[156] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 518.

language through language, a technique Beckett was himself looking to initiate in the period leading up to and succeeding the writing of Kaun 1937.

Both Beckett and Stein's extensive practical understandings of grammar can be traced to their similarly extensive grounding in the grammars of several European languages. Critics have made several useful studies of Beckett's own facility for languages[157] but aside from passing references to Stein's polylingualism by her biographers, Stein's facility for languages has received considerably less attention despite her zealous promotion of this particular skill. As previously noted, Stein referred to herself as a "grammarian"(*HTW*, 109) and, in both her *Lectures in America* and *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, states that sentence diagramming was among her favourite leisure pursuits and that sentences were a lifelong "passion" of hers, noted previously: "I really do not know that anything has ever been more exciting than diagramming sentences"[158]; "Sentences not only words but sentences and always sentences have been Gertrude Stein's life long passion"(*AABT*, 47). While the former statement was undoubtedly somewhat tongue-in-cheek and likely made to rile critics who found her work nonsensical, it is nonetheless a truthful admission of

[157] For critical essays and monographs that focus on Beckett's bilingualism, see Banfield's chapter on Beckett in *Unspeakable Sentences: Narration and representation in the language of fiction* (Boston; London; Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982); Ann Beer's "Beckett's Bilingualism" in *The Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett*, ed. John Pilling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 209-221; Cohn's "Samuel Beckett: Self-Translator," *PMLA* (76; Dec 1961), 613-21; Steven Connor's "'Traduttore, traditore': Samuel Beckett's Translation of *Mercier et Camier*," *Journal of Beckett Studies* 11/12 (1989); Brian T. Fitch, *Beckett and Babel: An investigation into the status of the bilingual work* (Toronto; University of Toronto Press, 1988); Friedman, Rossman and Sherzer (eds.), *Beckett Translating / Translating Beckett*; Montini's *"La bataille du soliloque"*; Sinéad Mooney's "Beckett in English and French" in *A Companion to Samuel Beckett*, ed. Gontarski (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2010) and *A Tongue Not Mine: Beckett and Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Corrine Scheiner, "Self-Translation" in *Samuel Beckett in Context*, ed. Anthony Uhlmann (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2013); Sam Slote, "Continuing the End: Variation between Beckett's French and English Prose Works" in *Publishing Samuel Beckett*, 205-218, and "Bilingual Beckett: Beyond the Linguistic Turn," in *The New Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett*, ed. Van Hulle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 114-125; Taylor-Batty, *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*.

[158] Stein, "Poetry and Grammar" in *Writings 1932-1946*, 314.

Stein's learnedness with respect to languages in general and the English language in particular.

Whereas Stein was exposed to multiple languages from birth, Beckett's secondary and tertiary languages were acquired through determined pedagogic effort in early adulthood.[159] Nevertheless, by the year 1937 it can at least be claimed—the preceding section having made this explicit—that both artists shared a comparable dissatisfaction with language, openly acknowledging the negative effect language acquisition and the habits of language use have had on their capacity to express themselves freely. Both authors describe the grammars and learned habits of "correct" language use as being particularly difficult to avoid and present the ingrained behaviours associated with felicitous language use as having inhibiting and restrictive effects on their writings. The strictures of "grammar and style" in "formal English"[160] exert a modulating influence on Beckett, so much so that, as noted previously, he speaks of a desire to be "*allowed* to violate [...] my own language,"[161] feeling instead, as he did then, that he was prevented or forbidden from doing so by the rules of grammar and style. Stein similarly focuses on this issue in detail throughout *How To Write* and in "Narration 1," presenting grammar as a set of strictures that are "indisposed" to change, prohibiting any bending of the rules: "Grammar makes no mistakes. Grammar uses indisposes in that way"(*HTW*, 81). Recurrent throughout Stein's analysis of grammar is the similar notion that grammar is infallible and something that cannot be altered because in order for grammar to function

[159] A fact noted by both Montini and Beer: "Beckett n'est pas bilingue de naissance, il le devient grâce à un effort rationnel"(Montini, *"La bataille du soliloque,"* 129); "he [Beckett] made himself bilingual"(Beer, "Beckett's Bilingualism," 214).
[160] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 518.
[161] *Ibid.*, 520; emphasis added.

effectively and enable communicability it must not be tampered with or subverted in any way. Indeed, as Stein states in the following passage, grammar necessitates that nothing is modulated: "What is grammar. Grammar is a collection of observations on the necessity of there having been nothing modulated"(*HTW*, 77). Grammar imposes hierarchies and meaning-making connections that, over time, become cemented and difficult if not impossible to escape. While this enables a certain level of practical communication, it also inhibits the fuller development and exploration of the potentials—or the limits—of linguistic expression.[162] As a structure that works to bring unity, consistency, and standardisation to a linguistic dialect, an integral facet is clearly going to be the presence of a certain rigidity. Grammar is, as Stein puts it, agreeable and "visibly comforting" through its ability to seemingly simplify that which is complicated in terms of expressing through language: "Grammar and agreeableness"; "Any kind of complication is simple that is the real use of grammar. [...] Visibly comforting"(*HTW*, 59, 101).

Though less encumbered by English grammar than Beckett, Stein still nevertheless recognised the inhibitor that was the habits of grammar and schooled language use:

> I am having it as a habit.
> Now the trouble with this is there is a conflict and not in thought, but in reality. I am having it. Is that a possible tense. No it is not. No it isn't. I am

[162] Again we can here refer to James's observation, expressed in "The Methods and Snares of Psychology," that "It is hard to focus our attention on the nameless"(James, *The Principles of Psychology: Volume One*, 194-195) Or alternatively, in relation to Beckett, to Fritz Mauthner's similar argument that it is "as a piece of superstition and mental weakness... that because there is a word, it must be a word for something, that because a word exists there must exist something real that corresponds to that word"(Mauthner, quoted in Gershon Weiler. "On Fritz Mauthner's critique of language," *Mind* 67:265 (Jan 1958), 84).

> having it as a habit. As a habit has no meaning. I am having it as a habit. Is completely false in reflection. The use of the word so. As well, as much as a piece, so forth (*HTW*, 106).

Grammar rules inhibit her capacity to express, making Stein ask whether what it is she is working to articulate is *articulatable* in correct language. "Is that a possible tense"(*HTW*, 106) Stein asks, of her preceding observation quoted above. Even with this observation the urge to correct still invades the narrator's analysis of the narrative—having surmised that it is not a "possible tense"("No it is not"), she repeats the conclusion using the declined—and thus the more acceptable or fluent—version of the combined "is" and "not": "No it is not. No it isn't." The phrasing here is important nonetheless because it shows Stein thinking of the possible as opposed to the extant; pushing the boundaries of what is considered "possible" in language rather than settling for status quo, allowed, and apperceptive expressions. Even when one is operating, as Stein is, at the very limits of semantic sense, it is still difficult to wholly avoid the corrective urge. Like Beckett, Stein appears to be justified then in her remonstrations that it is difficult to fully un-learn the grammars and styles of a set language: "Grammar and resemblance could any one forget how to be told"(*HTW*, 59).

Such is the nature of language acquisition that this grammatical interference is almost insidious in its ability to make those who use it believe it is the only way to conduct oneself within this linguistic medium:

> A sentence may be learned by them in their way which is why they have thought of it. It is not without them as a blame of which it is why they could never ask. In their way they must be close to it which is why they are alike and have to have a finish without being sure (*HTW*, 41-2).

Stein's point here is identical to Beckett's frustrations with the ingrained influence of English grammar and style on his writings. Not only do the apperceptions of English language provide Beckett with "cold comforts"(*Dis*, 70) but as noted above, he finds himself all but unable to escape them, and only feels he has done so when he abandons the English language entirely for another—German in Kaun 1937, and later, of course, in French. Even Stein then, who benefitted from a far freer association with the English language than Beckett, found it difficult to un-learn the apperceptive habits of her medium: "It is hard not to remember what it is"(*HTW*, 32).

What Stein has done that is particularly noteworthy is spotted an act of habit in her own and others' language use, namely the act of putting received language before the act of raw perception. Grammar, Stein notes, lulls you into thinking that these meanings or values pre-existed the terms used to signify them, when this is not the case, Stein says: "Grammar is the art of reckoning that it is by themselves that they are one and two"(*HTW*, 48). That said, in line with Stein's querying of the "possible" or potential over the already-in-existence ("Is that a possible tense"(*HTW*, 106)), the notion of this supposed grammatical infallibility is repeatedly questioned by Stein: "Grammar may not be mistaken. [...] Grammar is mistaken at times"(*HTW*, 84). Further still, and from the same passage, Stein asserts that grammar should not be considered an accurate communicator of similitude, "grammar may not be likeness"(*HTW*, 84). Rather, grammar presents a conditional likeness—"grammar is a conditional expanse"(*HTW*, 55)—and provides a sort of calmative to the reader in the form of its predictability, sameness, and continuity: "Grammar in continuity"(*HTW*, 61). In displaying such awareness, Stein demonstrates a more nuanced

understanding of the issues surrounding linguistic defiance or subversion than that of Beckett in the mid to late 1930s.[163] Beckett was himself still caught in a battle of wills, so to speak, with the "grammar and style"[164] that so impeded his writings, and with his own ingrained habits and tendencies when it came to language use. From his perspective, as Cohn neatly states, "rather than lagging behind the other arts, literature should be aware of its own falsity."[165] But whereas Beckett himself was struggling at this period to come up with a method of displaying, interrogating, and discrediting this facet of language, Stein was clearly aware not only of the effects of grammar in terms of its capacity to modulate and impede expression, but also that this sentiment brought on by habit was itself false—that grammar was neither infallible nor unerring, it merely relies on the user perceiving it to be so. As Stein puts it, grammar not only "has no meaning" but "is completely false in reflection": "I am having it as a habit. As a habit has no meaning. I am having it as a habit. Is completely false in reflection"(*HTW*, 106).

Stein associates grammar with continuity. Through the manipulation of these set rules and patterns (i.e. the introduction of discontinuity), Stein argues that one can find ways to confuse readers and subvert their understanding of the standard dialect by subverting established semantic and syntactic connections and preventing extant grammar rules from functioning unimpeded: "A grammar in continuity. A grammar in disassociation find does well and tangle. An indicted description meant to be coupled"(*HTW*, 56). This presents grammar as a compendium of regulatory material that, with the proper level of skill, can be

[163] A distinction that is again indicative of their generational difference.
[164] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 518.
[165] Cohn, *A Beckett Canon*, 89.

twisted and turned against itself to serve the decidedly anti-grammatical intentions of the author. The following section will discuss Beckett's stated intention to "tear apart" the "veil" of language "in order to get to those things (or the nothingness) lying behind it."[166] Stein similarly speaks of leaking and porosities in relation to language, as indicated in the following examples where she utilises the term "leak" to indicate a state wherein a grammatical article or indeed, as the passage also suggests, a pronoun may "leak without their wishes"(*HTW*, 129). Aside from using such phrases for their metaphorical appropriateness, as will be made clear in the final section of this chapter, Stein actively engenders such situations in her writings, showing that while Beckett was still speaking of intentions, Stein had already actualised this desire to make language leak.[167]

IV. Expressing a desire to tear at language.

i) "my language appears to me like a veil which one has to tear apart [...] language is best used where it is most efficiently abused"[168]

In 1934 Stein questioned the need for grammar at all, asking similar questions to those posed by Beckett throughout Kaun 1937: "The question is if you have a vocabulary have you any need of grammar except for explanation that is the

[166] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, 520.
[167] Tram Nguyen notes this in his (slightly confusing) observation that "what Beckett extracts from Stein's work and repeats without mimicking or representing is the intuition that perforating language allows for new combinatorial forms. I repeat: he repeats without repeating, without derivation, because he repeats in the manner theorized by Deleuze decades later"(Nguyen, "Porosities: Aesthetic Correlations Between Gertrude Stein and Samuel Beckett," 52). While this is insightful, it is of limited use to this comparative as it provides little ground for quantifiable comparative research into the modus operandi of Beckett and Stein's creative praxis, bearing as it does the hallmarks of a critic engaging with Beckett and Stein from a Deleuzian perspective. This thesis is concerned with analysing Stein's particular technical methodologies without recourse to metaphor or theoretically derived analyses, so as to delineate the methods and technical exploits adopted in order to achieve their desired aesthetics of language.
[168] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 518.

question, communication and direction repetition and intuition that is the question. Returned for grammar"(*HTW*, 60). But while Stein anarchically challenged the need for grammar, she was not so naive as to think grammar could be eliminated completely. Certainly, for a period Stein wholeheartedly rallied against it (she states as much in "A Transatlantic Interview," quoted below), but experience brought about the realisation that grammatical connection or meaning of some form or another is inevitable:

> I found out very soon that there is no such thing as putting them [words] together without sense. It is impossible to put them together without sense. I made innumerable efforts to make words write without sense and found it impossible. Any human being putting down words had to make sense out of them.[169]

Stein's period spent attempting to get away from established semantic meanings in language and experiment with "the recreation of the word"[170] correlates with Beckett's observation in Kaun 1937 regarding the use of "some form of nominalistic irony" as a "necessary phase"[171] in his attempts at contributing to the disrepute of language.[172]

In Kaun 1937 Beckett suggests that such an activity was a potentially useful avenue through which to begin an attack on language: "On the road toward this, for me, very desirable literature of the non-word, some form of nominalistic irony can of course be a necessary phase."[173] Beckett appears somewhat dismissive of such an endeavour, saying it could only be useful for a

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[169] Stein, "A Transatlantic Interview–1946," *A Primer*, 18.
[170] *Ibid.*
[171] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, 520.
[172] Stein's role in Beckett's efforts at—first—displaying nominalistic irony and—second—transgressing this stage and developing a wholly bilingual aesthetics in English and French will be discussed further in Chapters Two and Five respectively.
[173] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, 520.

set phase and would serve only to partly undermine the structure of language. Nominalistic irony of the sort Stein demonstrates throughout *Tender Buttons* was indeed a set phase in her attack on language and, in her retrospective analysis, a not altogether successful phase at that. Acknowledging the importance of this act of nominalistic irony (if that was what Beckett considered Stein's logographs to be, as indeed the very concept of a logography invites us to consider the origin or source name with a measure of scepticism or irony) as a technique that is beneficial up to a point, demonstrates again that their assessment of language is compatible not just when it comes to identifying the shortcomings of language, but when it comes to assessing the potential techniques they either (in Stein's case) at one point adopted or (in Beckett's case) may at some point adopt, in their respective efforts to undermine the English language.

Language is presented by both authors as a medium that is no longer successfully performing its communicative or representative function; it is presented as a failure, and one that both enacts sentences and perpetuates this sentencing of sentences to fail in their efforts at conveying sense. Ironically however, both authors manage to successfully convey one key message—the message that they are failing to communicate successfully. Language, Stein states, does not contain what is known, and it inhibits the reception of knowledge or experience so that "nothing" is received, and "nothing" is known: "A sentence is not what they know"(*HTW*, 161). This is identical in sentiment to a familiar passage from *Three Dialogues* regarding

> the expression that there is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, nothing from which to express, no power to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express (*Dis*, 139).

Similar too is Stein's assertion that there is "no resemblance" between the signifier and the thing itself: "Resemblance. A grammar. There is no resemblance, it is not what they remind them to be an interval like it"(*HTW*, 91). Finally, Stein's forceful assertion that "grammar is useless because there is nothing to say"(*HTW*, 62) can be compared to Beckett's similarly minded declaration, noted above, that "there is nothing to express"(*Dis*, 139).

These expressions of futility regarding the act of expression are not confined to *Three Dialogues*, having earlier appeared in Kaun 1937 in the form of Beckett's observation that writing in English was becoming "pointless."[174] Earlier still in a 1934 letter to Morris Sinclair Beckett states "no sooner do I take up my pen to compose something in English than I get the feeling of being 'de-personified.'"[175] Similar such statements recur throughout the letters, but the fact that the latter two were themselves expressed in languages other than English (in German and French respectively) adds authenticity to these particular remarks. Similar sentiments are found throughout *Texts for Nothing*, with the narrator of "Text for Nothing III" declaring "all is false": "Yes, no more denials, all is false, there is no one, it's understood, no more phrases, let us be dupes, dupes of every time and tense"(*TFN*, 11). Similar too is the refrain from "Text for Nothing XI": "Name, no, nothing in namable, tell, no, nothing can be told"(*TFN*, 45). Beckett's writings in *Texts For Nothing*, while ostensibly

[174] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1,* 518.
[175] SB to Morris Sinclair [hereafter "MS"], 5 May 1934, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1,* 205.

pertaining to fictional scenarios, are pertinent to this argument when placed in the context of his aesthetics of language, in much the same way as *How To Write* is indicative of Stein's aesthetics as they stood in the early to mid 1930s. Consider, for example, the comparability of Beckett's comments above with Stein's assertion that "a sentence has no mystery. A mystery would be a reception. They receive nothing"(*HTW*, 34).

While the narrator or *Texts for Nothing* quoted above concentrates on instances of temporal falsity and how it is correspondingly relayed through verbal modification (tense), Stein instead singles out nouns, not only declaring "all" nouns to be alike (*HTW*, 152)—a sentiment that merits a passing comparison with Beckett's observation in "Text For Nothing I" that "another said, or the same, or the first, they all have the same voice, the same ideas"(*TFN*, 3)—but also declaring that there are "no words in grammar"(*HTW*, 54). This dissatisfaction extends beyond straightforward nominal insecurity through to the seams and sinews of nominal signifiers so that for Stein, even the pronouns are faulty: "There is no reason why they should compare them with themselves"(*HTW*, 125). This creates a particularly interesting point of aesthetic cohesion between the two authors, with their respective statements regarding pronominal uncertainty and insecurity being, at times, extremely proximate:

> I do not know nor do I know if he thinks with them or without me (*HTW*, 19).
>
> I'll be there, I won't miss it, it won't be me, I'll be here, I'll say I'm far from here, it won't be me (*TFN*, 11).

Further comparisons with the endeavours of the narrators in certain of the *Texts For Nothing* are found elsewhere throughout *How To Write*, such as the following excerpt, which again bears comparison with "Text For Nothing III":

> Grammar felt in telling that not telling in stories (*HTW*, 49).
>
> There's going to be a story, someone's going to try to tell a story (*TFN*, 11).

Not only does Stein indicate the presence of a disjunction between pronoun and referent, she extends this nominal and pronominal dissatisfaction to a larger critique of the relationship between language and the workings of the human mind: "What is the interest in character by saying he understood others. There is no use in finding out what is in anybody's mind. There is no use in finding out what is in anybody's mind"(*HTW*, 16). This querying of the "interest in character" can be seen elsewhere in her writing, such as in the following two examples, the first is from *How To Write*, the second from *Stanzas in Meditations*:

> Betty is leaving her home or at any rate where she is (*HTW*, 20).
>
> I think very well of Susan but I do not know her name.[176]

In the face of such dissatisfaction, with an ill-functioning system paired with a "fidelity to failure"(*Dis*, 145), together with a similarly negative appraisal of the capacity to express, both authors make a decision that is remarkable for its comparability and mutual coherency. That decision is to go on, to continue trying to narrate irrespective of the rate of failure or the unsuccessful nature of the act:

[176] Stein, Stanza 3.2, *Stanzas in Meditation: The Corrected Edition* (New Haven: London: Yale University Press, 2010), 108.

"Now I am going on. Now go on."(*MOA*, 664); "I am going on with him, then I am going on with her"(*MOA*, 689).

The act of trying to tell a story in spite of this terminal insufficiency of language, or, as Stein puts it, "telling that not telling in stories"(*HTW*, 49) is something both authors engage in throughout their respective fictions; and it is done in spite of their prior assertions regarding the ineffectiveness of writing in language because, as Stein puts it "they receive nothing"(*HTW*, 34). Their situation can be paralleled with that outlined by Beckett in the third of the *Three Dialogues* in relation to Bram van Velde:

> B.—The situation is that of him who is helpless, cannot act, in the event cannot paint, since he is obliged to paint. The act is of him who, helpless, unable to act, acts, in the event paints, since he is obliged to paint. [...]
> D.—Why is he helpless to paint?
> B.—Because there is nothing to paint and nothing to paint with (*Dis*, 145).

Similarly in this dialogue, the dialoguer "B" brings up the issue of a "fidelity to failure, a new occasion, a new term of relation, and of the act which, unable to act, obliged to act"(*Dis*, 145). Beckett notes in the van Velde dialogue that van Velde "is the first to admit that to be an artist is to fail, as no other dare fail, that failure is his world"(*Dis*, 145). But as has already been made clear, Stein in her writings not only tolerated the idea of failure, but actively encouraged if not pursued it throughout certain of her writings, attaching the "wrong" words to noun forms in *Tender Buttons*, for example, or creating an incomplete and incompletable catalogue of peoples throughout *The Making of Americans*, defending her idiosyncratic method of cataloguing with the observation that "When I have not been right there must be something wrong"(*MOA*, 573).

One potential outcome of this scenario wherein their respective aesthetic credos seem to fasten on the inevitability of failure apropos linguistic representation and communication, would be to harness this terminal insufficiency and opt to convey it rather than attempt to sidestep it, ignore it or, as Stein attempts to do throughout *Tender Buttons*, revamp it altogether through the creation of new noun forms and semantic associations of arguable efficacy. This is something both authors seem to have independently realised and, I think, sought to capitalise on. Whether or not Stein led Beckett to this realisation is unclear and, without definitive archival evidence this uncertainty will be maintained. That said, this chapter has made clear the fact that their respective articulations of dissatisfaction with the English language are strikingly similar and complimentary; suggesting a strong aesthetic confluence. From Stein's perspective, and this is particularly palpable throughout *How To Write*, conveying this insufficiency is perhaps a more achievable task than attempting to "fix" a fundamentally insufficient medium through the creation of alternate grammars. Rather than opt to remake the word and, as a consequence, create grammars that, however subversive or atypical they might initially seem, are grammars nonetheless, Stein instead turns to question language and grammar itself:

> Questionaire in question.
> What is a question [...]
> What is a grammar ordinarily. A grammar is question and answer answer undoubled however how about (*HTW*, 62-3).

Rather than bemoaning its existence as Beckett does in 1937, Stein harnesses aspects of English grammar and syntactic style and uses them to

rearrange sentences so as to confuse and, to borrow Beckett's metaphor, "tear apart"[177] the semantic content. This approach is typical of Stein's unique form of linguistic iconoclasm and her rarely paralleled mode of writing in language against language, a methodology that usurps the authority of grammar as a mode of authorising sentences and instead uses the "sinews" of language to force it to expose itself as an inherently inexplicable medium: "Consider grammar grammar may fairly be said to be not explicative"(*HTW*, 71). An example of such a play on grammar's binding factors, together with the capacity to undo or take advantage of these bonds by stepping into the circle of grammar and playing the sentence back on itself can be seen in the following line from *How To Write*: "What is a sentence if what is a sentence"(*HTW*, 201). Through her use of the conjunction "if" Stein manages to transform a question "what is a sentence" into a kind of rhetorical möbius strip that sees the syntax of the passage manipulated so as to render the semantics inaccessible. "What is a sentence if what is a sentence" could refer to the first part of the sentence alone—that is, if "what is a sentence" is a sentence, then "what is a sentence"? But it could also refer to the sentence in its entirety—that is, "what is a sentence" if "what is a sentence if what is a sentence" is a sentence? In this way Stein transforms a potentially limiting scenario wherein she is sentenced to a singular semantic meaning into a scenario wherein the "sentence" is no longer confined by the limitations of language structure itself. Rather it is reworked by Stein's clever manipulation of grammatical modifiers in tandem with semantic content. Stein capitalises on the non-explicative aspects of grammar, employing the conjunction "if" in this

[177] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 518.

instance to undermine the initial part of the sentence, and uses immediate and unaltered repetition to ensure that the sentence, as such, remains irresolvable.

By 1934, with over thirty years of work to her name, Stein had reached a level of proficiency in the manipulation of the English language that surpassed that of the Beckett of 1937 who, as the Kaun letter indicates, was fixated on "verbally demonstrating this [his] scornful attitude vis-a-vis the word" and "contribut[ing] to its disrepute."[178] Stein displays an awareness not only of the impossible nature of aspects of her task (i.e. that it was impossible to make language fully *other*), but seems to have arrived at an understanding of how to circumvent certain of the limitations of her medium. While she may have acknowledged and accepted that it is impossible to ever fully escape or prevent meaning (be it homophonic, semantic associations, rhyme or otherwise), Stein nevertheless queries whether what she is producing really is "grammar": "I can do it so easily it always makes grammar but is it grammar"(*HTW*, 109).

Stein's work presents a radical dehierarchising of language and the hierarchies implicit in proper grammar usage. Again, it is important to emphasise that this can only ever be an "act," because Stein's work showed that it was impossible not to make meaning and thus to re-hierarchise, even while one was in the process of attempting to de-hierarchise. But at the same time, the writings she produced did circumvent certain key aspects of language functionality. They inhibit the capacity for language to make specific, to successfully communicate semantic certainty, to relay meaning. Though Beckett would claim, some eight days after writing the 1937 Kaun letter, to be the only member of the "logoclasts league," this chapter makes clear that Stein's own

[178] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 518-19.

aesthetics of language and fierce iconoclasm place her firmly in the category of premiere "logoclast."[179]

The following section will move to delineate in a concrete manner a specific technique utilised first by Stein and later by Beckett to subvert the semantic surety of their fictional prose writings in English; this technique, which I will classify as "renarration," is a development on the technique of "denarration"[180] explored by Van Hulle and Richardson in relation to Beckett's writings.[181] Before delineating this theory of renarration as an aesthetic praxis shared by both Beckett and Stein, however, the following section will first situate renarration in the context of its narratological counterpart; namely, the technique of denarration, and its related rhetorical counterpart, the epanorthosis.

ii) "Grammar is in our power"(*HTW*, 73): renarration as a strategy of semantic and syntactic tearing

> I build them up little by little each time I said it it changed just a little (*MOA*, 296).

[179] SB to Mary Manning Howe, 11 July 1937, 521n.8.
[180] Douglas Coupland employs the term "denarration" in 1996s *Polaroids from the Dead*, referring to it as "the process whereby one loses one's life story; 'denarration.' Denarration is the technical way of saying, 'not having a life.' "*Scott doesn't have a life*'; '*Amber is denarrated.*'" Clearly this interpretation of "denarration" reflects Coupland's interest in American cultural theory (Douglas Coupland, *Polaroids from the Dead* (London; Flamingo, 1996), 179). In addition to Coupland's "denarration," "denarration" has been appropriated for use in the fields of practice-based performance studies and trauma-theory, with Shirley and Turner arguing that "this notion of 'denarration' is [...] provocatively explored as being evident in contemporary dramatic playwriting." Shirley and Turner, "Introduction" to *Performing Narrative: narration, 'denarration,' fracture and absence in contemporary performance practice*, ii.
[181] See Brian Richardson, "Denarration in Fiction: Erasing the Story in Beckett and Others," *Narrative* 9:2 (2001), 168-75; Van Hulle, *Modern Manuscripts: The Extended Mind and Creative Undoing from Darwin to Beckett and Beyond* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), and Van Hulle, "The Obidil and the man of glass: denarration, genesis and cognition in Beckett's *Molloy, Malone meurt/Malone Dies* and *L'innommable/The Unnamable*" in *Samuel Beckett Today/ aujourd'hui* (26), 2014, 25-39.

In his essay "Denarration in Fiction: Erasing the Story in Beckett and Others," Brian Richardson introduces denarration as a specific narrative strategy availed of by Beckett and a select number of other writers. He nicely summarises its effect with the observation that denarration is "a kind of narrative negation in which a narrator denies significant aspects of her narrative that had earlier been presented as given."[182] Richardson sees Beckett as "a master of the art of verbal negation" who instigates "sustained and relentless deployment[s] of denarration."[183] Van Hulle develops on Richardson's foundational exploration of this narrative strategy and examines denarration's usefulness as a tool for studying the intersections of cognitive narratology and genetic criticism;[184] specifically in relation to the "evocation of fictional minds."[185] Van Hulle and Richardson pinpoint similar instances of what they term denarrative writing in the works of Beckett. In each of these instances, as Richardson and Van Hulle both observe, an initial statement is redacted, and this occurs on a varying scale or "continuum rang[ing] from denarration 'light' to substantial narrative negations as forms of 'extreme narrations.'"[186] Richardson notes a further point of interest frequently found in tandem with instances of this narrative strategy, in the form of an extreme precision on the part of the author or narrator, with instances of denarration frequently coupled with "obsessive precision."[187]

[182] Richardson, "Denarration in Fiction: Erasing the Story in Beckett and Others," 168.
[183] *Ibid.*
[184] Van Hulle, "The Obidil and the man of glass: denarration, genesis and cognition in Beckett's *Molloy, Malone meurt/Malone Dies* and *L'innommable/The Unnamable*," 25.
[185] *Ibid.*
[186] Van Hulle, "The Obidil and the man of glass: denarration, genesis and cognition in Beckett's *Molloy, Malone meurt/Malone Dies* and *L'innommable/The Unnamable*," 26.
[187] Richardson, "Denarration in Fiction: Erasing the Story in Beckett and Others," 171.

What Richardson and Van Hulle classify as "denarration" Taylor-Batty calls "*décomposition*,"[188] taking her term from Beckett's *Molloy* and Molloy's observation "C'est dans la tranquillité de la décomposition que je me rappelle celle longue émotion confuse que fut ma vie."[189] Taylor-Batty cites the closing passage of *L'Innommable* as her example of "perhaps the simplest form of *décomposition*, and one that all the trilogy's narrators make use of."[190] In a distinction from both Van Hulle and Richardson, Taylor-Batty sees "*décomposition*" as a process that "can become a means of undermining language through a subversive adherence to academic forms and formulations of language."[191] It is, perhaps, not entirely necessary to emphasise that this process need be academic, though this stance is likely reflective of Taylor-Batty's interest in the pedagogic element she identifies throughout the specific denarrative or decompositive passages she cites from Beckett's late fictions.[192] Nevertheless, what Taylor-Batty sees as "excessive formalism"[193] reminiscent of classroom learning-by-rote, is identical in its execution to the technique of denarration covered by Van Hulle and Richardson. Both terms ultimately refer to the same technical praxis, and both engender the same result. Such an epanorthotically-tinged narrative procedure, as Taylor-Batty notes, results in passages that are "stylistically [...] orderly, rhythmical and grammatically correct; semantically it

[188] Taylor-Batty, *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*, 146-179.
[189] Beckett, *Molloy* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 2004), 32.
[190] Taylor-Batty, *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*, 171.
[191] *Ibid.*, 161.
[192] Taylor-Batty's interest in the pedagogic elements of Beckett's "décomposite" writing style works nicely when read alongside Cordingley's nuanced extrapolation of the pedagogic strands he identifies throughout *Comment* c'est/ *How It Is*. See Cordingley, "Beckett and 'l'ordre naturel': The Universal Grammar of *Comment c'est/ How It Is*," 185-200.
[193] Taylor-Batty, *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*, 171.

[the passage] is confusing."[194] This is a method then that is "particularly effective in exposing the strangeness, not only of words, but of grammar and syntax."[195]

Richardson, Van Hulle, and Taylor-Batty all provide excellent examples of Beckett's varying use of denarrative strategies throughout his writings, so there is little need to further delineate these here.[196] In the case of Stein, one does not have to look far to identify similar examples of denarrative strategies throughout her writings, such as the line "a sample not a sample because there is no worry"(*TB*, 25) from her description of " a handkerchief" in *Tender Buttons*. Alternatively, the following exhibit similar technically identifiable traits of denarration: "No mention of a little dog. [...] What is a dog"(*HTW*, 17); "Betty is leaving her home or at any rate where she is"(*HTW*, 20).

This thesis develops on this already established methodology by situating the technical process of denarration within a wider context of revisionary narratological techniques; one that need not be pedagogic in intent, as Taylor-Batty argues, and one that need not be confined to the assertion and redaction seen on the continuum of denarrative praxis espoused by Van Hulle and Richardson. Rather, a more generalist revisionary approach along the lines of assertion, reassertion, and *re*-reassertion, or assertion, redaction, and reassertion; one that, in the case of both Beckett and Stein, appears to have been a frequently availed of stylistic and technical trope throughout their writings. In the following passage Montini comes closest to articulating the theory of

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[194] Taylor-Batty, *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*, 173.
[195] *Ibid.*, 172.
[196] See Richardson, "Denarration in Fiction: Erasing the Story in Beckett and Others," 168-75; Taylor-Batty, *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*, 146-179; Van Hulle, "The Obidil and the man of glass: denarration, genesis and cognition in Beckett's *Molloy, Malone meurt/Malone Dies* and *L'innommable/The Unnamable*," 26-39.

renarration that will be forwarded throughout this section and further explored throughout the remainder of the thesis:

> Nous avons vu que les répétitions ne sont jamais exactement la *même chose*, mais qu'elle se manifestent plutôt en tant que *variations*: variations d'une phrase qui devient variation de la langue, variation qui atteint en même temps signifiant et signifié. Cela pour montrer comment une langue *familière* peut devenir *étrangère*.[197]

Taking Montini's point here, in combination with the preceding interpretations of denarration posited by Richardson, Van Hulle and Taylor-Batty, it can be observed that repetition makes a language strange from itself and does so without recourse to an alternate language, but rather through making extant or acceptable syntactic patterns or semantic associations strange through the action of repeating with minor variations. Or, as William Gass puts it in comments that specifically relate to Steinian repetition, what is important is "not the appearance of a word but the manner of its reappearance."[198] With this in mind, then, consider the following examples—they intimate a similar, though slightly variant strategy to the examples of denarration discussed previously, one that is revisionary in its intent as opposed to being explicitly concerned with assertion and redaction:

> Mrs. Edwards who is Mrs. Taylor but Mr. Taylor is not Mr. Taylor. Literalness is not deceptive it destroys similarity (*HTW*, 70).

> Walter a grammar repeat a name and call it Danny that is if he was called Sarah Amelia and there was callousness. Start again (*HTW*, 56).

> the same shining very colored rid of no round color (*TB*, 22).

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[197] Montini, *"La bataille du soliloque,"* 175; emphasis in original.
[198] William H. Gass, "Introduction," to *The Geographical History of America or The Relation of the Human Body to the Human Mind* (Baltimore; London; Johns Hopkins University Press,1995), 25.

In these examples Stein has deviated from the straightforward assertion and redaction of denarration to a more complex retreat involving a successive series of revisions and re-revisions to her initial statement. This act of rearranging pairs repetition with the act of modification in a manner that is akin to denarration, but is not limited to the two-fold process of action/redaction.

According to Stein, grammar is quite easily undermined or challenged by the simple act or rearranging, a facet of her technical approach she regularly draws attention to:

> Grammar may be reconstituted (*HTW*, 57).
>
> Grammar may be serially hampered (*HTW*, 58).
>
> Grammar does not need a balustrade to be broken so much so that separate parts of it are far apart and in that way are reorganised and very pretty (*HTW*, 81).

While these lines make for effective aphorisms, Stein does not resign herself, in this instance, to the esoteric and aphoristic. Rather, interspersed between these aphorisms are technically-minded instructive lines that provide significant insight into her esoteric prose. Take for example the following two passages from the opening of the second essay in *How To Write*:

> They made made them when they were by them. This is a sentence. It has no use in itself because made is said two times (*HTW*, 26).
>
> This is an ordinary paragraph made different by content (*HTW*, 28).

In the first example, Stein indicates an awareness of how an immediate single word repetition can make nonsense of a passage that would otherwise make semantic sense. In the second, Stein again draws attention to that fact that

syntactically "ordinary" sentences can be "made different" by introducing semantically atypical or anomalous terms, a technique we see her adopt throughout *Tender Buttons* or in the line "he was neighboured by a bean"(*HTW*, 115), to be discussed shortly.

Stein is here articulating a very nuanced understanding of how to go about, in Beckettian terms, "tear[ing] apart" the "veil of language"[199] or, adopting the phraseology of *Worstward Ho*, of writing "worser." How grammar functions as an arbiter of meaning that can be employed to disassemble semantic finitude. Effecting such semantic and syntactic subversions through grammatical machinations involves an in-depth understanding of grammar, of the role played by syntax and, in particular, of proximate word placement in the crafting of a sentence or phrase. Stein shows a clear awareness of this, as can be seen from the following two passages from *How To Write*. The first displays an acute awareness of the relationship between meaning-making and proximate word order, the second, her awareness of how atypical syntactic order problematises our capacity to make sense of a sentence, particularly when paired with semantically unconventional word pairings:

> Do you see. Dependent entirely upon how one word follows another (*HTW*, 108-9).
>
> A very easy failure takes place. Our comes back. Back comes our. He was neighboured by a bean (*HTW*, 115).

As Taylor-Batty puts it "Grammar both dictates and controls meaning."[200] It makes sense then that Stein, as a particularly accomplished "grammarian"(*HTW*,

[199] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1,* 518.
[200] Taylor-Batty, *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*, 166.

109), was herself aware that if the relationship between meaning and grammar is predicated on a regulatory exchange wherein grammar controls meaning, then by altering the grammars of a sentence, one can alter and detrimentally affect the meaning.

Stein's awareness of how to make a sentence *different*, of how to make a sentence ineffective extends beyond the already established approach of denarrative action and redaction. Instead, Stein's writings show her to regularly capitalise on two forms of proximity: phrasal proximity in terms of word placement within the sentence or phrase and the role played by proximate terms in meaning-making while reading, as well as proximity in the form of asymptotic or proximate portraits of an event at hand. Stein specifically employs the technique of repetition when it comes to instigating/ inducing language to "leak without their wishes"(*HTW*, 129). This technique is similarly manifest throughout Beckett's work, as can be seen from the following two examples. The first, from *The Unnamable*, displays an awareness of the narrative potential for the same incident to be revisited (not denarrated) by means of simple repetition with a modification to word order. The second, from *Company*, sees Beckett noting this same facet again, this time more acutely:

> We'll have to go through it all again, in other words, or in the same words, arranged differently (*U*, 86).
>
> Another trait its repetitiousness. Repeatedly with only minor variants the same bygone. As if willing him by this dint to make it his.[201]

This allows us to return to the double meaning behind certain of Stein's more pointed comments on the role of sentences throughout *How To Write*, and

[201] Beckett, "Company" in *Company etc*, ed. Van Hulle (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), 9.

one in particular that introduces the concept of error, and of deliberate error on the part of the author or narrator. Even within the confines of a specific text Stein's awareness of how others engage with grammar as a method of standardising and assessing literary writings allows her to identify passages within her own works that cannot be considered "successful" sentences, such as in the following example: "It is easy to feel helpful with ham. That is a sentence because it is a failure. This is a sentence because ti [*sic*] is a failure"(*HTW*, 157). "It is easy to feel helpful with ham" is a failure as a sentence because it does not make semantic sense. Owing to Stein's exploitation of the dual meaning of "sentence," this failure makes a further sentence of the sentence, as expressed in the second sentence in the excerpt "that is a sentence because it is a failure." The reasoning behind the second failure listed in the excerpt is more complicated—the third sentence ("This is a sentence because ti [*sic*] is a failure") is a near repetition of the second ("That is a sentence because it is a failure") and thus refers back to the second (which is itself already referring back to the first sentence) while also referring to itself as indicated by the use of the determiner/pronoun "this." This can be relayed in a somewhat more accessible manner through the use of arrows in the following diagram:

It is easy to feel helpful with ham.
↑
1) That is a sentence because it is a failure.
↑↓ ↑↓
2) This is a sentence because ti is a failure [*sic*] (*HTW*, 157).

The sentence labelled 1) above declares the preceding sentence to be a failure. It is declared a failure for semantic reasons because the term "ham" when used in tandem with the activity of feeling or being "helpful" creates a sentence that is syntactically or grammatically correct, but semantically uncertain. That sentence itself is then imperfectly repeated and declared to be both a "sentence" and "failure" as can be seen in 2) above. It is both a failure as sentence, and a sentence because it is a failure. The reasoning behind its acquisition of the sentencing label of "failure" is largely down to the fact that it is an imprecise repetition and because it, again, fails to successfully make semantic sense; the sentences literalise the simple modifications that can import nonsense into an ostensibly semantically secure sentence. In the first instance this is done by importing a term that creates a jarring semantic portrait—"It is easy to feel helpful with ham." In the second instance it is done through the induction of error in the form of a word reversal that transforms the regulatory pronoun "it" into the meaningless word form "ti." Thus "this is a sentence because ti [*sic*] is a failure" is a failure largely because "ti" is a failure as a word in that it cannot be said to possess the distinct meaningful conceptual element necessary to qualify as a successful "word."

To conclude, it is possible to identify the following two techniques as evidence of an explicitly renarrative strategy identifiable throughout the writings of both authors:

i) Using a term's semantic content against itself through immediate and recurrent single-word repetitions that serve to undo or undermine the term's heretofore definitive meaning.

ii) Manipulating the syntax of the sentence through the use of other lesser modifiers (conjunctions in particular) in tandem with repetitions so as to enforce oppositional or incompatible semantics and incite a term to suggest its own asymptote.

These renarrative techniques facilitate Beckett and Stein's attempts at enacting strategic manipulations of the syntax of the language by enabling them to induce what can metaphorically be referred to as a "tearing" at "the fabric of the language."[202] Through repetition in tandem with modification—either in the form of variants on the preceding repeated item, or the use of grammatical modifiers—Stein and Beckett engender a systematic praxis of renarration throughout their writings. This technique enables both authors to pragmatically interfere with the meaning-making capacity of language through the manipulation of the sinews of language itself. In short, it facilitates the torn, membranous vision of language as a "literature of the non-word"[203] Beckett calls for in Kaun 1937.

[202] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 519.
[203] *Ibid.,* 520.

Chapter Two

Comparing instances of renarration in *The Making of Americans* and *Watt.*

> What variety and at the same time what monotony, how varied it is and at the same time how, what's the word, how monotonous. What agitation and at the same time what calm, what vicissitudes within what changelessness (*TFN*, 37).

I. Repetition, renarration, and the mechanics of language

Grammar is drained in by and by (*HTW*, 49).

The door was open as well as closed (*HTW*, 106).

At roughly the same period in their writing careers, Beckett and Stein composed remarkably similar texts—*Watt* for Beckett and *The Making of Americans* for Stein. Both are their second completed novels,[204] both texts are the longest pieces in their respective *œuvres*, dwarfing their predecessors and successors. Both are written in curious and idiosyncratic deviations on standard English containing lengthy repetitive passages, long sequences, and recurrent linguistic and thematic patterns; novel-specific idiolects that, at times, hold only a passing resemblance to standard English dialect. Both texts can also be said to hold the theme and technique of repetition as one of the most, if not the most, prominent technical and thematic procedures present throughout. Given the acknowledged importance of repetition to the work of both authors, it is appropriate to begin this comparative not only with two key texts from the early periods of each authors' *œuvre*, but with texts where the technique of repetition is paramount

[204] Prior to this Stein had written *Q.E.D* and *Fernhurst*, both unpublished during her lifetime, and the short stories/ novellas of *Three Lives*, her first publication. Beckett had written *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, also unpublished during his lifetime, as well as the short story collection *More Pricks than Kicks* and the novel *Murphy.*

throughout; texts that have been variously identified as taking to task specific issues regarding the English language through lengthy engagements with a patterned repetition that sees repeated words or phrases subjected to continual modifications—to renarration.

Repetition is, perhaps, one of the most obvious points of convergence between Stein and Beckett in terms of their particular technical facilities and stylistics having already received notable attention in single-author studies of both authors.[205] Aside from the generalist introductory paragraphs that describe the cultural milieu of the Paris Beckett joined in the 1920s, critical studies that focus on repetition are also, to my knowledge, the sole area wherein Beckett and

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[205] Repetition is all-but synonymous with much of Stein's writing. *Three Lives* and *The Making of Americans* in particular have received much critical attention in this respect. Notable too is Leon Katz's doctoral thesis "The First Making of *The Making of Americans*: A study based on Gertrude Stein's Notebooks and early versions of her novel (1902-1908), 1963". More recently, the text of *The Making of Americans* has attracted renewed interest from scholars of the digital humanities, with data mining software being particularly appropriate for studying this vast text: Tanya E. Clément's "The Making of Digital Modernism: Rereading Gertrude Stein's *The Making of Americans* and poetry by Elsa Von Freytag-Loringhoven" (PhD diss. University of Maryland, 2009). Perloff provides characteristically detailed analyses of Stein's writings in two separate essays, touching off the technique of repetition in both. The first essay, from *The Poetics of Indeterminacy* sees her discuss four Stein texts in detail: *Susie Asado*, *Accents in Alsace*, *Melantcha* and *Tender Buttons*. The second essay, in *21st-Century Modernisms: The "New" Poetics*, sees Perloff return to *Tender Buttons* while also providing a detailed reading of *Miss Furr and Miss Skeene*. Perloff is a skilled reader of intonation and homophones (long considered an essential aspect of Stein's work), and her readings often focus heavily on intonation and phonemic rhyme. While her observations in both essays are confined to the pieces under consideration, many of them can be applied across larger groupings of Stein's works or abstracted from the individual text and used to understand her literary techniques at key periods in her early writings in particular. "The act of repeating," Perloff argues "serves to make their [connotations] less certain, not more specific"(Perloff, *The "New" Poetics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 61-2)). Perloff's account of Stein's use of repetition in *Miss Furr and Miss Skeene*, for example, can be declared characteristic of her engagement with repetition across the majority of her early writings:

> far from being excessive and boring as new readers of her work often assume, [the repetition] is characterised by its mathematical precision. A sentence is placed before us and then repeated with slight variation, each instance making us revise our sense of the one preceding it so that gradually meaning accrues (Perloff, *21st-Century Modernisms The "New" Poetics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 57).

That this process is also in operation throughout Beckett's writings goes without saying, but nevertheless it is worth noting the proximity of Perloff's assessment of Stein's technique of repeating "with slight variation"(*Ibid.*) and the following passage from *Company* wherein the narrator observes that the voice heard throughout the piece is to be heard "Repeatedly with only minor variants the same bygone"(*C*, 9).

Stein's work has received focused critical attention *in tandem* in the form of a comparative study.[206] Bruce Kawin devotes an entire chapter to Beckett and Stein in his study of repetition in literature and film, *Telling It Again and Again: Repetition in Literature and Film*.[207] Steven Connor includes a brief reference to Stein at the beginning of his study *Samuel Beckett: Repetition, Theory, Text*, a work that can be considered the most prominent study of repetition in relation to Beckett. Connor also quotes extensively from Kawin's chapter on Beckett (and Stein) throughout. According to Connor the "proliferation of minima"[208] in Beckettian repetition resembles the superabundance of Joyce or Proust. The third, unmentioned and arguably more appropriate figure here is that of Stein; indeed, to appropriate Connor's terms here, it is not inappropriate to refer to Stein's prose style in *Making of Americans* as a *superabundance* of minima. Beckett's adoption of the minimal in the form of simple word forms of the kind absent from his verbose early writings—what Banfield refers to as the "non-productive modifiers"[209] and what Porter Abbott (borrowing heavily from Banfield) classifies as "non-productive words"[210]—marks a turning point in his aesthetic development. Rather than declaring Beckett's proliferation of minima as resembling the work of Proust or Joyce then, instead, it distinguishes him from

[206] With the exception of Tram Nguyen's recent article in *Samuel Beckett Today/ Aujhourd'hui*, and my recent articles on the objects/ logography and the visual arts. Nguyen, "Porosities: Aesthetic Correlations Between Gertrude Stein and Samuel Beckett," 45-57; Nugent-Folan, "Personal Apperception: Samuel Beckett, Gertrude Stein, and Paul Cézanne's *La Montagne Saint Victoire*," 87-102; Nugent-Folan, "'Ill buttoned': Comparing the representation of objects in Samuel Beckett's *Ill Seen Ill Said* and Gertrude Stein's *Tender Buttons*," 54-82.
[207] Bruce Kawin, *Telling it Again and Again: Repetition in Literature and Film* (London: Cornell, 1972), 131-45.
[208] Steven Connor, *Samuel Beckett: Repetition, Theory, Text* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 14.
[209] Banfield, "Beckett's Tattered Syntax," 15.
[210] Porter Abbott, "Garden Paths and Ineffable Effects: Abandoning Representation in Literature and Film," 213.

them.[211] This "proliferation of minima"[212] emerges as a major point of stylistic divergence between Beckett and Joyce. Carrying the analogy further, it distinguishes the stylistic and aesthetic praxes of Stein and Joyce, with Stein's superabundantly minimal language standing in diametric opposition to the Joycean "apotheosis of the word."[213] Banfield's observation regarding Beckett's increasing reliance on these lesser modifiers is identical to a similar observation made by Perloff, who insightfully observes that repetitiousness is, at times, confined to word form modifiers or, as she puts it "the 'noncomittal adjective[s]' [...] non-specific and wonderfully suggestive words."[214] The proximate nature of their respective assessments of Beckett and Stein's interest in minima is further indication of the potential for a lucrative aesthetic connection to be made between their [Beckett and Stein's] renarrative praxes throughout these texts.

In relation to critical studies of repetition in Beckett, there is a marked tendency towards the philosophically abstract when it comes to summarising the functions and effects of repetition. Connor draws on his considerable knowledge of Beckett scholarship to observe that scholarly interest on the topic of repetition in Beckett has been largely metaphysical.[215] Despite being less metaphysical than the studies he highlights as overtly metaphysical, Connor's own analysis relies heavily on Gilles Deleuze, theories of birth and death found throughout the writings of Freud, and the work of Jacques Derrida.[216] Connor's study remains pointedly theoretical in its association of repetition and habitual recurrence with

[211] This can be considered a further example of the critical tendency to reach for a Joycean connection that is, at best, strained, when a viable Stein connection is not only closer to hand, but stylistically more proximate.
[212] Connor, *Samuel Beckett: Repetition, Theory, Text*, 14.
[213] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 519.
[214] Perloff, *21st-Century Modernisms*, 59.
[215] Connor, *Samuel Beckett: Repetition, Theory, Text*, 11.
[216] *Ibid.*, 1-14.

activities that take place external to the text in the form of intertext, intertextual characters, or thematic readings of repetition, as opposed to a more rhetorical or linguistic understanding of repetition. In the case of Stein, critical attention has largely focused on presenting her repetitions from a more anthropological perspective, rather than the metaphysical angle we can identify throughout certain critical accounts of Beckett's repetition. These range from Perloff's assertion that "As in the Zen koan, repetition produces enlightenment for the reader, but enlightenment is not the equivalent of knowledge"[217] to Kawin's assertion that Stein's characters display a Zen-like "disciplined attention to the present alone [...] beginning again in a new present without memory."[218] A linguistic reading of repetition that prioritises the study of word form repetitions over studies that focus on these looser connections to thematic or theoretically becoming analogies is preferable to these divergent critical approaches.

This tendency to read Beckett and Stein's engagements with repetition through philosophy, metaphysics, or theoretical abstractions distracts from an appreciation of the small and large-scale repetitions that are present throughout both texts. It makes it very difficult to isolate a standardised unit through which to analyse the repetitions, or to identify a set of criteria that contribute to the effect of these repetitious acts, because each critical approach to the study of repetition has adopted variant (often idiosyncratic) understandings of the repetitious act. These varying critical approaches each forward inconsistent units of analysis combined with varying and sometimes contradictory interpretations of the term repetition that together limit the extent to which one

[217] Perloff, *21st-Century Modernisms*, 61.
[218] Kawin, *Telling it Again and Again*, 139.

can study the technique in a cross-authorial comparative scenario. For example, Connor stresses repetition in the form of habit—in the form of habitual wanderings by characters that are, Connor asserts, different versions of each other—and linguistic repetitions. By linguistic repetition Connor specifically means intertext,[219] allusions that are either external or internal (intratext), and repetition in the form of self-translation.[220]

Kawin, in contrast identifies four types of repetitious acts:

> i) Destructive Repetition: the act of repeating has "a destructive effect on its material." [221]
>
> ii) Inappropriate Repetition: "neurotic repetition"/ "useless repetition […] locks a work or life into an unfulfillable compulsive cycle." [222]
>
> iii) Repetition Compulsion: Kawin reads this in relation to "the problem of memory" in Beckett.[223]
>
> iv) Habit: "the most destructive effect of repetition, for it is the doing of things over and over, each time with less energy and less interest."[224]

Kawin's analysis of repetition is useful largely because it is one of the few extended comparative studies of Beckett and Stein, and the only one to focus exclusively on repetition. Kawin makes several valid points but can often be inexact in his analysis, a result of his tendency to speculate over authorial intentions and provide psychological readings of the motives behind their work. His definition of what constitutes good or bad (his terms)[225] repetitions, quoted

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[219] Connor, *Samuel Beckett: Repetition, Theory, Text*, 2.
[220] In addition, Connor quotes Deleuze on the two types of repetition: mechanical or naked repetition and disguised repetition (*Ibid.*, 5-6). Again, this is of limited use here as it is not lexically focused and serves largely to deflect attention away from the writings.
[221] Kawin, *Telling It Again and Again*, 10.
[222] *Ibid.*, 12.
[223] *Ibid.*, 16.
[224] *Ibid.*, 22.
[225] *Ibid.*, 20-21.

above, are also of limited use to this thesis because they are tailored to Kawin's psychoanalytically inclined methodology and lack the capacity to be delineated in a systematic, methodical, and language-focused manner.

Connor sees repetition as a strategy for turning language against itself,[226] noting that repetition draws attention to the medium of language, to language as arbitrary, systematic material.[227] This is a fact similarly noted by Montini when she observes that Beckett utilises "[la répétition] pour montrer comment une langue familière peut devenir étrangère,"[228] a facet of renarration discussed further in Chapter Five. Kawin, rather unhelpfully, sees repetition "both as an aesthetic device […] and as a state of mind"[229] and makes a dubious distinction between the repetitious and the repetitive that does not lend itself readily to further critical delineation:

> *Repetitious:* when a word, percept, or experience is repeated with less impact at each recurrence; repeated to no particular end, out of failure of invention or sloppiness of thought.
>
> *Repetitive:* when a word, percept, or experience is repeated with equal or greater force at each occurrence.[230]

Gass, who according to Perloff gives "the best account of [Stein's] use of repetition,"[231] confusingly seeks to differentiate between "merely mechanical repetition, in which there is no progress of idea, no advance or piling up of wealth, and that which seriously defines our nature, describes the central

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[226] Connor, *Samuel Beckett: Repetition, Theory, Text*, 17.
[227] *Ibid.*, 15.
[228] Montini, *"La bataille du soliloque,"* 175.
[229] Kawin, *Telling It Again and Again*, 3.
[230] *Ibid.*, 2.
[231] Perloff, *The Poetics of Indeterminacy,* 86.

rhythms of our lives."[232] At the same time, however, Gass usefully argues that what is important in Stein is "Not the appearance of a word but the manner of its reappearance."[233]

The critical approaches considered thus far give rise to varying, mutually incompatible interpretations of repetition, the repetitious act, and its effects on the surrounding narrative. Each of the critics mentioned previously present variant interpretations of the word "repetition." Also notable is the absence of a consistent unit of analysis. In addition these scholars tend to conflate the occurrence of repetition with its effect, making it difficult at times to discern whether they are discussing either one, the other, or both. This is not surprising as the word repetition covers both "the use of repeated words or phrases"[234] and the effect of this usage;[235] a fact that can lead to some confusion as the act and effect can often be quite different. This creates something of a confounding multiplicity of repetitions that reflects the richness of material available when it comes to the topic of repetition approached from a philosophic or metaphysical perspective, but it also creates studies that are difficult to read together and can, at times, especially in the case of Kawin's study, seem conflicted and become a hindrance. Furthermore, these varying interpretations of repetition are an impediment to a language-focused comparative study wherein establishing a consistent unit of analyses is a paramount aspect of initiating a successful comparative act.

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[232] Gass, "Introduction," to *The Geographical History of America*, 25.
[233] *Ibid.*
[234] "repetition, n.1". OED Online. December 2014. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/162794?result=1&rskey=eW9TaP& (accessed January 09, 2015).
[235] *Ibid.*

Would it be possible to examine repetitions in Beckett and Stein using a methodology that relies less on philosophies of repetition and more on a linguistic understanding of repetition? With this in mind, I propose we turn to linguistics and discourse theory to establish a linguistically-derived understanding of repetition, together with a consistent unit of analysis. A standardised unit of analysis is a necessary first step in the creation of a successful comparative methodology that will allow us to successfully delineate the comparable nature of their respective efforts at, as Beckett puts it throughout Kaun 1937, tearing at "the fabric of the language" through displays of nominalistic irony that can induce porosity into the word surface.[236] Ascertaining a unit of analysis for the study of repetition will enable us to study and delineate the precise manner of a repeated word or phrase's reappearance. A consistent unit of analysis also creates a level playing field upon which to study *Watt* and *The Making of Americans* in tandem, without recourse to metaphysics, anthropology or conflicting notions of what constitutes "good" or "bad" repetition. Throughout this thesis I will draw on Elena Tarasheva's methodology, which I will delineate presently, and adopt the word form as my unit of analysis.

In her review of literatures on repetition, Tarasheva observes the following: "approaches to repetitions in linguistic disciplines are characterised by confusion with co-referring terms, [and] a lack of a unified unit of analysis."[237] Tarasheva's common sense approach is refreshing and her critique of scholarly readings of repetition is worth quoting in full:

[236] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 518-19.
[237] Tarasheva, *Repetition of Word Forms in Texts*,11-12.

> A good point of departure for a study of repetition is to ask the question: what is repeated? [...] in some cases the reference to an object is repeated, in others—isolated semantic components, yet others reiterate merely the linguistic form. Needless to say, these are all repetitions of completely different types [...] Furthermore, the unit of analysis differs in the literature on repetitions. [...] A comprehensive study of repetitions should start with positing a unit of analysis which is:
> - undeniably lexical
> - reflects the process of naming
> - can easily be traced throughout the texts[238]

The word form is an ideal standardised unit for analysing different types of linguistic text with a view to identifying specifics of a given genre or author, as Tarasheva herself demonstrates in her cross-genre study of "short stories written by established writers in English [...], research articles by established researchers in English [...] political speeches in English delivered by outstanding personalities."[239] It allows comparability of style to be clearly identified, delineated, and studied, as is the aim of this study.[240] To further elucidate my adoption of Tarasheva's unit of analysis of repetition in literary texts, I will incorporate delineation methodologies found throughout Madeline Frédéric's similarly exhaustive study *La répétition: Étude linguistique et rhétorique*. Frédéric's study traces the various types of repetition classified in classical rhetoric. Of specific interest to this study is her table collating the various types of linguistic repetitions.[241] Frédéric's careful delineations of the modes through which repetition can occur on a single word unit and phrasal level enables the identification and categorisation of the different types of repetition across this

[238] Tarasheva, *Repetitions of Word Forms in Texts*, 5-6.
[239] *Ibid.*, 13.
[240] While Tarasheva adopts the word form as her unit of analysis, she also specifies that the word form "can change within the grammatical paradigm of the repeated item—to show plural, singular or possessive"(*Ibid.*, 12).
[241] See Appendix: 2.

comparative study. It facilitates the effective charting of, as Gass puts it, "the manner of its [the word's] reappearance."[242] The remainder of this chapter will isolate and study the repetition of set word forms and phrasal units relating to a core number of thematic elements readily identifiable throughout both *The Making of Americans* and *Watt*. These thematic elements range from the rhetorical technique of the pleonasm to more specific repetitions relating to the superordinate word categories of humankind, the family, numerical word units, speculative events or identities, and large scale modal repetitions.

II. Structural Affinities

i) infinite pleonasm and the incomplete narrative

In *The Elements of Elocution* Mark Forsyth acknowledges Stein as a particularly gifted exponent of the pleonasm,[243] honing in on the phrase "rose is a rose is a rose."[244] However, in a further example of the critical tendency to read Stein in relation to domestic trivia as opposed to her writing, Forsyth only obliquely acknowledges Stein's actual writings. His comments here refer not to the line as it appeared in the poem "Sacred Emily"(*GP*, 178-88) but to a collection of personalised crockery owned by Stein and Toklas on which the line was reproduced in a circular motif as a sort of personal insignia. [245]

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[242] Perloff, *The Poetics of Indeterminacy*, 87.
[243] My understanding of pleonasm has been taken from Bernard Dupriez's *A Dictionary of Literary Devices*: "1. A superabundance of words which strengthen what is expressed. [...] 2. Redundancy, using useless words, a defect towards battology"(Dupriez, *A Dictionary of Literary Devices*, 345).
[244] Mark Forsyth, *The Elements of Eloquence: How to Turn the Perfect English Phrase* (London: Icon Books, 2013), 161.
[245] Quoting from Forsyth, "Alice Toklas, took to marketing dinner plates that had that phrase written all the way around the edge. The crockery version has no beginning and no end and is therefore a case of infinite pleonasm." What Forsyth neglects to mention that this same embossed

Inscribed around the edge of their dinner plates, as Forsyth notes "the crockery version [of the phrase 'rose is a rose is a rose is a rose'] has no beginning and no end and is therefore a case of infinite pleonasm."[246] While the infinite pleonasm is technically impossible beyond typographic manipulations of the kind seen on Stein's personalised insignia, it can certainly be said to operate thematically throughout both *The Making of Americans* and *Watt*. Both texts benefit from being considered as not unsuccessful attempts at appropriating the rhetorical technique of the pleonasm (itself traditionally seen as a fault of style when used excessively) so as to bring about near-infinite pleonastic narratives.

The concept of the infinite pleonasm is particularly apt in the context of Stein's comment that the writing of *The Making of Americans* was an attempt on her part to "escape from inevitably feeling that anything that everything had meaning as beginning and middle and ending."[247] But while the connection Forsyth establishes with Stein is immediate and fitting, particularly in the context of her attempt at subverting "the inevitable narrative of anything,"[248] Stein was not alone in conceiving of narrative as an event that is, or could potentially be, infinitely pleonastic. Infinite pleonasm, or, for the purpose of accuracy, hyper-extended pleonasm, is a technique employed by both authors throughout *The Making of Americans* and *Watt*. In the case of Stein, *The Making of Americans* appears as a text that strives for the infinite but gradually succumbs to the impossibility of this very task; or, more cynically, a text that sees its author

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insignia was in fact used on the cover of all Stein texts published via the Plain edition imprint, and indeed on the cover and title pages of *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* so it was and remains readily available to critics who may wish to turn the attention from the content of Stein's dinner plates to the contents of her written texts (Forsyth, *The Elements of Eloquence*, 161).

[246] Forsyth, *The Elements of Eloquence*, 161.

[247] Stein, "Narration 2," *Narration*, 25.

[248] *Ibid.*

and/or narrator gradually overcome by what Beckett in *Watt* refers to as "fatigue and disgust"(*Watt*, 215n1). The text begins as a history of all peoples only to be subsequently recalibrated to serve as a partial history; a history of "them" as opposed to a history of "all": "there will be a history of them and now here is a beginning"(*MOA*, 176). Later still, in the closing passages of the novel, this recalibration is made more diminutive again by being retroactively modified to serve as a history of "some"(*MOA*, 925).

In the case of *Watt*, itself a diminutive text when compared to *The Making of Americans*, we encounter a text with near-infinite interpretative potential, a feat that is largely enabled by the closing line in the addenda. But aside from thematic aspirations or interpretative potentials that verge on the infinite, there is a high proportion of pleonastic passages that, while not infinite, are excessively lengthy. The account of the Lynch family, for example, is as lengthy and permutative as some of the shorter pleonastic passages in Stein's text. Similar, albeit markedly curtailed, passages serve to present infinite pleonasm as a thematic model around which many of the passages operate: the description of the infinite (infinite through semantic rendering, if not infinitely rendered in text) chain of figures coming and going to the Knott house in *Watt* is an example, as are the network of symbols—intended and unintended—that permeate the text of *Watt* thanks to its ambiguous closing line "no symbols where none intended"(*Watt*, 223). In the case of Stein, emphasis is also placed on the fact that the Dehning and Hersland families are just two families chosen from an infinite number of "different ones," or that particular characters focused on throughout the text have been selected from an infinite pool of other figures, other "ones." The text of *Watt* presents the character of Watt as part of a chain of figures

similar to that from which the Dehning and Hersland families were selected, one of many of "all those of whom all trace is lost"(*Watt*, 51). Like *Watt*, the closing line of *The Making of Americans* effects a retroactive amorphousness throughout the preceding narrative, with this "history of all" that subsequently becomes a "history of them" ultimately, and rather anticlimactically, positioned as a history of "some" that "some" may or may not remember: "Any one can be certain that some can remember such a thing. Any family living can be one being existing and some can remember something of some such thing"(*MOA*, 925).

Despite falling short of the infinite then, both texts adopt a thematic or systematised approach to the infinite that presents the narratives as being potentially infinitesimal; with both texts presented as just one small aspect of a larger untold (or in Stein's case, yet to be told) narrative. To this end, their respective narrators present the narratives they recount as incomplete, imperfect, ill-arranged, and inaccurately rendered.[249] Stein makes this apparent from the onset of *The Making of Americans*, with a direct address to the reader to remind them that this 925 page account is "perhaps" incomplete: "yet, please reader, remember that this is perhaps not the whole of our story either"(*MOA*, 15). Further still, the succession of largely unfinished "histories" in *The Making of Americans* make the text an idiosyncratic and incomplete gamut, with the

[249] Both novels not only contain direct addresses to the reader wherein they are informed that the story is not only incomplete, but contain passages that seek to draw attention to the text as a material product. In *Watt* references to the text's materiality occurs from page four with the incursion of the first footnote and the reference to the text being a "work,"(*Watt*, 4n1) through to "Sam's" account of his exchanges with Watt in section three (*Watt*, 129-85) and his observation that aspects of the resultant narrative and "following information"(*Watt*, 145) are the product of his ill-heard conversations with Watt; together of course with the cryptic "Addenda" whose "incorporation" was prevented by "fatigue and disgust"(*Watt*, 215n1). Again, such addendum and notes to the text presents *Watt* not only as an incomplete text, but a text wherein completeness is impossible to attain, as the "No symbols where none intended"(*Watt*, 223) closing line suggests. The many instances where Stein's narrator from *The Making of Americans* draws attention to the procession of the narrative as narrative have already been thoroughly delineated in Chapter One.

imprecise and modal terms used throughout greatly adding to the unfinished and unquantifiable nature of Stein's assessment of the various categories of peoples examined throughout.[250] Similarly, in *Watt*, the figure of Sam cautions against any tendency to view the narrative as complete by making explicit the extent to which inexactitude is infused throughout his recounting of the exchanges he has with Watt, observing that "much fell in vain on my imperfect hearing and understanding, and much by the rushing wind was carried away, and lost forever"(*Watt*, 133) or that "I understood as well as ever, that is to say fully one half of what won its way past my tympan"(*Watt*, 144). Furthermore, just as the figures throughout *The Making of Americans* appear at times to merge—a point that will be discussed in detail in section III.iv) of this chapter—so too throughout *Watt* are we cautioned and reminded that each instance of apparent difference may be an illusion: "one is sometimes tempted to wonder, with reference to two or even three incidents related by Watt as separate and distinct, if they are not in reality the same incident, variously recounted"(*Watt*, 65).

The reader is subjected then to the attempts and failures of the narrators in their efforts at narrating and concordantly, to sequences that trail off, reflecting the wandering mind of the narrator. These diversions are particularly notable in the case of Stein's work, though they accord with a similar event at the beginning of *The Unnamable*:

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[250] The narrator's aspirations regarding the completion of these histories is regularly implied verbally through the phrase "there will be," but always deferred through the modifying adverb "sometime":

> "Sometime there will be a history of all of them, and now to begin again"(*MOA*, 175); "there will be sometime a history of all of them, there will be a history of them and now here is a beginning"(*MOA*, 176); "And so to commence again with the history of many of them and all the kinds there are of men and women"(*MOA*, 180).

> The fact would seem to be, if in my situation one may speak of facts, not only that I shall have to speak of things of which I cannot speak, but also, which is even more interesting, but also that I, which is if possible even more interesting, that I shall have to, I forget, no matter (*U*, 1).

Like the creature in *The Unnamable*, the narrator of *The Making of Americans* returns again and again to states wherein the words they seek to express will not come out properly; or if they do, they are not considered sufficient. The reader is subjected to the narrator's requests for patience throughout ("arm yourself in every kind of a way to be patient"(*MOA*, 33)) and, armed with this patience, subsequently witnesses the collapse of every effort at initiating a story, at bringing an initiated story to a satisfactory completion, and ultimately, to the failure of their efforts at progressing this potentially infinitesimal narrative towards completion.

The following section will delineate further instances of the structural affinity between these two texts, and Beckett's later texts in general by examining instances wherein both authors misuse and manipulate the notion of the "beginning" apropos narrative, disrupting the sequential and temporal chronologies of their narratives.

ii) Beginning again and again.

> I shouldn't have begun. I began again (*TFN*, 45).

> Struggling with anything as anything has begun and begun and began does not really mean that thing does not really mean beginning or begun.[251]

[251] Stein, "Narration 2," *Narration*, 23.

Stein's attack on the temporal nature of narrative throughout *The Making of Americans* takes the form of a strong critique of how narrative-dependent representations of time are relayed and enabled through changes in verb tense and certain formal structures surrounding correct verb use in English. As Stein puts it in "Narration 2" this dissatisfaction relates specifically to what she terms "the inevitable narrative of anything":[252]

> A great deal perhaps all of my writing of *The Making of Americans* was an effort to escape from this thing to escape from inevitably feeling that anything that everything had meaning as beginning and middle and ending.[253]

Stein further specifies that this text was an attempt to escape "from the inevitable narrative of anything of everything succeeding something [...] of everything consisting that is the emotional and the actual value of anything counting in anything having beginning and middle and ending."[254] Throughout *The Making of Americans*, as the above excerpt makes clear, Stein takes it upon herself "to escape from inevitably feeling that anything that everything had meaning as beginning and middle and ending."[255] "The inevitable narrative of anything"[256] sees words conveyed in succession and, much like the "natural order" of *How It Is*,[257] has a regulatory effect on the language user. According to Stein this "inevitable narrative"[258] invariably gives rise to the "feeling that anything that everything had meaning as beginning and middle and ending."[259]

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[252] Stein, "Narration 2," *Narration*, 24-5.
[253] *Ibid.*
[254] *Ibid.*
[255] *Ibid.*, 25.
[256] *Ibid.*, 25.
[257] The pedagogic function of this is illuminated by Cordingley in "Beckett and 'l'ordre naturel': The Universal Grammar of *Comment c'est/ How It Is*," 185-200.
[258] *Ibid.*, 25.
[259] *Ibid.*, 25.

What is important to note here is that Stein is not disputing the assignation of stages to the completion of an activity; rather, she is disputing that this sectionalising of events has any intrinsic meaning or value in and of itself. She is disputing the notion that there is an "*actual value* of anything counting in anything having beginning and middle and ending.[260]

So as to test the limits of (or "escape from"[261]) the notion of beginning, middle, and ending, Stein employed continuous tense verbs throughout *The Making of Americans*; a technically-minded tactic aimed at scuppering the formation of a beginning, middle, and ending in a temporal sense by preventing the temporal distinctions of past, present and future brought on by differing verb tenses. This verbal reconfiguration sees Stein steadfastly adhering to the present participle in an effort to prevent the imposition of time and thus the beginning, middle and ending of certain events. But the "inevitable narrative"[262] of beginning, middle, and ending goes beyond the temporal and cannot solely be avoided by verbal acuity alone. While adopting a continuous present tense may serve to destabilise the temporal sureties of past, present, and future, the sequential nature of narrative, and the lexically dependent method of relaying information through narrative automatically consigns a beginning, middle, and ending on both hyper- and hyponymic formalist or structural levels. Thus, every paragraph has a beginning, so does every chapter, so does every sentence, and so does every word. Molloy puts it nicely when he observes that successions of

[260] Stein, "Narration 2," *Narration*, 25; emphasis added.
[261] *Ibid.*
[262] *Ibid.*, 24-5.

words are similarly associated with "a beginning, a middle and an end as in the well-built phrase."[263]

This creates explicit ontological associations between the correctitude of grammar and certitude in narrative. To subvert the English language by means of a full-scale subversion of these formal inevitabilities involves lexical manipulations that extend beyond displays of "nominalistic irony"[264] of the kind alternately praised and criticised by Beckett in Kaun 1937. It involves a full-scale assault on the orthodox syntactic structure of sentences within language and is itself incredibly difficult to bypass or sabotage. That this structural constant of narrative presented issues of an ontological nature to Stein is made explicit in her lectures on *Narration*, with Stein intimating in "Narration 2" that her knowledge has been impeded by structural and formalist conventions that assign a beginning middle and ending to narrativised events: "I felt that I had to know what I knew and I knew that the beginning and middle and ending was not where I began."[265] With this in mind, it is remarkable that both authors not only attempt to subvert this structural aspect of narrative, but that they do so using an identical methodology, that of repeatedly incorporating new beginnings into their narratives. Indeed, the recurrent beginning is so prevalent throughout their writings that it could be said to be characteristic of their respective stylistic praxis. If it is characteristic of their writings on an author-specific level, it must surely be a rewarding facet of study in the context of a stylistic comparative study.

[263] Beckett, *Molloy* (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), 29.
[264] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 520.
[265] Stein, "Narration 2," *Narration*, 24.

The repeated beginning trope poses a number of immediate problems, both formally and nominalistically. If one does not begin at the beginning, where does one begin? While this can in itself be considered a lexical tautology, as noted previously, both authors take this issue further than mere interrogations of "nominalistic irony."[266] Stein infuses the narrative of *The Making of Americans* with beginnings;[267] attempting to begin the narrative again and again over the course of 925 pages and thus literalising her critique, noted previously, that "the beginning and middle and ending was not where I began."[268] In addition to the repeated beginnings initiated by the narrator throughout *The Making of Americans*, many of the narrator's creations, the fictional figures that populate this history "of every one who ever was or is or will be living"(*MOA*, 179) experience recurrent beginnings.

Entreaties to begin again appear at the beginning of major section breaks or the end of major sections within the book, such as the end of section two wherein the narrator states her intention "to begin then"(*MOA*, 285).

> Now to slowly begin (*MOA*, 298); To begin again (*MOA*, 299); This is then again a beginning (*MOA*, 332); To begin then (*MOA*, 346); All of this is very interesting and now I must begin again (*MOA*, 364); So then to begin again (*MOA*, 397); To begin then (*MOA*, 397).

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[266] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 520.
[267] Critics such as Kawin and Perloff have read this recurrence of beginnings as illustrative of a Buddhist or Zen-like attitude to time on the part of Stein, but I do not see how this can be so, without subjecting the book and its author to major theoretical acrobatics. Aside from the fact that Stein posed as the Buddha for sculptures by Jo Davidson and Jacques Lipchitz respectively, the idea that these repeated beginnings again are accompanied by a perpetual present and an erasure of past memory seems to me to be an interpretative leap of faith on behalf of critics, not least because the characters concerned clearly retain a strong sense of the past, but also because the association of Buddhist nirvana with a co-occurrence state of being an amnesiac in the perpetual present is a dubious interpretation not only of Buddhist teachings on mindfulness (which is explicit in its acknowledgement of an awareness of and connectedness with the past) but of Stein's technique throughout these prose novels.
[268] Stein, "Narration 2," *Narration*, 24.

Frustratingly, this assertion even appears in the very latter stages of the novel, after the reader has had to navigate through some 691 heavily repetitive pages only to be told that the narrator has still "to begin then"(*MOA*, 692). This is comparable to the similarly late references to new beginnings that occur towards the end of *The Unnamable*: "But there is always this to be said, things are only beginning, though long since begun"(*U*, 82); "it's only beginning, it hasn't begun"(*U*, 98).

From its beginnings right through to its ending, *The Making of Americans* contains a variety of recurrent and nuanced beginnings. Beginnings that relate to the processing of the narrative as a whole—from the narrator stating she will begin the novel again, for example, or beginnings that relate to individual characters' descriptions and activities within the narrative, many of which invariably involve beginning again. The characters' lives are presented as being little other than a series of beginnings that permeate the different stages in their lives, with each period or major event categorised as a further beginning until the beginning of that most finite of endings, death, which itself is also marked out as yet another beginning. That said, it is not always clear exactly what begins again with every recurrence of the word. Often it seems that the sole thing that is realistically "beginning again" are the words themselves, or the statements of intentionality regarding the activity of "beginning again." In this way a structural facet of the narrative is rendered thematic by means of its insistent intrusions upon the narrative content. Iterations of these beginnings appear relentlessly throughout the novel, with the process of "beginning" regularly accompanied by the similar, but diametrically opposite process of "ending." The novel, the stories within the novels, and the life spans of the characters within it are divided into

phases of beginning, middle, and ending; with each of these phases again having their own subsequent beginning, middles, and endings, as can be seen in the following example: “At the beginning of the ending of the middle living [...], ways of thinking, ways of working, ways of beginning, ways of ending, ways of believing come to be in them as simple repeating”(*MOA*, 151). Indeed, so prevalent is the theme and activity of beginning again throughout the novel that both the narrative itself and the lives of the characters within it seem to consist, at times, of little other than a continuing series of beginnings, again and again, until either the passage ends, the section ends, the book ends, or the character concerned dies. In this way then, Stein recalibrates even the most definitive of endings—that of death—into yet another example of a beginning: “And this was in him, a big beginning, until the last of his living”(*MOA*, 144); “but always in him too was a big beginning and this was in him to his ending”(*MOA*, 146); “He was not going on being living in being living. He was a dead one at the ending of the beginning of middle living”(*MOA*, 902).

Just as Stein's narrator continually reiterates a variety of beginnings, each of the novels in Beckett's trilogy contain sections depicting the activity of beginning again. In *Molloy* we encounter a constipated Pomeranian engaged in “stopping, turning in slow circles, giving up and then, a little further on, beginning all over again”(*M*, 8). Later, when regaling the reader with a detailed account of his stone sucking, Molloy concludes with the observation “and there I am ready to begin again. Do I have to go on?”(*M*, 73). In part two of the novel, Moran expresses anxiety over the potential loss of his home and belongings by exclaiming “I am too old to lose all this, and begin again, I am too old!”(*M*, 138). Later again, towards the end of the novel, the activity of ending is paired with the

action of beginning, just as it is in Stein: "But one or two words nevertheless, for my own edification and to prepare my soul to make an end. To begin with my rare thoughts"(*M*, 174).

Beckett's narrators throughout the trilogy appear to experience an unease and anxiety similar to that of Stein's narrator throughout *The Making of Americans*. Moran speaks of "the immense uneasiness I had been feeling ever since the beginning of this affair"(*M*, 116). Malone looks to initiate one of his stories so as to bring it to a conclusion: "And I shall begin, that they may plague me no more, with the man and woman"(*MD*, 6). Similar to Stein's narrator, Malone also struggles to reflect over the narrative, observing "I have tried to reflect on the beginning of my story. There are things I do not understand" (*MD*, 14). And Malone shares a further connection with Stein's narrator in that they both, at times, abandon promising stories "so well begun": "If it begins to run short of life I shall feel it. All I ask is to know, before I abandon him whose life has so well begun"(*MD*, 23).

If each ending contains a beginning and each beginning entails an ending, when does one end and the other begin? Such wordplay creates blatant and perturbing instances of contraindicative tautologies that disturb the capacity of the narrative to actualise this "inevitable narrative of anything"[269] so critiqued by Stein. To a degree Stein succeeds then in, if not wholly averting, at least forestalling the capacity of the narrative to "go on" and be anything other than a narrative about a series of unsuccessful efforts at moving beyond the beginning.[270] This inclination to dispute and undermine the notion of a beginning

[269] Stein, "Narration 2," *Narration*, 24-5.
[270] Together with these recurrent beginnings, there are repeated injunctions to go on, to keep going on and towards a continuation in the face of such recurrences and repeated beginnings that

continued through to her later writings, with Stein playing on the distinctions inherent in the word beginning, what it means to begin, and how a beginning can be presented in situations other than at the beginning: "Every sentence has a beginning. Will he begin. Every sentence which has a beginning makes it be left more to them"(*HTW*, 26). There is a clear awareness that none of these beginnings fully achieve a genuinely new beginning, in the strict sense of the term. Throughout these insistent recurrences of the term, Stein's subversion extends beyond semantic play surrounding the nominal or verbal injunction to "begin." It undermines the structural authority of narrative and subverts her own attempts at establishing continuity throughout the text while also creating descriptions of character that border on the ontological: "she was always beginning and never really beginning anything"(*MOA*, 410); "I am beginning again, not from the beginning this time that is certain"(*MOA*, 637); "Certainly now I will begin again"(*MOA*, 746).

Stein is not alone in finding herself beginning at points other than the start. Similar to Stein's adoption of the present participle throughout *The Making of Americans* is the recurrent reference to events throughout Beckett's *How It Is* as being passing instances of "present formulation"(*HII*, 4) within the life of the

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bears distinct similarities to the same events throughout Beckett's trilogy and later fictions. While it will not be examined in detail, it is worth noting the fascinatingly close phraseology that exists between the following two excerpts from *The Making of Americans* and the closing injunction of *The Unnamable*:

> Now I go on with him, then I go on with her. I am going on with him, then I am going on with her (*MOA*, 689).
>
> Now I am going on. Now go on (*MOA*, 664).
>
> you must go on, I can't go on, you must go on, I'll go on, you must say words, as long as there are any, until they find me, until they say me, [...] I don't know, I'll never know, in the silence you don't know, you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on (*U*, 134).

"narrator/narrated"[271] figure: "my life present formulation"(*HII*, 19). Given the presence of a multitude of present formulations, there is, correspondingly, a multitude of beginnings to each present formulation: "its the beginning of my life present formulation"(*HII*, 4). This is also a prominent aspect of the trilogy, with the opening pages of *Molloy* and Molloy's interrogation of his own beginning initiating what, over the course of the three novels, becomes a recurrent stylistic and thematic trope:

> It was he told me I'd begun all wrong, that I should have begun differently. He must be right. I began at the beginning, like an old ballocks, can you imagine that? Here's my beginning. Because they're keeping it apparently. I took a lot of trouble with it. Here it is. It gave me a lot of trouble. It was the beginning, do you understand? Whereas now it's nearly the end. Is what I do now any better? I don't know. That's beside the point. Here's my beginning. It must mean something, or they wouldn't keep it. Here it is (*M*, 4).

Malone appears equally ill at ease with his beginnings, as can be seen from the line "in the beginning, but was it the beginning"(*MD*, 81) and the observation "Inauspicious beginnings indeed"(*MD*, 92) from the latter sections of the novel.

But the greatest synchronicity between Stein's beginnings throughout *The Making of Americans* and Beckett's repeated beginnings throughout the trilogy occurs throughout *The Unnamable*. The following can be considered a cursory selection of the variant beginnings present throughout, all of which display immediate similarities to the repeated beginnings found in Stein's text:

> These few general remarks to begin with [...] I shall not be alone, in the beginning. I am of course alone (*U*, 1); For I am obliged to assign a beginning to my residence here (*U*, 5-6); It would help me, since I too must attribute a beginning, if I could relate it to that of my abode. [...] I

[271] See Cordingley, "Beckett and 'l'ordre naturel': The Universal Grammar of *Comment c'est/ How It Is*," 185.

> shall therefore say that our beginnings coincide (*U*, 6); Which would not matter, far from it, but for the obligation, once rid of them, to begin again, to start again from nowhere, from no one and from nothing (*U*, 12); I hope this preamble will soon come to an end and the statement begin that will dispose of me. [...] For to go on means going on from here, means finding me, losing me, vanishing and beginning again (*U*, 13); I invented it all, in the hope it would console me, help me to go on, allow me to think of myself as somewhere on a road, moving, between a beginning and an end (*U*, 25); beginning again at the point where I had to interrupt (*U*, 39); Its usually with sticks they put me out of their agony, the idea being to demonstrate, to the backers, and bystanders, that I had a beginning, and an end (*U*, 46); it's the awakening, the beginning of worm, for now we must speak, and speak of Worm (*U*, 63); We must first, to begin with, go back to his beginnings (*U*, 66); Enough, enough. One can be before beginning (*U*, 67); Then the voice will begin again (*U*, 72); before he is restored, more or less, to that state in which he was before the beginning of his prehistory (*U*, 72); for it to begin, for something to begin (*U*, 99); for them its the end, for me the beginning, my end begins (*U*, 101); before beginning, before beginning again (*U*, 128); I alone, and come back, and begin again (*U*, 129); the end, the beginning, the beginning again (*U*, 133).

The act of beginning again can be considered a prominent example of Beckett and Stein's shared technical inclination to use language against language. It takes the form of a challenge to temporality as it is conveyed through language and is presented, in Stein's case, by a narrator that variously elects to adopt a specific tense, and, in Beckett's case throughout *How It Is*, by a narrator that repeatedly formulates and reformulates the "present formulation" of a life.

III. Delineating the "complete gamut of variation in the repeating of them" (*MOA*, 474) in *Watt* and *The Making of Americans*.

i) Men and women.

> Those are men and women, you know, people, without being able to specify further (*MD*, 108).

In her introduction to *The Making of Americans*, Dydo classifies Stein's endeavour throughout *The Making of Americans* as an attempt at composing "a total, systematic description of all the elements of human being."[272] This is only partially accurate, as the descriptions in *The Making of Americans* are neither total nor systematic. Though the narrative does show hints of systematic procession at times, this is often scuppered by the qualitative nature of the items examined, or indeed by the whims of a narrator who frequently moves on "beginning a new thing without really leaving the last thing"(*MOA*, 506). Where Dydo is accurate, however, is in her classification of this text as one that attempts the impossible with an "ambition possible to entertain but ultimately impossible to realize fully."[273] As noted in the previous section, it is a text that aspires to the infinitesimal. What Dydo describes as the "struggle to realise this impossibility"[274] takes up a considerable portion of the narrative.

The Making of Americans can be loosely summarised then as one long, flawed, hypernymic repetition wherein a history of one family becomes a history of two families, and subsequently a history of *all* families. Or, as Stein puts it, a history of "every one who ever was or is or will be living" (*MOA*, 179), subsequently recalibrated as a history of "some of them":

> Sometime there will be a history of every woman, there will be sometime a history of every kind of them, there will be sometime a history of every part of the living of every woman from her beginning to her ending. This is now a history of some of them (*MOA*, 175).

[272] Dydo, *A Stein Reader*, 18.
[273] Dydo, *A Stein Reader*, 18.
[274] *Ibid.*

While the text is ostensibly a journey towards a narratological ur-text of humankind, a literary counterpart of the mapping of the human genome, the practical focus is on this process of discerning characteristics of human behaviours through the study of repetitious acts. Stein is endeavouring to present "the being in them the complete gamut of variation in the repeating of them"(*MOA*, 474). Repetition, Stein argues, is the best method for spotting the nuances that constitute a given human's behaviour: "Slowly every one in continuous repeating, to their minutest variation, comes to be clearer to some one"(*MOA*, 284). In this opinion she is not alone, as the text of *Watt* contains similar such injunctions regarding the effect of repetition on the human person: "For it was an attitude become, with frequent repetition, so part of his being, that there was no more room in his mind for resentment at a spit in the eye, to take a simple example"(*Watt*, 25).

Such a seemingly insurmountable task (the mapping of all humankind in their past, present, and future iterations) necessarily involves a certain amount of categorising. Accordingly, Stein sets about establishing a set number of human types out of which, she argues, it is possible to extrapolate "their minutest variation"(*MOA*, 284). To achieve this Stein adopts a sequence-driven but capricious narrative style that endeavours to document the different types of people according to their status as living or dead, their gender, their age, as well as other less quantifiable certainties regarding the makeup of their character. Stein chronicles these different kinds of men and women, observing and cataloguing their day-to-day activities and habits: "There are many ways of knowing kinds in men and women from habits of training, of grammar, of playing and washing and working in them, and doing nothing"(*MOA*, 391). Stein elects to

approach this problem of anthropological quanta—creating a linguistic theory of everyone—using qualitative methods such as descriptions of mood, social dominance, temperament, or daily activities. The mutual incompatability of these two approaches to the recording of quanta serves to demonstrate the fundamental difficulty associated with narrativising human kind in a way that does not resort to stock formulae or, as Beckett puts it, to "the straws, flotsam, etc., names, dates, births and deaths."[275] Instead, Stein tries to account for and incorporate the idiosyncratic nature of the individual human within her narrativised history of the human species, but this in itself poses problems that again go to the core of Stein's admonition of the problems of representations of self through language: If every human individual is also part of the human species, how does one simultaneously create a history of every one and a history of everyone?

Stein enacts a process of continual specification and de-specification wherein each general category is shown to contain *further* subcategories, which are in turn shown to contain *further* subcategories; thus retroactively showing themselves be comparatively general, and so on. *The Making of Americans* consistently oscillates between the general (as in the terms men and women) to the specific (as will be discussed shortly in the form of Stein's interrogations of the more localised terms relating to the human family). To begin, the superordinate category of "human" is first divided into the (comparatively) smaller (but still quite general) categories "men" and "women":[276]

[275] Beckett, "German Diaries," 15 January 1937, quoted in Nixon, *Samuel Beckett's German Diaries*, 62.

[276] As noted in section I of this chapter, this is something of a stylistic attribute of Stein's writings in general, as she repeatedly favours words that are simultaneously specific and nondescript, such as "man" or "woman," a fact that is noted by Perloff when she acknowledged Stein's use of

> Mostly they were just ordinary stupid enough women like millions of them (*MOA*, 78).

> There are many kinds of men and there are many millions made of each kind of them. The many millions of each kind of them have in them each one more or less of that which makes such a kind of them (*MOA*, 136).

Despite Stein's reputation as an esoteric author, it is still possible to identify some relatively complete examples from her writings where the permutative process is followed through from beginnings to end. For example, when Stein switches from listing types of men to types of women, her initial statement is relatively concise and confined to the superordinate category that is "many women"(*MOA*, 161) Stein continues with this superordinate category of all "women" for four pages before introducing a subtype: "There are then two kinds of women, those who have dependent independence in them, those who have independent dependence inside them"(*MOA*, 165). Four pages later this statement recurs, this time modified so as to include men as well as women, with Stein now declaring that the two categories constitute one category:

> All these then make one kind of the two kinds there are of women, the two kinds too there are then of men, and there are many kinds of such of them many strengths and weakness in them, many mixtures in them of the independence and dependence in them, many mixings (*MOA*, 169-70).

Throughout the text there is a continuous oscillation between the "many kinds" and the "two kinds" of men and women: "There are then many kinds in men and women. There are two kinds of them, there are many kinds of these kinds of them, there are many kinds in each one of the many kinds of each kind

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'"noncomittal adjective[s]'" or "non-specific and wonderfully suggestive words"(Perloff, *21st-Century Modernisms*, 59).

of them"(*MOA*, 361). From these two categories Stein further extrapolates varieties of age, using adjectivally relative terms such as "young" and "old," with an accompanying variety of modifiers (such as the ubiquitous "beginning," "middle" and "ending") employed to signify the nuances between such abstract and subjective age-related divisions of the "having been," "being," "going on being" triad present in the following example:

> Every one being a young one, having been a young one, being an older one, having been an older one, being an old one and having been and going on being an old one, being an old one and going on being a young one, having been one not an old one not a young one and going on being not a young one not an old one is to me very interesting (*MOA*, 676).

Among the young and old men and women she attempts to quantify, there are those that are "being living" and those that are "dead"; again, these markers are accompanied with a range of unhelpful modifiers or determiners ("some," "each," "any" and the pronoun "one") to indicate specificities or variants within these corporeally diverse categories.

Further still each individual being is accorded a personality type built up out of a combination of physical activities:[277]

> walking, eating, sitting, sewing, working, sleeping, being babies, children, men and women, grown up men and women, growing old men and women, old men and old women, as one sees them every moment on their being there must be sometime a history of them, there must be sometime a history of each of them and of the nature or natures mixed up in them and the coming out of this being in them from them from their beginning to their ending (*MOA*, 176-77).

[277] Because this final subcategory is the least specific of Stein's quantifiable elements, and because it introduces a level of abstraction that is beyond the scope of this study, I will, in this chapter and throughout the thesis as a whole refer solely to the subcategories of male/ female, young/ old and living/ dead. These three groups provide enough material to create a solid study of Stein's repetitions throughout the text, avoiding the further complexity brought about by introducing variant personality types.

It is the combination of all of these qualities, each existing on a spectrum of present-ness—what Stein refers to as a "mixture"(*MOA*, 170)—that together make up the characteristics of any given human being:

> In all of them in all the things that are in them in their daily living, in all of them in all the things that are in them from their beginning to their ending,—in all of them then there are always in them from their beginning to their ending,—in some of the many millions of each kind of them some of the things are stronger in them than others of them (*MOA*, 150).

This is a proto-mathematical approach, albeit one that sees Stein displaying a distinct preference for the qualitative attributes of human kind. This preference further problematises the completion of her census as the "habits of training, of grammar, of playing and washing and working"(*MOA*, 391) are subjective factors and do not, as such, add up to "complete" people;[278] at least not a form or model of completion one would traditionally associate with such an encyclopaedically-minded project. Many of Stein's narrative asides can be read as explicit comments on this battle between the "every" and the "any," between the "one" and the "many." They read as informal treatise on the experience of attempting to author such unforgiving sequences of accumulative description: "Sometime I will tell everything, everything. Mostly I do tell anything"(*MOA*, 567). In this way the narrator of *The Making of Americans* can be said to hold much in common with that of Moran in *Molloy*, who similarly acknowledges his shortcomings when it comes to attending to figures in his thoughts: "But I confess I attended but absently to these poor figures"(*M*, 155).

[278] It could be argued that the text sees the so called "great needs [...] all my great categories of being"(*HII*, 9) referenced in Beckett's *How It Is* rendered in a qualitative and idiosyncratic manner.

Stein's interest in delineations relating to men and women can be compared to the method Beckett employs to detail the nuances of Watt's romantic relationship with Mrs Gorman. This relationship is extrapolated using a similar technique to that seen in Stein's narrative, with Beckett playing on the idiomatic compound "a man's man"—meaning "a man whose qualities are appreciated by other men; a man who is popular with other men"[279]—throughout. The text appears to specify the individual appeal (or lack thereof) of both Watt and Mrs Gorman to the opposite and same sex, but ends up confusing the matter further by being unable to classify them as appealing to persons of either sex:

> What was this in Mrs Gorman, what was this in Watt, that so appealed to Watt, so melted Mrs Gorman? [...] Between Watt not a man's man and Mrs Gorman not a woman's woman? Between Watt not a woman's man and Mrs Gorman not a man's woman? Between Watt not a man's man and Mrs Gorman not a man's woman? Between Watt not a woman's man and Mrs Gorman woman's woman? Between Watt neither a man's nor a woman's man and Mrs Gorman neither a man's nor a woman's woman? (*Watt*, 122).

Neither Watt nor Mrs Gorman can be classified as "a man's man," "a woman's man," "a man's woman" or "a woman's woman." The more specific the narrative is about either character's nuances, the less specific a portrait we possess of either figure. Like Alfred Hersland they too are "one of a kind"(*MOA*, 542), but we are never entirely sure what kind, or indeed what one.

[279] "man, n.1 (and int.). OED Online. December 2014. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/113198?redirectedFrom=man%27s+man (accessed February 23, 2015).

Further such gender-specific misidentifications occur in Beckett's later novels, most notably in the trilogy. In *Molloy*, for example, Molloy has difficulty assigning a gender to Lousse:[280]

> Lousse was a woman of an extraordinary flatness, physically speaking of course, to such a point that I am still wondering to this evening, [...] if she was not a man rather or at least an androgyne. She had a somewhat hairy face, or am I imagining it, in the interests of the narrative? [...] Molloy, man or woman, what does it matter? (*M*, 55)

In *Malone Dies*, Malone, when proposing his initial plan to tell four stories, decides instead to "put the man and woman in the same story, there is so little difference between a man and a woman, between mine I mean"(*MD*, 5). Finally, while the figure in *The Unnamable* sees itself as male, it clarifies that it is merely barely so, an approximation of maleness as opposed to a definite male: "They could clap an artificial anus in the hollow of my hand and still I wouldn't be there, alive with their life, not far short of a man, just barely a man, sufficiently a man to have hopes of one day being one, my avatars behind me"(*U*, 27). The repetition of the word "man" here is particularly interesting as the term transitions from "not far short" of maleness, to "just barely" male and finally "sufficiently a man to have the hopes of one day being one"; asymptotic maleness.

This difficulty assigning different "ones" identities that do not result in similitude with other "ones" is also present throughout *Watt*, and indeed in much of Beckett's later fictions, particularly throughout the trilogy. In the very opening pages of *Watt* Tetty has difficulty assigning Watt a gender: "Tetty was not sure

[280] Molloy also has difficulty ascertaining and remaining sure of the gender of Ruth/ Edith: "Perhaps she too [Ruth/ Edith] was a man, yet another of them. But in that case surely our testicles would have collided as we writhed. Perhaps she held hers tight in her hand, on purpose to avoid it"(*M*, 56).

whether it was a man or a woman"(*Watt*, 11). Mr Hackett takes this further and, rather than identifying the figure as human, he instead sees it as "a parcel, a carpet for example, or a roll of tarpaulin, wrapped up in dark paper and tied about the middle with a cord"(*ibid*.). The first is an example of superordinate linkage, with man and woman being part of the same hypernymic family: human. The second goes further, employing a similar hypernym link, but with a different superordinate in the form of protective coverings, or thick parcel-like material, one that is also framed within the pleonastic "parcel [...] wrapped up in dark paper and tied about the middle with a cord"(*ibid*.).

Watt contains many further instances of misidentifications based on the main character's resemblance to other people and the indeterminacy of peoples' sex, as in the following example from the final section of the novel where Watt himself commits an act of misidentification against another human:

> Watt was unable to say whether this figure was that of a man, or that of a woman, or that of a priest, or that of a nun. That it was not that of a boy, or that of a girl, was shown, in Watt's opinion, by its dimensions. But to decide whether it was that of a man, or that of a woman, or that of a priest, or that of a nun, was more than Watt could do. [...] For if the figure drew merely near, and not very near indeed, how should he know if it was a man, that it was not a woman, or a priest, or a nun, dressed up as a man? Or, if it was a woman, that it was not a man, or a priest, or a nun, dressed up as a woman? Or, if it was a priest, that it was not a man, or a woman, or a nun, dressed up as a priest? Or if it was a nun, that it was not a man, or a woman, or a priest, dressed up as a nun? (*Watt*, 195-6)

Watt is not solely the victim of such misidentifications as he admits to having difficulty assigning himself a specific gender, or even thinking himself human:

> As for himself, though he could no longer call himself a man, as he had used to do, with the intuition that he was perhaps not talking nonsense, yet he could not imagine what else to call it, if not a man. But Watt's

> imagination had never been a lively one. So he continued to think of himself as a man, as his mother had taught him, when she said, There's a good little man, or, There's a bonny little man, or, There's a clever little man. But for all the relief that this afforded him, he might just as well have thought of himself as a box, or an urn (*Watt*, 68-9).

Compared to the passage from *Watt* outlined above, Stein's descriptions are only intermittently methodical, with passages often left incomplete. This is the combined result of the intermittent attention Stein devotes to any given area of interest, the qualitative or inconstant nature of the attributes she focuses on, together with her continued acknowledgement that the descriptive task she has set herself is fundamentally impossible. *Watt* is significantly more focused than *The Making of Americans* then, and indeed their aims (if we can attach such a concept to these texts) are radically different. By and large, the repetitions and permutations in *Watt* can be said to proceed with an attention to detail that is unrelentingly assiduous and accords to a relatively closed-order system (that the final line in the "Appendix" effectively seeks to completely undermine). In contrast, the narrative of *The Making of Americans* wanders between and around the utterly unquantifiable series of qualities Stein is endeavouring to conquer through narrative collation in a way that is ill disciplined, forgetful, frequently illogical, and often prone to randomness of association. But it would be a mistake to consider this an accident or deficiency of style on Stein's part. While *Watt* concludes with the trump statement "no symbols where none intended," Stein instead incorporates this inexactness and imprecision throughout, so that each apparent progression towards an approximation is simultaneously regressive and counter-productive. This ultimately makes an already impossible task seem altogether less achievable. At times, it is as though her narrator somehow

manages to further impossibilise the already impossible, an impossible task in itself. In this way then the narrator shares characteristics with the figure in *The Unnamable*, who is similarly tasked with a "quasi-impossible" task:

> This obligation, and the quasi-impossibility of fulfilling it, engrossed me in a purely mechanical way, excluding notably the free play of the intelligence and sensibiliity, so that my situation rather resembled that of an old broken-down cart- or bat-horse unable to receive the least information either from its indistinct or from its observation as to whether it is moving towards a stable or away from it, and not greatly caring either way (*U*, 32).

ii) From hypernym to hyponym, from men and women to mothers and fathers.

Following Stein's delineation on the various "types" of men and women that populate her narrative, she enters a process of specification that brings her work into direct comparability with that of Beckett's in *Watt.* The following example sees Stein initiate a process wherein the once superordinate terms men and women are discarded for more specific terms relating to parenthood, terms that are themselves further modified with age-related adjectives and the idiomatic phrasal verb "grown/ growing old":

> [F]or you must always have it before you to hear much more of these many kinds of decent ordinary people, of old, grown, grand-fathers and grand-mothers, of growing old fathers and growing old mothers, of ourselves who are always to be young grown men and women for us, and then there are still to be others and we must wait and see the younger fathers and younger mothers bear them for us, these younger fathers and young mothers who always are ourselves inside us, who are to be always young grown men and women to us (*MOA*, 33-4).

In the above excerpt Stein takes "decent ordinary people" and specifies that among these people there will be men and women who are in turn fathers and mothers, and grand-fathers and grand-mothers. These figures are further classified as younger, young, young grown, growing old and old. [281]

The unit "family" can be classified as a form of genealogical hypernym then; a superordinate term covering a group of humans with genealogic relations. These repetitions of familial generations are instantly comparable to the well-known father/mother passage from section one of *Watt*:

> And the poor old lousy earth, my earth and my father's and my mother's and my father's father's and my mother's mother's and my father's mother's and my mother's father's and my father's mother's father's and my mother's father's mother's and my father's mother's mother's and my mother's father's father's and my father's father's mother's and my mother's mother's father's and my father's father's father's and my mother's mother's mother's and other people's father's and mother's and father's father's and mother's mother's and father's mother's and mother's father's and father's mother's father's and mother's father's mother's and father's mother's mother's and mother's father's father's and father's father's mother's and mother's mother's father's and my father's father's father's and mother's mother's mother's (*Watt*, 38).

Some differences can be observed: Stein's repetitions display her marked interest in the transitory nature of being, with age related adjectives attached to each family member that differentiate them from their older or younger relatives, while also making the description indistinct enough that she may only be dealing with one particular pair, marking out their history through the

[281] A much later (1937) Stein text titled "Is dead" enacts a similar repetition, though this time Stein does not bother to include adjectival ornaments:

> Long ago that is before this was, long ago, not so very long ago after all because she was not forty, but any way some time ago there was a hotel keeper who had succeeded his father, who had succeeded his father, who had already succeeded his father. In other words if there was to be a son and there came to be three, there would then have been six generations of hotel keepers. (Stein, "Is dead," *Occident* 30:2 (April 1937)).

transition from young to old adjuncts. Beckett's series is more meticulous in its delineation of familial generations. But like Stein's, it also moves from the specific (“my father's [...] my mother's”) to the general (“other people's father's and mother's”), from the hyponymic to the hypernymic.

iii) From hypernym to hyponym, from immediate family to extended family and person-specific names.

Both authors ruthlessly delineate the term “family” through extensive hyponymic repetitions drawn from the superordinate term “family.”
Stein introduces a further series of repetitions based on the hypernym “family,” extending her focus beyond the nuclear family to the relations of cousins, aunts and uncles:

> One cousin is dead, another is quite a sick one. That is not so strange as they are then in the middle of their middle living, it is not strange and yet it is certainly something one is not wishing to have happening just then. It is natural that when there are very many of a family living and very many cousins and some aunts and uncles living that sometimes some of them should be sick ones, even that once in a while one of them should come to be a dead one. In a way it is a strange thing because very often for many years not any one in the family connection is a seriously sick one, not any one is ever thinking of any one they are then knowing as any where near to any dying. Sometimes it happens that one cousin is quite a sick one, sometimes it happens that all the uncles are dead by then and only two aunts are still living. Sometimes it happens in a family living that all the aunts and some of the uncles are still living. Sometimes it happens in a family living that all the aunts and some of the uncles that are sisters and brothers of the mother the sister of these uncles and aunts is the only one of that family who is not then any longer living. Sometimes it happens that pretty nearly every one of the brothers of a father of some one are not any longer living and the father then after some more years of being living is not any longer living. There is then sometimes in a family living when there is not any one who is then a seriously sick one, that there has

> not been any one during many years coming to be not any longer a living one (*MOA*, 713).

This extended hypernymic repetition progresses further to the person-specific subcategory of particular family names. These terms now no longer have any generic potential and refer solely to specific persons within the Dehning and Hersland families. Thus we have the evolution of a hypernym "human" through to its most specific of hyponyms, an individual human name:

> Alfred Hersland and Minnie Mason and Patrick Moore and James Flint and Mackinly Young and David Hersland and George Dehning and Hortense Dehning and Julia Hersland and Theodore Summers and William Beckling and Helen Cooke and James Cranach and Miriam Cranach and Rachel Sherman and Adolph Herman and Charles Kohler and Linder Herne and Arthur Keller and Florentine Cranach and Hilda Breslau and Ernest Brakes and Selma Dehning and Ella Housman and Robert Housman and Fred Housman and Florence Arden and James Curson and Bertha Curson and Hilda Gnadenfeld and Algar Audenried and every one who knew any one of them were sometime being in living, were all their living going on being in living [...] I am saying there has been being there in being in some of these I have been mentioning, in Alfred Hersland and Martha Hersland and Julie Dehning and David Hersland and George Dehning and Hortense Dehning and William Beckling, and Minnie Mason, and Charles Kohler and Pat Moore and Florence Arden and James Flint and Robert Housman and Adolph Herman and Mackinly Young and Selma Dehninh and Hilda Breslau and Arthur Keller and James Flint and every other one they were any of them ever knowing and every other one living when any of them were going on being living and every other one being living when they were not any longer going on being living any of them or any other one, before any one of them were being in living being then being living, every one then of all these certainly sometime in a way was goingon [*sic*] being in living, was certainly being some way in being living (*MOA*, 718-9).

Read alongside Beckett's similar account of the Lynch family in *Watt* these two previous excerpts from *The Making of Americans* show themselves to be remarkably proximate not only in the topical focus of both narrators, but in the stylistic and syntactic nuances that see similarly lengthy and, at times,

sparsely punctuated sentences containing a proliferation of figures connected by conjunctions and possessive pronouns; methodical technical delineations of the familial unit from the general through to the hyper-specific. Though we are reminded by means of a footnote that "the figures given here are incorrect"(*Watt*, 87), the Lynch family roughly consists of "Five generations, twenty-eight souls, nine-hundred and eighty years [...] when Watt entered Mr Knott's service"(*Watt*, 87). More specifically, they consist of:

> Tom Lynch, widower, aged eighty-five years, confined to his bed with constant undiagnosed pains in the caecum, and his three surviving boys Joe, [...] a rheumatic cripple, and Jim, [...] a hunchbacked inebriate, and Bill, [...] and his only surviving daughter May Sharpe [...] Joe's wife née Doyly-Byrne, [...] and Jim's wife Kate née Sharpe [...] Joe's boy Tom, [...] and Bill's boy Sam, [...] and May's spinster daughter Ann, and Jim's lad Jack, [...] and the boon twins Art and Con, [...] young Tom's wife Mag née Sharpe, [...] and Sam's wife Liz née Sharpe, [...] and poor Jack [...] his wife Lil née Sharpe, [...] Tom's boy young Simon, [...] and his young cousin wife his uncle Sam's girl Ann, [...] and Sam's two surviving boys Bill and Mat, and Sam's other married daughter Kate, [...] and her young cousin husband her uncle Jack's son Sean, [...]and Jack's daughter Bridie, [...] and Jack's other son Tom, [...] And finally to pass on to the rising generation there were Sean's two little girls Roe and Cerise, [...] and then there were Simon's two little boys, Pat and Larry (*Watt*, 84-7).

Both passages refer extensively to the physical wellbeing of the various family members. Beckett's account of the maladies of the Lynch family is infused with a series of very specific ailments, but still proceeds in a relatively uncomplicated manner through the different generations of Lynch. Stein's interest, in comparison, rests on a more conceptual notion of how one individual can go from being healthy to being ill, from being alive to dying. In a further contrast with Beckett's meticulously ordered chronology, her account leaps from

generation to generation without recourse to any identifiable sequence.[282] There is a palpable anxiety identifiable throughout Stein's account of the fickle nature of illness, life, and death, and it includes this relatively accessible observation:

> It is natural that when there are very many of a family living and very many cousins and some aunts and uncles living that sometimes some of them should be sick ones, even that once in a while one of them should come to be a dead one. In a way it is a strange thing because very often for many years not any one in the family connection is a seriously sick one, not any one is ever thinking of any one they are then knowing as any where near to any dying (*MOA*, 718).

This could serve as an apt summary of the Lynch family dilemma from Beckett's *Watt*, all of whom suffer some form of ailment, but none of whom have yet managed to come "any where near to any dying"(*MOA*, 718). Following Watt's arrival at the Knott house, the Lynchs' extended period when "not any one is [...] any where near to any dying"(*MOA*, 718) comes to an abrupt end with the death of "Liz wife of Sam"(*Watt*, 88).

The death of Liz is relayed as an event that affects the entirety of her family and this is conveyed through the naming again of every family member, not through their names proper (their hyponymic signifiers), but through more generalised hypernymic terms used to signify related kindred; a literal re-naming of every family member:

> For not only was a wife, a mother, a mother-in-law, an aunt, a sister, a sister-in-law, a cousin, a niece-in-law, a niece, a niece-in-law, a daughter-in-law, a granddaughter-in-law and of course a grandmother, snatched from her grandfather-in-law, her father-in-law, her uncles-in-law, her

[282] Like Beckett, Stein also generates humour through the apparently random connections made from one generation to the next, leaps that make little or no logical sense and describe what can only be hypothetical scenarios at the time of writing: "Sometimes it happens that one cousin is quite a sick one, sometimes it happens that all the uncles are dead by then and only two aunts are still living"(*MOA*, 718).

> aunt, her aunts-in-law, her cousins, her brothers-in-law, her sisters, her niece, her nephew, her sons-in-law, her daughters, her sons, her husband and of course her four little grandchildren (*Watt*, 88).

Stein similarly moves between the hypernymic and hyponymic, creating a constant back and forth between the general and the specific. She manages to articulate this process quite succinctly through the use of the phrase "one of a kind," contrasting the uniqueness implied by the expression with the commonplace nature of the expression itself:

> There is a kind of a kind of them and Alfred Hersland was one of this kind of a one, one of the kind of them that have it mostly all of them to have it that mostly all of them to have it that mostly every one knowing them feels it of them knows it in them that they are a piece of being (*MOA*, 542).

If you are presented with a quantity of individuals that are each, in their own way "one of a kind," then you ultimately end up with a several "one[s] of a kind." Alfred Hersland is "one of this kind" but this also makes him "one of this kind of a one" and "a kind of every kind there is"(*MOA*, 542). The terms "one" and "kind" can refer to both an individual and a large group, they are, effectively, simultaneously hyper- and hyponymic, making the individual at once individual and part of a larger indistinct grouping of "one of a kind[s]."

A comparable exploitation of the idiomatic occurs in *Watt* in the form of Watt's continued preoccupation with the comings and goings in Knott's establishment. Watt elects to take "any three of four servants""(*Watt*, 114) and subject their procession through the house to further analysis. He settles on the names "Tom, Dick, Harry, and another"(*Watt*, 114):

> But why Tom Tom? And Dick Dick? And Harry Harry? Because Dick Dick and Harry Harry? Because Harry Harry and Tom Tom? Because Tom Tom

> and Dick Dick? [...] For it was not the Tomness of Tom, the Dickness of Dick, the Harryness of Harry, however remarkable in themselves that preoccupied Watt, for the moment, but their Tomness, their Dickness, their Harryness then, their then-Tomness, then-Dickness, then-Harryness (*Watt*, 115-6).

The names Tom, Dick, and Harry in succession are immediately recognisable as placeholder names for a grouping of unspecified people; in other words, a group of some or other "ones." Much like Stein's exploitation of the phrase "one of a kind" in her account of Alfred Hersland as a man who was "one of this kind of a one"(*MOA*, 542), this passage display's Beckett's capacity to turn specific hyponyms into a format that simultaneously make the terms available as hypernyms for a larger grouping of people.[283] Beckett's "Tom, Dick, and Harry" are both "one of a kind" and "a kind of one"(*MOA*, 542). In each of these instances, what at first appears as specific or particular to an individual can also turn out to be not very person-specific at all, or rather, person-specific but on an inflated scale: "And what to me may seem most unlike him, and what to me may seem most like him, may in reality be most like him, most unlike him, for all I can tell"(*Watt*, 101).

iv) A kind of "one" and "one" of a kind.

> Everything divides into itself, I suppose (*MD*, 6).

[283] Ackerley usefully simplifies the Schopenhauerian reading of this passage presented by Rubin Rabinovitz in *The Development of Samuel Beckett's Fiction* by noting "more simply, Watt confronts the conundrum of life in a present that both is and is not conditional upon (ordained by) the long chain of consistence from the past to the future." Rabinovitz, *The Development of Samuel Beckett's Fiction* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1984), 130; Ackerley, *Obscure Locks, Simple Keys: The Annotated Watt* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 137.

Throughout *The Making of Americans* characters are frequently referred to as being alike to the point of being indistinguishable.[284] This is greatly enabled through Stein's reliance on the preposition "like," and also through the now familiar heavy use of the determiners "some," "every" and the pronoun "one." The statement "everybody is a real one to me, everybody is like some one else too to me"(*MOA*, 305) is repeated with minor variations throughout the novel, often with subtle or not so subtle syntactic modifications: "Everybody has their own being in them. Every one is a kind of men and women"(*MOA*, 333). Later in this same passage the statement reappears only this time with the sentences joined by a comma, with the phrase "a kind of" rearranged to read "of a kind": "Everybody has their own being in them, every one is of a kind of men and women"(*MOA*, 333). The modification of "a kind of" to "of a kind" can be classified as a modal repetition that is not accompanied by a change in semantic content;[285] again it shows Stein to be actively playing on the notion of something being both unique and part of a wider grouping of similar objects. The opening sentence of the very next paragraph contains a further, partially modified repetition: "Every one has their own being in them. Every one is of a kind of men and women"(*MOA*, 333). The comma has been removed and again replaced with a period. The words "every one" replace "every body," a move that emphasises the difficulty the narrator is experiencing in differentiating between the one and the many.

In the following example, the first, second, and third occurrences of "one" within a single sentence each refer to different "ones": "So it goes on, every one

[284] This can be compared in passing to Molloy's reference to the "rabble in my head, what a gallery of moribunds. Murphy, Watt, Yerk, Mercier and all the others"(*M*,143).
[285] See table tr. from Frédéric in Appendix: 2.

mostly sees in each one something that is like something in some other one"(*MOA*, 333). This passage is concerned with identifying similarities between different people (different "ones"), so the pronominal repetition serves as a practical aid in intimating similarities between distinct figures; figures that are ultimately subjected to a merger of identities wherein any one "one" becomes indistinct from any other "one." The following three examples display further iterations of this recurrent play on "one" as both a hypernym and hyponym:

> Mostly every one is resembling some how to some one, every one is one inside them, every one reminds some one of some other one. [...]
>
> Every one is themselves inside them and every one is resembling to others. [...]
>
> Every one is resembling somehow to some one (*MOA*, 332).

The narrators' capacity to identify sameness or comparability in the face of difference becomes increasingly problematic throughout both novels; what begins in both texts as initial or superficial associations often gives way to much larger fields of uncertainty and mass similitude: "it began as a clear resemblance to some one, it goes on to be a confusing number of resemblances to many of them"(*MOA*, 340).

Such is the overlap between the persons of *The Making of Americans* that the physical bodies of these unique individuals are described as being little more than a "mushy mass with a skin to hold them in"(*MOA*, 383): "Some are always whole ones though the being in them is all a mushy mass with a skin to hold them in and so make one"(*MOA*, 383). The "one" is individuated from the many, or from all other "ones" by a membrane of skin: "every one, has their own skin that cuts them off from all the other ones"(*MOA*, 387). This membranous division

prevents the "mushy mass" of any one being from "flowing away from this one": "This one then, this one that is a whole one, a mushy mass of independent dependent being with a holding it together from flowing away from this one, holding it together to make of this a whole one"(*MOA*, 384). This can be compared with a similar passage in *Watt* wherein individuals are classified in terms of flesh and bones alone: "Some see the flesh before the bones, and some see the bones before the flesh, and some never see the bones at all, and some never see the flesh at all, never never see the flesh at all"(*Watt*, 60).

So accomplished are Stein's pronominal manipulations of different "ones," particularly when she pairs it with this account of human difference as little more than a matter of viscera, that it again brings to mind Beckett's comments in Kaun 1937 and his expressed desire to stretch and tear at "that terrifyingly arbitrary materiality of the word surface" and discover the ooze that lies behind.[286] Through her relentless depiction of the individual and the crowd using the same term ("one"), and through this extraordinary image of humankind as a "mushy mass with a skin to hold them in"(*MOA*, 383) Stein dissolves the distinctions between hypernym and hyponym and the resultant prose displays a seemingly inherent porosity wherein "one" can mean "one" but also "many." Again, we can return to Beckett's observation that in Stein's work one finds that "the fabric of language has at least become porous."[287] Nowhere is this more apparent than in the visceral extremeness of her depiction of these indeterminate beings, made up of little more than mush held together by a thin membrane of skin.

[286] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1,* 518.
[287] *Ibid.*, 519.

v) From one “one” to another “one”: Numbers.

Moving on from the familial and the corporeal, both texts make interesting use of cardinal numbers, and in particular the semantic crossover between the cardinal number “one” and its pronominal namesake. Stein uses a combination of the determiner “another” with the pronoun “one” when listing a group of people who are in varying states of agreement with her narrator:

> some are always believing this thing, some are not always believing this thing, I am not believing this thing, another one is not believing this thing, another one is not believing this thing, another one is believing this thing, another one is believing this thing, another one is believing this thing, another one is not believing this thing, another one is not believing this thing, another one is not believing this thing, another one is believing this thing, another one is believing this thing (*MOA*, 728).

In the above excerpt Stein refers to five “one” figures who believe “this thing” and five other “one” figures in addition to the narrator that do not believe “this thing.” Each iteration of the phrase “and another one” refers to a different figure, but beyond the passing influence of surrounding modifiers that specify whether each “one” is a believer or non-believer, all differences between the figures appears vestigial, with nothing lexical preventing one “one” from being mistaken for “another one.”

Two pages later Stein returns to this mode of specific non-specificity with the nicely complex “one and then another and then another one and then another one said something and then some other one said something and some one can listen to every one who says something”(*MOA*, 730). In this iteration of “ones” we see a steady progression from an initial “one” to the second person

who is not referred to as "one" but rather through the determiner "another." The third and fourth others are both referred to using the now familiar merger of determiner and pronoun "another one." Finally, there is a fifth "one," one referred to using the different determiner and adjective combination that is "some other one." These five individual "ones" are alternately referred to as "one," "another," "another one" and "some other one" before being pressed together into the pronoun "every one." Whatever it is they all have to say (each one of them has "said something") is listened to by yet another "one," the "some one [that] can listen to every one who says something"(*MOA*, 730).[288]

The pronominally tenuous listener/ hearer dyad presented throughout Stein's account here of a "one [who] can listen to every one who says something"(*MOA*, 730) can be compared to similar situations in many of Beckett's later fictions, particularly the *Nohow On* texts, as the following example from *Company* makes explicit:

> If the voice is not speaking to him it must be speaking to another. So with what reason remains he reasons. To another of that other. Or of him. Or of another still. To another of that other or of him or of another still (*C*, 6).

Similarly, Stein's declaration of intent regarding the procession of her narrative, wherein she states "and I will give one description and then another description and then another description and then another description of the being in him"(*MOA*, 734) bears comparison with *Molloy*: "This time, then once more I think, then perhaps a last time, then I think it'll be over, with the world too. Premonition of the last but one but one"(*M*, 4).

[288] These iterations bring to mind Malone's aphorism "It is better to adopt the simplest explanation, even if it is not simple, even if it does not explain very much"(*MD*, 6-7).

The following passage details the known past occupants of the Knott household, and thus merits comparison with Stein's oblique accounts of the various “ones” that populate her narrative:

> There were three men in the house [...] The first is here, in his bed, or at least in his room. But the second, I mean, Vincent, is not here any more, and the reason for that is this, that when I came in he went out. But the third, I mean Walter, is not here anymore either, and the reason for that is this, that when Erskine came in he went out, just as Vincent went out when I came in. And I, I mean Arsene, am not here any more either, and the reason for that is this, that when you came in I went out, just as when I came in Vincent went out and as Walter went out when Erskine went in (*Watt*, 47).

The known past occupants of the household are repeatedly referred to using the specific hyponyms of their individual names. As the passage transitions to the future and speculates over potential replacements for Erskine and Watt when the time should come for them to leave, it transitions from hyponym to hypernym, as can be seen below:

> [A]nd a man come, shutting the door behind him, and Erskine go. And then another night fall and another man come and Watt go, Watt who is now come, for the coming is in the shadow of the going and the going is in the shadow of the coming, that is the annoying part about it (*Watt*, 48).

Two pages later this is taken further with a lengthier account that reaches instead into the unknown past, reflecting on the unknown (by name) occupants that inhabited the house before Vincent and Walter:

> For Vincent and Walter were not the first, ho no, but before them were Vincent and another whose name I forget, and before them that other whose name I forget and another whose name I also forget, and before them that other whose name I also forget and another whose name I never knew, and before them that other whose name I never knew and another whose name Walter could not recall, and before them that other

> whose name Walter could not recall and another whose name Walter could not recall either, and before them that other whose name Walter could not recall either and another whose name Walter never knew, and before them that other whose name Walter never knew and another whose name even Vincent could not call to mind, and before them that other whose name even Vincent could not call to mind and another whose name even Vincent could not call to mind either, and before them that other whose name even Vincent could not call to mind either another whose name even Vincent never knew, and so on, until all trace is lost (*Watt*, 50).

This play on the duality of a given word's semantic functions occurs elsewhere throughout both novels. In the following example from Stein, the semantic meaning of "one" is modified mid-sentence:

> This one had it to be very careful in living and always this one would be counting everything by one and one and one. Counting everything this one was spending by one and one and one and one and one and one was in this one resisting being was in this one recognition of real existing of everything (*MOA*, 560).

"One" changes from pronoun to cardinal number over the course of the first sentence above. It reverts back to the pronoun "one" at the beginning of the subsequent sentence before immediately changing to signify the numerical "one" for six repetitions before again reverting to the pronoun "one" for two iterations and the conclusion of the sentence.

The following passage sees something of a culmination of the techniques examined previously, with the semantic meaning of "one" moving from the numerical to the pronominal and vice versa in almost every sentence:

> When he was a young one sometimes he was with two, sometimes he was with three, sometimes he was with four, sometimes he was with more than four. Sometimes there was one and he was with that one, sometimes there were two and he was with one of the two of them, sometimes there were three and he was with two of them, sometimes there were three and

> he was with the three of them, sometimes there were four and he was with two of them, sometimes he was with the four of them, sometimes he was with three of them. Sometimes when he was a young one he was with one, sometimes he was with two, sometimes he was with more than one, sometimes he was with three, sometimes he was with more than three. When he was not such a young one sometimes he was with one. [...] When he was not at all a very young one sometimes he was with one. Sometimes he was with more than one. [...] When he was in between not being any longer a quite a young one and being one not being an older one, when he was at the ending of the beginning of being living he was sometimes with three. He was sometimes then with one. He was sometimes then with another one. He was often then with one. He was often then with three. He was often then with two. He was often then with three. He was often then with another one. He was often then with six. He was often then with ten. He was often then with one. He was often then with another one. He was often then with another one. He was often then with another one. He was often then with three. He was often then with two. He was older then and he was often then not with any one. He was sometimes then with one. He was often then with more than one. He was often then with a good many more than one. He was sometimes then with one. He was sometimes then with another one. He was sometimes then with another one. He was sometimes then with more than ten. He was sometimes then with more than one. He was sometimes then with three. He was sometimes then with one. He was sometimes then with not any one. He was sometimes then with more than one (*MOA*, 854-5).

Flexible modifiers capable of operating as determiners, pronouns or adverbs such as "another," "more" and "any" are used to create ambiguous portraits of the number of other "ones" he was "sometimes then with." As before, non-specific adjectives such as "young," "very young," "not such a young," "quite young," and "older" are employed to differentiate the age of this specific "one." This faux-specificity imparts no real notion of this "ones"[289] age. In this way it brings to mind a similar passage in *Watt*: "To think, when one is no longer young, when one is not yet old, that one is no longer young, that one is not yet old, that is perhaps something"(*Watt*, 174). This combination of words that denote time,

[289] The figure being described is David Hersland.

age, and quantity in such a relative manner together creates a detailed account of the company David Hersland kept at various periods in his life, but for all its detail the information itself is useless, managing the dual task of being extraordinarily specific and nondescript at the same time.

In terms of passages that manage to be both hyper-specific and nondescript, the previous excerpt can be compared with the well known "shoe" section from *Watt* which is itself an example of hyponymic repetitions drawn from the hypernym "footwear":

> As for his feet, sometimes he wore on each a sock, or on the one a sock and on the other a stocking, or a boot, or a shoe, or a slipper, or a sock and boot, or a sock and shoe, or a sock and slipper, or a stocking and boot, or a stocking and shoe, or a stocking and slipper, or nothing at all. And sometimes he wore on each a stocking, or on the one a stocking and on the other a boot, or a shoe, or a slipper, or a sock and boot, or a sock and shoe, or a sock and slipper, or a stocking and boot, or a stocking and shoe, or a stocking and slipper, or nothing at all. [...] And sometimes he went barefoot (*Watt*, 173-4).

Just as "some one" can be both "any one" and "every one," "sometime" is an adverb that designates an unspecified, unknown time. In the above account of the variety of items Watt "sometimes" wore on his feet, we are provided with an account that is as detailed and useless as the account of the people that "sometimes" kept David Hersland company. Both sequences are concluded with a final statement that reduces the preceding aggregation of potential combinations (either of footwear, or of company), to little or nothing. David Hersland's social life is reduced to the relatively simple statement: "He was sometimes then with not any one. He was sometimes then with more than

one"(*MOA*, 854-5). Similarly, Watt—who has the potential to wear any number of items on his feet—sometimes opts instead to go "barefoot"(*Watt*, 174).

Beyond instances involving the cardinal number or pronoun "one,"[290] both texts have a similar tendency to reach for numbers as a method of sorting large quantities of information. Whereas throughout the previous examples Stein gestured towards age through relative adjectives such as young or old, in the following passage people are instead categorised by their numerical age:

> Each one comes gradually to be knowing how being is in men, in women when men when women are about sixty, about fifty, about fifty-five, about forty, about forty-five, about thirty, about twenty-eight, about twenty-six, about twenty-two, about eighteen and fourteen and eleven, and seven and five and three and two and under one being only just beginning being in iving [*sic*]. [...] I am just now a little realising how old men and old women mostly are when they are sixty-one. I have learnt a good deal about twenty-seven, twenty-five, twenty-nine, thirty, thirty-two, thirty-four, thirty-seven, forty and forty-two and then I know a little about fifty-seven and now I am learning something about being in women and in men when they are sixty and sixty-one. I know a good deal about them when they are very little ones, two and three years old in living, something about them when they are eleven, a very little when they are seventeen almost nothing when they are eighteen and fifteen. I know a very little about them when they are twenty-one. [...] I know that some when they are sixty are healthy ones and some when they are sixty are pretty well worn then and some are dead before they come to be that age in living and some are quite young men and quite young women [...] I am just now being quite an astonished one, finding it quite astonishing to be really realising being sixty years old and being in living in men and women (*MOA*, 715).

In this passage the narrator lays claim to knowing specific details about what it feels like to exist at a range of non-sequential numerical ages from two to sixty-one; a further attempt perhaps to delineate the number of people she knows "how being is in," by specifying in a cumulative manner the types of people she

[290] Beckett and Stein's manipulation of pronouns will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

considers herself familiar with. But this gesture towards specificity is simultaneously deferred by the recurrent use of the preposition "about." Knowing "about sixty, about fifty, about fifty-five, about forty, about forty-five, about thirty, about twenty-eight, about twenty-six, about twenty-two, about eighteen and fourteen and eleven, and seven and five and three and two and under one"(*MOA*, 715) merely feigns specific knowledge, using the numerals to suggest a distinction or mathematically inclined precision that is not altogether there. What is the exact age of someone that is "about fifty," for example?

Not only are the exact ages of these people ambiguous, the extent of this knowledge is similarly difficult to determine. Take the following phrase, for example: "I am just now a little realising how old men and old women mostly are when they are sixty-one"(*MOA*, 715). The narrator's knowledge of sixty-one-year olds is only "a little" realised. Further still, this awareness is not conclusive, and can be said to reflect only typical behaviours among this age-group; how sixty-one-year olds "mostly are." In contrast, the narrator claims to have "learnt a good deal about [the ages] twenty-seven, twenty-five, twenty-nine, thirty, thirty-two, thirty-four, thirty-seven, forty and forty-two," but knows only "very little" about seventeen and twenty-one-year olds and "almost nothing" about fifteen and eighteen year olds (*MOA*, 715). Ostensibly, there is very little difference between "very little" and "almost nothing," but within a narrative so driven by abstruse and relative variables, they may well amount to the equivalent of knowing "something" about sixty-one-year olds. Stein manages to make an instance of numerical specificity as abstruse and relative as the lexical modifiers young and old that circulated throughout the permutative passages examined previously.

The use of age-related numerical signifiers that, under closer examination, reveal themselves to be less than accurate is similarly active throughout *Watt*. To return to an example discussed previously, the Lynch family's combined ages totals "nine hundred and eighty years" across five generations and twenty-eight people"(*Watt*, 87). This number is, we are told in a footnote, "incorrect" making "the consequent calculations [...] doubly erroneous"(*Watt*, 87). Similar semantically lax attitudes towards numbers can be found elsewhere throughout the text, with numerous instances of apparently detailed, numerically dependent statements revealed to be capable of referring to almost any number of people; as in the concurrence regarding "the possibility, if not the probability, is not excluded of our finding two or less than two or even more than two men or women or men and women as little bony and so on as fat eternally turning about Mr Knott"(*Watt*, 52).

Both texts make use of numbers and numerical sequences to imply a knowledge where little real knowledge is present, or where there is little need for such numerically detailed descriptions as the numbers themselves, along indeed with much of the descriptive passages, are shown to be superfluous and highly pleonastic. The capacity for these numbered lists or tables to convey a finitude of information, or to make any competent attempt at solving the problems Watt encounters are continually compromised. These passages are often accompanied by a note or addenda wherein the narrator states that this is an incomplete attempt or that other possible solutions exist:

> Other possibilities occurred to Watt, in this connexion, but he put them aside, and quite out of his mind, as unworthy of serious consideration for the time being. The time would come, perhaps, when they would be

> worthy of serious consideration, and then, if he could, he would summon them to his mind, and consider them seriously (*Watt*, 75).

Both texts thus display a similar tendency for numbers to be of little use in progressing or advancing our knowledge of the events described.[291] The impediments to Watt and Mrs Gorman's physical interactions are conveyed by listing the number of physical readjustments Watt was at times required to make: "And so little could Watt support, on certain days, [...] that no fewer than two, or three, or four, or five, or six, or seven, or eight, or nine, or ten, or eleven, or even twelve, or even thirteen, changes of position were found necessary"(*Watt*, 121). Though it details the number—which varies from two to

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[291] Beckett engages with far more comprehensive numerical sequences than Stein and displays a preference for embedding well-known mathematical sequences into his repetitions of numerals, such as the pi numericals in the song Watt hears "with great distinctness, from afar, from without"(*Watt*, 26) just before he enters Mr Knott's house:

> *Fifty-two point one*
> *four two eight five seven one*
> *four two eight five seven one* [...]
> *four two eight five seven one*
> *four two eight five seven one* (*Watt*, 28)

As Ackerley details, this second verse of song follows the "number of weeks in a regular year" together with "the post-decimal notation of *pi* (.142857)"(Ackerley, *Obscure Locks, Simple* Keys, 55-6). Here we see the presence of an apparently random recital of numbers that in fact accord to the numerical value of pi. Later still, the numbers that mark out the rhythm patterns of the frog song are also shown to be accord to the Fibonnaci sequence: "The three frogs croaking Krak!, Krek! and Krik!, at one, nine, seventeen, twenty-five, etc., and at one, six, eleven, sixteen, etc., and at one, four, seven, ten, etc., respectively"(*Watt*, 117). This marks out a nice example of a co-occurrence of both Joyce and Stein's aesthetics within the one passage and neatly displays the dissimilitude not only of their own aesthetics, but of the differential nature of their corresponding influences on Beckett. On the one hand, the song appears to prioritise sound over sense, operating on a phonetic level that is comparable to Stein's own highly phonetic and sound-orientated early writings. But at the same time the song also contains an embedded reference, and thus a similarly embedded link to Joyce's influence on Beckett, one that manifest in the form of a similar tendency to bury erudite intertextual references into his own early writings. At the same time however, as Ackerley notes, there is a distinct "refusal [in Beckett] to attribute transcendental value to such synchronicity"(Ackerley, *Obscure Locks, Simple* Keys, 138). Much like Stein's listing of the various ages she is steadily becoming more familiar with, the inclusion of these specific sequences serves only to re-assert the texts closing line "No symbols where none intended"(*Watt*, 223). From Montini's perspective of *Watt* as a transition away from the monolingual polyglottism of Joyce to bilingual Anglophonic and later bilingual Francophone writings it is interesting and perhaps not irrelevant that this intertextually rich passage occurs at the onset of the novel, whereas the lexical rearranging that I will argue is a distinct engagement with Steinean logography occurs towards the end of the novel (Montini, *"La bataille du soliloque,"* 103-124).

thirteen—the use of the conjunctional "or" makes the position changes something of a co-occurrence in that the record serves to prevent any specific number or position marking itself out as distinct from another. They are all merely one further addition to the numerical sequence built around the recurring conjunction "or," a sequence wherein totality or specificity is impossible because it is impeded by this consistent deferring of meaning brought about by an apparent inability to settle on, or secure, a meaning.[292]

Any implication of specificity as a result of this intense scrutiny brought about by the repetitions is prevented through the abundance of meanings heaped on the word by the repetitious act. As the narrator of Stein's text observes "It is very interesting, often very exciting, mostly very confusing, always steadily increasing in meaning"(*MOA*, 335). While the first two terms in this description are debatable, the final two are certainties; throughout both *Watt* and *The Making of Americans* the narratives proceed in a manner that is "mostly very confusing" and continually, "always steadily increasing in meaning"(*MOA*, 335).

vi) The speculative "one" and the inquisitive "one."

[292] Though I have only covered familial permutations and permutations built around numbers, this technique of using grammatical modifiers to alternate between the superordinate and the specific, between the hypernymic and the hyponymic, is prolific throughout both texts and occurs in relation to topics that far exceed the necessarily tight remit of this chapter's focus. To give but one example, the following passage describing the different days of the week any individual may have a preference for combines ambiguity and specificity through the inclusion of the determiners "some" and "other." Through Beckett's thorough inclusion of the determiner "some" and pronoun "others," this passage has the potential to describe, or at least summarise, all the possible varieties of preference held by all people. In spite of this, we are nevertheless left with little specific knowledge other than the rather Stein-like summation that some like some days, and others like other days: "So Thursday was the day Watt preferred, to all other days. Some prefer Sunday, others Monday, others Tuesday, others Wednesday, others Friday, others Saturday"(*Watt*, 120).

In addition to aspiring to cover every human being that exists or has ever existed, Stein extends her remit to include those that are yet to be, those that are not yet in existence, or those that hold a speculative or conditional chance of coming into existence; figures that can be classified as speculative or future conditional "ones": "I am almost being certain that I am understanding all being ever having been, ever being, ever going to be in any man, in any woman"(*MOA*, 684). The following examples concern repetitions borne from entirely speculative scenarios brought about by an inquisitive character or narrator. Such exercises in speculation are not only borne from curiosity, but also from a certain anxiety on the part of the narrators and characters depicted throughout both texts. Interestingly, anxiety is one of the characteristics the narrator of *The Making of Americans* declares is a "more or less" constant presence in the lives of "almost every one" she describes: "Every one then has in their living repeating, repeating of every kind of thing in them, [...] of the anxious feeling almost every one has more or less always in them"(*MOA*, 184). The narrator of *The Making of Americans* is openly inquisitive and admits to being so:

> Some men and women are inquisitive about everything, they are always asking, if they see any one with anything they ask, what is that thing, what is it you are carrying, what are you going to be doing that thing, why do you have that thing, where did you get that thing, how long will you have that thing, [...] I am such a one (*MOA*, 556).

This root inquisitiveness is very much comparable to similar instances of inquisitiveness and speculation to be found throughout *Watt*. Watt's inquisitiveness regarding Mr Knott's daily routine (*Watt*, 71-2), his eating habits (*Watt*, 72-5) or indeed, his decision that "an examination of Erskine's room was essential, if his mind was to be pacified, in this connexion"(*Watt*, 105), an

inquisitiveness that is causally responsible for his subsequent discovery of and interest in the painting in Erskine's room (*Watt*, 109-10) These can all be placed in counterpoint with the declaration that this pursuit of meaning was enacted in spite of a general indifference to meaning (*Watt*, 62), an unusual scenario that again has a counter-example in Stein and the narrator's pronouncement that "it all grows confusing [...] sometimes all of a sudden I lose the meaning out of all of them I lose all of them [...] and there is no meaning"(*MOA*, 335).

The following passage from *The Making of Americans*, concerns a situation wherein an individual who is currently in good health engenders a situation of perpetual recurrence around a milk delivery:

> Some one has milk brought to the house by the milkman and it is wasted and yet always that one is continuing having that amount of milk brought in because that one is thinking that sometime that one will be a sick one and then if the milkman is not in the habit of bringing milk every day to that one then when that one is a sick one that one will not have milk brought every day by the milkman. It will be too late then to be beginning then when that one is so sick that one cannot go out to order anything. One having in that one a feeling that nothing should be wasted by any one living can have such a way of doing with a milkman bringing milk for that one. Such a one can have it that that one never throws away anything, never wastes anything in living and always there is more milk there then that one can be using in the daily living, in a kind of a way this is very common, not about milk left, but about a way of feeling in living and a way of acting (*MOA*, 543).

In this passage a specific "some one" has milk delivered to their house that they do not need or use. Despite this, and despite the fact they themselves "[feel] that nothing should be wasted by any one living," they refuse to cancel the milk delivery. They refuse to cancel this milk delivery on the premise that their "one-ness" may one day change to incorporate them being a "sick one." In such a

situation they would not be able to go outside to purchase milk, and may then need it, and it would then be too late for them to arrange regular milk-delivery according to their liking. This “one” is thus both wasteful and resolute in their commitment not to be wasteful, altering their self-conception to allow for this perpetual transgression in anticipation of a potential future need for milk. This reveals the narrator to be in possession of a palpable inquisitiveness towards her surroundings and the activities of these figures, known or unknown, existent or non-existent.

The elaborate series of speculative arrangements this “some one” engages in regarding their milk delivery can be compared to the series of events hypothesised by Watt to facilitate the effective removal of any of Mr Knott's leftovers by means of a leftover-eating dog: “it was necessary that a dog from outside should call at the house at least once every day, on the off chance of its being given part, or all, of Mr Knott's lunch, or dinner, or both, to eat”(*Watt*, 76) Much like the “one” ordering milk in the above passage, Mr Knott is yet another individual who dislikes waste. In order to ensure none of his leftovers go to waste, the dog must be kept in a state of perpetual hunger, and Watt devises possible solutions that would ensure “a real live famished dog as large as life was coming night after night as regular as clockwork to Mr Knott's back door”(*Watt*, 84). Much like the situation with the milk, which is left to spoil day after day on the off-chance that it may one day be needed, “the number of times the dog went full away was small compared with the number of times that it went away half empty, and the number of times that it went away half empty was small compared with the number of times that it went away as empty as it came”(*Watt*, 76). The milk waster in *The Making of Americans* could benefit from an

arrangement such as the one detailed with the hungry dog in *Watt*, and the famished dog would no doubt greatly benefit from the wasted milk which, it appears, would be a far more regular source of nourishment than the inconsistent leftovers of Mr Knott. These two passages, with the wasting milk and the famished dog, create an acute moment of intertextual compatability between the novels. *Watt*'s arrangement with the famished dog solving the problem of the wasted milk and the wasted milk solving the problem of the famished dog, eliminating (or at least reducing) the need for a "kennel or colony of famished dogs from which at any time a well-bred well-trained famished dog could be withdrawn and set to work"(*Watt*, 83).

Aside from providing the reader with a pithy explanation for the unrelenting vigour of the quest to discover and relate the history "of every one who ever was or is or will be living"(*MOA*, 179), this inquisitiveness leads the reader on unexplained asides and presents bizarre scenarios through the medium of equally bizarre syntactic arrangements that would not themselves be out of place within the lexically confused narrative world of Watt. In the following account, a visitor's inquisitiveness regarding the layout of a house leads them to speculate over its design in a way that is eminently comparable to Watt's thoughts on the layout of the Knott house:

> Once this one asked some one he was visiting, just suddenly,—and this door here does it lead into the hall or directly out into the garden,—and that was all he said then about this thing and afterwards every one was thinking he would be using this against them but really then this one was wondering did the door lead to the hall or directly to a garden (*MOA*, 557).

> And what further seemed to Watt extraordinary was the shortness of time that Erskine spent up, when he flew up, before flying down again, and the

> shortness of time that he spent down, when he flew down, before flying up again, and the rapidity of his flight [...] Perhaps Mr Knott sends him now upstairs, and now downstairs, on this errand and on that, saying, But hasten back to me Erskine, don't delay, but hasten back to me (*Watt*, 100-1).

The passages discussed throughout these sections all severely test the semantic limits of the terms they repeat. In the case of Stein's narrator throughout *The Making of Americans*, the issue of semantic succour is paramount throughout the novel; with the narrator admitting to having forgotten the meaning of certain words, mixed the meanings up, or assigned them new ones:

> I am always knowing more and more and then it gets all mixed up in me all mixed up in each one all mixed up in each one I am learning, each time there is in me a clear understanding of any one and I go on to another one or back to one I was earlier understanding that one is all a confusion [...] then all of a sudden this new grouping is a clear thing to my understanding and then sometimes all of a sudden I lose the meaning out of all of them I lose all of them and then each one I am then seeing looks like every one I have ever known in all my looking and there is no meaning in any of my grouping and then there is in me again a beginning (*MOA*, 335).

As in *The Unnamable*, this difficulty in remembering words gives way to a sort of semantic abandon where words and images are mixed to suit the whim of the teller:

> I use them all, all the words they showed me, there were columns of them [...] they were on lists, with images opposite, I must have forgotten them, I must have mixed them up, these nameless images I have, these imageless names, these windows I should perhaps rather call doors, at least by some other name, and this word man which is perhaps not the right one for the thing I see when I hear it, [...] I'd mix them, I'd vary them, that would be gamut enough (*U*, 127).

As has repeatedly been demonstrated throughout this chapter, the pronoun "one" and general nominal terms such as "man" or "woman" come under immense strain throughout the narratives of *The Making of Americans* and *Watt*, drawing attention to the materiality of the language and arbitrary nature of the grammars that arbitrate the English lexicon. This leads the investigations beyond the hypernym and hypernymic realm to instances wherein both texts address larger questions about the semantic certainty associated with the words and language they employ to convey meaning.

vii) Certain uncertainty and failing language.

> Knowledge is what you know and there is nothing more difficult to say than that that knowledge is what you know.[293]

Stein's project of cataloguing all human kind was largely left to the wayside following the completion of this mammoth text (with the exception of 1937s *Everybody's Autobiography* which begins "Alice B. Toklas did hers and now everybody will do theirs."[294]). That said, Stein continued to pay close attention to the difficulties of expression through the medium of English, and the shortcomings and insufficiencies of standard English dialect remain a stalwart of Stein's literary aesthetics from *The Making of Americans* through to her later writings. The narrator of *The Making of Americans* states at the midway point in the text that "certainty is certainly very interesting"(*MOA*, 449) and the issue of certainty becomes paramount both to the narrator and to the narrative. Both narrator—and narrative, it seems—becomes steadily more and more uncertain as the narrative progresses:

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[293] Stein, "Narration 2," *Narration*, 16.
[294] Stein, *Everybody's Autobiography* (New York: Vintage, 1973), 3.

> What am I believing about living. I am believing that I am not certain when I am saying something from being one being then being loving that I am meaning anything by what I am then saying, I am not certain that I am not then having being in being one being loving that is being that is having the meaning as being of what I am then saying. I am believing that I am not certain about being being in one meaning what one being in being loving is saying. I am believing that I am not certain that being is not in one meaning what that one being then being loving is saying. What is it I am knowing about living, I certainly am not knowing that I am not knowing everything about being in living. I am not certain that I am knowing everything about being living (*MOA*, 723).

Towards the latter half of *The Making of Americans* we encounter extended sections detailing the certain nature of the narrator's growing uncertainty:

> Certainly some one is very often certain that not any one really is certain in doing something in some way, that that one is certainly not certain enough in doing that thing that way to be ever in the living of that one really doing that thing in any such a way in the living of that one (*MOA*, 718).

Furthermore, the narrator shows themself to be intensely interested in anyone that believes him or herself certain of anything, as can be seen in the following passage:

> Always more and more I want to know it of each one what certainty meant to them, how they came to be certain of anything, what certainty meant to them and how contradiction does not worry them and how it does worry them and how much they have in them of remembering and how much they have in them of forgetting (*MOA*, 449).[295]

One thing we can be certain of then, in relation to both *The Making of Americans* and *Watt*, is the ever-present presence of uncertainty. Uncertainty

[295] This same passage is repeated again thirty pages later (MOA, 480-1).

rounds off the text of *Watt* with the closing line "no symbols where none intended"(*Watt*, 223); a closing statement that serves to create a retroactive haze of uncertainty throughout an already difficult text. Like that of *The Making of Americans*, the text of *Watt* contains numerous unresolved issues or unknowable events and, as the previous section made clear, contains abundant examples of words that come under increasing scrutiny and seem to bear little real relationship to what it is they supposedly signify.

We also encounter uncertainty in the relationship between what has been said and what has been done, as seen in the following example from the end of *The Making of Americans*:

> Surely David Hersland said some things and did some things that some said he said and some said he did. [...] Certainly David Hersland did some things some said he did, and said some things some said he said. [...] Surely each one certainly did some things and said some things that some said he did and said (*MOA*, 828).

The passage begins with a vague appeal for conviction regarding the veracity of David Hersland's account of his activities; as though by making a statement as general as possible it must surely bear some relation to reality. The narrator encounters difficulty in ascertaining a response to their query as to whether Hersland's activities and other peoples' accounts of his activities ever line up. This is relayed by means of an alteration of "surely" to "certainly," before abandoning this position of dubiously "certain" surety or certitude for the uncertain superordinate statement "surely each one certainly did some things and said some things that some said he did and said"(*MOA*, 828). This passage, roughly concerned with the issue of "hearsay" continues for a number of pages, moving from hearsay in relation to David Hersland to hearsay in relation to all

living beings: “Certainly each one in being one being living is saying some things, is doing some things”(*MOA*, 829).

Some are troubled by events and the meaning or meanings behind them, “some are certain of almost anything, some are hardly certain of anything”(*MOA*, 449):

> Certain worries some and some never have certainty as a worry to them. Some have certainty by comparison, by comparing the thing they have then with what any other one they are knowing, hearing, seeing is having, some never compare anything with anything in any one, certainty is a real thing in some (*MOA*, 481).

As for the narrator of *The Making of Americans*, their own struggles with certainty have a palpable effect on their efforts to tell their story. When describing a given character the narrator is unable to decide whether they “certainly will” or “certainly will not” continue to talk about this subject:

> I certainly will not tell any more now about being in her, about living in her, I certainly will tell some about being in her, about living in her, later. I certainly will later be telling something that I have not yet been telling. I do not yet know about her what I will be telling about her later (*MOA*, 716-7).

Such is the extent of this uncertainty on the part of the narrator that even explicit statements affirming certain knowledge are infused with an undertone of doubt, as in the following example where the narrator attempts to convey certainty regarding their knowledge of Julia Dehning:

> I know Julia Dehning. Certainly I know Julia Dehning. Yes of course I know Julia Dehning. Have I not certainly come to know Julia Dehning. I certainly have come to know Julia Dehning, I know Julia Dehning, I have known Julia Dehning, I am thinking I will know Julia Dehning. How do I know Julia Dehning, I know Julia Dehning as one at the end of her beginning

> living, at the beginning of her middle living, at the middle of her middle living. I know Julia Dehning as one having in her living married Alfred Hersland. [...] I certainly do know Julia Dehning. How do I know Julia Dehning? I know Julia Dehning as a kind of one, as a kind of one in men and women. I know Julia Dehning having in her being in her in her living. I know Julia Dehning being certain in being living. Yes I do know Julia Dehning. I certainly can say I do know Julia Dehning. [...] I am certainly certain I am certainly knowing being in Julia Dehning (*MOA*, 630-1).

The passage begins with a short and to the point declaration of knowledge regarding Julia Dehning, but the more the narrator reiterates this statement, the less certain they seem to be about this knowledge. Aside from the interval citing her familial relations, the majority of the passage is concerned with reiterating the narrator's knowledge of Julia Dehning through various repetitions of phrases stressing this knowledge, in particular through the use of the verb "to know" in the first person and predominantly in the present tense. In this passage the name Julia Dehning is repeated twenty times. The middle section reiterates the narrator's awareness of Julia Dehning's part in the familial nexus of the Dehning family, and the separate versions of her known by her father, mother, brother and sister: "I know Julia Dehning in the Dehning family living, I know Julia Dehning some as Mrs Dehning, some as Mr Dehning, some as George Dehning, some as Hortense Dehning, as each one of them, as each one of them then knew her in their living, in her living"(*MOA*, 630). This can be compared to Beckett and Stein's respective subversions of the superordinate unit "family" and how both Beckett and Stein make use of this unit in their repetitions to transition between the modes of hypernym and hyponym, discussed at the beginning of this chapter.

Of interest too, in addition the six unmodified iterations of "I know," are the modifiers attached to this phrase in its twelve other appearances. The phrase "I know" is mainly seen attached to adverb or nominal modifiers such as

"certainly" and "yes of course" that affirm this knowledge or seek to further stress or emphasise the extent of the knowledge. But it also appears attached to modifiers that undercut this knowledge, such as "have I not certainly come to know" which introduces a negative slant on this presumed knowledge, or the interrogative "how do I know" wherein the narrator probes the source of this knowledge. Iterations in the future conditional "I am thinking I will know" indicate the knowledge is yet to be attained, and iterations that make use of the past participle "I have known" indicate the knowledge is a thing of the past, or at the very least in need of updating.[296]

Watt's attempts at assigning a meaning to events frequently result in failures or states of paralysis wherein he is left unable to communicate or even think of the events in question and is consigned to suffer them in silence: "events that resisted all Watt's efforts to saddle them with meaning, and a formula, so that he could neither think of them, nor speak of them, but only suffer them, when they recurred"(*Watt*, 65). These issues of "semantic succour"(*Watt*, 68) are not confined to descriptions of men and women but branch out to reflect more complex issues relating to the semantic certainty associated with the specific keywords; Watt's attempts at reconciling these issues spur on many of the more lengthy repetitious sections found throughout the novel. The sequence built around the leftover-eating dog leaves the narrator querying the difference between the determiners "a" and "the," and the relationship between "a dog" and

[296] To further complicate matters, roughly thirty pages later we are presented with a further description of Julia Dehning, this time of Julia after her marriage and the nominal surname change this has brought about: "This then is a description of being in Julia Hersland born Julia Dehning"(*MOA*, 657). This brings to mind Watt's pausing over the difference between "a dog" and "the dog," noted previously. Does a name change brought about by change in circumstance, be that marital or merely pronominal or related to grammatical articles bring about a corresponding change in the subject being described? What is the relationship between "Julia Hersland born Julia Dehning"(*MOA*, 657) and the Julia Dehning the narrator was so adamant they knew in the above lengthy excerpt from earlier in the novel?

"the dog": "But was a dog the same thing as the dog?"(*Watt*, 80). Similar to this is Watt's interrogation of his hat by means of the pronoun "your," the possessive determiner "his" and the determiner and definite article "the": "He picked up Watt's hat and brought it to him, saying Your hat, sir, I think. Watt looked at the hat. Was it possible that this was his hat"(*Watt*, 20). It is also necessary to mention the well-known "pot" passage: "It resembled a pot, it was almost a pot, but it was not a pot of which one could say, Pot, pot, and be comforted"(*Watt*, 67). Consider the following passage from *The Making of Americans* in relation to these previous examples:

> How can anything be different from what it is. I do not know any such a thing. Very many are knowing this. I am not knowing this thing. I am not knowing anything being different from what it is. Very many are knowing everything being different from what it is. [...] I am thinking now about everything being what it is, everything not being what it is, something being what it is, nothing being what it is, something not being what it is for some, I am thinking of this thing and I am thinking about sense for living in men and women (*MOA*, 672).

"How can anything be different from what it is?," Stein's narrator asks. Beckett conducts similarly relentless interrogations of the relationship between "Watt's hat," "[y]our hat," "the hat," and "his hat"(*Watt*, 20), between "a dog" and "the dog"(*Watt*, 80). And so we have a situation wherein, as Stein puts it "everything being what it is, everything not being what it is, something being what it is, nothing being what it is"(*MOA*, 672).

The more information acquired by the narrator—the more they learn—the more uncertain they find themselves becoming, and the less they seem to understand of the world around them: "Categories that once to some one had real meaning can later to that same one be all empty"(*MOA*, 440). Rather than

simplifying the world around them by collating it into different "categories," their project creates a fractious linguistic situation for the narrator, oscillating between occasional distinction and an overabundance of indistinct qualities in relation to the object at hand:

> and so always more and more I am understanding and am always more and more I am changing and always more and more I am beginning and always more and more I am having uncertainty in my feeling and always more and more I am certain and always more and more there are distinct kinds of them kinds of men and women, and then sometimes there are so many ways of seeing each one that I must stop looking (*MOA*, 337).

The narrator becomes ensconced in the difficulties between the thing seen and the thing experienced: "It is very hard to know it in any one whether they are knowing the relation between what they are saying and what had happened what is happening to them"(*MOA*, 544). Watt similarly experiences and describes this feeling as a state of being overawed at the interpretative potential latent in each incident, occurrence, event, or object; seeing within it the potential for numerous competing interpretations: "one is sometimes tempted to wonder, with reference to two or even three incidents related by Watt as separate and distinct, if they are not in reality the same incident, variously interpreted"(*Watt*, 65).

In both *The Making of Americans* and *Watt*, words fail those that attempt to make use of them. In Watt's case this is made explicit following his arrival at Mr Knott's house and the observation that words begin to "fail him," and his "world [...] become[s] unspeakable"(*Watt*, 70). In *The Making of Americans* we experience the breakdown of the narrator's ability to convey any event with certainty:

> I mean, I mean and that is not what I mean, I mean that not any one is saying what they are meaning, I mean that I am feeling something, I mean that I mean something and I mean that not any one is thinking, is feeling, is saying, is certain of that thing, I mean that not any one can be saying, thinking, feeling, not any one can be certain of that thing, I mean I am not certain of that thing, I am not ever saying, thinking feeling, being certain of this thing, I mean, I mean, I know what I mean (*MOA*, 782).

This state, of knowing what one wishes to express but being unable to do so, is comparable to the situation of *The Unnamable*. Indeed, the figure in *The Unnamable* is occupied with the task that appears as impossible as the task of Stein's narrator throughout *The Making of Americans*—the task of making an utterance before it can be enveloped in silence (*U*, 13). Comparing this to Stein's aspiration of creating, in *The Making of Americans*, a *complete* story, a story of "everyone" and every "one" that encompasses past, present and future conditional, and the tasks of Beckett and Stein's narrators not only appear particularly proximate, but are both revealed to be particularly language-dependent and dependent on a language that systematically fails the respective narrators or protagonists of each text.

Watt is failed by "the time-honoured names [...] the old words, the old credentials"(*Watt*, 70). A narrative aside at the onset of the pot sequence in *Watt* provides a summary of Watt's particular difficulties when it comes to identifying objects by their communally agreed nominal signifiers, a sentiment that is identical to Stein's comments from her lecture "Portraits and Repetitions":

> And it was just this hairbreadth departure from the nature of a true pot that so excruciated Watt. For if the approximation had been less close, then Watt would have been less anguished. For then he would not have said, This is a pot, and yet not a pot, no, but then he would have said, This is something of which I do not know the name. And Watt preferred on the

> whole having to do with things of which he did not know the name, though this too was painful, to Watt, to having to do with things of which the known name, the proven name, was not the name, any more, for him (*Watt*, 67-8).

From the perspective of the narrator of *The Making of Americans*, Watt's dilemma is far from unusual:

> This is very true then, this is very true then of the feeling and the thinking that makes the meaning in the words one is using, this is very true then that to many of them having in them strongly a sense of realising the meaning of the words they are using that some words they once were using, later have not any meaning (*MOA*, 441).

IV. Modal repetitions

Both texts similarly contain lengthy modal repetitions, otherwise known as permutations, based around set syntactic patterns.[297] Throughout the examples covered in this penultimate section of the chapter we will return again to the

[297] A permutation is defined as follows and can be considered the equivalent of Frédéric's concept of repetitions that involve modal change (see Appendix: 2):

> permutation, *n.*
> **2.** [...] **a.** Change of form, position, state, etc.; alteration, transformation, transmutation; successive change, vicissitude; (also) an instance of this.
> [...] **b.** A product of alteration or transformation, a changed form; a variety, a form, *esp.* one of many. [...] **4.** *Phonetics*. An interchange of consonants occurring regularly in cognate words belonging to related languages; a consonantal sound shift. [...] **5.** *Logic*. [...] **b.** In propositional calculus: an interchange of terms that does not affect the validity of the proposition. Chiefly in ***principle of permutation***, ***law of permutation***. [...] **6.** *Linguistics*. In or with reference to the theories of Gustaf Stern: a type of semantic change (see quot. 1931). ("permutation, n.". OED Online. December 2014. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/141246?redirectedFrom=permutation& (accessed January 09, 2015); emphasis in original).

The *OED* definition of "permutation" incorporates modal changes that both do and do not alter semantic content. The examples discussed throughout this chapter primarily encompass points 14, 15, 22 and 23 on Frédéric's classification of different patterns of repetition, provided in the Appendix: 2. These are, repetition with immediate contact (...XX...), repetition with interrupted contact (...X...X...), repetition with convergence (...X/ ...X/ ...XX) and repetition with dissociation (XY.../X.../Y...). See also Frédéric *La répétition: Étude linguistique et rhétorique*, 74.

issue of “some” and “one” so as to study the comparability of a number of the longer permutative passages from both novels. In the following passage the description builds in a manner that befits the term “accumulative repetition” with modal variations:

> In some one, in some to some, in some to some one sometime, sometimes, to some sometimes, all the time of their being living, to some one sometimes all the time of that one being living there is not anything to convince of anything (*MOA*, 761).

A steady accumulation of descriptive entities builds a portrait whose subject or topic is nonetheless very difficult to identify. Each iteration of “some” in this sentence brings with it further specificity, but it also throws uncertainty over its preceding iterations in the sentence. We cannot be certain if any one “some” bears anything other than titular similarity to any preceding or succeeding “some.” Certainty is continually deferred, until at the end of the sentence we have a final uninterrupted stream of words presenting an unconvincing statement on an individual's intermittently unconvinced temperament that does little to resolve the hanging determiners, pronouns and prepositions of the preceding half of the sentence. This, again, is Beckett's “no symbols where none intended”(*Watt*, 223) put to work in the very body of a prose text.

Towards the end of *The Making of Americans*, these sentence-long exploitations of the meanings of “one” take the form of lengthier and more complex passages with an assortment of additional units that together create sequences with highly complex morphologies. In the following example, Stein is describing a scenario wherein a group of people come together to hear, do, or see “something”; perhaps to attend a cultural event such as a music or theatrical

performance, for example. Naturally, they are not passive entities at this event and so the experience of the aural or visual event or activity brings about a corresponding sensory reaction, causing them to "feel something." This is the scenario being described in the following passage, which can be considered something of a crowning achievement in terms of the complex syntactic and semantic manipulation therein:

> Certainly very many [people being living] come together to see something, to hear something, to do something, to see some see something, to see some hear something, to see some do something, to hear some see something, to hear some do something, to hear some hear something, to feel something, to feel some feel something, to feel some hear something, to feel some see something, to see some one do something, to hear some one do something, to feel some one do something, to do something to some, to do something to some one, to feel some do something to some, to hear some do something to some one, to see some do something to some one, to feel some doing something to some, to hear some do something to some, to see some do something to some, to see some one do something to some, to feel some one do something to some, to hear some one do something to some, to feel some one do something to some one, to see some one do something to some one, to hear some one do something to some one (*MOA*, 838).

Here we have an ostensibly simple scenario (the experience of witnessing an event or partaking in some unnamed activity) relayed using very plain language in a manner that obliterates the act or series of acts being described. With its combined modification of determiners and pronouns such as "many," "something," "some," "one," the perception verbs "see," "hear," "feel," and the action verb "do," utter devastation is wreaked on the grammar and semantics of the words in the passage.

Reading this excerpt in its entirety one cannot but think of the appropriateness of Beckett's comment that in Stein's work we see "the fabric of

language [...] become porous,"[298] or indeed the appropriateness of Stein as an aesthetic model against whom Beckett situates his proposed "literature of the non-word"[299] in 1937. This passage also makes clear why it was that Beckett would have admired or envied Stein's ability to "violate" the English language "with knowledge and intention"[300] at a time when he felt unable to do so—the passage is written in English, yes, but such is the extent of the distortions Stein enacts on her prose that it is all but impossible to understand what is being said. Further still, all of this is done in a manner that appears almost effortless, the sequence has a sing-song quality and a lightness of touch that belies its complexity and the anarchic effect of its morphology on standard English dialect.

Moving on to the following short example from *The Making of Americans*:

> That is what I want to know about each one, being in them making of them ones succeeding, ones failing, ones succeeding and failing, ones failing and succeeding in being in living (*MOA*, 695).

In this short passage it is possible to identify single word renarrations ("one/s," "succeeding" and "failing) together with phrasal renarrations ("ones succeeding" and "ones failing"), and a longer phrasal renarration "ones succeeding and failing" and "ones failing and succeeding." The single word repetitions form a tripartite permutation with "one/s" being the nexus word through which the other two operate. "Succeeding" appears in immediate contact with "one" only to be separated before an almost immediate convergence: "ones succeeding, ones failing, ones succeeding." The longer phrasal renarration presents an interesting opportunity to examine a repetition that includes a modal change in that "ones

[298] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 519.
[299] *Ibid.*, 520.
[300] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 520.

succeeding and failing" recurs as a modal reconfiguration in "ones failing and succeeding." But are they semantically consistent? Not perhaps if the events being described are temporally specific, as this would see one individual or set of individuals first fail and then succeed, or vice versa. In this instance the terms would refer to different events. However, with no indication of temporal import in the passage the semantic consistency of these two phrases remains unresolved. A single sentence in *The Making of Americans* can contain several examples of resolved and unresolved repetitions relating to single words or phrases, and such repetitions can induce semantic change, but it is not always possible to ascertain whether this change is of a definite nature.

What this passage demonstrates is the potential for large-scale renarrative sequences to contain further smaller repetitions. These smaller repetitious events can themselves be analysed independently of their larger surroundings, to which they also contribute. This disproves Kawin's assertion that *Watt* is a text of permutations, not of repetitions. According to Kawin, "the repetitions in *Watt* are actually permutations."[301] Inherent to every permutation are repetitions of a modal variety that either induce or do not induce semantic change. Permutations are thus made up of repetitions and, in the same way, a text concerned with hypernyms and superordinate terms will necessarily be compiled out of hyponyms and smaller, more localised grammatical terms, as has been demonstrated throughout the previous sections.

I will now examine two longer passages, one from *Watt* and one from *The Making of Americans*. The first longer example is from an excerpt discussed

[301] Kawin, *Telling It Again and Again*, 131.

earlier in the chapter in relation to classifying Watt and Mrs Gorman as “men's men” or “women's women,” and the many permutations in between:

> Between Watt not a man's man and Mrs Gorman not a woman's woman? Between Watt not a woman's man and Mrs Gorman not a man's woman? Between Watt not a man's man and Mrs Gorman not a man's woman? Between Watt not a woman's man and Mrs Gorman woman's woman? Between Watt neither a man's nor a woman's man and Mrs Gorman neither a man's nor a woman's woman? (*Watt*, 122).

Throughout this passage we can clearly identify immediate contact repetitions (“man's man”/ “woman's woman”) and repetitions with interrupted contact (“man's man [...] man's man”). As the sequence extends the repetitions become more complicated, introducing repetitions that appear in immediate contact only to diverge, converge, and diverge again, as can be seen with “man's man” which diverges, converges, and diverges again: “man's man [...] woman's man [...] man's woman [...] man's man [...] man's woman [...] woman's man.” More complicated still is the repetition of “woman's woman” which can be classified as an immediate contact repetition that diverges, converges again, diverges yet again only to finally converge at the conclusion of the sequence: “woman's woman [...] woman's man [...] man's woman [...] man's woman [...] woman's man [...] woman's woman [...] woman's man [...] woman's woman?”(*Watt*, 122). Each of these modal recurrences arguably brings with it a semantic change. For example, a “man's man” is nominally different to a “woman's man” and one could push for the presence of a semantic difference in these two terms; i.e. that a “man's man” and a “woman's man” amount to slightly different types of men. But if both occur within the same individual man (that is, you have a man that is both a man's man and a woman's man), then both terms refer to the same person and a semantic

change is no longer applicable. Again this issue is unresolvable, despite the tenacity of Beckett's approach to completing the sequence.

What we have here is, however, more complicated than ascertaining the difference (if any) between a man's man and a woman's man, and it is made so by Beckett's use of the negative. Watt is neither a "man's man" nor a "woman's man" and Mrs Gorman is not a "woman's woman" nor a "man's woman." Yet the sequence is drawn from an attempt to ascertain the mutual attraction between Watt, a man and Mrs Gorman, a woman: "What was this in Mrs Gorman, what was this in Watt, that so appealed to Watt, so melted Mrs Gorman?"(*Watt*, 122). We are left then, once again, with a sequence of increased specificity that brings us no closer to knowing exactly what attracts the one to the other, or indeed, what it is either of them are if not "a man's man [...] a woman's woman [...] a woman's man" or a "man's woman?"(*Watt*, 122).[302]

Similar modal repetitions occur throughout *The Making of Americans*, though as with *Watt* I will examine only one larger sequence in detail. This excerpt occurs towards the latter sections of the novel, in a passage concerned with how David Hersland feels towards those that taught him as a child. The section moves from David Hersland's individual feelings about "almost every one teaching him when he was a young one"(*MOA*, 771) to a more universal inquisitiveness into the feelings of "some" towards their educators:

> Some are thinking, some are feeling, some are thinking some one is feeling, some are thinking some one is thinking, some are thinking some one is feeling and thinking, some are feeling some one is thinking, some

[302] It is important to note that these are not the only repetitions in this excerpt: The names Watt and Mrs Gorman reappear throughout, along with the determiner, preposition and conjunctions "Between [...] not a [...] nor a" or "Between [...] neither a [...] nor a" or "and."

> are feeling some one is thinking and feeling, some are feeling some one is feeling (*MOA*, 771-2).

This is a more complex example than the preceding two discussed, containing repetitions of the key words "some," "thinking," "feeling," and "one." Repetitions occur in phrase-length sections, what Frédéric defines as repetitions involving "more than one word"[303] and are subjected to modal rearrangement. The sequence opens with the all-inclusive statement "some are thinking, some are feeling," from which the subsequent permutations derive. Within the grouping of those that are "thinking," there are those that think only of an individual "some one" and of what they think this one is alternately thinking, feeling, or thinking and feeling. Similarly, within the grouping of those that are "feeling," there are those that focus only on an individual "someone" and what they feel this one is alternately feeling, thinking, or thinking and feeling. We can identify numerous immediate contact repetitions, but only by means of a segue away from the general "some" to the specific "some one" such as in the line "some are thinking some one is thinking, some are thinking," or "some are feeling some one is feeling" at the conclusion of the sentence.

"Some one" is part of the larger set "some" and thus presents the thoughts or feelings of individuals within this larger grouping; or, of what the larger grouping of "some" think or feel towards individuals within that group. This creates dissonance within the superordinate groupings of people, so that while all of those that are "thinking" are thinking in general, they are not all thinking the same thing. Similarly, in relation to the group of feelers, "some are feeling some one is thinking, some are feeling some one is thinking and feeling, some

[303] Frédéric, *La répétition: Étude linguistique et rhétorique*, 74. See Appendix: 2.

are feeling some one is feeling." While they are all clearly "feeling," they are clearly not feeling the same feelings. As in the previous examples, here again a straightforward grouping of people (a group of thinkers and feelers) becomes less straightforward as the passage becomes more detailed; leaving the reader with less and less certainty regarding these heretofore-harmonious categories. What these passages make explicit however, is the remarkably compatible nature of Beckett and Stein's respective strategies of repetition, when enacted on both a large and small scale throughout these comparatively early texts from each authors' *œuvre*.

Both authors enact large-scale renarrations that destabilise the semantics of the repeated units contained therein. These large and small-scale renarrations take the form of repeated modulated passages. Within these renarrated passages the terms repeated are either hypernymic or hyponymic, and the repetitions with syntactic modulation serve to make the hypernymic become hyponymic and vice versa. As has been made clear throughout this chapter, this methodology is repeatedly employed by both authors throughout each of these texts, and employed on a continuous and oscillating scale wherein the superordinate or general is made specific before some further syntactic rearrangement encourages yet a further oscillation from specific to superordinate. As the specifications get more specific, what was initially specific becomes general, and so on. The chapter will now conclude with a brief and recapitulatory analysis of the comparable nature of Beckett and Stein's adoption of repetition as a strategy for challenging inhibiting elements of formal English.

V. Lexical renarrations

> In Beckett, it is not multilingualism, interlingual interference, and mixing that are "artificial" or "unnatural," but language itself.[304]

Throughout both *Watt* and *The Making of Americans*, Beckett and Stein took to task specific aspects of the English language they found problematic and hindering to their attempts at writing in English. By subjecting the language to rigorous renarrations, they sought to transgress these limitations by exposing them to excessive semantic and syntactic stresses designed to instigate the metaphoric tears or porosities Beckett mentions throughout Kaun 1937.[305] For Stein, *The Making of Americans* was an attack not only on the temporal nature of narrative, but on certain specificities of tense. The completion of this novel seems to have rid her of much of the constraints she had felt prior to this mammoth task, and it is particularly noteworthy that the texts produced in the aftermath of *The Making of Americans* are noticeably truncated when compared to their predecessor. Noticeable too is Stein's apparent abandoning of semantic verisimilitude in certain works produced in the aftermath of *The Making of Americans*, a facet most apparent throughout *Tender Buttons*. This allows us to return to Kaun 1937 and Beckett's observation that Stein's writing was logographic, that it rendered the "fabric of the language [...] porous" and that is related in some way to a display of "nominalistic irony," a "necessary phase" "on the road towards" Beckett's "literature of the non-word."[306] It is important here to observe that logographs and logography are themselves a very basic form of

[304] Taylor-Batty, *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*, 179.
[305] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 518-19.
[306] *Ibid.*, 518-20.

synonymic repetition, one of the predominant facets at work throughout the technical machinations of *Watt* and *The Making of Americans*.

In her assessment of the repetitious act in Stein as one wherein "the gap between the signifier and signified is repeatedly emphasized, a gap that leaves room for continuous verbal play,"[307] Perloff comes very close to the point I wish to make here; namely, that Stein used the machinations of the English language to make the language of her prose writings insufficient as a communicative entity. Stein sabotages the facultative elements of the English language and inhibits words and word phrases from relaying that which they are ostensibly supposed to communicate. She does so by harnessing the technique of repetition and adapting it to serve as an acute and precise tool for destabilising the English language in the form of specific and deliberate renarrations. Stein is remarkably attuned to the effects of such repetitions on her prose narratives and many of her observations on the same, dispersed throughout the text of *The Making of Americans*, are fitting counterparts to contemporary analyses of the effects of repetition throughout *Watt*; specifically the effect these repetitions have on the semantic and syntactic security of the English language. Just as Montini observes that in Beckett "[la répétition] montrer comment une langue familière peut devenir étrangère,"[308] noted previously, Stein similarly notes that "categories that once to some had real meaning can later to that same one be all empty"(*MOA*, 440). That is to say, the language can be made strange from itself through the deliberate exercise of repetitious narrative acts. Montini's other observation regarding the effect of repetition in Beckett, namely that "de

[307] Perloff, *The Poetics of Indeterminacy*, 98-99.
[308] Montini, *"La bataille du soliloque,"* 175.

nouveaux mots prennent la place des anciens,"[309] has an almost word-for-word counterpart in Stein whose narrator in *The Making of Americans* observes of herself "sometimes I am using a new one [word], sometimes I feel new meanings in an old one"(*MOA*, 539).

As this chapter has made explicit, both *Watt* and *The Making of Americans* can be said to share a similar renarrative strategy, one that involves capitalising on the technique of repetition throughout large scale and imperfect[310] repetitious acts so as to expose the mechanics of the English language—both on a semantic and syntactic level. In doing so Beckett and Stein undermine and subvert the grammars of standard English dialect. Comparing *Watt* and *The Making of Americans* as texts that take on certain restrictive elements of the English language, with both texts situated as deliberate attempts at "getting away" from formal and formalising aspects of the English language and of the narratives construed through such formal English structures, not only renders Beckett and Stein's aesthetics as remarkably proximate, but it shows them repeatedly relying on and making use of the same techniques as a means of subverting the semantic and syntactic regularities of the English language.

Throughout *The Making of Americans* Stein constructs narratives that exist, as she puts it in *How To Write*, "out of allowed grammar"(*HTW*, 78). Similarly, Beckett's extreme variances on formal English, particularly throughout the latter sections of *Watt* wherein this relentless questioning of words and

[309] *Ibid.*, 148.
[310] Imperfect because the repetitious act, irrespective of whether it is analysed from a linguistic or philosophical perspective, is necessarily imperfect.

word order devolves into what Knowlson perceptively describes as "a language that is scarcely English at all":[311]

> *Of nought. To the source. To the teacher. To the temple. To him I brought. This emptied heart. These emptied hands. This mind ignoring. This body homeless. To love him my little reviled. My little rejected to have him. My little to learn him forgot. Abandoned my little to find him.* [...]
>
> *Deen did taw? Tonk. Tog da taw? Tonk. Luf puk saw? Hap! Deen did tub? Ton sparp. Tog da tub? Ton wonk.* [...]
>
> *Lit yad mac, ot og. Ton taw, ton tonk. Ton dob, ton trips. Ton vila, ton deda. Ton kawa, ton pelsa. Ton das, ton yag* (*Watt*, 142-3; italics in original).

The shells or word forms themselves are exploited, with both Stein and Beckett opting to extrapolate the full spectrum of signification potentials from the chosen word form; testing the boundaries of meaning, testing the medium itself. Determiners, for example, are shown to be indeterminate. Nouns name every "thing" of a specific "thing," but do little to convey anything of "the being in them." "The complete gamut of variation"(*MOA*, 474) of a given term is identical in appearance to that same term merely being repeated over and over and over again. Stein exploits this faculty by choosing non-committal but multivalent words; taking advantage of and harnessing the gamut of semantic potential latent in these simple language units, the minima that distinguished her work from that of Joyce. Every statement towards the specific becomes a statement of infinite variations within a system of infinite variants: "In each way of making kinds of them there is a different system of finding them resembling"(*MOA*, 290). We are continually reminded that, even without authorial trickery or clever repetitions, the exact meaning of a word changes from person to person: "I say to

[311] Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, 357.

myself that words can have a meaning to some one and a meaning to some other one"(*MOA*, 728).

Chapter Three:

Getting mixed: Verbs and adverbs, nouns and adjectives.

I. Verbs and adverbs: "Devised deviser devising"(*C*, 30).

i) Time: "Every one I have been describing I will be describing I am describing" (*MOA*, 551).

Of the major grammar units, Stein indicates a strong preference for verbs, stating in "Poetry and Grammar" that she "recognise[d] verbs and adverbs aided by prepositions and conjunctions with pronouns as possessing the whole of the active life of writing."[312] This preference is borne from what Stein classifies as their imprecision, citing them as useful to her in her writings because they frequently err:[313]

> It is wonderful the number of mistakes a verb can make and the same is true of its adverb. [...] verbs can be so [mistaken] endlessly, both as to what they do and how they agree or disagree with whatever they do. The same is true of adverbs.[314]

To engage in traditional models of relaying narrative is to make use of the inherent temporal falsities that accompany verb tense and are enhanced by adverbial suggestion. Verbs and verb tense specifically, Stein argues in "Narration 2," are responsible for what she refers to as "the inevitable narrative of anything" together with the "feeling that anything that everything had meaning as beginning and middle and ending,"[315] previously noted in Chapter Two. Similarly, as Beckett's narrator suggests elsewhere in *Texts for Nothing*,

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[312] Stein, "Poetry and Grammar" in *Writings: 1932-1946*, 320.
[313] From the perspective of a comparative study of two authors seeking to "abuse," "dissolve" or "violate" language, it is particularly notable that the aspects of grammar Stein identified as being most interesting are the very units she considers best capable of prompting error (SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1,* 518-20). This will be further discussed in Chapter Four.
[314] Stein, "Poetry and Grammar" in *Writings 1932-1946*, 314.
[315] Stein, "Narration 2," *Narration*, 25.

engaging in certain modes of narrative, specifically those that contain implicit temporal markers, is to become "dupes of every time and tense"(*TFN*, 11): "Yes, no more denials, all is false, there is no one, it's understood, no more phrases, let us be dupes, dupes of every time and tense"(*TFN*, 11). But while the resulting effect of mingled tenses may induce confusion, the mingling itself is not altogether random or chaotic. Rather it proceeds by meticulous approaches to re-stating the already said; processes that this chapter will make explicit are hallmarks of both authors' renarrative styles. For example, in the following excerpt from "Text for Nothing IV," Beckett seems to be attempting a move beyond the "inevitable"[316] beginnings, middles, and endings of narrative criticised by Stein:

> Then it all goes, all goes, and I'm far again, with a far story again, I wait for me afar for my story to begin, to end, and again this voice cannot be mine. That's where I'd go, if I could go, that's who I'd be, if I could be (*TFN*, 19).

This creation of a narrative space wherein time is uncertain—as are the differentiations between the concordant terms beginning and ending—is accomplished not through abstractions but through a controlled use of conjunctions in tandem with the strategic use of modal verbs. Throughout this chapter I will make clear that all such instances of linguistic uncertainty are enacted through the deliberate application of particular linguistically derived grammatical modifications.

Beckett does not go so far as to explicitly praise the error-prone nature of verbs, but his narrators make frequent commentaries regaling dissatisfaction with verb tense, such as the following directive from *Molloy* regarding the

[316] Stein, "Narration 2," *Narration*, 25.

pluperfect tense: "This should all be rewritten in the pluperfect"(*M*, 13). Aside from such explicit articulations of dissatisfaction with the extant tense of specific passages, Beckett's narrators also make deliberate decisions to adopt particular tenses, as in the following example from "Text for Nothing III": "No no, I'll speak not of the future, I'll speak in the future, as when I used to say, in the night to myself, Tomorrow I'll put on my dark blue tie [...] and put it on, when night was past"(*TFN*, 12).[317] Aside from the use of the modal and future tense "I will," the intentionality conveyed by this assertion is aided by the adverb "tomorrow" and the accompanying logographic phrase "when night was past." The same deliberate mentioning of verb tense also occurs in the text of *How It Is*, with the narrator listing off a variety of tenses, from past to conditional: "a little less so of no matter what no matter how no matter when a little less of to be present past future and conditional of to be and not to be come come enough of that on and end part one before Pim"(*HII*, 31). *How It Is* is a text that contains many such instances of temporal confusion, but beyond the explicit acknowledgements of "present past future and conditional"(*HII*, 31) mentioned previously, this temporal uncertainty is largely instilled by means of tense changes and adverbs that delimit specific time frames.

Montini observes that "L'histoire telle que Watt la raconta n'a de logique temporelle ni spatiale."[318] Such illogical temporal and spatial narratives continue through to the later writings, the texts Montini classifies as "bilingually

[317] In Chapter One it was noted that both authors frequently use the appearance of specific modifiers in their writings as opportunities to break from the narrative contract and engage in a direct address to the reader. Such opportunities occur most frequently in relation to specific modifiers such as pronouns and various punctuation marks but are particularly associated with unusual verb tenses—such as the "plethoric reflexive pronoun" (*Watt*, 4n1)—or even just a transition in verb tense from past to present say, or vice versa.
[318] Montini, *"La bataille du soliloque,"* 144.

francophone."[319] "Text for Nothing I" makes explicit reference to states of temporal melding similar to those found throughout *How It Is* wherein "All mingles, times and tenses"(*TFN*, 5):

> All mingles, times and tenses, at first I only had been here, now I'm here still, soon I won't be here yet, [...] for the moment I'm here, always have been, always shall be (*TFN*, 5).

In this passage the mingling of times and tenses occurs simultaneously.[320] This occurs by virtue of the fact that the nouns used are explicitly related to the act of relaying time, with definite changes of temporality suggested by means of a change of verb tense. The "head" or source terms from which the resulting modifications develop comes in the form of the statement "at first I only had been here." The adverb "still" indicates a temporal shift, with a transition from just arrival ("I only had been here") to being "still" there, as implied by the phrase "now I'm here still." Finally, the adverb "soon" and associated statement "soon I won't be here" seems to indicate a progression to a further state, the state of not being "here." But this assertion is thrown awry by the adverb "yet" coming as it does before a comma, a comma that would otherwise indicate a distinction between the clauses on either side of the "yet;" it suggests the figure is not yet at the place, despite the fact that they have just asserted they are "still here." Carrying on, the progression appears to reset and revert back to asserting a definite presence "here" "for the moment" followed by a double recurrence of the adverb "always," with "have been" and "shall be" employed to imply a perpetual presence at a place where "I'm here, always have been, always shall be." In this

[319] Montini, *"La bataille du soliloque,"* 178.
[320] Together with an additional querying of place. The role of the adverbs "here" and "there" will be discussed in section I part ii) of this chapter.

way, Beckett manages to instil an uncertainty into the narrative representations of both time and place by means of relatively straightforward verbal and adverbial renarrative modifications.

How It Is is a rewarding text to study in relation to temporal uncertainty brought about by tense changes and adverbial modifiers. A variety of approaches can be identified throughout, with early phrasal repetitions in the text consisting of single verbs repeated in a semantically consistent manner—albeit with a change in tense—while the figure of Pim too remains consistent throughout the repetitions (and thus throughout the temporal change): "be with Pim have been with Pim"(*HII*, 18). Later in the text this process is further complicated, as in the following lengthy example of "how it was" and "how it is" with Pim and Bom:

> how it was before Pim how it was with Pim how it is present formulation
> how it was before Bom how it is how it will be with Pim
> how it is how it will be with Bom how it will be before Pim
> how it was my life still with Pim how it is how it will be with Bom (*HII*, 113).

These instances of tense change occur in a somewhat more complex arrangement that takes in changing pronouns in the form of a second interlocutor (later in the text, a third), and changing prepositions in addition to a consistent and methodical transition from past, to present and future tenses of the verb "to be." Using Frédéric's terminology, this passage can be described as a phrasal repetition wherein the verb remains semantically consistent but where the repetitions incorporate a change in tense coupled with a recurrent back and forth between the figures Pim and Bom.

An alternative application of this process of un-doing semantic certainty by means of phrasal repetitions with altering modifiers is to be seen in the

following line from *How It Is*: "without food or thought of ever finding any or memory of ever having had any or notion of ever needing any"(*HII*, 97). This process is not explicitly concerned with creating temporal confusions through tense changes across otherwise unmodified phrasal repetitions. Rather it sees phrasal repetitions that incorporate a change of verb with every iteration, as opposed to a consistent verb that undergoes a change of tense with each iteration. The changing verb is counter-balanced by a consistency in repetition among the surrounding lesser modifiers, all of which remain largely unchanged through the repetitions of the phrase "or [verb] of ever finding any"(*HII*, 97). In *How It Is* the capacity of the narrator to specify the exact instance of occurrence is problematised by means of an instilled uncertainty regarding the present and the past, the relationship between these two distinct temporal periods, and whether there is crossover between them. This is accomplished by a literal change in tense from present to past, but with additional uncertainty relating to frequency provided by means of the adverb "sometimes"; a delimiter that serves to make the regularity of this occurrence less certain and the instance of occurrence less exact: "the kind I see sometimes see in the mud part one sometimes saw"(*HII*, 7).

The following two examples—both from *How It Is*—take this further by means of the addition of a third option, the future conditional:[321]

> and last that's where I have my life where I had it where I'll have it (*HII*, 43).

[321] These passages can also be considered strong examples for my argument that renarration is a preferable term to describe these instances of strategic narrative upending by means of verbal manipulation that distort (as opposed to denarrate) the actions of a repeated verbal unit.

> you'll have the two lives the three lives the life you had the life you have the life you'll have (*HII*, 112).

This passage disturbs the idea of a singular self by separating the individual into three various selves, with each self corresponding to a specific temporal period as indicated by the past present and future tenses used to relay these "three lives." The adjectival accompaniment to "life" is correspondingly modified from "two" to "three," replacing the singular life not once but twice and bringing the total number of lives attributed to the figure to three.

In a development on these sequential transitions from past to present and future, the following passage also employs this transition through three variations of the same verb (in past, present and future tenses) but introduces the auxiliary verb "to have" to indicate a growing alienation from self: "I'm said to have had before him with him after him a life I'm said to have"(*HII*, 52). Presenting the act of being alive through the buffered combination of the verb "said" and auxiliary verb "have" distances "life" and the act of "having a life" from the narrator. It is depersonalisation made literal (or lexical) through renarrative modification that actualises a distancing of the figure from that which the figure possesses naturally, with these assets or intrinsically personal resources instead attributed to him by an external agency, be that the figure or figures doing the "saying" here, or indeed by language itself.[322] Depersonalisation relayed through a transition to the auxiliary is also found in "Text for Nothing V" with the narrator distancing themself from the otherwise intrinsically personal activity of self-knowledge by means of a literal depersonalisation that involves transferring

[322] A similar tripartite repetition also takes place among the lesser modifiers here and concerns specificities regarding the speaker's relationship with "him," as relayed through the prepositions "before," "with," and "after."

that which is known by the individual ("all I know") to external figures in the form of the pronoun "they" and the auxiliary verb form "all I'm said to know": "it's they have taught me all I know, about things above, and all I'm said to know about me, they want to create me, they want to make me"(*TFN*, 24).

The predicaments described above largely relate to instances of temporal uncertainty. But the subversive potential of renarration with respect to verbs and verbal modifications is not limited to deferring the capacity to pinpoint exactitudes apropos time, as is encapsulated by the tripartite repetition of different derivatives of the verb "to be" from *Ill Seen Ill Said*: "Neither be nor been nor by any shift to be"(*Ill*, 53). The three iterations of the verb "to be" are respectively modified by the adverb "neither" and two uses of the conjunction "nor." This makes clear that such changes to verb tense not only affect temporal certainty throughout the narrative, but are similarly intrinsic to representations of identity. When employed across a range of modifiers this effect can be striking, as in the following example which sees the antithetical adjective and noun pair "viewless form" used in tandem with a tripartite series of verbs that defer temporal fixity to the act of description being described: "my viewless form described as ended, or to come, or still in progress, depending on the words"(*TFN*, 27). The deliberate use of semantically incompatible verbs not only creates semantic inconsistency and a certain temporal uncertainty around these figures, it also directly impacts on the figure's identity as a figure, because in being temporally uncertain they are also biologically uncertain, if not biologically improbable.

Similar instances of antonyms being used to distort narrativised accounts of living occurs in the following line from "Text for Nothing IX" which shows the

successive use of antonyms in tandem with semantically oppositional verbs related to being and the beginning and endings of life: “I'm dead and getting born, without having ended, helpless to begin, that's my life”(*TFN*, 38). Later again, the same technique is employed in *How It Is*: “as many as we are as many as we'll end if we ever end by having been something wrong there”(*HII*, 94). Finally, Stein, in a notable passage from *Everybody's Autobiography*, manages to effectively negate the difference between the act of “getting older” and being younger; albeit in a manner that is less restrictive than the technically acute use of modifiers seen in Beckett's work:

> I was getting older when I wrote the Autobiography, not that it makes much difference how old you are because the only thing that is any different is the historical fact that you are older or younger. One thing is certain the only thing that makes you younger or older is that nothing can happen that is different from what you expected and when that happens and it mostly does happen everything is different from what you expected then there is no difference between being younger and older (*EA*, 39).

As will be discussed in further detail throughout section II of this chapter and again in Chapter Four, both authors frequently employ lesser modifiers to instil antagonism or exacerbate already tenuous semantic relations between verb and adverb, between noun and adjective, or between any grammatical term and the adjunctive terms used to further delimit or define with further exactitude the item being described. In the case of temporal sense as it is relayed through verbs and adverbs, this is achieved through employing temporally incompatible words in apposition; that is to say, placing terms that are semantically inapposite in apposite syntactic arrangements. Verbs indicate explicit, or seemingly explicit, distinctions between temporal periods by means

of variations in tense. Certain adverbs can similarly assign an action to a temporally specific period, or to further delimit the temporal period indicated by their associated verb. Alternatively, as we shall see presently, they can also be employed not to delimit the temporal periods suggested by certain verbs but instead to differ from and undermine the verbs they are supposed (grammatically speaking) to be delimiting. The remainder of this section will focus on the role played by adverbs in the strategic disassembling of temporal certainty throughout the writings of both authors.

A straightforward example is to be found in the opening pages of "Text for Nothing I" where a statement in the present is retroactively applied to the plural past, with the addition of the adverb "always" to stress a certain unity of mind in the face of such temporal change: "we're of one mind, all of one mind, always were"(*TFN*, 5). In contrast, in the following passage, the adverb "up" remains consistent throughout two iterations, with a tense change to the verb "to give" instigating uncertainty regarding when "it" was given up, what "it" is, and how it related to the narrator, if at all: "Give up, but it's all given up, it's nothing new, I'm nothing new"(*TFN*, 41). The infinitive "give" is modified in repetition to its past participle "given," in the latter half of the statement this delimiting progression from infinitive to passive is reversed with a similar transition in the pronouns, from the impersonal "it's" to the personal "I'm," each accompanied by the statement "nothing new." A further example of an explicit denarrative elaboration that again draws on verbal representations of "being" occurs in *How It Is* by means of a transition from "will be" to "never been" with the aid of the adverbial close antonyms "soon" and "never" and the pronominal antonyms "no one" and "anyone": "soon there will be no one never been anyone"(*HII*, 51).

Similarly, the verb in the following example is repeated but modified to the negative and paired with the adverb “that,” later with the adverb “nothing,” to create a scenario where something transitions from being like “that” to not being like “that” to then being like “nothing”: “there are moments when it's like that, then they pass and it's not like that any more, never was like that, is like nothing, no resemblance with anything, of no interest”(*TFN*, 37).

Quantifying periods of time or pinpointing events with a temporal exactitude through the use of temporally appropriate adverbs in this way makes for instances of imprecision as opposed to further specificity in the work of both authors. The adverb “then,” for example, has a dual function. It can indicate the next event in a succession of events, as it does in the line “did he believe he believed then not couldn't any more”(*HII*, 63) where “then” precedes and initiates a transition from the interrogative and then affirmative assertion “did he believe he believed” to the negative “then not”(*HII*, 63). Or, it can refer to a distant, distinct period when it is frequently used alongside the adverb “now”:

> What with what feeling remains does he feel about now as compared to then? [...] As well inquire what he felt then as compared to before. [...] As then there was no then so there is none now (*C*, 13).

With “then” situated in the past, “now” situating an activity in the present, the adverb “soon” in the following examples serves to situate an activity in the yet-to-be realised future:

> I'm saying it now, I'll say it soon, I'll say it in the end, then end, then I'll be free to end, I won't be any more, it won't be worth it any more, it won't be necessary any more, it won't be possible any more, but it's not worth it now, it's not necessary now, it's not possible now, that's how the reasoning runs (*TFN*, 47-8).

In this passage the muddling of tenses regarding when a statement has been said is amplified by the contribution of the adverbs “now” and “soon” and later the adverb “then.” The adverbs create uncertainty regarding when the event has taken place and this effect can be equated to the dissolution of beginning, middle and ending advocated by Stein in “Narration 2.”

“Then” can also be employed to regale different temporal periods in a way that, as in the following example from *How It Is*, is particularly ambiguous: “flown then sudden same again then then where do I go from then to then and in between”(*HII*, 83). Beckett's phrasing here, specifically the pairings “from then to then” and “then then” can be compared to Stein's similarly turned phrase “not there, there is no there there” from *Everybody's Autobiography*: “anyway what was the use of my having come from Oakland it was not natural to have come from there yes write about it if I like or anything if I like but not there, there is no there there”(*EA*, 289). As discussed in Chapter Two, Stein favours the term “something” and employs it in pleonastic reiterations to describe the doing and the completion of an action: “Some one is doing something. Some have done something. What they have done they have done [...] Some one has done something”(*MOA*, 860). The “something” done is not known, beyond that the thing done can be delimited by the adverb “something,” which is of little use; as is the similarly oblique and recursive determination that this “something” done by the individual concerned can be described by the logographic phrase “what they have done they have done.” To attempt to assign a specific temporal period for this activity is all but impossible, yet the narrator has gone out of her way to state and re-state specificities regarding the event done. Despite this insistence,

all that can be ascertained comes through the guise of verb tense, which informs us that the event is in the past and that what has been done has, literally, been done.

The following description of time from *How It Is* sees the adverb "longer" paired with the similarly oblique adverbial pair "more and more": "silence more and more longer and longer silences vast tracts of time we at a loss more and more"(*HII*, 63). This pairing of opposites to describe a state of being "at a loss more and more" can be compared to Stein's observation "most is more than most"(*HTW*, 119) from *How To Write*. As with "more and more" or indeed with "longer," "most" is shown in this iteration to not equal "most," despite both terms being identical; the words themselves are shown to be ineffective in terms of convening the "most." The adverb "always" can also be employed to quantify a time period, in the following example, the period classified as "evening," but Beckett also exploits it so as to disrupt notions of temporal exactitude by declaring "evening" omnipresent: "evening after evening, and night after night, and all through the days, but it's always evening, why is that, why is it always evening"(*TFN*, 45). Evening is itself capable of functioning as an adverb as is "night," particularly when they are preceded by a preposition such as "after" as they are in the above example. This litany of adverbs describes an improbable time period wherein it is evening "evening after evening, and night after night, and all through the days." It can be compared to Stein's depiction of "A darker day [that] is not darker" from "Scenes" in 1922s *Geography and Plays*: "A darker day is not darker and the reason of that is that the impression being made it is continued until there is that change and the change is not coming, it has not that complexion"(*GP*, 98). As with the preceding examples wherein semantic

inconsistencies were imbued into the text by means of the biological improbability of the figures being described, these passages similarly tear at the boundaries of semantic sense by creating depictions of landscapes and temporal periods that exist in opposition to geographic, atmospheric, or meteorological probability.

A further instance of the impulse to employ adverbs to quantify rate of occurrence and its relationship with being occurs in the oscillation between "each time" and "sometimes" in *How It Is*: "the wish to laugh each time no sometimes three every ten four every fifteen that ratio try sometimes same ratio succeed sometimes same ratio"(*HII*, 95). The beginning of this passage sees a retracted assertion that the wish to laugh occurs "each time no sometimes," that is a clear instance of epanorthosis, or indeed of renarration. The latter section sees the narrator continue this epanorthotic impulse with an almost mathematical precision that merits comparison with the same technique employed elsewhere throughout Beckett, as in quantifying the regularity of farts in *Molloy* (*M*, 27-8). The following section will compare the methods adopted by both authors to destabilise representations of place through narrative by means of repetitions that incorporate verbal modifications.

ii) Place: "From here from here in from there to there"(*HTW*, 53).

> There's a way out of there, no no, I'm getting mixed, I must be getting mixed, confusing here and there, now and then, just as I confused them then, the here of then, the then of there, with other spaces, other times, dimly discerned, but no more dimly than now, now that I'm here, if I'm here, and no longer there, coming and going before the graveyard, perplexed (*TFN*, 39).

Depictions of place by means of verbs relating to movement or the journeying towards or away from a specific place give rise to some of the most frequently observed instances of de- and renarration involving verbal modifiers in Beckett and Stein. The following line from "Text for Nothing I" can be considered a typical application of the technique of denarration of the standard format brought to our attention in Richardson's essay on same:[323] "I could have stayed in my den, snug and dry, I couldn't"(*TFN*, 3). The initial statement is repeated with the modal verb tweaked to the negative so as to retract the initial statement; a variation of epanorthosis that is specific to the technique of denarration. The following passage from "Text for Nothing XIII" sees a more complex instance wherein place and presence are grammatically intertwined, achieving something more complicated that a simple switch from assertion to retraction: "but it's ended, we're ended who never were, soon there will be nothing where there was never anything"(*TFN*, 52). There is the now expected transition from the impersonal pronoun "it" to the personal "we"("it's ended, we're ended), but the more syntactically interesting passage comes later with the ontologically complex statement "we're ended who never were" together with this similarly paradoxical, geographic observation, "soon there will be nothing where there was never anything"(*TFN*, 52). This latter statement sees Beckett achieve an elegant instance of aporia in the form of his equation of "nothing" and "anything." With "nothing" being situated at a point where there was "never anything" the passage thus devolves into an Epimenidian paradox.

Throughout *How To Write* Stein creates moments of indecision that are comparable to Watt's predicament wherein "the coming is in the shadow of the

[323] Richardson, "Denarration in Fiction: Erasing the Story in Beckett and Others," 168–75.

going and the going is in the shadow of the coming"(*Watt*, 48). She accomplishes this through the use of statements that query the distinction between the verbs "came" and "went" and an instance of motion indecision that is very much akin to that encountered by many of Beckett's characters:

> What is the difference between came and went (*HTW*, 83).
>
> Any time they go they stay (*HTW*, 20).

Placed alongside the following examples from Beckett, it becomes clear that statements that incorporate verbal renarrations are less particular to Beckett's work than critics such as Clément lay claim.[324] Rather, they are reflective of a particular and distinct technique that was also employed with regularity throughout the writings of Stein:[325]

> How can I go on, I shouldn't have begun, no I had to begin (*TFN*, 3).
>
> I'll be able to go on, no, I'll be able to stop, or start (*TFN*, 42).
>
> can't go on one goes on as before can one ever stop put a stop that's more like it one can't go on one can's stop put a stop (*HII*, 78).

The trigger for each redaction in these examples appears to be a dissatisfaction with the verb used in the first iteration. Each re-statement involves a modification to the preceding verb, be that in the form of tense change (temporal), a change from positive to negative, or a semantic recalibration to reflect an alternative (often semantically oppositional or antonymic) position.

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[324] Bruno Clément, *L'Œuvre sans qualités: Rhétorique de Samuel Beckett* (Paris: Seuil, 1994), 242.
[325] If, as I assert elsewhere, we can roughly date Beckett's reading of Stein's "logographs" to the years between the late 1920s and early to mid 1930s, this would suggest that Beckett perhaps first encountered this particular technique of renarration employed as a means of instilling semantic indeterminacy when he came across the "logographs" of Stein he references in Kaun 1937. See Nugent-Folan,"'Ill buttoned': Comparing the representation of objects in Samuel Beckett's *Ill Seen Ill Said* and Gertrude Stein's *Tender Buttons*," 54-82.

Stein is less concerned with crafting semantically coherent narratives than Beckett, and semantic tearing (metaphorically speaking) is something of a priority, if not an explicit authorial agenda, particularly throughout texts such as *Tender Buttons* and *How To Write*. The following example displays not only her willingness to take these renarrative manipulations further than Beckett,[326] but her virtuosity as a writer in terms of her capacity to actually do so: "A grammar is why they made their own in the way they were after they had not liked where they went"(*HTW*, 91).[327] The sole explicit noun in this passage is "grammar," with the pronouns "they" and "their" appearing in statements that contribute to an overall temporal uncertainty through their recurrence attached to verbs that alter from past to present and back again ("made," "were," "had not," "likes," "went"), creating a confusing and syntactically complex sentence that convincingly relays the indecision surrounding where it is these they-figures are.

Aside from the instances of single word repetition of verbs wherein the verb is repeated unchanged or with a slight modification to tense, as seen throughout the preceding section on time, we again here encounter renarrative elaborations that employ antonyms of the head term. In the following two examples relating to movement, this serves to infuse the act of movement with a curious stasis, and presents the act of progress by means of forward motion as a counteractive, asymptotic process:

[326] To take this process beyond the states of extreme semantic and lexical ambiguity seen throughout Beckett's mid-to-late texts is a not insignificant achievement, if we remember that, throughout the *Texts for Nothing* and later works such as *How It Is*, Beckett is himself operating at the limits of semantic sense.

[327] This is important author-specific counterpoint to Van Hulle's contention as to "whether the modernists' own rhetoric is an adequate starting point for the literary analysis of their works"(Van Hulle, *Modern Manuscripts*, 2).

> She still without stopping. On her way without starting. Gone without going. Back without returning (*Ill*, 53).
>
> Toward but never nearer (*Ill*, 55).

These two passages are all but identical in sentiment to a similar account of troubled perambulations found in Stein: "Any time they go they stay"(*HTW*, 20). This line in particular stands out as an instance of finely distilled, strategic renarration that disrupts the semantic fabric of the passage in much the same way as Beckett's "still without stopping. On her way without starting. Gone without going. Back without returning"(*Ill*, 53).

The following passage from "Text for Nothing XII" sees the disjunction between past and present made literal through a rapid change from past to future tense in relation to a place the narrator first suggests they were, but quickly switches to instead refer to a yet-to-be arrived at place: "It's a winter night, where I was, where I'm going, remembered, imagined, no matter, believing in me, believing it's me"(*TFN*, 49). This switch in verb tense is nicely mirrored by the related pairing "remembered, imagined." The subsequent observation that the difference between these two states is of "no matter," suggests indifference or apathy on the part of the narrator, but in the context of the semantic difference between these radically different verbs, the observation "no matter" holds much in common with Stein's frequent observations regarding mass-similitude across the English language. Indeed earlier in *Texts for Nothing*, specifically in "Text for Nothing IV," the narrator makes this immateriality all but explicit: "What counts is to be in the world, the posture is immaterial"(*TFN*, 19).

In the following example the issue of place is made ontological by means of a pairing of place with presence or being:

> Those evenings then, but what is this evening made of, this evening now, that never ends, in whose shadow I'm alone, that's where I am, where I was then, where I've always been (*TFN*, 47).

The consistency of identity across temporal periods is here probed by means of recurrent iterations of the verb "to be" in different tenses (am/was/always been) in a similar manner to the passages examined earlier. The capacity to delimit specific periods of time is similarly challenged by the marked uncertainty discernable regarding the limits of the temporal period corresponding to the adverb "evening" which is itself repeated with a litany of accompanying adverbial modifiers: "those evenings then," "this evening," "this evening now." This same pairing of uncertainties of space or place and instances of depersonalisation is seen earlier in *Texts for Nothing*, as in the line "No point under such circumstances in saying I am somewhere else, someone else"(*TFN*, 19) from "Text for Nothing IV."

In the following example, depersonalisation is realised literally by means of a transition from the present tense of "to be" to "I would be," again showing how verbal machinations when employed in a renarrative format can give rise to situations of an ontological nature: "I'm tired of it, I'd be tired of it, if I were me. It's a game, it's getting to be a game, I'm going to rise and go, if it's not me it will be someone"(*TFN*, 23). The introduction of the modal verb "would" is accompanied by a radical change in the narrator's confidence in the pronouns they use when referring to themself. This doubting of the "I" and "me," together with the conjunction "if" serves to further query the relationship between figure and feeling. Cordingley observes how, throughout "*Comment c'est* / *How It Is* proper names appear to occupy a position in a geometric series [...] their

sequence seeking a model of consistent and precise expositions in language."[328] Stein makes use of modal verbs to engineer sentences through similarly "precise expositions"[329] to those noted by Cordingley, instigating identity mix-ups by creating sentences out of terms that share close, if not identical, phonemes. The word "May" in the following example is capable of functioning alternately as a proper noun or a modal verb depending on the context of its use: "May may be Mary. Mary may be at stake. Mary may be Mabel Mabel may be may fairly May Mary"(*HTW*, 69). This passage in itself merits immediate comparison with what Banfield nicely classifies as "the infinite series of 'brotherly likes,' Murphy, Molloy, Malone, Mercier, and Camier, Pim, Pam, Bem, Bom, Kram, Krim, Skom, Skum"[330]; though in this instance Beckett's series of names is more lexically diverse and not as phonemically nuanced as Stein's.

Less ontologically weighted examples occur elsewhere throughout Beckett, such as the following use of verbal antonyms to create the familiar Beckettian trope of a figure debating their capacity to "go on": "Suddenly, no at long last, I couldn't any more, I couldn't go on. Someone said, You can't stay here. I couldn't stay there and I couldn't go on. I'll describe the place, that's unimportant"(*TFN*, 3). The act of going is placed in counterpoint with the act of staying, while the decision to act, initially declared as one that came about "suddenly" is instead re-classified as something that came about "at long last"; another antonymic reversal that again takes the form of a renarrated variant on epanorthosis. Finally, the figure's inability to stay "here" is followed by a lexical demonstration of his very distance from "here," one that is made lexically explicit

[328] Cordingley. "Beckett and 'l'ordre naturel': The Universal Grammar of *Comment c'est/ How It Is*," 189.
[329] *Ibid*.
[330] Banfield, "Beckett's Tattered Syntax," 9.

by the fact that figure refers to “here” as “there.” Uncertainty regarding the ability to be truly “here” is also seen earlier in “Text for Nothing VI” and “ Text for Nothing IX” respectively:

> I'd join them with a will if it could be here and now, how is it nothing is ever here and now? (*TFN*, 25).
>
> now, now that I'm here, if I'm here, and no longer there, coming and going (*TFN*, 39).

In the first example the “here and now,” or the co-existence of temporal immediacy and spatial presence, is declared impossible through the use of the modal “could” together with the conjunction “if.” In the second, the narrator first tentatively situates themself as being “here” before the conjunctive “if” queries this “here,” while the re-introduction of the adverb “there” again makes these two places distinct.

Stein creates a similar melding of differential adverbially constructed places in her exposure of the adverbs “here” and “there” to an aporetic scenario wherein “here” and “there” are shown to be semantically (and thus geographically) homogenous:

> From here from here in from there to there.
> From here.
> From here from here to from here to there (*HTW*, 53).

This example sees a relatively straightforward manipulation of the anagrammatic and phonemic relationship between “here” and “there.” The sentences invite a reading that sees “here” in “there.” This is largely because of the preposition “in,” but it is a reading that is enhanced by the allophonic similarities between “here” and “there,” that is to say the “-ere” that ends both

terms, together of course with the fact that the word "here" is literally "in" the word "there." This problematises the spatial distinction supposedly relayed by the adverbs "here" and "there" by presenting them as equivalent. Stein's equating of the "here" and "there" here can be contrasted with her famous observation "not there, there is no there there"(*EA*, 289). Taken from *Everybody's Autobiography* the line has largely been read exclusively in relation to its context within the autobiography itself, as a reference to Stein's ambivalence towards one of her childhood homes, specifically the town of Oakland, California. In this passage Stein refutes the "thereness" of "there," of Oakland, California. This can be considered an apposite phrase and an acute relaying of her disaffection towards this particular location because "there is no there there"(*EA*, 289) indicates that, for Stein, there is no comfort or nothing soothing to be found there.[331] Yet, it is also an example of Stein working at her most grammatically astute and anarchic, by declaring there to be "no there there" she literally declares two identical words to be dissimilar, and does so in a manner that is so well rendered that it has been all but eclipsed in favour of the preferred critical tendency to read Stein's work solely in the context of her biography and personal disaffection for Oakland.

While Stein may find "here" in "there" but struggle to locate a "there" in "there," Beckett's narrator in "Text for Nothing IX" is attempting to alternately get "out of there" and get "out there":

[331] "7 [...] *there-there* vb. trans., to soothe or comfort by saying these words." "there, adv. (adj. and n.). OED Online. December 2015. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/200471?rskey=NudXjK&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed January 05, 2016).

> There's a way out of there, there's a way out of somewhere. [...] I'd get there somehow, to the way out, sooner or later, if I could say, There's a way out there, there's a way out somewhere, the rest would come, the other words, sooner or later, and the power to get there, and the way to get there (*TFN*, 38-40).

The verb and directive regarding the existence of a "way out" first occurs in relation to a specific place in the form of the adverb "there"(once "there," the figure would, we assume, subsequently refer to themselves as being "here" as to use the word "there" implies an intended place as opposed to an occupied place). This directive and the phrase in its entirety is repeated, but with the place altered from "there" to "somewhere." Thus we have a proto-specific site ("there") identified and immediately made less proximate and less determinate— "There" is indeed "somewhere" but "somewhere" may not always refer to "there." In contrast, in the earlier "Text for Nothing VI," "there" and "somewhere" are declared concordant: "did I ever believe I was there, somewhere in that ragbag, [...] perhaps I'm still there, as large as life, merely convinced I'm not"(*TFN*, 26).

That this oscillation between here, there, and elsewhere is ongoing throughout the narrative landscapes of Beckett's *Texts for Nothing* is clear from the number of instances where Beckett establishes distinctions between these adverbs only to then redact them and declare such distinctions unimportant or non-functional. Like Stein's attempts at finding "here" in "there," or her failure to find "there" in "there," the apparent inconclusiveness of these adverbs comes to read as deliberate incitements to err; an action that, as Stein notes, is a particular habitude of verbal and adverbial modifiers. This is something Beckett similarly seems to note and capitalise on in relation to his treatment of the verbs and adverbs relating to place, as can be seen from his suggestion that, much like the

"no symbols where none intended" of *Watt* (*Watt*, 223), distinctions of place all amount to something of an "infinite here": "Elsewhere perhaps, by all means, elsewhere, what elsewhere can there be to this infinite here?"(*TFN*, 25). Or similarly, Stein's declaration in "An Elucidation" that there is "in a place a place for everything": "Place, In a place. A place for everything and everything in its place. In place a place for everything, in a place."[332]

It becomes apparent that such instances of geospatial semantic disturbance brought about by manipulating verbal and adverbial modifiers are often accompanied by similarly relayed imprecisions in other areas, be that through a questioning of nominal or pronominal terms, or, as has been seen throughout the previous section, in temporally imprecise suppositions regarding when or where various events will occur, or have occurred. These renarrative elaborations frequently take on the characteristics of the rhetorical epanorthosis with each iteration discrediting the preceding sentence or statement; not necessarily denarrating it, rather renarrating so that it re-appears in a slightly modified format. The following section will explore these technical machinations when they are employed by both authors in relation to the act of speech.

iii) Speech: "As I was saying"(*MOA*, 322).

Van Hulle and Richardson both delineate examples of denarration in relation to speech-acts throughout their respective essays on denarration.[333] Building on these instances of speech-centred denarration, the following examples from *How It Is* concern instances of renarration that are all

[332] Stein, "An Elucidation" in *A Stein Reader*, 431.
[333] See Richardson, "Denarration in Fiction: Erasing the Story in Beckett and Others," 168-75; Van Hulle, "The Obidil and the man of glass: denarration, genesis and cognition in Beckett's *Molloy, Malone meurt/Malone Dies* and *L'innommable/The Unnamable*," 26-39.

accomplished by similar verbal modifications relating to speech acts. The sentences that follow are all syntactically complex. This syntactic complexity and the associated semantic uncertainties are further enabled by the lack of punctuation throughout *How It Is*; a lack of punctuation that is similarly exploited by Stein throughout *How to Write*:

> the voice goes on a few words it can stop it can go on depending on what it's not known it's not said (*HII*, 74).
>
> no nothing I said nothing I say it as I hear it I said always brief movements (*HII*, 80).
>
> YES OR NO I don't know I won't know I didn't ask I won't be asked (*HII*, 68)

These repetitions are largely accompanied by a modification of the associated verbs in the form of a change in tense, altering the verb from a positive to a negative iteration, or altering the verb to an unrelated or altogether antonymic activity.

Throughout *The Making of Americans* Stein displays a thorough commitment to her assault on "inevitably feeling that anything that everything had meaning as beginning and middle and ending"[334] when she relentlessly reiterates first, that which is being said, and second, that which has just been said:

> As I am saying [...]. Some as I was saying [...]. Some [...] as I am saying [...] some, some as I am saying [...] some, some as I am saying [...] as I am now saying [...] some as I am now saying (*MOA*, 760).
>
> As I was saying there are many that I know and I know it, there are many that I know and they know it, they are many that I know and I tell it. There

[334] Stein, "Narration 2," *Narration*, 25.

> are many that I know and I know it, there are many that I know and they know it, there are many that I know and I tell it, I know it and I tell it, they repeat it and I see it, and I hear it and I feel it and I tell it (*MOA*, 322).

Similarly, the following example, this time from Beckett, sees the phrase "what have I said" repeated with modifications to the semantic content coming in the form of a tense change so that "what have I said" becomes "I've said something": "what sun what have I said no matter I've said something that's what was needed seen something called it above said it was so said it was me [...] I have it I had it"(*HII*, 74). A further repetition sees the tense remain consistent (that is, the past tense is retained) but the verb itself is altered to "seen something." As is becoming customary, one of these iterations also includes a query of authorship or agency in the form of the line "said it was so said it was me." Whereas Beckett relies on tense changes to impart temporal change here, Stein in the following example from *The Making of Americans* pairs a repeated phrase containing the modal verb "would"("would be happening") with the adverb "sometimes" to delimit the temporal period during which "something" can happen; using adverbs as opposed to verbs to specify when an event occurs: "When he came to be certain that something would be happening, sometimes something would be happening"(*MOA*, 879).

This method of exploiting the adverb to specify a temporal instance is similarly discernible in Beckett's *Texts for Nothing* and *How It Is*, as the following examples from each of these texts attest:

> no one feels anything, asks anything, seeks anything, says anything, hears anything, there is only silence (*TFN*, 53).

> nothing then suddenly something then suddenly nothing suddenly afar the silence (*HII*, 8).

These acute deployments of the adverbs "something" and "anything" merit comparison with the following representative passage from *The Making of Americans*:

> Being one saying something, having been saying that thing is what any one is doing in being one being living. Saying something, saying anything, having been saying something is what any one is doing in being in any family living. Saying it then, having said it again, having said something, [...] and being living, having been being living, beginning not being living, beginning being living in any family living. Saying anything, saying anything again, saying something and not then saying it again, saying something again, going on saying anything again is what some are doing who are then not beginning being in any family living. Saying anything again, saying something then, saying something again and then not saying anything is what some are doing, is what some are doing again (*MOA*, 915).[335]

Instances of denarration in Beckett regularly take the form of a transition from assertion to redaction in the form of a simple repetition with the repeated verb modified from positive to negative, or vice versa. Stein takes a somewhat different approach to undoing the assertions of preceding clauses to Beckett, as the following lines from *The Making of Americans* attests: "He was telling something. He was not mentioning again and again that he was telling

[335] A similar sequence occurs two pages later in the novel:

> When some one has done something, that one might then do that thing again. When some one has done something and some other one has done something and both of them have not then been doing some other thing, both of them might do something and one of them might do that thing and tell the other one and the other one might then be one going on doing the same thing. When some one has done something that one might then do that thing again. When some one has done something and has then not done something that one might then do that thing again might then might then do something and then not do something. When some one has done something and some other one has then some something and it is a similar thing and they both then have not been doing something, they have similarly not been doing something then, they might be doing something and not doing something together (*MOA*, 917).

something. He was telling something"(*MOA*, 892). What is being told is left unclear, classified only as "something." This act of "telling something" is followed by a "not mentioning again and again that he was telling something." This unusual application of the negative makes sense semantically, but at the same time, to make a note of "not mentioning" "something" while nevertheless "telling [this] something" conjures up a complex and arguably impossible scenario wherein things are not mentioned, while still being said. To bring up something someone is not doing while what it is they are doing is veiled and identified only by the vague term "something" further shrouds the activities in semantic uncertainty. Similarly, in the line "I would gladly eat something but I won't eat anything"(*HII*, 36), the initial statement regarding the figure's willingness to eat "something" is followed by a redaction that employs verb and adverb to negate the preceding statement. Instead of gladly eating "something" then, they will instead not eat "anything," leaving the reader wondering about the differences, if any, between "something" and "anything."

The preceding series of examples make explicit the fact that both authors regularly make use of renarrations that involve modifications to verbs and adverbs wherein the head terms are consistently repeated in an unaltered manner while the surrounding lesser modifiers are altered. Conversely, at times, the modifiers remain consistent but the head term they delimit changes, as in the following example where the adverb "nothing" remains consistent while the associated verbs change: "hearing nothing saying nothing capable of nothing nothing"(*HII*, 53).[336] Similarly, in the line "no one feels anything, asks anything,

[336] Here in passing we can connect this with the "ill-said ill-heard ill-recaptured ill-murmured"(*HII*, 3) process regularly invoked throughout *How It Is.*

seeks anything, says anything, hears anything, there is only silence"(*TFN*, 53) the adverb "anything" remains consistent while the associated verbs—all sensory related—change. And again, in the following example the phrase "you are said" remains consistent while its accompanying modifiers in the form of past participles and nouns undergo change, with "had" becoming "made" and "tormentor" becoming "victim": "when the whole tale is told the tormentor you are said to have had then lost the journey you are said to have made the victim you are said to have had then"(*HII*, 112).

Throughout the work of both authors, assertions and declarations made by the narrator or narrators are frequently returned to so as to seek reassurance regarding the validity of what has been said. This activity, when taken to the excessive lengths seen throughout the writings of both authors, serves to undermine the acts described. That Stein deliberately invited such attention to her writings is made explicit in "Narration 2," wherein she states: "I felt that I had to know what I knew."[337] Much like the instances of pronominal self-checking that will be discussed in Chapter Four, this statement implies that the act of knowing alone, as conveyed through the present tense or infinitive of the verb "to know," is no longer satisfactory. Beckett's figure in *How It Is* engages in a similar form of self-analysis "in the familiar form of questions I am said to ask myself and answers I am said to give myself however unlikely that may appear"(*HII*, 126). A further instance of meta-interest in the words that have just been uttered by the narrator occurs earlier in *How It Is*, in the form of a double emphasis on seeking out while setting out: "as when he sets out to seek out all of him sets out to seek out the true home"(*HII*, 89). The emphasis or specificity

[337] Stein, "Narration 2," *Narration*, 24.

achieved through zooming in so closely on the act of setting out ends up inferring a delay to the action of "setting out"; as though the verb "set out" is itself not considered sufficient evidence that the activity has been initiated, completed, or is even underway. The point where one action (setting out or seeking out) ends and the other (seeking out or setting out) begins is unclear. It can be compared to Stein's query on the exact point when a premeditation becomes a meditation:

> Premeditated meditation concerns analysis.
> Now this is a sentence but it might not be.
> Premeditated. That is meditated before meditation (*HTW*, 32).

Many of these statements can be classified as tautological. Here again there is room for explicit comparison between Stein and Beckett as can be seen when the following two observations from *How To Write* are placed alongside a single, similarly tautological example from *How It Is*:

> Wait for what you are waiting for (*HTW*, 31).
>
> Forget with or without. With or without forget with or without. Forget to forget to forget with or without (*HTW*, 152).
>
> nothing ever as much as begun, nothing ever but nothing and never, nothing ever but lifeless words (*TFN*, 50).

Aside from labelling such passages as deliberate tautologies, in the context of Beckett and Stein's shared dissatisfactions with received language, it is more useful to see them as further evidence of the extreme and exacting attention they paid to the grammars of the language; asking questions of the most banal terms, such as, as in the above example, whether the act of waiting entails waiting, or whether a verb such as "to wait" or "waiting" is inherently related to the act of "waiting." Again, this is akin to the lines "when he sets out to seek out all of him

sets out to seek out the true home"(*HII*, 89) from Beckett and "Premeditated. That is meditated before meditation (*HTW*, 32) discussed previously. Each of these examples clearly show the authors deliberately manipulating the semantics and functional tasks of the terms they employ so as to undermine their semantic and functional efficacy; using language against language in a full-scale assault on the "Grammar and style" of "formal English" that has clearly moved beyond the demonstrations of "nominalistic irony"[338] Beckett begrudgingly embraces in Kaun 1937.

Aside from studying the ways in which a verb may relate or differ from itself, both authors also query the differences between semantically proximate terms, and not just in relation to adverbs denoting place as in Stein's interrogations of "there" and "here" or the "something" and "anything" passages discussed previously. The following sees Stein noting the differences between the modal verbs "can" and "does," and the differences between "that is" and "that which is":

> Good flour can make good bread is not the same as good flour does make good bread. Good flour does make good bread is not the same as good flour can make good bread. [...]
>
> That is a little better that which is a little better is that (*HTW*, 90; 93).

In both of these examples a contrast is established between grammatically correct and incorrect word pairings. In setting up such explicit contrasts, Stein questions whether there really are tangible differences between correct and incorrect sentence structures, between "That is" and "that which is"(*HTW*, 93). At all times, Stein appears hyper-aware of the implications of seemingly minor

[338] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 518-20.

differences and the potential such minor diffractions of semantic sense have in terms of disrupting surety or semantic certainty within the narrative; turning a relayed piece of information from something certain to something uncertain through tweaks in the accompanying grammars of the phrase: "It is different to say it looks like it and it seems like it"(*HTW*, 188). It is unsurprising then, that in such landscapes of verbal and adverbial insecurities, there are regular asides that serve to assert uncertainty. Stein's excessive use of the adverb "perhaps"(*MOA*, 762) throughout *The Making of Americans* is an example of this, as is the regular appearance of the verb "Supposing"(*TB*, 38) throughout *Tender Buttons*. The adverb "quite" in "I am quite certain that this is certain"(*MOA*, 725) is employed to perform a similar function to that achieved by Beckett with the adverb "presumably" in the observation "proper names presumably"(*HII*, 69).

Making a meaning, or making meaning, together with the issue of "authorship" or "origin" is a central concern of Beckett's *Company*. This centrality is reflected in the following tripartite repetition stemming from the verb "devised," with "devised" first appearing as a verb, then as a noun, then as a verb again: "Devised deviser devising it all for company"(*C*, 30). The complications surrounding issues of ownership are similarly conveyed by Stein in *How To Write*, this time through renarrative machinations beginning with the verb "to own": "The own owned own owner"(*HTW*, 131). Variants on the concept of ownership here recur throughout four immediate repetitions, with "owned" and "owner" in each instance being modified by the adjective "own." The exact semantic meaning of each term denoting "ownership" varies, as indeed does their functionality, with the term "owner" being in the unusual and perhaps inappropriate grammatical situation of being "owned." A similar approach to

verbal renarration occurs in the following passage from Beckett's *Company*, which sees a renarrative sequence involving variants on the activities of "crawling," "creation," and the created nominal counterpart of the "creator," the "creature":[339] "Can the crawling creator crawling in the same dark as his creature create while crawling? [...] Could not conceivably create while crawling in the same create dark as his creature"(*C*, 34-5).

Meaning is repeatedly shown to be contingent on grammatical phraseology, specifically in the form of tense changes, with many instances identifiable in the work of both authors wherein the narrator interrogates the efficacy of preceding statements. In the following example from *How To Write* a query regarding the more appropriate of two interrogative adverbs ("how or have") is succeeded by a similar query regarding verb tense and its relation to meaning-making:

> How or have. A sentence is.
> Made or make a meaning (*HTW*, 26).

Stein displays an acute awareness of the implications of tense changes. This awareness is accompanied by a contingent capacity to capitalise on the meaning-making facets of language structure as yet another specific technical and methodical approach to turning language against itself by means of repetition with modifications to the grammars of the repeated passage or word: "Call has been replaced by called. They called is they called they were there as it they had called to him"(*HTW*, 118).

To conclude this section's analysis of verbs and adverbs, I will summarise the techniques identified throughout the writings of both authors. Stability of

[339] This passage is also a close epanalepsis.

semantic meaning in one aspect of the statement enables the introduction of semantic indeterminacy in the other; so in order to enable semantic modification at least one aspect of the sentence or passage needs to retain stability, functioning as an anchoring device so that the reader can identify the grammatical indiscretion when and where it occurs and register its effect on the surrounding narrative. In the writings of both authors this is performed with almost surgical precision, and while this is something of a characteristic of Beckett's work, it has not always been considered characteristic of Stein's. What these previous sections have made explicit however, is that while Stein is certainly less concerned with maintaining semantic sense throughout a given sentence or passage, her endeavours to undermine semantic certainties are enacted in a meticulous and precise manner and by means of systematic redactions and modifications to an initial phrasal assertion. These systematised renarrations, when delineated, are shown to be as procedural as Beckett's own. Aside from clear instances of epanorthosis, there are phrasal repetitions or near repetitions which see clauses repeated with different associated verbs, while the surrounding supportive modifiers remain consistent, as in the following example where the adverb “the same” remains “the same”: “unwitting that each always leaves the same always goes towards the same always loses the same always goes towards him who leaves him always leaves him who goes towards him our justice”(*HII*, 99). The following section will examine the comparable nature of Beckett and Stein's approach to the compromising of semantic certainty apropos nouns and adjectives.

II. Nouns and Adjectives: "a white way of being round"(*TB*, 13).

Stein's distaste for the noun was made abundantly clear throughout the examples discussed in Chapter One. Stein queried the need for nouns in sentences by asking "Why write in nouns."[340] She declared them "by definition completely not interesting,"[341] and later claimed "There should not be a noun"(*HTW*, 146). Perloff picks up on this nominal ambivalence and presents it in the context of Stein's contemporaries, noting that while "the noun or noun phrase was obviously central to Eliot [...] and even more so to Pound [...] Stein regularly dismissed the noun as the least interesting part of speech."[342] Despite this ambivalence however, for an extended period during the 1910s, a period during which Stein produced works such as *Tender Buttons*,[343] Stein looked extensively at nominal word forms and specifically experimented with the idea of providing replacement titles for nouns that were already in existence—nouns Stein deemed insufficient and unsatisfactory. Throughout this period Stein focused her considerable creative energies on nominal revisions and attacked the fabric of language through the relatively straightforward format of "asking questions" of the noun: "A noun provokes questions. Therefor a noun can be tried. A noun can be asked"(*HTW*, 156). This passage sees Stein employ a straightforward revisionist approach to the sections within the narrative she finds faulty, specifically "nouns" as represented by the noun "noun." The sentence containing the word "noun" states that "noun[s] provoke questions," followed by the consequential summation that such nouns "can be tried." Stein's

[340] Stein, " Poetry and Grammar" in *Writings 1932-1946*, 313.
[341] *Ibid.*, 314.
[342] Perloff, *21st-Century Modernisms*, 64-5.
[343] *Tender Buttons* being the work Stein refers to in "A Transatlantic Interview–1946," as the apex of this period.

concept of asking "provoke[d] questions"(*HTW*, 156) or of questioning the questionnaire, as in the following questioning of the term and form "questionnaire," may induce the incapacities of the noun forms to reveal themselves through errors and slight tears in the sinews of the language: "Questionaire [*sic*] in question. What is a question"(*HTW*, 62). In short then, as Stein puts it elsewhere throughout *How To Write*, everything is in question, not just the subject of the questions themselves—be they nominal or otherwise—but the very format through which these questions are asked as Stein searches for latent fault lines in the semantic meanings of nouns.

i) Named Nouns.

> People if you like to believe it can be made by their names. Call anybody Paul and they get to be a Paul call anybody Alice and they get to be an Alice perhaps yes perhaps no.[344]

So Stein states at the opening of her lecture "Poetry and Grammar."[345] By the years 1934-5 when Stein first delivered this lecture throughout America, the name "Alice," of course would not have signified "anybody" or "anyone," but a very particular "one" in the form of Stein's partner Alice B. Toklas, the pseudo-author of 1933s *the Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*.[346] In this instance this renarrative attention takes to task that most individualistic of nouns, the proper noun.

It is common knowledge that *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* was not written by Toklas herself, but by Stein. The distinction between the figures of

[344] Stein, "Poetry and Grammar" in *Writings 1932-1946*, 313.
[345] *Ibid.*, 313-36.
[346] I will not be dealing with the particulars of Stein's engagement with the genre of autobiography here as it is beyond the remit of this study. These instances of renarration involving proper names are of interest to this study as they display the extent of Stein's own commitment to this process of renaming and revising extant names.

Stein and Toklas that have been established and maintained throughout the course of the autobiography, are dissimulated in a concluding line that informs the reader that all along, the narrating figure has been Stein (or a fictional version of "Gertrude Stein") as opposed to the real-life or autobiographical "Alice B. Toklas":

> About six weeks ago Gertrude Stein said, it does not look to me as if you are ever going to write that autobiography. You know what I am going to do. I am going to write it for you. [...] And she has and this is it (*AABT*, 272).

This distinction between the fictional characters of Stein and Toklas as they appear throughout the autobiography is something Stein returns to in the opening two paragraphs of the subsequent autobiography, this time titled *Everybody's Autobiography*:

> Alice B. Toklas wrote hers and now everybody will write theirs. [...]
> In the first place she did not want it to be Alice B. Toklas, if it has to be at all it should be Alice Toklas and in the French translation it was Alice Toklas in French it just could not be Alice B. Toklas but in America and in England too Alice B. Toklas was more than Alice Toklas. Alice Toklas never thought so and always said so (*EA*, 3).

Herein Stein makes a distinction between "Alice Toklas" and "Alice B. Toklas," two almost identical names for the same person, but names that the "real" Toklas ostensibly has distinct attitudes towards, preferring one to the other, but being characterised as one or the other depending on the version of the autobiography that was published. This takes place, furthermore, within a book entitled *Everybody's Autobiography*, which sees Stein making a transition from a generically transgressive autobiography of a single figure (a single "one") to a similarly transgressive autobiography but one that, from a lexical perspective,

presents a title that is more explicitly pronominally transgressive because it purports "to be everybody's autobiography"(*EA*, 6), or an autobiography of every "one."

This frivolous attitude to proper nouns is hardly surprising coming from the author of *Tender Buttons*, who proclaimed that "Pastry" for example, could instead be presented through the nonsensical and uneconomical sentence "Cutting shade, cool spade and little last beds, make violet, violet when"(*TB*, 55). Similar examples of Stein's liberal perspective regarding the substitutive capacity of the proper noun occur external to the genetically restrictive form of the autobiography, such as in *How To Write* where Stein declares "Mrs. Edwards who is Mrs. Taylor but Mr. Taylor is not Mr. Taylor"(*HTW*, 70) or indeed that "a sentence has to do with Lizzie or Lena which we will call Lucy or Nellie or Tillie or Louise"(*HTW*, 116). That Stein's attitude towards proper nouns was much the same as her attitude to common nouns is made clear in the following passage, again from *Everybody's Autobiography*:

> I used to think the name of anybody was very important and the name made you and I have often said so. Perhaps I still think so but still there are so many names and anybody nowadays can call anybody any name they like (*EA*, 10).

This can be linked to the Tom, Dick, and Harry passage in *Watt* which sees a similar deliberation over "the Tomness of Tom, the Dickness of Dick, the Harryness of Harry [...] their Tomness, their Dickness, their Harryness then, their then-Tomness, then-Dickness, then-Harryness"(*Watt*, 116).

The process of calling "anybody any name they like"(*EA*, 10) is also to be found throughout *How It Is*, albeit likely without the personal preference of the

named figure being taken into account to the same level it may have been in Stein. Just as Stein argues "People [...] can be made by their names,"[347] the narrator in *How It Is* pleads to be given a name and subsequently a life: "give me a name his name to give me a life make me talk of a life said to have been mine"(*HII*, 96). Similarly, in *The Unnamable,* names circle and encircle the figure, proferring themselves and being proferred to the figure (we are led to believe, by "he"), yet this figure still remains nameless: "then he says I, as if I were he, or in another, let us be just, then he says Murphy, or Molloy, I forget, as if I were Malone"(*U*,122). Beckett's "unnamable" is presented with a series of figures familiar from previous texts within the *œuvre*, many with names that begin with the letter "M" and many of whose names share phonemes and are close or partial homonyms of each other : "Murphy, or Molloy, I forget, as if I were Malone"(*U*, 122). Stein similarly plays on the miscibility of certain proper names by exploiting the phonemic assonances as, for example, in the following exemplary play on the names May, Mabel and Mary, discussed previously: "May may be Mary. Mary may be at stake. Mary may be Mabel Mabel may be may fairly May Mary"(*HTW*, 69).

As Stein argues in "Narration 2," "You can slowly change any one by their name changing to another name."[348] *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* can be considered a case study for the efficacy of this statement. Elsewhere, and throughout Beckett's work in particular, we see this blurring of the distinctions between individuals and their names employed to great effect as a means of

[347] Stein, "Poetry and Grammar" in *Writings 1932-1946*, 313.
[348] Stein, "Narration 2," *Narration*, 29.

effecting change in “any one.” For example, throughout *How It Is* while the distinctions between Bom and Pim are maintained, their boundaries are blurred:

> Bom now Pim something wrong there according as left or right north or south tormentor or victim these words too strong tormentor always of the same victim always of the same and now alone journeying abandoned all alone nameless all these words too strong almost all a little too strong I say it as I hear it (*HII*, 100).

As with the distinctions between the nouns left and right, north and south, and tormentor and victim, neither the name Bom nor the name Pim can be considered quite right, with all instead labelled as being “too strong almost all a little too strong”(*HII*, 100).

Moving on from proper nouns, this section will presently analyse the common nouns exposed to almost relentless renarrative scrutiny throughout *Watt*. The first example comes in the form of Watt's smile: “[I]t was true that Watt's smile, when he smiled, resembled more a smile than a sneer, for example, or a yawn. [...] To many it seemed a simple sucking of teeth”(*Watt*, 19). Watt's smile is presented in terms of what it is not, namely a sneer, or a yawn, though this anti-description of the “smile, when he smiled” is further obscured by the statement that it would perhaps be more accurate to consider it a “sucking of teeth”(*Watt*, 19). A similar though somewhat more elaborate process occurs in “Text for Nothing II” in the form of antonymic renarration with respect to adjectives used to describe moisture levels: “Here at last none of that, no talk of a creator and nothing very definite in the way of a creation. Dry, it's possible, or wet, or slime, as before matter took ill”(*TFN*, 8). The level of moisture varies dramatically following every iteration of the conjunction “or,” from dry to the antonymic wet followed by an apparent middle-ground or synthesis in the form

of "slime." While the sentence could itself be labelled a denarration, doing so diminished the importance of the synergic term "slime" as a sort of mid-way point between dryness and wetness and one that could only have been enabled by a renarrative strategy as opposed to a twofold denarration.

A particularly accomplished example from this style of accumulative parasynonymic[349] descriptions comes from Stein's *The Making of Americans* and sees her employ a proliferation of parasynonymic, antonymic and semantically unrelated adjectives, all further modified by the determiner "enough" which, despite its traditional usage as an asserter of adequacy, serves to make every qualification a little less adequate:

> David Hersland when he was a boy was gentle enough and active enough and happy enough and earnest enough and quick enough and eager enough and strong enough and angry enough and glad enough and serious enough and lively enough and willing enough and quarrelsome enough and obstinate enough and quiet enough and enthusiastic enough and energetic enough and generous enough and selfish enough and talkative enough and hearing enough and remembering enough and forgetting enough and light enough and slow enough and foolish enough and silly enough and daring enough and weak enough and bashful enough and forward enough and careless enough and careful enough and easy enough and respectful enough and doing enough to be one being living then (*MOA*, 836).

In contrast to the preceding examples of common nouns and adjectives that undergo rigorous reconfigurations, throughout its regular appearances in *How It Is*, the noun "sack" remains constant and singular, and this despite the fact that there is more than one sack and that the ownership of these different sacks changes hands by means of a meticulous series of physical choreographies, from

[349] My understanding of parasynonymy has been taken from Dupriez's *A Dictionary of Literary Devices*: "perfect synonymy is rarer than the imperfect kind called *parasynonymy*"(Dupriez, 447).

Pim to Bem to Bom. Despite the consistent reference to the sack as a singular item, we are here dealing with several sacks, and several different owners of several different sacks. Change of ownership is indicated throughout by pronominal modification, as when "the sack Pim left me" is relayed as first being "his sack" and later "my sack" as the speaker adopts the sack as his own and simultaneously predicts a future scenario where he will "leave my sack [once Pim's sack] with Bom." The specific sack referred to as "my sack" throughout the passage quoted below can refer both to the sack the narrator once owned but subsequently left "with Bem" and to the sack he acquires after "Pim left me without his sack," a sack that subsequently becomes the speaker's new personal sack, the same sack he will leave with Bom, having it then become Bom's sack, not his sack:

> it's the sack Pim left me without his sack he left his sack with me I left my sack with Bem I'll leave my sack with Bom I left Bem without my sack to go towards Pim it's the sack
>
> Bem then I was with Bem before going towards Pim I left Bem then without my sack and yet that sack that I had going towards Pim part one that sack that I had
>
> [...] it's regulated thus we're regulated thus (*HII*, 96)

Throughout this complicated series of transfers it is unclear whom or what the pronoun "it" in the closing assertion "it's regulated thus we're regulated thus" is referring to—the sack or sacks or the process by which the sacks are transferred between the different figures. Despite this, it is fair to assert that the grammatical modifiers have a regulatory effect on the object "sack," and the recurrent appearances of "sack" in turn serves to regulate both the modifiers that refer to it

specifically ("the sack [...] his sack [...] my sack") and the individuals that interact with it ("I left my sack with Bem I'll leave my sack with Bom I left Bem without my sack").

This sack passage continues through to the next page of the text, with the process or transferral of the different sacks explained in further, perhaps unnecessary, detail that recalls some of the more delicate permutations found throughout *Watt*:

> leaving then without a sack I had a sack I found it on my way there is that difficulty overcome we leave our sacks to those who do not need them we take their sacks from those who soon will need them we leave without a sack we find one on our way we can continue on our way (*HII*, 97).

Again, the noun "sack" remains constant, modified first by the article "a"—which indicates the sack is not particularly specific, it is just "a sack"—before a transition to the possessive determiner "our" signifies that this impersonal relationship between narrator and sack has now become personal, with sacks now alternately referred to as "our" or "their." The term "sack" is again constant but continually associated not only with different sacks but with different figures, different spaces, and different temporal periods in the movement of figures, or the movement of sacks, from one area to the next. The sacks' transitions are contingent on a situation wherein sacks are left with figures who do not need them and taken from figures who do need them, with each traveller leaving without a sack, only to soon find one:

> we leave our sacks to those who do not need them we take their sacks from those who soon will need them we leave without a sack we find one on our way (*HII*, 97).

Beckett's pleonastic account of sacks continually changing ownership through a narrative strategy that sees one grammatical item remain consistent (the noun sack) within a formula of changing verbs and pronouns that relay temporal changes and changing ownership, has much in common with many of Stein's similarly pleonastic accounts of different peoples in *The Making of Americans* discussed throughout the previous chapter.[350]

The following example, this time from *How To Write*, sees Stein employ antonymic adjectives in tandem through a form of semantic epanalepsis where both antonyms are declared equally pertinent to the description: "The door was open as well as closed"(*HTW*, 106). This sentence enacts a situation wherein the semantic content of two oppositional adjectives modifying a head term (in this instance, "door") are declared equivocal. While the most obvious comparison is perhaps the door sequence at the beginning of *Watt* where Watt attempts to discern why "the back door, so lately locked, [was] now open"(*Watt*, 29), this sequence relies less on modifiers and more on a series of logical elaborations, and so can be considered a less efficient example of the type of strategic tearing Beckett was working towards, if it is that at all. Instead, a more fitting comparison is to be found in *How It Is*, where the antonyms beginning and end are, like Stein's open and closed door, declared analogous: "two possible formulations therefore the present and that other beginning where the present ends"(*HII*, 115).

Such nominal and adjectival renarrations, drawn as they are from synonyms or antonyms that modify a single set term also occur in the slightly

[350] It also brings to mind Forsyth's concept of the "infinite pleonasm," discussed previously (Forsyth, *The Elements of Eloquence*, 161).

more complex format of what I will refer to as functional parasynonymy; that is, a single word repetition wherein the repeated word retains lexical elements that refer back to its root (semantic) meaning but, in fact, changes functionality, from noun to verb or vice versa, and so on. A particularly nuanced example of this is to be found in the following excerpt from *Watt*: "In an instant the last flowers will be engulfed, said Mrs Nixon. Mr Nixon rose"(*Watt*, 16). The nominal "flowers" is obliquely renarrated in the succeeding sentence by means of a transition that is both semantic and syntactic and effects semantic and lexical functionality. This renarration sees "flowers" modified in repetition to the more specific term "rose;" rose is a type-specific synonym of "flower" as it is both a type of flower and a sub-species of the larger nominal genus that is the "flower."[351] In this instance, while the proximity of the two terms may invite a connection that sees the term "rose" as a type of flower, the syntactic arrangement of the second sentence prevents this happening because, the syntax of the sentence indicates that "rose" is set to function as a verb and not a noun. There is nothing "rosy" then about this particular "rose," a fact that perhaps serves to further emphasise the preceding sentence's assertion that "the last flowers will be engulfed" in "an instant." This passage then sees the repetition (and instantaneous engulfing) of a term that, in the context of this sentence, is both semantically and functionally unrelated to the preceding noun ("flower") because it is a verb ("rose") and because it signifies an upward movement not a type of flower. But despite this, the semantic content of the noun flower recurs in a latent capacity by means of the associated functional parasynonym "rose," the past tense of the verb "to rise."

[351] We can also here apply the terms used throughout the previous chapter because flower is a superordinate or hypernym term of which rose is a subordinate hyponym.

Thus "flower" is renarrated and transitions from a common noun to an unrelated verb with polysemic connections to the noun "flower."

A comparable example is to be found in *Tender Buttons* where Stein maximises the polysemic capacity of the term "rose" which can, in this instance, serve three different grammatical functions, each with a different semantic content: "A cool red rose and a pink cut pink, a collapse and a sold hole, a little less hot"(*TB*, 26). Rose can here function as a verb, as a number of different nouns, and as an adjective; alternately referring to the genus "rosa,"[352] that is, to any plant that falls within the rose family in general (thus "rose" can actually be used to refer to plants that are not "roses"), to the more specific flower of the rose shrub, or it can function as a mass noun detailing a crimson ("rose") colour or indeed the adjective "rose." Similarly, "red" can serve as either a noun, mass noun or an adjective, and is also is a homophone of "read" which would fittingly make the "red rose" a "read rose." That this passage is concluded with a clever doubling of negatives in the form of "little" paired with "less"; a phrase that ostensibly seeks to quantify lessness by presenting a little less lessness than would be apparent if Stein had employed only the word less.[353]

The following section will move on from these analyses of named names, named nouns, and objects such as sacks that are surrounded by changing modifiers, to unnamed nouns that consistently recur throughout passages that contain a similarly consistent changing sequence of surrounding clausal modifications.

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[352] "rose, n.1 and adj.1". OED Online. December 2015. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/167509?rskey=eNGuSC&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed December 09, 2015).

[353] The topic of lessness will be discussed in Chapter Four's analyses of lesser modifiers.

ii) Unnamed nouns.

> I must have forgotten them, I must have mixed them up, these nameless images I have, these imageless names (*U*, 127).

The transition of the named but non-specific sacks from figure to figure in Beckett's *How It Is* discussed in the previous section is mirrored and enabled by a similar transition of unnamed figures or, as in the passage below, "things" that "nameless [...] awaits" and "nameless goes towards" their next interlocutor: "the same voice the same things nothing changing but the names and hardly they two are enough nameless each awaits his Bom nameless goes towards his Pim"(*HII*, 99). In each transition alternately towards or away from a figure, what changes is not so much the "names and hardly they" but rather the attributes that surround, and further modify the unnamed figures. For comparison, consider the following passage from Stein's *How to Write*:

> He said does it please you that they have a name. He says yes it does as everybody has a name. He is spoken of by his name. Does it please you that he is spoken of by a name and that that name is his name. He is spoken of by his name (*HTW*, 206).

As in the nameless transition of figures throughout Beckett's *How It Is*, the name in the above passage (in this instance, literally, the name "name") remains consistent, but the term immediately preceding every iteration of the name changes. Thus we have "a name [...] a name [...] his name [...] a name [...] that name [...] his name" and finally "his name." Despite appearing seven times attached to articles, determiners and possessive determiners or possessive pronouns, the name "that is his name" is never revealed. All we can be sure of, at most, is the pleonastic assertion "that he is spoken of by a name and that that

name is his name." The modifiers associated with the name "that is his name" purport to assign specificity but instead merely remind the reader that this name is but a name and, as we are repeatedly reminded throughout *How To Write* and throughout Stein's non-fiction writings on language in general, a name may name one thing, but it can also name anything: "A noun is the name of anything"(*HTW*, 20).

The following section examines instances involving the renarration of the word "thing" in examples from both Beckett and Stein. We can begin with an example of relayed speech from *The Making of Americans* that acquires a particular significance when placed alongside instances of same from *Texts for Nothing*:

> There are some saying something and saying it again and again, there are some saying something and not saying it again and again, there are some saying one thing and then saying another thing, there are some saying one thing and then saying another and then saying another thing, there are some saying one thing and saying it again and then saying another thing and saying it again and again and again (*MOA*, 742).

In this passage one thing is first said three times by a set group of "some" people. This is followed by an alternative scenario wherein "some" again say one particular thing but this thing, in contrast to the first instance, is subsequently twice unsaid; that is to say, "there are some saying something and not saying it again and again." A further scenario occurs wherein "some" say one thing followed by another *different* said thing. This accumulative process is then enhanced by a further group of "some" people who say three different things, followed by a further group of people who say one thing twice in succession, followed by a further thing said four times in succession.

Stein's narrator in this passage is relaying an account of patterns of repetitive speech among an unspecified number of people. The content of their statements are left unsaid and instead, as in the example of a figure whose name is signified solely by the noun "name," their speech act is classified as "something," later, as a "thing." Despite referring to different things said by different people (different some-figures or, more correctly, different "someones"[354]), this word—"thing"—recurs. Rather than engage in a straightforward denarration, Stein opts instead to create a somewhat difficult situation wherein an unnamed "thing" is said and, rather than have that statement discounted by means of a denarrative technique, the said item is repeated but not said; creating an explicit tautological scenario by means of renarration. What is particularly interesting here is the concept of an unnamed or obliquely named item being said and then unsaid, or more precisely, being said and twice unsaid. This makes an interesting counterpoint with the "said missaid"(*WWH*, 88) of Beckett's *Worstward Ho*, or indeed the numerous iterations of items "ill said" throughout the later works (specifically *How It Is*, and the *Nohow On* texts). Needless to say, the unsaid said sayings are, like the instances of said sayings, all uniformly accorded that most functional of nominal signifiers in the form of the noun "thing." Unsaid or said, or said and not said, the sayings, irrespective of their arrangement, are left with names that do little or nothing to differentiate them from the identically named "things" that surround them; only the modifiers that dictate that which is said, unsaid, and re-said by

[354] The nuances and potential for manipulation of the pronoun "one" will be discussed in detail throughout Chapter Four.

the different groups of people can allow the reader to distinguish between these otherwise indistinguishable "things."

While the previous examples kept the number of "things" down to a minimum, the following two passages, again from *The Making of Americans*, sees the number of distinct "things" climb to five:

> One is doing something and then doing that thing again and then doing another thing and then doing that thing again and then doing the one thing and then the other thing and that one certainly would be doing some other thing and doing that thing again and would be then.
> [...]
> Each one being living is one being one doing something and doing it again and another thing and something and another thing and doing something and doing another thing again. Each one being living is one doing something and doing that thing and another thing and that thing and another thing and another thing and that thing and another thing and another thing again (*MOA*, 803-4).

Just as in *How It Is* with the proliferation of different sacks all referred to by the one noun "sack," the above passage sees a proliferation of things that are all unhelpfully referred to as "thing." As before, the head term "thing" remains consistent while the surrounding modifiers change to indicate or specify the difference between these all-too-similar "things." Thus, we have "something" and then "that thing" done again, followed by "another thing" that is also done "again," followed again by a further change to "one thing" then "another thing" and then "some other thing" that is, as with the others, done again. What began then as one set "thing" is thus extended to encompass three different "things" alternately said or done, and then in some cases, said or done again.

Comparing this with the following account from "Text for Nothing VI," we see the word "thing" similarly repeated with different semantic content inferred in each case:

> as if there were two things, some other thing besides this thing, what is it, this unnamable thing that I name and name and never wear out, and I call that words. It's because I haven't hit on the right ones, the killers, haven't yet heaved them up from the heart-burning glut of words, with what words shall I name my unnamable words? (*TFN*, 27-8).

Just as in the previous example from Stein, the narrator here describes a state where there are "two [different] things, some other thing besides this thing"(*TFN*, 27). One of these things is singled out by the narrator as being particularly hard to define, in fact the narrator refines it adjectivally by referring to it as "this unnamable thing," an act that sets it apart—but only barely—from its counterpart. The "other thing besides this thing" appears, at least objectively, to be equally as unnamable, yet is itself not singled out by virtue of the fact that, unlike the "unnamable thing," it has not been "name[d] and name[d] and never [worn] out"; at least, not yet.

Later again in the same text, the naming process is repeated, with the term "thing" recurring three times in close succession, and with an inferred suggestion that the semantic content of each of these "things" is consistent: "Another thing, I'll call that another thing, the old thing I keep on not saying"(*TFN*, 29). The word "thing" is here standing in for a specific item that is not named, merely labelled with the intermediary term "thing." This "thing" is thus both named and not named and, as the narrator has said (but also not said), it becomes instead "the old thing I keep on not saying"(*TFN*, 29). Beckett stresses the ontological facet of these problems of naming through his penchant for

repeatedly emphasising that this parade of various "things" is symptomatic of the unnamability of these terms. Stein, in contrast, never quite goes so far as to make this procession of "things" explicitly ontological.

In addition to the parade of things encircled by the now familiar technique of changing modifiers, the passage from "Text for Nothing VI" quoted above contains a further renarrative strategy akin to the "flower"/ "rose" functional parasynonymy discussed previously. It occurs in relation to repetitions of the head term "name": "this unnamable thing that I name and name and never wear out, [...] with what words shall I name my unnamable words?"(*TFN*, 27-8). Name first appears in an anyonymic variant in the form of the adjective "unnamable" before recurring almost immediately as a verb ("I name and name") and finally, later in the passage, reverting to the adjective and antonym "unnamable." Beckett's fondness for antonyms when it comes to creating counterpoints between nouns can be seen elsewhere throughout the *Texts for Nothing,* particularly in "Text for Nothing V" where it is paired with an episode of nominal aphasia that sees the narrator forget the particular antonym he or she is referring to: "Out of the corner of my eye I observe the writing hand, all dimmed and blurred by the—by the reverse of farness"(*TFN*, 22).

Beckett's presentation of an "old thing"(*TFN*, 29) that is said but not said sees its counterpart in Stein's portrait of a similar such "thing" from *Tender Buttons*: "a red thing not a round thing but a white thing, a red thing and a white thing"(*TB*, 12). Here we see our first example of colour being used to make an item distinct, or indeed indistinct, with the item being referred to as "red" but also "white." This time, however, in contrast with the clear demarcations Beckett laid out to distinguish his different "things" in our previous examples, or indeed

the distinctions Stein imported onto different "somethings" throughout *The Making of Americans*, it is unclear whether the "red thing" and "white thing" refer to distinct or indistinct things. In engaging in specific repetitions that see the head term remain consistent while the modifiers that further delimit it change from iteration to iteration, both authors challenge the nominal form. By using non-specific nouns that correspondingly possess further semantic potential, a slight modification in the form of the addition of a determiner, for example, can transform one item from "any" thing to "every" thing: "I know some one who asks questions always about these things and I am remembering the words that one is using in asking about everything in asking about anything"(*MOA*, 684). Here Stein reiterates this by again emphasising that despite their nominal sameness, each apparent specification regarding "anything" is of limited value as in asking about "anything" one could be asking about "everything" and vice versa.

The previous two subsections dealt with distinct items melded by nominal similitude, unnamed items with differential referents, and the various iterations through which both authors exploit grammatical modifiers to emphasise sameness or difference between these nominally identical named or unnamed items. The next section will deal specifically with nouns and adjectives that denote various abstractions relating to time, space, or order.

iii) Nouns relating to time, space or distance, and nouns denoting order.

Beginning then with Beckett's description of a nominal object according to its future—as opposed to its present—state, a state brought about by what *How It Is* refers to as "vast tracts of time"(*HII*, 3): "a pebble sand to be"(*TFN*, 34).

This can be compared first to Beckett's logographic depiction of a “stone” in the sentence “there stands a stone” from *Ill Seen Ill Said* as a “rounded rectangular block three times as high as wide. Four”(*Ill*, 48). Though it does not explicitly relate to time, it sees Beckett make use of the same renarrative strategy, namely by replacing the head term with a variety of adjectival and nominal modifiers that depict the object either in a yet-to-be realised shape, or an extant state viewed differently.

Returning to depictions of time then, Stein's *How To Write* contains a number of clever phoneme repetitions that suggest close homonymic terms that have different semantic meanings and grammatical functions. In the following sentence the two iterations of “Hour” are clearly demarcated as representative of the noun “hour,” but the syntax of the sentence leads the reader to retroactively read both “hours” as the pronoun “our”: “Hour last hour glass”(*HTW*, 49). Phonetically the pronunciations of “hour” and “our” are proximate. Both are also partial anagrams with “hour” containing the word “our” and “our” spelling “hour” minus its initial letter. This suggestion of two “ours” in or instead of two “hours” invites the reader to correct the sentence, perhaps to something more semantically coherent such as “Our last hour glass” or the fragmented half-rhyme “our last our glass.” As it is, however, the noun “hour” merely suggests the pronoun “our” by means of phoneme similarity and partial homonymy. That said, this homonymy suggests a certain nominal insecurity surrounding the term, “hour” being as it is both a written noun denoting a period of time and, phonetically, a term that can feign the capacity to function as a pronoun.

Stein takes similar advantage of the close homonyms in the following passage where she again manipulates proximities between pronoun and noun, but this time using anagrams instead of phonemes:

> Consider a house. [...] Consider.
> Hours in a house. A house held ours (*HTW*, 61).

Stein again returns to the phonemically proximate terms "hours" and "ours," but introduces the noun "house," a noun that has partial phonemic similarities with both "hours" and "ours": "Consider a house. [...] Hours in a house. A house held ours." Again, Stein plays on the phonemic similarity of the terms hours and ours, referring to "hours" being spent in a house, and subsequently to this house holding or containing "ours." In both cases the terms "hours" and "ours" could readily be exchanged, but as it is they nonetheless suggest each other sonically, resulting in a house where "hours" are held in, but not held by, and a house that can hold "ours," yet these "our" figures are not literally specified as being held in the house: "Hours in a house. A house held ours"(*HTW*, 61).

Nouns that suggest pronouns by means of phonetic assonance and acronym are not confined to Stein's writings. An almost identical instance occurs in Beckett's "Text for Nothing IV":

> now he has it, his kind of life, let him lose it, if he wants to be in peace, [...] His life, what a mine, what a life, he can't have that, you can't fool him, ergo it's not his, it's not him, what a thought to treat him like that, like a vulgar Molloy, a common Malone (*TFN*, 18).

The line "his life, what a mine," is set within a passage that, as is characteristic of many of the *Texts for Nothing*, problematises the issue of source. It does this by means of oscillating pronominal ownership between the pronouns and figures

"me," "I," "he" and "they," inviting the reader to read "mine" as both the noun "mine" and the possessive pronoun "mine." Mine here feigns the role of its homonym, the phonemically identical possessive pronoun "mine," with the semantic context of the sentence alone informing us that we must prioritise one "mine" over the other identical "mine."[355] In this instance, proximity of related terms serves to create anomalous apposition, inducing this particularly aporetic distinction between the contextual semantics of the sentence, and the phonetic assonances that threaten to overrule one "mine" with another "mine."

This can be compared with the more straightforward example of nominal denarration seen in the following excerpt from "Text for Nothing VI":

> How many hours to go, before the next silence, they are not hours, it will not be silence, how many hours still, before the next silence? Ah to know for sure, to know that this thing has no end, this thing, this thing, this farrago of silence and words, of silence that is not silence and barely murmured words (*TFN*, 27).

Beckett first complicates the distinctions between nouns denoting temporal periods or stillness through a standard denarrative transition from declaration to denial in the form of the assertion that "hours" "are not hours," and "silence [...] is not silence." Further still, the augmenting alienation between the narrator's sense of "hours" is further demarcated by means of phonetic assonance that is similar to Stein's "Hours in a house. A house held ours"(*HTW*, 61) discussed previously. Beckett's observation that "they are not hours" can be read phonetically as "they are not ours." Fittingly for a narrator who has just admitted

[355] A similar event occurs in "Text for Nothing VIII" which sees the exclamations "no" and "yes" incorrectly presented as pronouns despite their not being so: "I never saw the light of day, any more than he, ah if no were content to cut yes's throat and never cut its own"(*TFN*, 35). As such then, while not pronouns in a grammatical sense, they are forced into the role of pronoun by the syntax of the sentence.

“I can't have heard right,” these “hours” that “are not hours” are also not “ours”(*TFN*, 27).

In contrast with the preceding instance wherein temporal nouns phonetically suggest pronouns, the following examples concern nouns whose renarration instigates temporal uncertainty. The following example from “Text for Nothing V” relays temporal uncertainty through the renarration of a single noun (“evening”) that is, by means of the interrogative adverbial subordinate clause “even when its,” related to the distinctly non evening time periods of “morning” and “night”: “This evening, it's always evening, always spoken of as evening, even when it's morning, it's to make me think night is at hand, bringer of rest”(*TFN*, 23). As previously discussed, an almost identical situation of temporal uncertainty relayed through nouns occurs in paragraph twenty of *Ill Seen Ill Said* when the noun “evening” is repeated over the course of three sentences as follows: “It is evening. It will always be evening. When not night”(*Ill*, 57). The noun “evening” remains consistent throughout two iterations but is then replaced by the aporetic and negatively determined description “not night.” “Not night” is not necessarily an antonym of “evening,” nor could it really be said to function as synonym or even parasynonym of “evening.” “Evening” itself marks the period just preceding the period of “night.” Finally, a similar event occurs in *The Unnamable*, though in relation to the distinction between “morning” and “dayspring”:

> Morning, I call that morning [...] I haven't many words, I haven't much choice, I don't chose, the word came, I should have avoided this bright stain, it's the dayspring, but it doesn't last, I know it, I call that the dayspring, if you could only see it (*U*, 119).

By drawing attention to the indeterminable temporal limits inherent between the words “evening,” “night,” “not night” and “morning” through repetitions that place them in counterpoint, Beckett makes explicit how difficult it actually is to pinpoint the dissimilarities between these otherwise altogether separate nouns. Similarly, with evening in *Texts for Nothing*: “through those evenings, moving too, evenings with an end, evenings with a night, never saying a word, unable to say a word”(*TFN*, 47).

When it comes to sentences that renarrate using modifiers yet do not alter the semantic content of the head term, these sentences themselves frequently tend to be elaborate commentaries on the characteristics of that noun, a type of epanorthotic elaboration that verges on the logographic in that the specifics of the term are displayed and contrasted with an alternative, often differential or oppositional term, such as night and day in the following passages. As in the previous examples, “evening” is said to be “always evening” when “not night”(*Ill*, 57). “Morning” in *The Unnamable* is “the dayspring” that “doesn't last”(*U*, 119). Similarly, in “Text for Nothing I” “night” and “day” are described as being mutually exclusive terms: “One thing at least is certain, in an hour it will be too late, in half-an-hour it will be night, and yet it's not, not certain, what is not certain, absolutely certain, that night prevents what day permits”(*TFN*, 5). In this example the adjective “certain” is repeated with asymptotic—indeed, aporetic—nominal modifiers in the form of “day” and “night.” This serves to create an uncertain certainty that oscillates between being “at least certain” “not, not certain” and “absolutely certain” apropos the distinction between day and night, with night preventing what day permits and, perhaps, vice versa.

Just as the temporal limitations of the term evening can be discomposed by adverbial manipulation and the use of atypical relative terms (such as "morning"), in the following example from "Text for Nothing X," the permanent former of the noun "past" is reconfigured as something not only "ever new" but, curiously, as both "ever ended" and "ever ending." This is accomplished by means of adverbial modification that sees "ever" paired with adjectival antonyms that destabilise the term "old past" by situating it instead as "ever new"; creating a past that is still "ending": "that old past ever new, ever ended, ever ending"(*TFN*, 41). Finally, the following example from *How It Is* contains a more nuanced example of this temporal incertitude relayed through nominal and adjectival modifications. It can be described as an antonymic epanalepsis wherein the noun "midnight sun" is recalibrated in reverse as the proximately antonymic "midday night": "what lands all lands midnight sun midday night all latitudes all longitudes"(*HII*, 73).

Whereas Molloy admits to confusing nouns that distinguish direction: "I confuse east and west, the poles too, I invert them readily"(*M*, 16) Stein, at times, described landscapes in terms of what they are not, as opposed to what they are. For example, in the opening essay of *How To Write*, Stein enacts an inversion of the traditionally held concept that still lakes reflect their surroundings by describing "A blue sky [that] can reflect a lake"(*HTW*, 14). As such, this involves the creation of a landscape that is a meteorological phenomenon, but no more a phenomenon than that encountered in the opening pages of *Watt* where "the western sky was as the eastern, which was as the southern, which was as the northern"(*Watt*, 18). A description of the northern sky is not given here, and so the other skies within this möbius-like skyscape, all declared equally alike, are all

equally without descriptive specificity. Similar such instances occur elsewhere in *How To Write*, as for example in the following two descriptions, first of a scene that apparently displays "the influence of a hill" the second involving a renarration of the noun "home" to the interrogative adverb and verbal statement "where she is":

> A setting, the influence of a hill and on which snow and woods are abundant. [...]
>
> Betty is leaving her home or at any rate where she is (*HTW*, 17; 20).

Like the curiously reflective sky of *How To Write*, these depictions of place are rendered redundant by technical machinations that equate the described scene with an unnamed (or unnamable) landscape, something that cannot be resigned to traditional linguistic demarcations.

The proximity of "four" and "one" in the following example creates an appositional suggestion that invites "one" to serve as a cardinal number instead of a pronoun, but this is not the "correct" way of reading the sentence and, like the "hour"/ "our" passage from Stein and the "his life what a mine" passage from Beckett, again presents a noun that is feigning the capacity to function as a pronoun: "fleeting impression I quote that in trying to present three parts or episodes an affair which all things considered involves four one is in danger of being incomplete"(*HII*, 113). Further instances of renarration that specifically involve ordinal numbers can be seen elsewhere throughout *How It Is*, for example in the following line from Part Three of the text: "now the first second and third now the fourth first and second now the third fourth and first now the second third and fourth"(*HII*, 114). The issue here comes from the numerical

hierarchy present within the definitions of the words themselves and how their semantic meanings begin to jar with their placement in a syntactic order that is atypical or distinct from that of their semantic order. Thus the order of *How It Is* is conveyed in a manner akin to the narrative of *Watt* wherein

> the beginning of his [Watt's] story [is told], not first, but second, so not fourth, but third, now he told its end. Two, one, four, three, that was the order in which Watt told his story (*Watt*, 186).

This approach involves a simple strategy for tearing at language through the use of ordinal numbers and terms out of the contexts inherent to the definition of the terms, and thus in a manner that is contraindicative to their semantic meanings; using the term or terms against itself or themselves. Is the first still first when it is relayed second, and so on? If the fourth is relayed first is it still fourth? Moving on from places, time, and objects—named or unnamed—to colour and its use as both a nominal and adjectival modifier.

iv) Colours.

In Chapter One the role of colour apropos language was introduced specifically in relation to Stein's experiments in colour theory and Weber's law of the "just noticeable difference."[356] Colour is a specific adjectival and nominal modifier that enabled Stein to enact or engender similar such experiments regarding the "just noticeable difference" throughout her prose; using colour as it is signified through language to blur the distinctions between different objects or, when the objects did not share the same source noun (as was the case

[356] Solomons, "The Saturation of Colors," with Gertrude Stein, 50.

throughout the previous examples), melding foregrounded objects with their background, or vice versa.

Though this thesis is not primarily concerned with the dramatic works of either author, it is important to note here in passing the role colour, transitions between colours, and the melding of similar colours plays throughout Beckett's drama. Many of the transitions from light to darkness in Beckett's drama engage directly with this concept of the just noticeable difference. This can be seen in "Come and Go" wherein the "Full-length coats" of Ru, Vi, and Flo are "dull violet," "dull red," and "dull yellow" respectively, with a further specification that "Apart from colour differentiation three figures as alike as possible."[357] While the influence and effect of colour, colour melding, and the distinctions between light and shade are readily accessible through a visual medium, adapting this technique to a solely literary context poses significant problems in terms of the limits of the linguistic medium. Whereas Beckett could specify in his stage directions to "Play" the exact intensity of light he wished to employ, ranging from "*Faint spots*" to "*Strong spots*,"[358] without a visual counterpart this same level of precision is not possible in prose. Unless, that is, one engages in the very adjectivally dependent terms Beckett himself relied on in these same stage directions, as for example the stage directions to "Footfalls," where the spectral transition of the "dim" lighting is relayed through the modifiers "dim," "least," "less," and "strongest": "*Lighting: dim, strongest on floor level, less on body, least on head.*"[359] The directions regarding the lighting of "Breath" takes this precision

[357] Beckett "Come and Go" in *Krapp's Last Tape and other shorter plays* (London: Faber, 2009), 75.
[358] Beckett "Play" in *Krapp's Last Tape and other shorter plays*, 64; italics in original.
[359] Beckett "Footfalls" in *Krapp's Last Tape and other shorter plays*, 109; italics in original.

to a numerically qualitative level by presenting the gradations of light on a scale of zero to ten:

> Maximum Light
> Not bright. If 0 = dark and 10 = bright, light should move from about 3 to 6 and back.[360]

Even with this scale of gradations however, Beckett still resorts to an approximation of lightness, as can be seen in his use of the modal "should" combined with the adverb "about" when specifying that the light "should move from about 3 to 6 and back."[361] Without a visual counterpart to the above depictions of the light transitioning from strong to least, or from ten to zero, the writing becomes wholly dependent on the modifiers used to enlist and enable distinctions between shadings and intensities of colours. Beyond the visual realm of theatrical productions then, finding a way to merge objects in prose texts, and enact similar such moments of nominal or adjectival indistinctness is an activity both authors engage in, specifically through the use of colour-related modifiers in tandem with additional disjunctions and prepositions to create literary portraits that could, much like Stein's experiments into Weber's Law, successfully counteract the semantic associations inherent to the word surface.

Colour modifiers are frequently employed throughout the texts of Beckett's *Nohow On* sequence as a means of blurring the distinction between foregrounded objects and their surroundings or backdrops. While the following section will largely draw from the later texts, it is important to note that this technique is not confined to the later works. We also see it in significantly earlier texts as in the opening passages of *Watt* and the description of "a solitary figure,

[360] Beckett, "Breath" in *Krapp's Last Tape and other shorter plays*, 79.
[361] *Ibid.*, 371.

lit less and less by the receding lights, until it was scarcely to be distinguished from the dim wall behind it"(*Watt*, 11). Not long after this event, shortly after Watt successfully negotiates his way into the Knott house, we encounter a further passage rich in colour related nouns and adjectives, with Beckett even going so far as to make the pictorial nature of the scene explicit by declaring it a "pretty picture":

> He [Watt] set down his bags beside him, on the beautiful red floor, and he took off his hat, [...] discovering his scant red hair, [...]. And a pretty picture they made, Watt's scalp and red-grey tufts, and the floor burning up, from below. Watt saw, in the grate, of the range, the ashes grey. But they turned pale red, when he covered the lamp, with his hat. [...] So Watt busied himself a little while, covering the lamp, less and less, more and more, with his hat, watching the ashes greyen, redden, greyen, redden, in the grate, of the range (*Watt*, 30).

As Watt manipulates the light that falls on the range with movements of his hat, he alters the colour of the ashes in the grate; first grey, they become a pale red, and correspondingly oscillate between these two colours as Watt continues this back and forth motion with his hat. But the colours produced are not quite red, and nor are they quite grey, rather, they are described as either moving towards redness through the act of reddening, or moving towards greyness by gradually turning greyer.

"Redden" is a verb used to describe the process of becoming red. Ackerley also notes a previous occurrence of the term in *Murphy* were "'greyen' was used for the 'dayspring'"[362] and he also finds grounds to link it with both the Irish language and with Joyce, observing that "redden "unlike 'greyen,' [is] common in colloquial Irish; as in Joyce's *Portrait* [...] where Davin stops once or twice to

[362] Ackerley, *Obscure Locks, Simple Keys*, 57.

'redden' his pipe."[363] While "redden" can be considered appropriate usage from an Irish or Hiberno-English context, "greyen" is a different matter. Aside from observing, as he does, that "greyen" is "unlike 'redden'"[364] in that it does not have a counterpart in Irish or in Joyce, its presence in the passage is not further elucidated by Ackerley. The terms greyer or greying would have been appropriate here but they are not the terms used, rather Beckett employs what we can either term a deliberate neologism or a deliberate error—the ashes are described as moving between redness and "greyen," with "greyen" here, we assume, meant to signify a verbal modification that approximates the act of turning grey, and not the act of turning green, which is what it sounds like homophonically. Thus we have an object described as moving between at least two colours, being almost red at times, and at times almost grey, grey-green, or "greyen."

The visual spectrum provides a far wider range of nuance within the one concept, head term, or "colour" than can be successfully actualised to a comparable extent in language. There are many different shades of blue that are all nonetheless still referred to as blue, or indeed, as in the preceding section, shades of red or grey that can oscillate from shade to shade while remaining under the umbrella term for that set colour. In contrast, any change to the term blue is immediately noticeable, and immediately makes the word no longer fully "blue"; a by-product of the inherent material limitations of language.

In the preceding example from *Watt*, Beckett attempts to transgress the limitations of the medium so as to accommodate a wider spectrum of colour for

[363] *Ibid.*
[364] Ackerley, *Obscure Locks, Simple* Keys, 57.

"redness" by modifying the noun red to the verb redden, and he does the same to the noun grey by altering it to what appears to be a verb, albeit an incorrectly declined one, in the term "greyen." This allows for a set colour (red or grey) to be presented as changeable or subject to fluctuation on a delimited spectrum of that colour, one that can, in the case of red, redden, or, in the case of grey, "greyen."

Linguistic adaptations of the just perceptible differences that occur on the colour spectrum are similarly employed throughout *Tender Buttons* where Stein takes advantage of the one dimensional or planar nominal depiction of colour by employing modifiers that attempt to enhance or diminish the colour of that colour, as for example in the following line from "Mutton" in *Tender Buttons*: "Darkness very dark darkness is sectional"(*TB*, 41). In this example, much as in Beckett's whitening of the already white throughout "Ill Seen Ill Said," the darkness is made darker by the addition of the adjectives "very" and "dark" This creates a situation wherein the initial iteration of darkness is, by contrast, somehow less dark than the "very dark darkness" that supersedes it in the sentence. This nuanced approach to indicating change in a non-substantive colour or shading is evident elsewhere throughout *Tender Buttons*, such as the following line from "A Substance in a Cushion": "The change of colour is likely and a difference a very little difference is prepared"(*TB*, 11). Here, as in the sectional and variant darkness of "Mutton," a minor variance to the unnamed colour or light intensity is indicated but not made certain or substantive. Instead, we are left to distinguish the gradients that exist between "a difference" and "a very little difference" aware that a change has taken place, but left relatively unenlightened by the words that should, ostensibly, quantify this change; other than the determiner and preposition used here to indicate the minutiae of

change that has taken effect. The descriptive passage that accompanies the phrase “Dirt and not copper” also sees reference being made to a colour becoming “darker” by the addition (we assume) of “dirt and not copper”: “Dirt and not copper makes a color darker. [...] There are more places not empty. They see cover”(*TB*, 14). This description also contains an example of a type of negative description wherein an attributive clause is employed to deny attributes to the associated head term; in this instance, the clause “and not copper” is included solely to emphasise that copper is not an additive to this particular coloured portrait just as the modified noun “a little dog” is included in the line “no mention of a little dog”(*HTW*, 16) so as to signify or draw attention to its non-inclusion. This is a way of defining something by means of drawing attention to what it is not, or what it is that is not present, of using the tools of description to make a setting nondescript, as in the following example of same from the same passage as the unmentioned little dog in *How To Write*:

> Scenery is a valley in moon-light.
> Scenery is left of a valley in moon-light (*HTW*, 16).

Here then the scene is described according not to what it is, but to what it is “left of,” an act that leaves the reader with little or no solid certainties regarding what exactly is in this depicted scene. Similarly, and from a much earlier and aptly named piece called “Scenes”: “It was not dark and the weather was not clear and the sunshine was not gloomy and the colour was not red, it was not dusty and the window was not open and the stove was not shut and the table was set”(*GP*, 103).

Moving on from sectional darkness and darkness or scenery that is qualified by means of adverbial or adjectival supposition, the following description of “Mildred's umbrella” includes reference to “an established color [*sic*]“(*TB*, 15), but this so-called “established” colour is left unnamed. What exactly is an established colour? One could tentatively suggest that an established colour refers to a colour that has already been assigned a set nominal configuration. While the colour is referred to as established it is itself left un-established within the context of this passage as the “established color” of this established colour is withheld and, ultimately, left colourless. Similarly, the following line from Stein's depiction of “A piano” is an instance of suggested and then retracted colour tones and sees Stein first refer to “all the waving color” only to immediately retract that with the statement “there is no color, not any color”: “if the button holder is held by all the waving color and there is no color, not any color”(*TB*, 19). Stein adopts a similar approach later still in the “Objects” section when it comes to her description of “More;” here, Stein's description again reverts to colour, as though to further emphasise that such so-called lesser modifiers are as difficult to gradate as an unnamed colour: “The reason that there is more snips are the same shining very colored [*sic*] rid of no round color [*sic*]“(*TB*, 22). Before moving on to a more detailed analyses of Beckett's use of colour throughout the *Nohow On* texts, a passing comparison can here be made to the line “In the same figment dark as his figments”(*Ill*, 30) from *Ill Seen Ill Said*. Much like the “established color”(*TB*, 15) mentioned previously, the concept of “figment dark” plays on the comparable figments of darkness and qualitative accounts of darkness in language. This pairing of colour with modifiers that are themselves particularly difficult to quantify is a clever connection for Stein to

make, showing again how her interest in visual media directly fed into her understanding of language and her attempts at making the visual inform her attack on verbal media through technically difficult transmedial comparatives.

The preceding paragraphs included numerous passages wherein the terms “color” or “colour” were included in descriptions where no distinct colours were specified. But aside from mere instances of the noun “colour,” the text, and in particular the subtitles of *Tender Buttons*, are rife with colours: “A red stamp,” “A red hat,” “A blue coat,” “Malachite,” “Red roses,” “Coloured hats,” and “It was a black, black took”(*TB*, 15-31). Further still, the following sections use actual colours (as opposed to just the word “colour”) in atypically phrased segments that situate the coloured term in a manner wherein its colour does little to benefit the colouring of the object or items described therein. One of the strongest examples of this is to be found in Stein's depiction of “A box” in *Tender Buttons*, a description that includes the anomalous phrase “a white way of being round”: “So then the order is that a white way of being round [...] it is so earnest to have a green point not to red but to point again”(*TB*, 13). How can whiteness and roundness be equated? How can something be considered round in a white way? Rather than attempt to “solve” this riddle, what is more interesting here is its very unsolvability. It sees Stein insert semantically incompatible terms into sections of her sentence that are syntactically required to be semantically compatible in order for the phrase to function; an act that prevents semantic certitude. Beyond this, the subsequent line describing a situation wherein you encounter “a green point not to red but to point again”(*TB*, 13) presents further difficulties from a syntactic point of view. While green seems to be functioning as an adjective to the noun “point,” the remainder of the sentence serves to

retroactively suggest "point" may also be capable of functioning as a verb; thus, "point not to red but to point again"(*TB*, 13).

Similar such examples are to be found elsewhere, with the colour green first described obliquely as "a kind of green" and then employed adjectivally to describe "a game in green" in the following prose accompaniment to the object "A plate": "A kind of green a game in green and nothing flat nothing quite flat and more round, nothing a particular color strangely, nothing breaking the losing of no little piece"(*TB*, 17). Following this, the descriptive passage of "A red hat" sees the colour "grey" declared "monstrous because there is no red in it": "A dark grey, a very dark grey, a quite dark grey is monstrous because there is no red in it"(*TB*, 19). In the context of the passage this is perhaps explained by the simple fact that a red hat that does not contain the colour red, or that once was red but now no longer contained the colour red, would perhaps merit the attribute "monstrous." However, the subsequent observation that "if red is in everything it is not necessary"(*TB*, 19) underlines the paradox of such an attack on nominal forms; if the descriptive term is ubiquitous (as the use of the adjective red may be when it comes to the description of a "red hat") then it becomes redundant, but while the term may be considered redundant, alternative terms used in lieu are equally labelled "monstrous," as Stein puts it.

A similar instance of colour being declared ubiquitous occurs in *How It Is* and the description of the sack as first being the "colour of mud in the mud," a colouring that is subsequently declared ubiquitous in the same manner as the red hat, so that the sack is declared the "colour of its surroundings":

> a sack bravo colour of mud in the mud quick say a sack colour of its surroundings having assumed it always had it it's one or the other seek no further what else that thing could possibly be so many things (*HII*, 91).

This recalibration of the mud-coloured sack into a sack that is the colour of its surroundings brings with it a certain amount of syntactic uncertainty in the subsequent passage; specifically with respect to the referent of the second iteration of the pronoun "it" in the following clause "having assumed it always had *it* it's one or the other"(*HII*, 91; emphasis added). The first "it" in this clause is likely referring to the sack (it could also, however, refer to the "surroundings," though this is unlikely as "surroundings" is plural and the pronoun "it" refers to a singular item or object). The second "it" is, however, harder to pin down, as it can either refer to "the surroundings" or "the colour of mud," given that both have been declared ubiquitous in the preceding passages. Thus, the reader must decide whether the sack has always been the colour of mud, irrespective of its surroundings, or whether the sack has always had these same surroundings; an observation that divorces the colour of the sack (which has already been declared first the colour of mud, then the colour of its surroundings) from the colour of mud. The sack melds with the mud surrounding it, or rather, seeing as mud is not explicitly referenced in the second iteration, melds with its surroundings to the point where, it seems, the sole difference between them comes in the form of their nominal signifiers, that somewhere in that mush of mud there is a mud-coloured object sack, and an equally mud-coloured mud surrounding; the mud is ubiquitous to both object and surround, serving not so much as to distinguish the sack from its surround, but to make the surrounding and sack indistinguishable.

When colour is presented as a noun, as in the following example (again from Stein's "A Substance in a Cushion"), the adjective "light" serves, naturally, to "lighten" the intensity of the noun "blue": "Light blue and the same red with purple makes a change. It shows that there is no mistake"(*TB*, 12). This is a contrasting use of the term "light" to those seen in the previous example from *Watt* wherein the light from the lamp served to redden the greying ashes in the grate of the fire. Of greater interest, however, is the remainder of the sentence and what follows the "light blue," namely: "Light blue and the same red with purple makes a change"(*TB*, 12). What is meant by "the same red with purple"? Or even just "the same red"? Does it mean the same "lightness" of red, as in red with a lightness that is comparable to the lightness of the light blue? Does "the same red" refer to a red known before? Or, given the appearance of the colour purple, a shade made by combining equal parts red and blue, or does it refer to the same quantity of red as blue?

In the opening sections of *Ill Seen Ill Said*, the description of "chalkstones" and the "moon" are based on adjectival associations with the colour "white": "Chalkstones of striking effect in the light of the moon. [...] How whiter and whiter as it climbs it whitens more and more the stones"(*Ill*, 46). Beckett modifies the word "white" to "whiter," a word that suggests asymptotic whiteness as opposed to true "white." This passage suggests that neither the moon nor the chalkstones will ever attain true "whiteness" as both can only become "more and more" "whiter and whiter." However, this is contradicted by the re-appearance of both objects in the subsequent paragraph, this time again associated with the word "white" as opposed to "whiter" or "whiten": "Innumerable white scabs all shapes and sizes. Of striking effect in the light of

the moon"(*Ill*, 47). This play on the qualities surrounding the word "white" returns again in the line "Everywhere every instant whiteness is gaining"(*Ill*, 57). While "gaining" can be interpreted as an increase in spatial whiteness, it can also be read purely in terms of its relationship to the noun "whiteness." Though already white the "whiteness" is thus said to be increasing in "whiteness." Through repetition and subtle modifications the noun that signifies the colour "white" is shown to be an approximation of "whiteness," asymptotic whiteness. The colour "white" is therefore not fully "white," and through its association with "chalkstones" and the "moon," neither are they.

Similar in its apparent immiscibility to Beckett's oddly grey white in *Ill Seen Ill Said* is Stein's antithetical description of "A Piece of Coffee": "Dirty is yellow. [...] The resemblance to yellow is dirtier and distincter. The clean mixture is whiter and not coal color, never more coal color than altogether"(*TB*, 13). The description of a "clean mixture [that] is whiter and not coal color, never more coal color than altogether" is semantically coherent, even if it does make a seemingly incompatible connection between coffee and whiteness as opposed to the dark brown or chocolate colour one would accept more readily in association with black coffee. Again in this passage, as in the reddening and greying fire in *Watt*, discussed previously, we see an adjective undergo an unusual modification wherein an item whose resemblance to the colour yellow is said to be both "dirtier," which itself is lexically sound, and "distincter," which sees the adjective "distinct" or the adverb "distinctly" adopt an -er suffix, an act that should technically assign further specificity as it does in the case of "dirtier," but

"distincter" is an erroneous spelling and an apparently deliberate error[365] or, as with Beckett's "greyen"(*Watt*, 30) a neologism that serves to make the distinction of a distinctly dirty yellow both somewhat indistinct, and so distinct from other items of a similar type that it itself necessitated not only to be marked out as "distinct" but so distinct that even the term denoting its distinction was itself distinct from its fellow terms, in this case distinct by means of a deliberate and jarring error.

Colour then plays an integral role as a grammatical modifier in the work of both authors, serving to blur the lines that distinguish foreground from background, object from surrounds, and even to make certain objects dissimilar from themselves. Much of what is presented in this respect in the examples shown here from the works of both authors then is, like aspects of the foods and objects of *Tender Buttons*, narrated and subsequently renarrated as "the same sight slighter"(*TB*, 13). Just as colour is of import, so too are names and unnamed nouns and adjectives, together with nouns denoting time, order and place, all of which are subject to change:

> How long have I been here, what a question, I've often wondered. And often I couldn't answer, An hour, a month, a century, depending on what I meant by here, and me, and being, and there I never went looking for extravagant meanings, there I never much varied, only the here would sometimes seem to vary (*TFN*, 4).

The changes that take place as a result of these renarrational modifications serve to retroactively tear at the semantic certainties in the descriptive terms used. They prioritise terms that are used to delimit or specify and then demonstrate

[365] That the term is deliberate as opposed to an uncorrected error is confirmed by its presence in the welcomed 2014 publication of the corrected centennial edition of *Tender Buttons*. See Seth Perlow's "A Note on the Text" in Stein, *Tender Buttons: The Corrected Centennial Edition*, 89-97.

the inherently unquantifiable nature of any and all attempts to make these terms quantitative, so much so that, like Watt, one can at best hope to ascertain "the sentiment that a change [...] had taken place":

> But in what did the change *consist*? What was changed, and how? What was changed, if my information is correct, was the sentiment that a change, other than a change of degree, had taken place. (*Watt*, 36; emphasis in original)

That Beckett and Stein were following markedly similar aesthetic strategies regarding the creation of semantically insecure statements and actualising these strategies in the form of specific techniques involving the modification of the grammars and syntaxes of sentences should now be explicit. Similarly clear is the comparable nature between Stein's attempts at subverting "the inevitable narrative of anything"[366] and Beckett's seeming actualisation of this throughout *Texts for Nothing* and elsewhere in the form of their respective subversions of temporal certainty through verbal renarrations. It could in fact be suggested that Beckett's narratives, particularly in *Texts for Nothing* (i.e. post *The Unnamable*) seem to exist at or beyond just such a point, namely, the point where one can distinguish between beginning, middle, and ending. Similar too are their pragmatic approaches to the application of verbs, adverbs, nouns, and adjectives in repetitive patterns that facilitate semantic indeterminacy.

Earlier in this section I noted Beckett's clever capitalisation on the total homophony between the noun "mine" and the possessive pronoun "mine": "His life, what a mine, what a life"(*TFN*, 18). In this instance the proximate terms in the sentence aid the reader in distinguishing the "correct" iteration and

[366] Stein, "Narration 2," *Narration*, 24-5.

interpretation of “mine.” It is an example of how the correct semantic reading can be derived through apposition and context. Yet, at the same time this suggestion of miscibility between that which is attributed to the speaker (“mine”) and that which is an attribute of the third person interlocutor (“his life”) so pertinent throughout the *Texts for Nothing,* ensures that such confusion is not only thematically appropriate, but is a regularly occurring concomitant of pronominal usage throughout Beckett's fictions. Pronouns and the manipulation of pronouns present both authors with opportunities for continuing their respective tearings at the fabric of language but on a more acute—and arguably more effective—scale. Indeed, it presents perhaps the most efficient (remembering Beckett's emphasis on efficiency in Kaun 1937) avenue through which to enact a tearing at the seams of language and semantic sense.[367] The following chapter will focus on pronouns, a major subsection of the nominal modifiers. Close analysis of the efficacy of pronominal modifiers in the act of renarration will identify further examples of aesthetic proximity in relation to the literary techniques and styles of both authors, showing them to be remarkably similar, with their respective adoption of the same techniques producing remarkably similar results.

The following chapter will also consider nondescript or lesser modifiers in the form of pronouns, determiners, prepositions, conjunctions, and punctuation. Aside from the section on pronouns—which will delineate a variety of pronouns in detail—each section will focus on a specific type of that particular modifier (for example, the section on determiners will focus largely on the

[367] It also, in the case of Stein in particular, takes the linguistic sabotaging away from the world of inanimate objects of the kind found throughout *Tender Buttons*. These nominal revisions, arguably, have limited subversive potential because irrespective of their efficacy in remaking the noun, their range is restricted by the nominal terms themselves.

determiners “more” and “less”). This will be followed by a comparative study of Beckett and Stein's use of punctuation as a deliberate technique for subverting the “grammar and style”[368] of the English language.

[368] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 518.

Chapter Four:

Non-productive inanities: Non-productive modifiers.

> I like to write with prepositions and conjunctions and articles and verbs and adverbs but not with nouns and adjectives.[369]

I. Introduction: "No words in grammar"(*HTW*, 54).

Beckett's interest in the lesser modifiers is a prominent and well-documented feature of his later prose, having already received significant critical attention from the likes of Banfield, Brienza, Porter Abbott et al.[370] Banfield puts it succinctly by noting Beckett's interest in the "'nonproductive' words" the "closed-class members lack[ing] highly specified semantic content, having only cognitive syntactic features"[371] as a characteristic feature of his later style.[372] Banfield classifies Beckett's late style as one that "exploits not language's productive processes, but what linguists call 'non-productive' or 'closed-class' lexical formatives—grammatical 'function words' like determiners, pronouns, and so on, as well as inflectional morphemes such as tense and plural, and the bound morphemes of derivational morphology."[373] Banfield sees Beckett's engagement with these items as being particular to his late style and argues that "Beckett's late style is a result of an attempt to create an art made largely out of syntacticon."[374] Banfield refers to "Noun, Verb, Adjective/ Adverb, language's so-

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[369] Stein, "Poetry and Grammar" in *Writings 1932-1946*, 316.
[370] See Susan D. Brienza *Samuel Beckett's New Worlds* (Norman; London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987); Banfield, "Beckett's Tattered Syntax," 6–29; Banfield, *Unspeakable Sentences: Narration and representation in the language of fiction*; Porter Abbott, "Garden Paths and Ineffable Effects: Abandoning Representation in Literature and Film," 205-226.
[371] Banfield, "Beckett's Tattered Syntax," 16-7.
[372] Gontarski similarly draws attention to Beckett's "creative life [spent] paring away at the inessentials" and "courting of unintelligibility," though this is made in the specific context of his later dramatic works. (Gontarski, "Preface" to *Krapp's Last Tape and other shorter plays*, ix-x.)
[373] Banfield, "Beckett's Tattered Syntax," 16.
[374] "The late style is the result." *Ibid.*, 16-7.

called content words" as the "aspect of language exploited by Joyce's 'revolution of the word,' which leaves the framework of the syntax largely intact."[375] Porter Abbott similarly makes this connection, referring to Banfield's work as he does so:

> Unlike the nouns, verbs, abjectives and adverbs so rich in semantic content that Joyce gathered together and cross germinated, Beckett' work depended more on the "nonproductive" words, the pronouns and determiners that "lack highly specified semantic content, having only cognitive syntactic features."[376]

Banfield posits Beckett's later writings as an aesthetic counterpoint to Joyce's own. Banfield goes to great lengths to link this aesthetic praxis to the altogether different Joycean "revolution of the word."[377] The extent to which this latter assertion is accurate is debatable,[378] but that the late prose contained lengthy passages of extended and complex syntactic manipulations is undoubted.

The previous chapter made clear the comparable nature of Beckett and Stein's manipulations of major grammatical modifiers of the kind Banfield classified as the "productive categories"[379]—the nouns and adjectives, verbs and adverbs that Emonds in turn refers to as the "mental lexicon which consists of the open classes of the more contentful lexical items"[380]—and the strategies adopted by both authors so as to bring about a subversion of these

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[375] Banfield, "Beckett's Tattered Syntax," 15.
[376] Porter Abbott, "Garden Paths and Ineffable Effects: Abandoning Representation in Literature and Film," 213.
[377] Banfield, "Beckett's Tattered Syntax," 9-15.
[378] That Banfield repeatedly connects Beckett to Joyce, even when their respective aesthetics appear diametrically opposite, is just a further example of the critical tendency to link Beckett and Joyce in lieu of the more aesthetically compatible work found throughout Stein's writings, again despite the fact that this Stein link is highlighted by Beckett in the core aesthetic marker that is Kaun 1937.
[379] Banfield, "Beckett's Tattered Syntax," 16.
[380] Joseph Emonds, *Lexicon and Grammar: The English Syntacticon* (Berlin; Mouton De Gruyter: 2001), vii.

"contentful"[381] open-class lexical terms. This chapter takes as its topic what Banfield, drawing on the work of Emond, refers to as "non-productive" modifiers. Emond himself classifies these items as the "grammatical lexicon bereft of purely semantic features."[382] In the context of an aesthetics of language that has its foundations in an expressed distaste for "grammar and style," together with a concordant desire, as Beckett puts it, to both abuse language and "contribute to its disrepute,"[383] a more productive avenue is perhaps to be found by capitalising on "'nonproductive' or 'closed-class' lexical formatives—grammatical 'function words' like determiners, pronouns, and so on."[384] An attack on the sense-making capacity of language would be better served (or more "efficiently abused"[385]) through an approach that capitalises on these already semantically tenuous and changeable terms; terms that are themselves already "made porous,"[386] referring as they do to particularly "nonproductive" semantic terms.

II. Pronouns: "homeless mes and untenanted hims"(*TFN*, 50).

While Stein relegated the noun to the position of the lexically least interesting, her assessment of the pronoun was not so severe. "Pronouns are not as bad as nouns," she argues in "Poetry and Grammar," because "they are not really the name of anything. They represent someone but they are not its or his name."[387] Pronouns have no direct referent other than that signified within the context of the sentence or narrative. Stein capitalises on this pronominal ambiguity, seeing in it perhaps an opportunity similar to the capacity to err that

[381] Emonds, *Lexicon and Grammar: The English Syntacticon*, vii.
[382] *Ibid.*, vii.
[383] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 518.
[384] Banfield, "Beckett's Tattered Syntax," 16.
[385] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 518.
[386] *Ibid.*, 519.
[387] Stein "Poetry and Grammar," *Writings*, 316.

so appealed to her when it came to the use of verbs and adverbs in narrative. Stein displays a disregard for distinctions between different pronouns and executes a kind of pronominal interchangeableness throughout her writings that suggests, at the very least, a willingness to push at the semantic boundaries that separate one pronominal entity ("one") from another (another "one"). In this way then, Stein's disregard for the distinctions between different pronouns places her in direct and useful comparison with Beckett.

Both Stein and Beckett hone in on this miscible capacity of pronouns as important aids in the execution of renarrative strategies of tearing at language. It is particularly interesting that Stein creates a direct equation between their usefulness and their capacity to obfuscate or "not really" "name anything."[388] Having a narrative driven or directed by pronouns enables these authors to engage with issues relating to language and identity, or the relation between the word and the world, without having to bother with excess, effusive details of the kind that arguably limit the subversive potential of *Tender Buttons* or similar nominally oriented passages in Beckett such as the previously discussed "pot" scene in *Watt* (*Watt*, 67-8). Occupying the position of the subject within a given sentence, a pronoun is literally all that is required to regulate the sentence and create a vague idea of the form of object, person, or thing being referred to; that is to say, one can be aware of the thing as an "it," "he," "she," or "they," of the speaker as "I," "me," of the addressee as "you," and so on. Their reach and flexibility extends far beyond that of the standard common noun and can alternately refer to something or nothing, to a specific one, anyone, everyone,

[388] Stein "Poetry and Grammar," *Writings*, 316.

someone, or no-one; a fact that grants them greater potential as tools in the strategic tearing of language through renarrative modifications.

Beginning then with Beckett's *Watt*, the object in the following example—a public bench—is external to the main interlocutor. The figure thus engages with the object by means of the possessive determiner "his":

> Mr Hackett turned the corner and saw, in the failing light, at some little distance, his seat. It seemed to be occupied. This seat, the property very likely of the municipality, or of the public, was of course not his, but he thought of it as his. This was Mr Hackett's attitude towards things that pleased him. He knew they were not his, but he thought of them as his. He knew they were not his, because they pleased him (*Watt*, 3).

Mr Hackett's capacity to derive pleasure from the bench and from objects in general is contingent on that object not belonging to him; only that which is "not his"(*Watt*, 3) can please him, a phenomenon he correspondingly employs to ascertain whether or not certain items belong to him by assessing their capacity to please him. Both "his" and "him" are contingent but mutually exclusive; they rely on each other, are enabled by each other, but cannot, we are told, co-exist in relation to the same object.

A similar instance of pronominal irreconcilability occurs shortly after the Mr Hackett sequence in *Watt* and concerns Mr Nixon's curious association of Mr Hackett with Watt and vice versa: "when I see him, or think of him, I think of you, and that when I see you, or think of you, I think of him"(*Watt*, 13). The figure of Watt—signified by the pronoun "him"—and Mr Nixon—signified by the pronoun "you"—are intertwined in a relationship wherein seeing one sparks a thought of the other and therefore, to an extent the figures, or at least the pronominal

figures are interchangeable, with "him" leading to "you," and "you" to "him." Ackerley suggests that this passage is a

> narrative suggestion (a) of the affinity between Mr Hackett and Watt, implying (b) that the reader's understanding, or failure to understand, Mr. Hackett will anticipate a like understanding, or failure to understand, Watt.[389]

The ontological consequences of this relationship are external to the remit of this study, but that there is a "narrative suggestion [...] of the affinity between Mr Hackett and Watt" is unquestionable.[390] Furthermore, it is a "suggestion" that is not so much indicated as engendered by a strategic and deliberate collation that sees two altogether different pronouns being declared all but equivalent.

This instance of "suggestion"[391] by means of pronominal trafficking has its counterpart in the well known Stein quote, originally from *How To Write* but later appropriated to serve as the title for a 1970s documentary on "Gertrude Stein in Person" directed by Perry Miller Adato[392]: "When this you see remember me"(*HTW*, 17). As with the Mr Nixon and Watt example above, this statement invites the reader to make a semantic connection between determiner and pronoun, between "this" and "me," but also between the pronoun "me" and the perceived referent of "this," namely the written sentence at hand, or that particular passage of text in general.[393] More complicated examples of this

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[389] Ackerley, *Obscure Locks, Simple Keys*, 38.
[390] *Ibid.*
[391] *Ibid.*
[392] Adato, Perry Miller dir., *Gertrude Stein: When This You See Remember Me: Gertrude Stein in Person* (NET Educational Broadcasting Corporation, 1970), http://perrymilleradato.com/Documentaries/gertrude-stein/.
[393] As is clear from Miller Adato's decision to appropriate the line to serve as the title of his documentary on Stein, this line has been largely read in a manner that identifies the "me" as explicitly autobiographical (that is, referring to the figure of Stein herself), and the "this" as referring to Stein's writings as a whole. This is a further example of the critical tendency to read Stein's writing solely in relation to its author, to the neglect of the often very explicit and literal

pronominal fissuring occur in the following two passages—one from each author. Both relay a type of cross-generational melding of identities through acts of pronominal interchange that intimate inter-generational experiential interchange. The opening paragraph of *The Making of Americans* sees Stein establishing an improbable scenario relating to inherited behaviours and a familial trait for paternal battery: “Once an angry man dragged his father along the ground through his own orchard. 'Stop!' cried the groaning old man at last, 'Stop! I did not drag my father beyond this tree'”(*MOA*, 3). This is comparable to a line from Beckett's “Text for Nothing I” where generationally distinct nouns are paired to achieve generational repetition in the form of an inter-generational memory of rheumatism: “My rheumatism in any case is no more than a memory, it hurts me no more than my mother's did, when it hurt her”(*TFN*, 5). Whereas hereditary rheumatism in and of itself is hardly novel, this is not the generational tie that is being stressed here; rather, the narrator instead emphasises a sort-of inter-generational memory connecting the narrator with their mother. This same process re-occurs in the concluding passage of the same text, this time in relation to the narrator's father and son: “Yes, I was my father and I was my son, I asked myself questions and answered as best I could, I had it told me evening after evening, the same old story I knew by heart”(*TFN*, 6). Here again we see the same process, with the first person pronoun “I” and the possessive determiner “my” repeated and paired with semantically incompatible nouns to create a sentence that is grammatically correct but semantically and biologically

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statements of intent articulating strategies of tearing at “the fabric of the language” by means of deliberate, structural manipulations that distort the semantics contained therein (SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 519).

impossible (except perhaps within the "fortunate [and incestuous] family Lynch"(*Watt*, 84)).

Events separated not only by extensive temporal difference but by differences of agency are blurred by pronominal manipulations that suggest the possibility of a relationship across biological and temporal impasses. While this naturally invites readings of a metaphysical variety, these inter-generational suggestions are all accomplished by means of pronominally reliant insinuations regarding cross-generational shared interpersonal memories. At the same time however, this suggestion is also perennially deferred by both authors, who both similarly compromise this cross-generational merger by still maintaining a suggestion of pronominal difference between these figures, however tenuous these differences, or indeed these shared memories, may actually be. Though they are somewhat more complicated than the Mr Nixon/ Watt exchange or the Mr Hackett/ seat exchange discussed previously, they are nevertheless still accomplished by a similarly structured renarration that blurs the distinction between pronouns and referent. The approach to engendering such semantically distorted passages is relatively straightforward and involves pairing semantically immiscible pronouns with similarly atypical prepositions or determiners, as in the "I was my father and I was my son"(*TFN*, 6) passage discussed above. A more efficient example occurs later in "Text for Nothing XII" with the observation "it's me in him remembering"(*TFN*, 49). To refer back to an example discussed at the end of the previous chapter, these examples are identical in their technical execution to the seemingly incompatible semantic pairings that make a clause like "a white way of being round"(*TB*, 13) impossible to reconcile semantically.

Ostensibly, pronouns establish and maintain distinctions between different figures. While these distinctions were problematised in the previous examples, in the following passage from *How It Is*, the distinction between "he" and "us" is relentlessly maintained for the duration of the passage:

> there he is then at last that not one of us there we are then at last who listens to himself and who when he lends his ear to our murmur does no more lend it to a story of his own devising ill-inspired ill-told and so ancient so forgotten at each telling that ours may seem faithful (*HII*, 121).

The transitions from "he" to "himself," "he," and "his" maintains the distinction between "he" and "us" that is set up in the opening clause. This distinction is maintained throughout the various iterations of "he" by having the first person plural similarly adapt from "us" to "we," and the possessive determiner "our" change to "ours" when "he" makes the similar transition from pronoun to possessive determiner. "Not I" is a further example of a Beckett text that maintains an extreme distinction between the first person singular and third person singular.[394]

Beckett seems to particularly favour interplay between the personal pronouns "me" and "him" throughout the *Texts for Nothing*; later, between the first and second person singular pronouns "me" and "you," and the ubiquitous "other" found throughout the *Nohow On* texts. The following example from "Text for Nothing XIII" is not as semantically problematic as the preceding examples of fissured nominal and pronominal crossovers, but nevertheless makes use of a

[394] Beckett, "Not I" in *Krapp's Last Tape and other shorter plays*, 81-94. In the case of Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* enacts a comparable distinction between the ostensible author/narrator, "Alice B. Toklas and the actual author, Gertrude Stein, but this is further complicated by the various strictures surrounding the genre of autobiography, so is of less relevance to this particular study.

series of rapid fusillades between the pronouns “it,” “me” and “him” to complicate the distinction between “that voice which is silence, or it's me, there's no telling”(*TFN*, 52):

> [I]t and me, it and him, him and me, and all our train, and all theirs, and all theirs, but whose, whose dream, whose silence, old questions, last questions, ours who are dream and silence, but it's ended, we're ended who never were, soon there will be nothing where there was never anything (*TFN*, 52).

This rapid back and forth between “it,” “me,” and “him” expands to accommodate the inclusive and possessive determiner “our” that, like the “it” or “him” and “me” distinction, has its external counterpart in the possessive determiner “their.” Before even this pithy agreement is allowed to settle it is once again returned to a state of indeterminacy by means of the interrogative query “but whose.” The sequence quickly descends into tautological abstractions, here accomplished by means of the pronoun “ours,” whose referent in the clause “ours who are dreams or silence” is unclear. The passage concludes with a final clausal tautology that sees Beckett attempt to revise the narrated or narrating figures out of existence by following a verb denoting ending or finitude with a statement of anti-being (“we're ended who never were”) and a similar though slightly tweaked use of antonymy to make a “non-entity” of an already non-existent place (“soon there will be nothing where there was never anything”).

The Unnamable contains a similar episode involving rapid, rhythmic transitions between different pronouns employed in a manner that reflects the uncertainty the figure narrating feels regarding their acts of narration:

> [H]e speaks of me as if I were he, as if I were not he, both, as if I were others, one after another [...] he says I'm far, as if I were he, no, as if I were not he, for he is not far, he is here, it's he who speaks, he says it's I, then he says it's not, I am far, do you hear him, he seeks me I don't know why, he doesn't know why, he calls me, he wants me to come out, [...] he wants me to be he, or another [...] he thinks he's caught me, he feels me in him, then he says I, as if I were he, or in another (*U*, 122).

More concentrated instances of pronominal confusion occur throughout *How It Is* and take the form of unregulated clauses containing lengthy strings of different and apparently competing pronouns; what Cordingley refers to as a "confusion of pronouns"[395]: "and the last day comes I come to the day Bom comes YOU BOM me Bom ME BOM you Bom we Bom"(*HII*, 65). In this passage the uncertainty regarding who it is that is coming is reflected first through the series of rapid pronominal switches between "YOU BOM [and] me" before a transition to the first person plural "we," a term that manages to capture and contain together the different figures. Elsewhere throughout *How It Is* we see the same pronominal flits occur in sequences largely compiled of different pronouns:[396]

> who for me for whom I what I for Pim Pim for me (*HII*, 52).
>
> to whom of whom to whom of me of whom to me (*HII*, 93).
>
> Bom to the abandoned not me Bom you Bom we Bom but me Bom you Pim I to the abandoned not me Pim you Pim we Pim but me Bom you Pim something very wrong there (*HII*, 100).

These strings of pronouns merit comparison with Stein's enumerative lists of grammatical articles from her essay "Sentences" from *How To Write* discussed in

[395] Cordingley. "Beckett and 'l'ordre naturel': The Universal Grammar of *Comment c'est/ How It Is*" *Samuel Beckett Today/ Aujourd'hui* 18, 188.
[396] In addition, these three examples all contain partial epanalepses.

Chapter One. There, they were presented as examples of Stein's fascination with the materiality of language. Here, when placed alongside Beckett's fusillades between Bom and Pim, they read as pronominally overabundant sentences wherein the narrative impetus is firmly situated in the realm of pronominal and determiner-focused clauses:

> For theirs. That is an idea. This is for them. That is hers. That is hers for this for theirs that which they have for them. They have this for them. This is hers for theirs theirs for hers with this for hers this for theirs with for hers. With her (*HTW*, 128).

That Stein is aligning the narrative impetus with pronouns and determiners (as opposed to verbs and nouns) is confirmed by the puzzling aphorism that immediately follows this passage, an aphorism that would not be out of place as an epigram for *Texts for Nothing*: "In this the pronouns do not count they are only the story. The pronouns in this do not count they are only the story"(*HTW*, 128). As such then, Stein appears to be suggesting a narrative state akin to that encountered throughout *The Unnamable* wherein "affirmations and negations [are] invalidated as uttered, or sooner or later"(*U*, 3).

In contrast to the above passages which see Beckett rely on the first person singular pronoun "me," Stein makes repeated use of the third person singular pronoun "one," as the following two examples—both from *The Making of Americans*—attest:

> Every one is resembling some how to some one. Everybody is a real one to me, everybody is like some one else too to me. [...]
>
> So it goes on, every one mostly sees in each in each one something that is like something in some other one (*MOA*, 333).

The first example sees Stein relay a relational interchange between persons that can be considered a more generalist version of the Mr Nixon/ Watt relationship discussed previously. The second example similarly reiterates this pronominal reciprocation in a somewhat more pleonastic and indeterminate format with the adverbs “mostly” and “something” importing further vagueness. Every “one” in these passage is conveyed as being in some way similar to a different “one” with each “one” sparking some referential connection to an other “one” and vice versa. Yet, while in the Mr Nixon/ Watt exchange, the difference between the two pronouns “you” and “him” enabled a level of distinction between the two figures, here the different “one” figures are lexically identical.

The capacity to make distinctions between these variant figures is further complicated when the pronouns used to identify them no longer explicitly indicate difference, as for example is the case with the pronouns “me” and “you.” Stein's preference for orthographically identical pronouns when referring to mass groupings of figures makes her writings exceptionally difficult to parse, and makes it all but impossible to establish and maintain semantic difference between these different figures. This is particularly apparent when, as in the following example, the number of different “one-figures” builds to a level far higher than the examples discussed previously:

> Sometime perhaps it will be clear to every one the whole being in any one. This then is a beginning. This then is a beginning [...] sometime perhaps it will be clear to some one the being in any one. This then again is a beginning. Mostly every one is resembling some how to some one, every one is one inside them, every one reminds some one of some other one. Each one has it to say of each one he is like such a one I see it in him, every one has it to say of each one she is like some one else I can tell by

> remembering. Every one is always remembering some one who is resembling to some one. Every one is themselves inside them and every one is resembling to others (*MOA*, 332).

Stein goes to great lengths in the manipulation of the modifiers that surround these orthographically identical pronouns, thereby establishing distinctions and overt indications of difference between otherwise identical pronominal terms; that is to say, between one "one" and other "one[s]." The first brief example sees Stein refer to a mass plural form of "one" in the form of "every one" before immediately seguing from the general "every" to the specific "some" in her statement: "That is always there in every one to some one"(*MOA*, 306). Much like the individuals themselves, who can be classified as either every or some "one"(a specification that does little to help us distinguish them from each other),[397] the content of "that" we are assured is "always there" is similarly vague. All we know is that "that is always there," a statement that invites the question What is always where?

Similarly, in the following two examples the variant "ones" are differentiated solely by means of their surrounding modifiers:

> Understanding being in some one makes the one understanding the being in some one come very nearly to telling that one the one whose being is understood by the one understanding the being of some one makes that one come sometimes very near to telling the one whose being that one is understanding that that one is needing to be one going on being living. [...] Some one understanding some one is telling that one and explaining that thing completely explaining that thing that that one that that one is understanding. [...]

[397] It is all but impossible to establish the distinction between "every one" and "some one," though it is fair to assume that these "some one[s]" would necessarily also belong to the set containing "every one"(*MOA*, 332).

> Some one said about some one who was saying something that seemed a very foolish thing to some one about how some one did something, [...] (*MOA*, 824-25; 725).

The first passage sees a development on the already difficult series of differential "ones" discussed previously. This development comes in the form of the determiner "some," an addition that intimates a belied specificity. Thus, we have an initial figure ("some one") engaged in understanding another "some one" while also telling that "one" that they (the initial "some one") understand what is being communicated. This process is complicated even further when, as in the second example, in addition to being repeated alongside the pronoun "one," the determiner "some" is further repeated in connection with other terms, in this instance, as part of the adverb "something."

Aside from distinctions brought about by the determiner "some," Stein also employs the determiners "this" and "that" to distinguish between different "ones":

> This one then that I was last describing and then describing the meaning in the being in that one and then describing the telling of the meaning of the being in that one to that one, that one then knew then the meaning of the being in that one (*MOA*, 331).

As with the preceding examples, this passage is pleonastic in its elaboration on the narrator's description of a specific figure ("this one"). The statement "I was last describing" is expanded and recurs to include the different things described, be they the "meaning in the being in that one," the "telling of the meaning of the being in that one" and finally the knowledge "that one then knew" regarding "the meaning of the being in that one."

Given the already established difficulty of referring to different figures using the same term, Stein employs different determiners to instil, if not absolute certainty regarding the distinctions between these different "ones," then a gestural (at best) indication that, despite their pronominal similitude, differences exist between "this one" and "that one," even if these differences have largely been determined solely by a difference of determiner. Similarly, in the following example from the latter half of the novel, the determiners "this" and "that" are explicitly used to demarcate a distinction between two different "ones," a distinction that is presented as an almost certainty ("surely") but a certainty that is nevertheless undermined by the sub-clause that specifies this dissimilitude is only "in a way": "Surely this one is not such a one and yet in a way that one is such a one"(*MOA*, 771). Stein's distinguishing between these different "ones" in this example is enacted by means of the leverage (however slight) granted by the determiners "this" and "that." That said, it is also possible to argue that "this one" and "that one" are here one and the same one, merely differently determined.

Both authors make similar and regular uses of the pronouns/ determiners "this," "that," "these," and "then" then to make distinctions between different figures, or different temporal periods. This technique can be seen in the following example from "Text for Nothing IX" which sees the verbs within the phrase "what is it that makes me say" remain consistent for the first two iterations, with the changing contents of that which is said being duly reflected by the alternate use of the determiners "this" and "that": "what is it that makes me say that, what is it that makes me say this, whatever is it makes me say all, and it's not certain"(*TFN*, 38). A more complicated example occurs in *The Making of Americans* where an already difficult statement regarding the figures the

narrator has been describing is repeated in an epanorthotic recalibration specifying that "these then that" the narrator is describing are "all kinds of them"; in other words that the narrator is talking about a variety of different people: "All these then that I have been describing all these then all these kinds of them that I have been describing"(*MOA*, 511-2). The figures are first referred to as "these" before becoming "them" or specifically "all kinds of them," and thus we have a repetition wherein the pronoun used to indicate the figures changes but the semantic content remains consistent, creating a statement that is an epanorthosis, a characteristically Steinian pleonasm, and contains a particularly nice triple phonemic alliteration in the form of the fragment "these then that."

Consider the following two examples of contestably delimited spaces, the first is from Beckett's *How It Is*, the second from Stein's *How To Write*:

> seeking that which I have lost there where I have never been (*HII*, 39).
>
> They went where they had linked a well with. Whom were they known to be there (*HTW*, 15).

Beckett's statement here verges on the perennially hyperbolic, with the pronoun "that"—signifying a lost item—being sought out in an area ("there") where the speaker has never been. The statement itself implies a sort of continuous geospatial renarration through its creation of a continually deferred place. Each place, once visited, becomes familiar, thus driving the speaker on to seek out further unfamiliarity "there where I have never been"(*HII*, 39). The contested space where "that which I have lost" and "there where I have never been" coexists is perpetually deferred by the assertion that this search for the lost item is only ever carried out "where I have never been"(*HTW*, 39). In the latter

statement by Stein, the contested space is similarly abstruse though less assuredly defined; it is a place "where they had linked a well with." It is unclear where or what this "well" is; whether it is a noun, adverb, exclamation (unlikely), or the adjective to an undisclosed noun. Instead of demarcating space, Stein focuses on the effect this transition has on the identities of the figures, noting that the transition towards this alternate place leaves the "they" figures uncertain of "whom" they are known as in this newer space. This place "they went" to resulted in a certain loss of identity that lead to their identities being called into question, as can be seen in the phrasing "whom were they known to be there" (*HTW*, 15)? A more complicated example that incorporates the pronoun "them" is found three pages later in the same essay: "Will when they leave will they think that they will have it for them"(*HTW*, 18).

In the following passage, each "that" in the tripartite single-word repetition of "that that that" from *The Making of Americans* refers to a separate item within the sentence:

> This then is a personal idea, that that that one has for daily living and so this one has feeling of being always creating the daily living, the being in that one, really that one is going from something that one has been knowing to something that one has not quite been certainly knowing and sticks there in that thing (*MOA*, 645).

The word "that" functions as both a pronoun and a preposition and, in the above passage, as with many of the unpunctuated passages throughout *How It Is*, the way you read the sentence and classify the functionality of each term therein determines which grammatical function is assigned to each term. What is changing then isn't so much the meaning as the functionality of the term itself; or more precisely, the meaning is shown to be intrinsic to its functionality;

particularly in the case of a statement such as "that that that"(*MOA*, 645). Further still, this collection of "thats" manages to intimate specificity—that there is a difference between "that," "that that," or "that that that," that each of these are somehow different to the initial "that"—while remaining resolutely non-specific.

In the following example from *The Making of Americans*, the various figures are made indiscernible by extensive pronominal layering throughout the sentence that serves to create the grammatical equivalent of what Molloy, speaking metaphorically, describes as "a glittering dust, and soon through that mist too which rises in me every day and veils the world from me and veils me from myself"(*M*, 26): "Then there are these then there are then those that have it in them in living that dead is dead only partly in them"(*MOA*, 499). In this sentence the figures themselves are hard to distinguish from each other, shunted as they are within a twofold pile up of clauses that respectively references "these" then "then those" as examples of figures that "have it in them in living that dead is dead only partly in them." The syntax of the sentence makes it unclear if this particular characteristic is mutually exclusive to one of these two grouping of people, either to "these" or to "those"; thus, this apparent distinction between figures may not in reality distinguish them at all, merely feign the capacity to do so, with the sentence itself being so vague as to undo the perfunctory terms used to distinguish between "these" and "those."

In the following passage from Beckett's *How It Is*, epanorthosis is achieved through the manipulation of pronouns and prepositions involving the prefixes "any-" and "every-":

> always understood everything except for example history and geography understood everything and forgave nothing never could never

> disapproved anything really not even cruelty to animals never loved anybody (*HII*, 34).

The initial statement in the first example ("always understood everything") is undermined by means of a segue into a subclause containing a substantial number of topics that are not understood; this renarration is introduced by the conjunction "except" and enabled by the pronoun "everything" and its antonym "nothing." An almost identical effect is achieved in the following line from Stein's *The Making of Americans*: "He was one who was not completely forgetting anything and he was one who did not remember everything"(*MOA*, 899). As in the passage from *How It Is*, an initial statement is recalibrated by means of a change in verb, from "forgetting" to its near antonym "remembering," paired with a shift from the pronoun "anything" to "everything," creating similarly precise and acute epanorthotic and pleonastic effects to those achieved by Beckett.

The pronoun "some" straddles both the general and the specific and, with proper modification, is capable of referring to either the general or the specific, or in some cases, to refer to both within the one sentence. Take the following account of the topics of peoples' conversations from *The Making of Americans*:

> They talked in different ways about different things, some talked in some way about something then talked in another way about something, some talked in some way about something then talked in another way about another thing, some talked in the same way about a good many things, mostly every one talked a good deal about something, mostly every one talked a good deal about a number of things (*MOA*, 748).

Much like Stein's similarly structured account of things said and then unsaid, discussed in Chapter Three—"there are some saying something and not saying it

again and again"(*MOA*, 742)—this passage recounts not the specificities of items said, but the topics by which these conversations can be classified; a subtle difference, but one Stein doubtless felt necessary to include in her "complete gamut of variation"(*MOA*, 474). The passage opens by introducing a group of people—"they"—who are engaged in conversation. This group is revealed in the next sentence to consist of an unspecified number of "some" people. The contents of their conversations are kept similarly vague, with "some" appearing twice again, first as a determiner informing the reader that these people spoke "in some way," second as an adverbial prefix and subordinate clause that informs us they spoke "in some way about something." The passage continues in this mechanical-like trajectory of various "somes" and "things" for several sentences, with none of the descriptions being of much use to the reader in terms of elucidating what has been talked about. It gradually transitions from a group of people ("they") talking "different ways about different things" to "mostly every one" talking "a good deal about a number of things." As such then, this sees a transition from vague to vaguer, a progressive vaguening enacted on a sentence-by-sentence level. The passage concludes with that most vague of assertions, namely that "mostly every one talked a good deal about something, mostly every one talked a good deal about a number of things"(*MOA*, 748); in other words, people talked, and they talked about things. But even this vague assertion is undermined by the strategic placement of the adverb "mostly."

The following contains a contrasting example to the preceding instances of varieties of "some," with Beckett instead opting for the dualising terms "another" and "the same," as opposed to Stein's favoured counterpoint of "some" or "one" and "another one". Despite the difference of terms, semantic consistency

between pronouns is equally as uncertain and this is enabled both by the strategic vagueness imported by the pronouns "another" and "the same" together with the ordinal number "first" in epanorthotic interactions enabled by the conjunction "or." It can be considered a strong example of Clément's claim that epanorthosis was a particularly favoured characteristic of Beckett's mature style:[398] "Another said, or the same, or the first, they all have the same voice, the same ideas, All you had to do was stay at home. Home. They wanted me to go home"(*TFN*, 3). "Same" begins in the above excerpt as a pronoun, transitions to an adjective with two different nominal referents. Thus, it manages to recur in three different renarrative guises, displaying a frequency and versatility that does little to convey the activity of sameness or stasis.

In the following description of "everywhere" from *The Making of Americans*, the activities of those present acquire a site-specific specificity that lasts only for the duration of a single sentence. The proximity of the sentences to each other invites the reader to read each "some one" as a specific "someone" but this is merely inferred and is far from certain:

> Everywhere where the thing that is done by some one comes to be done it is done and done by some one. Certainly every where where something is done it is done and done by some one. Certainly some are doing something and it is done and done by each one of them (*MOA*, 920).

A similar example of situational renarration involving pronouns is discernible in the following passage from *Company*:

> Nowhere in particular on the way from A to Z. Or say for verisimilitude the Ballyogan Road. That dear old back road. Somewhere on the Ballyogan Road in lieu of nowhere in particular. [...] Somewhere on the

[398] Clément, *L'Œuvre sans qualités: Rhétorique de Samuel Beckett*, 242.

Ballyogan road on the way from A to Z (*C*, 14).

This sequence attains a certain specificity of place through the line "somewhere on the Ballyogan road." When considered alongside the subsequent remark "that dear old back road," these statements also hint towards a sentimental esotericism that would grant the "dear old" location further import. However, this gesture towards an identifiable location, like the location of the "cabin" in *Ill Seen Ill Said*, is immediately counteracted by the qualification that this location has been selected "in lieu of nowhere in particular." Further still, the "Ballyogan road" is merely "nowhere in particular on the way from A to Z." The road is the one known location between two unknown variables ("A" and "Z") but as neither "A" nor "Z" are disclosed, this "somewhere [...] in lieu or nowhere in particular" is as useful in terms of ascertaining location as the "inexistent centre of a formless place" of *Ill Seen Ill Said*.[399] Similar instances of partially asserted knowledge or assurances that are systematically undermined once uttered are to be found in relation to the depth and scope of various figures' knowledgeability. The following line from *The Making of Americans* appears to state that some figures are capable of knowing things without really knowing anything: "Some have in them completely the emotion of knowing something is something without feeling in them that any thing is anything"(*MOA*, 697).

The Making of Americans sees a cumulative transition from the universal—by means of Stein's combined use of the determiner "every" with the pronouns "one" and "everyone"—to the specific—by means of Stein's use of the

[399] In turning what initially appears to be a specific pronouncement into something over-determined and abstract, the "Ballyogan road" sequence can also be said to exemplify Stein's declaration in "An Elucidation" that there is "in a place a place for everything": "Place, In a place A place for everything and everything in its place. In place a place for everything, in a place," discussed in the previous chapter (Stein, "An Elucidation," in *A Stein Reader*, 431).

determiner “some” with the pronouns “one” and “someone.” This proceeds by means of pronominal renarration that sees the investigative limits of the novel drastically redefined from being a novel of “every one” or “everyone” to being a novel of “some” or of a select and therefore finite number of “someones.” This recalibration, while gradually introduced throughout the course of the novel, eventually serves to bring the novel to its conclusion; but aside from the obvious relief that comes with having finished this seemingly endless novel, the ending is rather unsatisfying. As with many of the beginnings and endings seen throughout the novel itself, not only does it appear not to be a definite ending, but much like the ending of *Watt*, it appears to undermine much of what has been said before over the course of the novels 925 pages: “Any family living can be one being existing and some can remember something of some such thing”(*MOA*, 925). This recalibration is done by means of syntactic manipulation with the determiner “any” at the onset of the concluding sentence hinting at the all-encompassing aims set out at the onset of the novel, this statement of general collectivity is subsequently drastically recalibrated to present a comparatively infinitesimal thesis, one whose specificity it again reiterates by a transition from “any” to “some.” Any family can exist, Stein says, 925 pages into a promised universal history of all peoples past, present, and future, but only “some can remember something of some such thing”(*MOA*, 925). This ending is the very epitome of anticlimactic and is on par with a comparably frustrating conclusion to one of the key essays in *How To Write*, which concludes with the blunt admission “I made a mistake”(*HTW*, 21); a summation that can itself be further linked to *Watt*'s inconclusive conclusion “no symbols where none intended”(*Watt*, 223).[400] This

[400] It also serves to present the narrative of *The Making of Americans*, and the select figures and

technique of presenting something as a certainty but immediately undermining that assertion is a habitual approach adopted by Stein throughout *The Making of Americans*, *How To Write*, and elsewhere. The preceding sections have detailed this activity with respect to various iterations of the pronoun "one" and its interactions with different determiners that serve to alternately merge or make dissimilar the various "one" figures depicted. Pronouns enable Stein to enact a very successful semantic vagueness throughout her prose, as in the following sentence where "anybody" is combined with the adverb "nearly" to create a sentence anybody may be able to read, but one whose meaning, despite her assurances that "anybody can see" it, can only ever be "nearly" seen: "Anybody can see nearly what I mean"(*HTW*, 110).

That Stein elicits to adopt the one pronoun when referring to all peoples makes her work all the more difficult to parse than Beckett's. That said, a comparable instance of deliberate pronominal vagueness occurs in the recurrent references to the "other other/s" of *Company*:

> If the voice is not speaking to him it must be speaking to another. So with what reason remains he reasons. To another of that other. Or of him. Or of another still. To another of that other or of him or of another still. To one on his back in the dark in any case. [...] For were the voice speaking not to him but to another then it must be of that other it is speaking and not of him or of another still. [...] It is clear therefore that if it is not to him the voice is speaking but to another it is not of him either but of that other and none other than that other (*C*, 6).

When considered in tandem with the following passage from *The Making of Americans*, the above sequence from *Company* reveals itself to be engaging in the

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families outlined therein, much like the figures that populate *Watt*, as a particular series drawn from any number of potential series: "Thinking then, in search of rest, of the possible relations between such series as these, the series of dogs, the series of men, the series of pictures, to mention only these series"(*Watt*, 116).

same renarrative process, one wherein a set pronoun ("other" in Beckett, "one" in Stein) recurs and with each iteration refers to different figures, whose differences are demarcated by means of the syntactic acrobatics of the surrounding modifiers:

> In some way anything, everything any one, every one says about any one is a true thing. Each one says something about some one and that one says something says a number of things sometime about herself or himself and everything any one, anything any one says about that one anything that one says about that one everything that one says about that one is in a way a true thing (*MOA*, 576-7).

Though both authors show preference for different pronouns then, the methods adopted for engendering a diffusion of the distinctions between different "ones" or different "others" and conversely, the methods employed to indicate similitude or sameness between others, are identical. This is a fact made clear by the seamless transition Beckett himself enacts in the following passage from "Text for Nothing XII" wherein the narrator first articulates unorthodox plural forms of "me" and "him" before indicating an awareness of the polysemy such manipulations of pronouns can engender:

> And this other now, obviously, what's to be said of this latest other, with his babble of homeless mes and untenanted hims, this other without number or person whose abandoned being we haunt, nothing. There's a pretty three in one, and what a one, what a no one (*TFN*, 50).

This passage contains two instances of renarration. The first sees the term "other" appear in its first iteration as an adjective only to be reconfigured as the subject for its second iteration. The second involves a syntactic structure that forces the pronouns "me" and "him" into the unorthodox plural forms "mes" and "hims." Further still, there is a remarkable triple repetition of the word "one,"

with each recurrence laying claim to a different semantic component. The first "one" refers to the cardinal number "one" whereas the second and third respectively refer to the pronoun "one" and its pronominal antithesis "no one." Before moving to examine a counterpart in Stein that similarly engages with cardinal and pronominal ones, first a brief pause to draw attention to the correlation between Beckett's "what a one, what a no one"(*TFN*, 50) and Stein's similarly worded line from *The Making of Americans*: "Any one could be such a one. He was such a one. Not any one could be such a one"(*MOA*, 864). These statements are technically correlative, with both employing renarration in a manner that is again akin to epanorthosis.

Beckett's segue from cardinal to pronominal ones and no ones in the above excerpt also has its complement among Stein's writing in the description of "A box":

> The one is on the table. The two are on the table. The three are on the table. The one, one is the same length as is shown by the cover that shows it. The other is different there is more cover that shows it. The other is different and that makes the corners have the same shade the eight are in singular arrangement to make four necessary (*TB*, 16).

While the title of this passage is "A Box" it seems relatively clear that we are dealing with a description of at least three if not four separate boxes (or alternatively, one single box with particular attention given to each of its four sides). The first occurrence of "one" here is cardinal, referring to the first of what becomes three different items on a table. Following the three short sentences that establish this layout of three different items on a table, Stein switches from cardinal references to pronominal, returning briefly to describe characteristics of "the one, one" before moving to describe the other two; except she does not refer

to them as “two” or “three,” she classifies them as being “other” to the “one, one”. Thus we have a specific “one” that is referred to both as the first “one” and the pronominal “one.” This is followed by an “other,” and an additional “other,” an other “other”: “The one, one [...] The other is different [...] The other is different”(*TB*, 16). Cleverly, Stein manages to create a further disruption to this collation of ones and others by means of her repetition of the phrase “the other is different” across the description of both others. Thus, while either “other” may be declared not only different from “the one” but different from each other, this is not the case lexically as these two statements of difference through otherness are themselves identical.

The following examples concern narrators that repeatedly stop to check and reassure themselves of the source of their voice. In a refreshing instance of specificity, coming off the back of Stein's unabashed abuse of the pronoun “one,” the narrator of “Text for Nothing V” pauses to reiterate that in this instance, “one mean[s] me”:

> That is why nothing appears, all is silent, one is frightened to be born, no, one wishes one were, so as to begin to die. One, meaning me, it's not the same thing, in the dark where I will in vain to see there can't be any willing (*TFN*, 21).

In this instance pronominal renarration is adapted to serve as a means of self-assessment, as it is in the following example from *How It Is* where the semantic content of “mine” remains consistent despite a number of tests by the narrator as to whether the voice is really his or whether it belongs to another: “yes my voice yes mine yes not another's no mine alone yes sure yes”(*HII*, 128). This is a similar technique to that seen in the examples discussed from both “Text for

Nothing XIII" and *The Unnamable* wherein the respective distinctions between "it and me, it and him, him and me"(*TFN*, 52) and "he speaks of me as if I were he, as if I were not he"(*U*, 122) are complicated by means of rapid back-and-forth transitions between these different figures. Except in this instance, rather than serve to confuse the speaker as to who is speaking (him, me, or it), these series of rapid transitions seek to attain clarification by means of rigorous self-assessment. Thus, the possessive determiner "my" is employed in relation to the noun "voice," with assurance provided in the form of the affirmation "yes," an affirmation that recurs almost immediately after the possessive pronoun "mine," which requires, it seems, a further affirmation "yes," all in an effort to confirm and reconfirm that this voice is "yes mine yes not another's no mine alone yes sure yes"(*HII*, 128). Further still, from a slightly earlier passage in *How It Is*, we again encounter this recurrent checking and it again occurs as in an effort to seek out assurances as to whether "all that is not false yes": "if all that all that yes if all that is not how shall I say no answers if all that is not false yes"(*HII*, 126).

Earlier in the novel the act of leaving is subject to a similar renarrative corroboration wherein the pronoun "he" in the statement "he sets out," is not deemed sufficient to convey the fact that "all of him sets out": "as when he sets out to seek out all of him sets out to seek out the true home"(*HII*, 89). This type of excessive checking by means of pronominal renarration is also seen at the conclusion of "Text for Nothing I" and the repeated self-assurance "I'm in my arms, I'm holding myself in my arms"(*TFN*, 6). Taken together, they give further credence to the complaint articulated in *The Unnamable* that "it's the fault of the pronouns, there's no name for me, no pronoun for me, all the trouble comes from that, that, it's a kind of pronoun too"(*U*, 123). In *The Making of Americans* we see

an identical process of pleonastic self-referentiality in the form of fixating on the exact location of feelings: “It was in her when she had inside her her feeling of herself to herself in her”(*MOA*, 277). This brief passage, together with the following longer excerpt, can be considered an example of renarration as opposed to denarration because rather than explicitly undo that which has been said in a straightforward manner, the narrator engages in an elaborate epanorthosis regarding the various “feeling[s] [...] to herself inside her” that alternately were and were not important:

> Feeling herself to herself inside her was not really ever very important being in her. Feeling herself to herself inside her from her talking to Madeline Wyman, from her defending her against her nagging father and mother was not really important being in her, feeling herself to herself inside her from having in her as part of her her family living, her husband and her children, her country house living, was important to her. (*MOA*, 274)

Many of these examples from both Beckett and Stein verge on the epanorthotic, and it is difficult not to see all of these renarrative efforts—particularly those concerned with obsessive self-verification—as partially epanorthotic, partially pleonastic, or indeed a mixture of both. In contrast to the previous examples, the following passages portray instances where pronominal renarration is employed to articulate depersonalisation and a struggle much like that experienced throughout *The Unnamable* wherein the figure is unable to self-identify with the extant pronouns, feeling instead that “there's no name for me, no pronoun for me”(*U*, 123). Instances of indeterminacy are relayed through syntactic formats that import uncertainty regarding the relationship between speaker, as in the line “be in on that what's the use of me”(*HII*, 70) or as in the following example which sees an indeterminate “any” that could refer to either

tears or eyes, or both: "he turns his head tears in the eyes my tears my eyes if I had any it was then I needed them not now"(*HII*, 65). Ascertaining the specific referent for this "any" is ultimately of moot benefit because irrespective of its semantic ties, the speaker has neither tears nor eyes, but rather needed them at some indeterminate point in the past referred to as "then." Similarly, in the following example from Stein a pleonasm serves to obscure the directive in the sentence making it unclear whether "it" refers to head or to something else: "He raises his head and lifts it"(*HTW*, 25).

What these passages have in common is a querying of agency, ownership, and of source. All of these take the form of epanorthotic renarrations that serve to not only query the activity described but the act of being at all, as in the following example that combines interrogative adverbs, conjunctions, modal verbs, and pronouns to convey a de-personalisation of vocaliser from voice:

> And the voices, wherever they come from, have no life in them. [...]
>
> Where would I go, if I could go, who would I be, if I could be, what would I say, if I had a voice, who says this, saying it's me? (*TFN*, 15; 17).

In these examples from *Texts for Nothing* the pronoun "me" is presented as being a composite entity, a lexical simulacra for living and a figure contingent on the other, the "they": "it's they have taught me all I know, about things above, and all I'm said to know about me, they want to create me, they want to make me"(*TFN*, 24). Indeed, this relationship between the "they" and the "I," a development on the "he"/ "you"/ "me"/ "Bom" sequences explored previously, remains unclear throughout many of the *Texts for Nothing*; an effect that, in the following example, is again enabled by a renarrative strategy involving the recurrent

appearance of the indefinite pronoun “they” attached to the oscillating adverbial phrase “nothing else” followed by the epanorthotic line “I'll be able to go on, no, I'll be able to stop, or start”:

> [T]hey can say nothing else, they say there is nothing else, that here it's that and nothing else, but they won't say it eternally, they'll find some other nonsense, no matter what, and I'll be able to go on, no, I'll be able to stop, or start (*TFN*, 42).

A certain nominal fluidity is identifiable throughout the *Texts for Nothing*, as in the following example wherein the terms hour, month, and century are shown to have meanings that are specific to the narrator. This idiosyncratic attitude towards semantic fluidity between nouns is similarly applied to certain pronouns; thus, the following passage similarly blurs the distinctions between the pronoun “me” and the activity of “being”:

> How long have I been here, what a question, I've often wondered. And often I couldn't answer, An hour, a month, a century, depending on what I meant by here, and me, and being, and there I never went looking for extravagant meanings, there I never much varied, only the here would sometimes seem to vary (*TFN*, 4).

In this way then, pronominal distinctions become at times more fluid, displaying atypical or variable semantic meanings. This is a direct development on the nominal miscibility discussed in Chapter Three but it is a more complex process because these pronouns have indistinct semantic counterparts. Correspondingly, they are more versatile and rewarding in terms of their capacity to instil semantic uncertainty within a narrative. Increased confusion is again relayed through increasingly rapid transitions between different pronouns; transitions from semantic consistency regarding pronominal significations of self to

semantic inconsistency as the mutual exclusivity between the figures "he," "me," "they" and so on are blurred or torn at: "no more than I by his own account or my imagination he had no name any more than I so I gave him one the name Pim for more commodity more convenience it's off again in the past"(*HII*, 51).

The preceding examples all detailed instances where the pronominal terms referred to different figures, either through the use of different pronouns to distinguish between different "others" or, as in the case of Stein's manifold "ones," the same pronoun with different surrounding modifiers to distinguish between the otherwise pronominally identical. The following demonstrates instances where a narrator uses a multitude of orthographically different pronouns to refer to only the one figure, more often than not, to a figure speaking to and of itself "as of another"(*C*, 16). In "Text for Nothing XI" the noun "voice" is first said to belong to a figure with a head and voice, before being reconfigured into a severely compromised "headless voice":

> Vile words to make me believe I'm here, and that I have a head, and a voice, a head believing this, then that, then nothing more, neither in itself, nor in anything else, but a head with a voice belonging to it, or to others, other heads, as if there were two heads, as if there were one head, or headless, a headless voice, but a voice (*TFN*, 45-6).

In the section "it, or to others, other heads," the transition from a noun attributed to the narrator to a noun divorced of speaker (both literally and anatomically because the voice is headless and is also merely "a" voice) articulates this steady process of depersonalisation. This enacts a literal disembodying by distancing the narrator from their own self through the systematic erasure of any indication of personal possessiveness towards these inherently personal elements; it is the literal erasure of possessive pronouns or determiners so as to render the

relationship between self and same-self indeterminate. Noteworthy in this respect is Beckett's use of the pronoun “it” when attributing the voice to the head (“a head with a voice belonging to it”), a gesture that again depersonalises the source of this most personal of apertures before taking this further again and instead attributing it to “others, other heads,” heads that do not belong to the narrator.

The narrator's head in “Text for Nothing V” is presented in a similarly impersonal manner, this time by means of the definite article; a pronominally neutral presentation that correlates with the narrator's distancing of himself from himself, with “me” and “someone” being presented as having an equally viable chance of being “there”: “An instant and then they close again, to look inside the head, to try and see inside, to look for me there, to look for someone there”(*TFN*, 21). Later again in the same text, the increasing self-alienation of the speaker (of “me”) is further displayed by the use of the indefinite article “a” to modify the pronoun “me,” enacting a transition from the subjective to the impersonal, from “to me” to “a me”: “It's they murmur my name, speak to me of me, speak of a me, let them go and speak of it to others, who will not believe them either, or who will believe them too”(*TFN*, 23). The speaker then begins to speak of itself reflexively by means of reflexive pronouns before taking this further and referring to itself using the second person “you”: “and you saying to myself and you bad to worse bad to worse steadily [...] or worse saying to myself no worse you're no worse and was worse”(*HII*, 5).

In the following example from *How It Is*, a voice is heard by the speaker who entertains the possibility that it could be his if he had a voice, which he declares he does not. This same voice is also heard by “him,” a figure that Bom

has left to approach the speaker. A further "him" also hears the voice, but the syntax of the passage makes it difficult to distinguish if this "him" is identical to the first "him" or if indeed it refers to a different "him" and thus to yet another other "him":

> a voice which if I had a voice I might have taken for mine which at the instant I hear it I quote on is also heard by him whom Bom left to come towards me and by him to go towards whom Pim left me (*HII*, 99).

While it has previously been observed that the character of Watt would often set about "trying names on [...] himself, almost as a woman hats"(*Watt*, 68) it is noteworthy that throughout this passage articulating his experience of depersonalisation that he not only refers to himself as alternately a "man," a "box," and an "urn," but by means of the third person singular pronoun "it": "he could no longer call it a man, [...] yet he could not imagine what else to call it, if not a man"(*Watt*, 69). Similar too are the following examples, the first from "Text for Nothing VII," the second from "Saving the Sentence" in Stein's *How to Write*:

> I'd like to be sure I left no stone unturned before reporting me missing and giving up (*TFN*, 29);
>
> I do not know nor do I know if he thinks with them or without me (*HTW*, 19).

These examples are interesting for the apparent doubling or splitting of the speaker's identity therein. In the first instance, from Beckett, the speaker shows a capacity to both comment on activities of the self while also commenting on a certain absence of self ("me" is missing but the event is reported by "I"). The second example, from Stein, displays a seemingly dual "I-figure" brought about

by the repetition of the pronoun “I” with both “I”s made distinct by means of the adverb “nor.” These two examples can be compared to the following excerpt from “Text for Nothing III”:

> There's going to be a departure, I'll be there, I won't miss it, it won't be me, I'll be here, I'll say I'm far from here, it won't be me, I won't say anything, there's going to be a story, someone's going to try to tell a story (*TFN*, 11).

Consistency between the pronouns and adverbs throughout the first half of the phrase “There's going to be a departure, I'll be there, I won't miss it,” is subsequently disrupted by a pronominal modification wherein the “I,” who has just declared their commitment to being “there” now instead asserts that “I'll say I'm far from here, it won't be me, I won't say anything.” This thus intimates not only a diverging of self through a repeated “I” that, when shared across geospatially incompatible spaces, creates an impossible situation wherein the narrator is both “here” and “far from here.”

Similarly, the two occurrences of “they” in “They are different they and I”(*HTW*, 190), together with the “I'll be here, I'll say I'm far from here”(*TFN*, 11) quoted above invite us to again remember Stein's earlier iteration that “There is no reason why they should compare them with themselves”(*HTW*, 125). This can be related to a line from *Texts for Nothing* discussed previously: “I'm in my arms, I'm holding myself in my arms”(*TFN*, 6). While this is not necessarily a problematic statement, and one that largely reveals an excessive tendency to self-check on the part of the speaker, it also sees the figure presented through three different pronominal versions of the one self; a state we can parallel with the hearer, devised deviser, and voice of *Company*. In addition, throughout

Company the variant pronominal forms are all ultimately revealed to have come from the same figure, with the concept of company a mere "fable of one fabling of one with you in the dark. [...] And you as you always were. Alone"(*C*, 42).

These passages indicate that Beckett specifically engaged in the manipulation of personal pronouns whereas Stein, in contrast, displays a higher tendency to employ generalist pronouns such as "one." That Stein was a writer of considerable technical skill is very much apparent throughout these passages, particularly as she weaves virtuosic and seemingly seamless narratives that alternately imply sameness or difference around these different "ones." Despite their variant preferences when it comes to the specific pronouns employed, it is clear that both authors made extensive use of the manipulation of pronouns through renarration as a particularly useful and effective strategy for instigating a mode of writing that is decidedly de-mimetic, one that tears at "the fabric of the language"[401] in a way that renders the semantics of the passages in question porous and decidedly fractured, to say nothing of the effects this has on the identities of the figures depicted throughout. This not only highlights Stein's capacity to execute the procedures Beckett gestures towards in Kaun 1937 and later realises himself in his mature writings, but it shows such semantic and syntactic trickery to be a central aspect of their respective stylistic realisations of these aesthetics of renarrative de-mimeticism. Furthermore, it makes clear that both authors enacted these attacks on language in a similarly procedural manner, adopting the same techniques and methodical approaches when it

[401] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 519.

comes to their respective subversions of "formal English" and "grammar and style."[402]

III. Lesser modifiers

i) Determiners: "As seen ill seen throughout the past neither more nor less. Less!"(*Ill*, 76).

Determiners refer to modifying words that delimit the frame of reference a noun or noun group has.[403] For example the determiners "the," "a," "an," "more," "less," or "every" each enact a process of specification upon their associated term wherein that term is delimited (determined) to refer to a specific type of that term; thus to "a," "an," "more," or "less" of the term in question. Possessive determiners such as "mine," "my," "his," and "their," modify a noun or verb so as to indicate possession or a particular relation to the noun or action. Throughout this section I will largely focus on Beckett's use of possessive determiners to enact a process of depersonalisation in *Ill Seen Ill Said*, together with instances wherein the determiners "more," less," "every," and "some" are used to denote quantity or regularity or occurrence.

In the following example from *How It Is*, the possessive determiner "my" transitions to the impersonal determiner "a" in a line that sees "my voice" recalibrated to a more impersonal "a voice in my mouth": "my voice no objection back at last a voice back at last in my mouth my mouth no objection a voice at last in the dark"(*HII*, 92). The renarration of "my voice" to "a voice in my mouth" reflects the speaker's depersonalisation through the literally disembodied

[402] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 518.
[403] "determiner, n.1". OED Online. September 2015. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/51248?rskey=tlAb4H&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed November 17, 2015).

presentation of "my voice" as "a voice" inhabiting "my mouth."[404] "A voice in my mouth" is also a logographic renarration of "my voice" as it presents the voice in a manner that allows the reader to logically infer the connection between the phrase "a voice in my mouth" and the initial source term "my voice"; one that allows the reader to "read" "my voice" in the phrase "a voice in my mouth."

Moving on from instances of depersonalisation as relayed through determiners to the approximative quantifiers "more" and "less." In the following aphorism from *How To Write* Stein reduces the problems of inexactitude contingent with usage of the terms "more" or "less" to a pleonastic triptych along the lines of her famous "rose is a rose is a rose is a rose"(*GP*, 187): "Most is more than most"(*HTW*, 119). This sentence takes advantage of the lexical similitude between the terms "most," "more," and "most" to create a looping pleonasm that inhibits our capacity to enclose the statement semantically. Logically, one quantity of an item could be said to be "more than" most other quantities of that, or other items. But read literally the phrase makes a strong argument against lexical similitude, by using the semantics of the terms to disprove their definitions. Thus, "most" is said to be dissimilar to the lexically identical term "most"; in fact, the first "most" is said to be "more than" the second "most," which leads us to deduce that the second "most" is, in fact, less than "most." This creates a scenario where two lexically identical terms are rendered semantically distinct. Indeed, with one "most" being less than the other "most," they are arguably semantically antonymic within the confines of that sentence. The rhetorical minutiae of this standpoint sees Stein effectively create a scenario where two

[404] This mode of literal disembodying through pronominal or determiner-led renarration can be compared to the "headless voice, but a voice"(*TFN*, 46) discussed in the previous section.

identical terms denoting specific quanta are shown to be ineffective in terms of conveying that which they are said to signify. While one "most" can be considered to be "more than most" and the other "most" can certainly be considered a lesser "most," neither can be considered the "most most."

In the line "most is more than most"(*HTW*, 119), Stein creates a certain semantic cohesion between descriptions involving "more" and "less" that sees each "more" or "less" existing on a spectrum wherein they are always "more than," and always "less than" certain other quantities that are themselves also always "more than" and "less then" other quantities, ad infinitum. Beckett achieves the same in the following excerpt from *Ill Seen Ill Said* with his observation that this observed change is "the same but less," a change that will "end by being no more"(*Ill*, 73). While in the previous example, Stein employs the determiners "more" and "most" to deal with quantities, in the following example from Beckett's *Ill Seen Ill Said*, the narrator uses the determiners "more" and "less" to address the problem of precision when it comes to articulating specificities of location: "Thus they keep her in the centre. More or less"(*Ill*, 55). What does it mean to be "more or less" in the centre?[405] To be "more or less" in the centre indicates an approximation of centrality, the state of being near or nearly central, but still not quite central. A similar attestation towards exactitude is to be found in "Text for Nothing II," this time relating to the disintegration of objects over time: "The things too must still be there, a little more worn, a little even less"(*TFN*, 7). Approximations of quanta or placement involving such determiners seem to preclude exactitude, with the narrative recurrently

[405] It is important to emphasise that in some of the above examples the terms "more" and "less" function as adverbs and not as determiners, but they nevertheless retain their status as lexically "non-productive" terms that contain exclusively cognitive syntactic features.

returning to the observation that every effort at exactitude or approximation is merely one further instance of asymptotic "more[ness] or less[ness]." In many of these instances of ill-approximated quantities, so fluid is the interchange between terms denoting "more" and terms denoting "less," that it seems that the narrator is capable only of observing, as in *Watt* that "what was changed [...] was the sentiment that a change, other than a change of degree, had taken place"(*Watt*, 36). Such equation of "less-ness" with change is made explicit in *Ill Seen Ill Said*: "With what one word convey its change? Careful. Less. As the sweet one word. Less. It is less. The same but less. [...] To say the least. Less. It will end by being no more. By never having been"(*C*, 73).

Beckett's use of the determiners "more" and "less" can be paralleled with Stein's similar pairing of "every" and "some"; two terms that again attest towards specificity, but a specificity that is particularly difficult to quantify with exactitude. In the following sentence from *The Making of Americans*, the determiner "every" is itself subjected to further delimiting so as to instead specify "some": "That is always there in every one to some one"(*MOA*, 306). The determiners "any," "every" and "some" see frequent usage throughout Stein's work, as is evident from the regularity of their occurrence throughout the passages discussed in Chapters Two and Three. When used alongside person-specific pronouns such as "one," these determiners bring about a very particular effect, one that is perhaps best described as specificity that is not specific, or pleonastic a-specificity. In Stein's manipulations of "every," "any," and "some ones," we encounter particularly acute and nuanced renarration that reveals, or purports to reveal, further information regarding the certain groups of peoples while also occluding the capacity for the reader to discern anything concrete

about them beyond that which is contained in their perennially vague pronominal signifiers: “When any one, that is every one, that is some, that is mostly any one can see something as a complete thing”(*MOA*, 861). This line sees a subtle, pronominally driven oscillation between singular and plural (from “one” to “some”) and between general and specific (from “any” to “every” to “some”) in a description that purportedly describes the various categories of peoples that are “mostly” capable, Stein asserts, of “see[ing] something as a complete thing”(*MOA*, 861). The epanorthotic phraseology does little to create confidence in “any,” “every,” or “some” of these individuals' respective or shared capabilities to see anything at all. Indeed, as with much of Stein's writing throughout *The Making of Americans* and elsewhere, it turns attention back on the fabric of the language itself, and what Stein exposes by means of this scrutiny does little to assure the reader of the effectiveness of the determiners “any,” “every,” or “some” in conveying anything at all about the pronominal figures they delimit.

Beckett and Stein's work with determiners can also be considered acute examples of grammatical logography. This sees both authors employ the technique of logography in relation to lesser, nondescript modifiers as opposed to the nouns or verbs discussed previously. This results in a multitude of statements that suggest a generalist or relative quantitative specificity but at the same time prevents that specificity. Using the semantic content of that term to undo or undermine the semantic content of the term is particularly effective when it comes to the acutely vague concepts of greater than and less than, with repetitions such as “less less” and “more more” denoting quantities that are particularly resistant to more precise quantifying. It also sees the texts assume a

particularly mathematical tinge, with "more than" and "less than" having their own symbols within the language of mathematics as ">" and "<" respectively; a fact that brings to mind an observation made by Cordingley, in reference to *L'image*, that "the pseudo-rhetoric of geometry organises the very action of building the image/memory/narrative." [406] The determiners "more" and "less" frequently induce asymptotic delineations of quanta, as in the following line from *Ill Seen Ill Said* which contains an asymptote built around the riddle-like quantity "no more than minimally less": "Minimally less. No more. Well on the way to inexistence. As to zero the infinite"(*Ill*, 74). The following section will examine a selection of similar such instances of renarration relating to both authors' use of prepositions.

ii) Prepositions: "I am a grammarian. I do not hesitate but I rearrange prepositions"(*HTW*, 109).

Prepositions express relations between a noun or pronoun and another word. They usually precede the noun or pronoun in question.[407] For example: "before," "by," "into," "like," "on," "to," "up," "with," "within," and "without." As with the determiners "more" and "less," prepositions delimit other terms and do not themselves hold up well (semantically speaking) when exposed to immediate repetitions or renarrative manipulation. As the above indented quote from *How To Write* makes clear, Stein was particularly attuned to the effect syntactic rearrangements of prepositions can have on the clausal units she employed. Beckett's later writings in particular see him engage in similarly

[406] Cordingley. "Beckett and 'l'ordre naturel': The Universal Grammar of *Comment c'est/ How It Is*," 189.
[407] "preposition, n.". OED Online. September 2015. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/150493?rskey=hjg3w0&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed November 17, 2015).

extensive arranging and rearranging of prepositions. The following section will provide an overview of a select number of these prepositional rearrangements.

One of the most recurrent instances of prepositional renarration throughout *How It Is* comes in the form of the prepositions "before," "with," and "after," used to delimit specific temporal instances (past, present, future), spaces the protagonists have variously inhabited or passed through, and specific figures they have come into contact with (Bom, Bem, Pim):

> I'm said to have had before him with him after him a life I'm said to have (*HII*, 52).
>
> before the other with the other after the other before me (*HII*, 85).
>
> before Bom how it is that's how it was with Pim (*HII*, 86).

Beckett repeatedly refers to this as the "natural order more or less" while mixing the prepositions "before," "with," and "after": "I learn it natural order more or less before Pim with Pim vast tracts of time how it was my vanished life then after then now after Pim how it is my life bits and scraps"(*HII*, 14). Four pages later he again references this "natural order" of "how it was before Pim"(*HII*, 18).

In his essay "Beckett and 'l'ordre naturel': The Universal Grammar of *Comment c'est/ How It Is*" noted previously in Chapter One, Cordingley proficiently delineates the relationship between the repeated invocation of the "natural order" on the part of "the narrator/ narrated of *Comment c'est/ How It Is*" and the "intellectual history stretching from the Latin *ordo naturalis* to *l'ordre naturel* of French and the lesser known English natural order."[408] Cordingley observes, "'*L'ordre naturel*' refers to the order of subject-verb-object in French;

[408] Cordingley. "Beckett and 'l'ordre naturel': The Universal Grammar of *Comment c'est/ How It Is*," 185.

in the context of grammatical relations [...] the logical order of the *ordo naturalis* was fixed in a syntax following the subject-verb-object order."[409] As Cordingley outlines, the historical aim of the natural order was to "isolate on the page [...] the maximum number of words playing a syntactical role within the sentence consistent with minimizing graphic ambiguity."[410]

Here then, we have the concept of the natural order subverted so as to instead maximise ambiguity.[411] The muddling of past, present, and future times and tenses is apparently ubiquitous throughout a later statement that again attests that the narrative is delivered "more or less" in its "natural order" and "more or less" in the present: "my life natural order more or less in the present more or less"(*HII*, 21). The phrase "more or less" was discussed in the previous section and so will not be discussed here. This example can, however, be considered a further instance of its usefulness as a term that intimates specificity by means of approximation, but one that also precludes exactitude, because to be "more or less" in the "present" creates a temporal instance that is impossible to pinpoint accurately. The "natural order" as it is conveyed throughout these passages appears then to occur in the order signified by the prepositions "before," "with," and "after"; alternatively, by using verbs and tense change to relay how it was, is, and later, how it will be.

Moving on to the prepositions "with" and "without." In the following example from *How To Write* we see the preposition "with" recur in the form of its

[409] Cordingley. "Beckett and 'l'ordre naturel': The Universal Grammar of *Comment c'est/ How It Is*," 193.
[410] *Ibid.*
[411] As Cordingley puts it "the foregrounding of syntax in the fragmented language of *Comment c'est*/*How It Is* directs attention to a linguistic condition. 'Speaking' in his rudimentary syntax, the narrator/ narrated evoked a tradition of the philosophy of language which once postulated the analytic precision of word order and its correspondence with the 'pure' operations of the mind"(*Ibid.*, 185).

asymptote “without,” an unlikely pairing facilitated by the conjunction “or”: “Forget with or without. With or without forget with or without. Forget to forget to forget with or without”(*HTW*, 152). The third and final recurrence—“Forget to forget to forget with or without”(*HTW*, 152)—sees the addition of a fifth term in the form of the preposition and infinitive marker “to” and presents an instance wherein one “forget[s] to forget to forget with or without.” Whereas the act of “forget[ting] to forget” would result in the act of remembering, or at least the act of forgetting to forget, the tripartite repetition of “forget[ting] to forget to forget” returns us to the original premise and the act of “forget[ting] with or without.” This again demonstrates Stein's capacity to encourage a term to suggest its semantic opposite. A similar approach is adopted in the following sentence where “it” is held “with all” but “without it”: “Please have it with all without it”(*HTW*, 20). The phrasing here creates a disjunction between the two instances of the twice repeated pronoun “it” and it seems that the author is encouraging us to read “it with without it,” or to read one instance of “it” as “it” but the other instance of “it” as “it” “without it.” Does the second instance of “it” bear any relation to the first? How could “it” be presented supposedly with everything (“with all”) but without “it” itself? The phonemic similarity between “with all” and “withal”(another word for “with”) again encourages a phonetic reading that sees “it” both “with” and “without it”(*HTW*, 152).

The following sequence from *How To Write* details a permutation around the phrase “with or without you”:

> With without you. [...]
> With this with as you.
> With as.

Well as you. [...]
With with as with well as in their well with as you (*HTW*, 81).

The prepositions "with" and "without" are combined with the pronoun "you" and the determiner "this," with "as"(functioning here as a preposition), to create a passage that is particularly refined in its delineation of different iterations of "with" that simultaneously manage to appear "with" "without you," "without" "without you," but also "with" "with without you"; an act of renarration that, just as in the passage "forget to forget to forget with or without"(*HTW*, 152) discussed above, enacts a denarration only to immediately reinstigate (or renarrate) the event again, for a third time.

A more nuanced example is to be found later in the same text: "With this. With with without their there there"(*HTW*, 201). This sees Stein combine pronouns and prepositions to create a sequence wherein "with this" first reappears "with with" and thus "with[out] this." Appearing for the second time with "with" as opposed to "this," "with with" not only breaks the imperative established by the preposition "with" in its first iteration,[412] but it also appears both without the comfort (the "there there") provided by an unmodified and semantically consistent repetition that would have seen "with this" repeat itself again "with this." "With" instead appears "without" "this" and thus without the associative content of the pronoun "this" or, as Stein puts it, "without their there there"(*HTW*, 201). Similarly, the sentence "most is more than most"(*HTW*, 119) discussed in the previous section sees Stein getting the "most" out of "most."

The following sees a slightly different instance of determiner led modification, from Beckett's "Text for Nothing III": "To be bedded in that flesh or

[412] It recurs in its second iteration not "with this" but instead appears "with with"(*HTW*, 201).

in another, in that arm held by a friendly hand, and in that hand, without arms, without hands, and without soul in those trembling souls"(*TFN*, 14). In this passage the determiner "that" suggests a specificity that is subsequently undermined by "or in," which sees the preposition "in" usefully paired with the conjunction "or"; creating a sentence that feigns specificity but is non-specific. To be in a specific flesh or another grants neither specificity nor precision in much the same way that Stein's elaboration "That is always there in every one to some one"(*MOA*, 306), discussed in the preceding section, does little other that gesture towards a specificity that is as resolutely non-determinate as the modifiers that enable it. The final clause—"without souls in those trembling souls"(*TFN*, 14)—much like "with without you"(*HTW*, 81) and "forget to forget to forget with or without"(*HTW*, 152)—employs syntactic manipulation that succeeds in disturbing the semantic surety of the statement by first narrating, then denarrating and finally renarrating the event described. In this way the passage is similar in its effect as the "Ballyogan Road" passage from *Company*, discussed previously. It sees a further instance of the preposition "in" working in tandem with the conjunction "or" so as to redact specificity as soon as it is intimated:

> Nowhere in particular on the way from A to Z. Or say for verisimilitude the Ballyogan Road. Somewhere on the Ballyogan Road in lieu of nowhere in particular. Where no truck any more. Somewhere on the Ballyogan Road on the way from A to Z (*C*, 14).

As with the section on determiners, Beckett and Stein's technical approach to renarrating prepositions are extraordinarily proximate, with both employing repetition, asymptotic descriptions, and antonyms to undermine these already

nondescript terms. Both authors also frequently engender scenarios wherein the terms themselves appear to disprove their own definitions.

iii) Conjunctions: "Grammar. Leave layers out"(*HTW*, 70).

So Stein advises in *How To Write*, intimating in the process that writing in a manner that subverts the "grammar and style"[413] that so frustrated Beckett involves a certain sparseness, a delayering of semantic or syntactic complexity, an undoing of the layers that so distract from the problems of signification both authors had identified as being a central problem of linguistic representation. Conjunctions stand in variance to this injunction, at least ostensibly, as they are perhaps one of the most obvious methods available to a writer to introduce further layers into their sentences through the addition of subordinate conjunctive clauses. Conjunctions are a lever term through which one can present an alternative to the preceding clause. Conjunctions—the conjunctions "or," "if," and "but" in particular—are a grammatical mechanism through which one can suffuse a phrase, sentence, or series of sentences with uncertainty and deferred meaning. This section will consider a select number of examples wherein uncertainty of syntactic or semantic origin, have been facilitated by the presence of the conjunctions "or" and "if" in the works of both authors, and in Beckett's later writings in particular.

Conjunctions facilitate the engendering of statements that are syntactically indeterminate by enabling a deferral of semantic certainty over the course of a successive number of clauses, or simply through the introduction of a conjunctive term and thus an alternative co-occurrence. Often in the case of both

[413] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 518.

Beckett and Stein's writings, the conjunctive alternative is so radically different to the initial proposition that it serves to undermine the statement as a unit; this is particularly the case when it comes to Beckett's mid-to-late prose texts and throughout the *Nohow On* texts in particular, with conjunctions being employed to present radically different narrative alternatives to each preceding clausal passage. Taking the following passage from "Text for Nothing XI" as an example: "When I think, no, that won't work, when come those who knew me, perhaps even know me still, by sight of course, or by smell, it's as though, it's as if, come on, I don't know"(*TFN*, 45). It is immediately apparent the central role the conjunctions "or," "as," "if" and "though" play in the devolution of the narrator's certainty from their initial assertion "When I think" through to the conclusion of the sentence with the submissive "I don't know." Each instance involving a conjunction in the preceding passage sees the presentation not so much of a related or logically inferred alternative, but of radical switches in the semantics of the passage; in this instance this occurs in the form of a shift in the mode of perception potentially used to identify those who knew or still know the narrator "by sight of course, or by smell"(*TFN*, 45).

Staying with *Texts for Nothing* for the moment, the conjunction "or" is employed throughout the following passage in what seems like an attempt to engender semantic equivalency between oppositional terms:

> [F]aster and faster, no, slower and slower, for other obvious reasons, and at the same time faster and faster, for other obvious reasons, or the same, obvious in a different way, or in the same way, but at a different moment of time, a moment earlier, a moment later, or at the same moment (*TFN*, 38).

In this passage “faster and faster” is redacted for its kinetic antonym “slower and slower.” This is a clear instance of epanorthosis wherein the statement is substituted with its antonym (it is denarrated). It is enabled by the use of the exclamation “no” which here appears to function syntactically in the role of a conjunctive. While the epanorthosis is not problematic or surprising in itself, having been established by Clément as something of a characteristic of Beckett's late prose,[414] what follows makes it extremely difficult to ascertain the pace of the proceedings as they seem to be simultaneously occurring “faster and faster” and “slower and slower.” This kinetic impossibility is explained by means of a taxing statement that asserts the similitude between the faster and slower paces is apparent for “other obvious reasons,” then for *other* “other obvious reasons,” reasons that are, we are told, “the same, obvious in a different way, or in the same way”(*TFN*, 38). Finally then this unlikely and physically difficult scenario is concluded by an equally unsettled assertion that the temporal instance at which these incompatible alterations of pace occur “at a different moment of time, a moment earlier, a moment later, or at the same moment”(*TFN*, 38). This use of conjunctions to blur the distinctions between vastly different lexical and semantic terms is identical in its technical approach to Beckett's use of the prepositions “before,” “with,” and “after” throughout *How It Is*, and Stein's use of the determiners “more” or “less,” both discussed previously.

Similar inversions relating to the directionality of specific movements are enabled through the relentless formation of conjunctive clauses by means of the conjunction “or,” as in the following passage from *How It Is*: “two veils from left and right they approach come together or one down the other up or aslant

[414] Clément, *L’Œuvre sans qualités: Rhétorique de Samuel Beckett*, 242.

diagonal from left or right top corner right or left bottom corner"(*HII*, 76). Further such examples of the conjunction "or" disrupting depictions of place are to be found throughout *Company* with "or" providing the segue from "nowhere in particular" to the somewhere that is "the Ballyogan Road: "Nowhere in particular on the way from A to Z. Or say for verisimilitude the Ballyogan Road"(*C*, 14). Similarly, the repeated injunctions regarding the specificities of placement for the voice, hearer, creator, and creature occur "In the same dark [...] or in another"(*C*, 16). And finally, two explicit instances wherein the conjunction is employed to enact a semantic U-turn in the narrative, also from the text of *Company*: "From nought anew. Or in some quite different direction"; "Withershins [...] Or conversely"(*C*, 32).

Semantic uncertainties regarding the position of the narrator's body (or the limbs involved in certain movements) are a major feature of Beckett's later prose. In the following passage from "Text for Nothing IV" the conjunction "if" facilitates a series of conjunctive sub-clauses that throw doubt on each preceding utterance:

> I stay here, sitting, if I'm sitting, often I feel sitting, sometimes standing, it's one or the other, or lying down, there's another possibility, often I feel lying down, it's one of the three, or kneeling. What counts is to be in the world, the posture is immaterial (*TFN*, 19).

This passage also highlights a further stylistic trait seen throughout later Beckett, namely the act of leaving words out. Staying with theme of bodily movement or narrative representations of moving bodies however, the following excerpts from *Company* are representative of the particularly prominent role the

conjunction "or" has in the bodily gradations that are so prevalent throughout this short prose piece:[415]

> Were it but of a hand closing. Or opening if closed to begin (*C*, 12).
>
> The hood slowly down. Or up if down to begin (*C*, 12).
>
> Let him for example after due imagination decide in favour of the supine position or prone and this in practice prove less companionable than anticipated. May he then or may he not replace it by another? Such as huddled [...] Or in motion. [...] Another in another dark or in the same [...] Or some other form of motion (*C*, 16-17).
>
> A clenching or unclenching. [...] Or raised to brush away a fly (*C*, 17).

Stein's capacity to manipulate non-productive grammar elements sees her pose questions of a seemingly ontological nature merely through the repetition of simple conjunctions: "What is it that is are or or"(*HTW*, 210). In this instance, an attempt to discern something ("What is it that is") devolves into unintelligibility by means of the verb "are," a temporal modification of the verb "to be," followed by two instances of the conjunction "or." "What is it that is are or or"(*HTW*, 210) is impossible to parse or discern. This can be compared to a similar example from *Company*: "For why or? Why in another dark or in the same?"(*C*, 15). While the second sentence in this series of questions is straightforward, the first is truncated to the point of unintelligibility. Indeed, the sole item that marks the statement as complete is the presence of a question mark, creating a truncated and semantically uncertain query out of a

[415] Examples are paramount too, albeit on a more acute level, throughout *Worstward Ho*: "Better again. Or better worse"(*WWH*, 81); "If ever down. No choice but up. Or never down."(*WWH*, 87); "As in vain. Or not in vain"(*WWH*, 88); "First one. Then two. Or first two. Then one. Or together."(*WWH*, 91); "Dim undimmed. Or dimmed to dimmer still."(*WWH*, 95); "Two black holes in foreskull. Or one."(*WWH*, 101).

preposition,[416]and an interrogative or relative adverb,[417] and a conjunction. In this way the abrupt statement "for why or?" presented as a complete unit solely as a result of a punctuation mark, bears comparison to any number of similar instances from Stein's *Stanzas in Meditation* where punctuation marks demarcate statements that would otherwise appear to be incomplete phrases built largely around a heavy recurrence of conjunctions:

> Which not only will but is me
> For me to me in me not only not be
> Not only not be how do you like not only not be
> They will be satisfied to be satisfactory.[418]

To conclude this inquiry into the role of lesser modifiers in the work of both authors, Beckett and Stein both employ nondescriptive modifiers to great effect throughout their writings, especially in instances where the term is repeated. Their approach to the manipulation of these lesser modifiers displays distinct stylistic comparabilities in the form of a shared tendency to employ immediate repetitions and asymptotes. Both can be said to capitalise on the cumulative effect of repeating such delimiting terms; an effect that sets limits on the already delimited and sees terms designed to delimit themselves subjected to delimitation. Within such aggregative and semantically nondescript descriptions, the deployment of immediate repetitions and antonyms is surprisingly effective as it serves to make already nondescript terms further nondescript, a feat of tautological mastery apropos their respective manipulations of grammar.

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[416] "For" can also function here as a conjunction.
[417] "Why"'s status as either an interogative or relative adverb is contingent on whether you decide "for" is functioning as a preposition or as a conjunction. If it is functioning as a preposition, then "why" would correspondingly be an interrogative adverb. If it is functioning as a conjunction, then "why" would correspondingly be a relative adverb.
[418] Stein, *Stanzas in Meditation: The Corrected Edition*, 168.

The resultant effect of such modifications on the semantics of the passages concerned highlights a central effect of renarration; namely that such renarrated passages come "with concomitant emotions"(*TFN*, 23). They come accompanied by unrelated or seemingly non-concomitant semantic referents. This equation of the unrelated, the asymptotic, or the traditionally unequivocal are deliberately enacted through narrative techniques that are grammar focused and grammar led. Again, to return to Beckett's commentary in Kaun 1937, it is a discrediting of language through language. But these grammatical manipulations go far beyond the "nominalistic irony" Beckett intimated could be "a necessary phase"[419] in the discrediting of language. Making one word mean or imply its opposite, or point towards a certain meaning that is incompatible with the assumed semantic meaning of the term when taken in isolation is a difficult feat to accomplish. It is made all the more difficult when the terms at hand themselves, as Banfield puts it, "lack highly specific semantic content, having only cognitive syntactic features."[420] That both authors successfully accomplished such distortions of semantic certainties by means of syntactic manipulation and renarration is remarkable in itself, but the comparable nature of their adoption and application of these techniques is of particular import when it comes to establishing Stein's position as a key stylistic influence on Beckett, and a prominent and rewarding aesthetic touchstone against which we can situate his mature writings.

Section four provides an overview of the roles played by punctuation in enabling semantic and syntactic uncertainty in the writings of both authors;

[419] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 520.
[420] Banfield, "Beckett's Tattered Syntax," 17.

specifically their use of commas and periods. It takes as its focus the comparability of certain clausal and lexical ambiguities in *Watt*, *How It Is* and the later *Nohow On* with examples from Stein's *How To Write*, and *Stanzas in Meditation*.

iv) Punctuation and syntax: "How hideous is the semi-colon"(*Watt*, 135).

> When I first began writing, I felt that writing should go on, I still do feel that it should go on but when I first began writing I was completely possessed by the necessity that writing should go on and if writing should go on what had colons and semi-colons to do with it, what had commas to do with it, what had periods to do with it what had small letters and capitals to do with it to do with writing going on.[421]

In Chapter One it was observed how both authors frequently use the appearance of specific modifiers as an opportunity to break narrative contract and point out specifics of grammar to the reader. Punctuation in particular, along with specific verb tenses (such as the "plethoric reflexive pronoun"(*Watt*, 4n1) of *Watt*) or changes in verb tense have all been employed by either author in passages containing a direct address to the reader or sections that acknowledge the act of narration in a metanarrative process. This shared tendency towards irony, metanarratives, and wilful self-contradiction when it comes to their engagements with punctuation and the particulars of orthography can be linked to their respective attempts at highlighting the de-mimetic potential of language; that is to say, of its capacity to distort, misrepresent, and to render things "ill seen ill said"(*Ill*, 72) and "missaid"(*WWH*, 81):

> And so I almost never use a comma. The longer, the more [...].[422]

[421] Stein "Poetry and Grammar" in *Writings 1932-1946*, 318.
[422] Stein "Poetry and Grammar" in *Writings 1932-1946*, 321.

> How hideous is the semi colon. I say an external agency; for of my own volition (*Watt*, 135).
>
> I set him off again opener or capitals as the case may be otherwise never a word new instalment so on (*HII*, 73).

Punctuation then is not only employed as a means of articulating a certain disgust at typography ("How hideous is the semi colon"(*Watt*, 135); "I always found it [the question mark] positively revolting."[423]) but also as a means of instilling the text with a certain irony that is comparable to the "nominalistic irony"[424] Beckett begrudgingly acknowledges as a necessary element in Kaun 1937. Of course, inciting such irony through the manipulation of actual punctuation marks is necessarily a form of non-nominalistic irony, and this is perhaps what makes it particularly interesting in terms of how both Beckett and Stein similarly employ commas and periods throughout their writings as a tool for making semantic certainty nebulous by either enabling or preventing certain syntactic patterns. Their capacity to instil irony in a text thus goes beyond instances of strictly semantic modes of dissent and instead enables the writer to instil syntactic atypicality or dissonances throughout the text; an ability that in the case of commas in particular, is innately linked to their interactions with the "non-productive"[425] modifiers covered throughout this chapter. I will first briefly discuss the role of the comma as a modulator before moving to discuss its role as a facilitator of syntactic and semantic uncertainty throughout the work of both authors and, correspondingly, the similar effect their absence has on the work of both authors.

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[423] *Ibid.*, 316-17.
[424] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 520.
[425] Banfield, "Beckett's Tattered Syntax," 16-7.

Commas are typical punctuative counterparts to certain of the nondescript grammatical modifiers covered throughout this chapter. Conjunctions, for example, are regularly preceded by a comma and, as a consequence, this pairing is particularly prolific throughout narrative passages concerned with the introduction of alternative potentialities by means of the conjunction "or." This is apparent throughout the many permutations and repetitions of *Watt*,[426] and also through archetypal instances of denarration such as the line "halting, without halting"(*TFN*, 7) from "Text for Nothing II." In this passage the comma plays an important peremptory role in deterring the reader from reading the line as "halting without halting," itself a semantically difficult, if not physically impossible, scenario to imagine. Rather, the comma here serves to separate one clause from its succeeding clause, making it clear that the narrator is in fact detailing a variety of figures, some of whom are halting, some of whom are not halting as they "the living find their ways [...] halting, without halting, among the elements, the living"(*TFN*, 7). In this way then the passage avoids the semantic uncertainty that would have been invited by a scenario wherein a figure or group of figures are depicted as simultaneously stopping and not stopping.

Of greater interest is the ways in which both authors manipulate this peremptory role so as to engender the opposite effect; namely how they employ commas as enablers of syntactic (and correspondingly, semantic) indeterminacy

[426] See for example the following selection of sequences from *Watt*: The account of Watt's shoe and sock combinations, relayed through a recurrent use of the comma and the conjunction "or"(*Watt*, 173-74); the account of Mr Knott's "tasteful" furniture, relayed through recurrent use of a comma and the conjunction "and"(*Watt*, 177-79); Mr Knott's physical appearance, relayed through the recurrent use of a comma and the conjunction "and"(*Watt*, 181-82); Mick's reaction to Watt's face as Watt prepares to leave the Knott house followed by the account of Watt's reaction to the draught, relayed through a recurrent pairing of a comma and the conjunction "or"(*Watt*, 190-91).

as opposed to their role as arbiters of syntactic (and semantic) determinacy. Throughout *Watt* and *Texts for Nothing*, we see regular use of the comma to create staccato-like clauses and sub-clauses that, at times, verge on the myriad:

> One thing at least is certain, in an hour it will be too late, in half-an-hour it will be night, and yet it's not, not certain, what is not certain, absolutely certain, that night prevents what day permits (*TFN*, 5).

> he raised his eyes to the sky and said, Bright again too early. And sure enough, soon after, the snow. In other words the night was black, when it fell at last, but no, strange, it wasn't, in spite of the buried sky (*TFN*, 9).

In each of these passages there is a deferral of meaning from one clause to the next, creating instances of confusion in terms of the semantic crossover between clauses and across sentences. In the second example what falls may be night, but it may also snow, given that the "it" that is falling is presented in a past tense iteration ("it fell") that does not go into the specifics of which "it" has fallen. Similarly, "the buried sky" may be buried either by night, or by snow, or indeed by a combination of the two.

While commas may serve to enable proliferative descriptions throughout works such as *Watt* and, to a lesser extent, *The Making of Americans*, throughout *Texts for Nothing* commas often separate clauses but, at times, the inter-dependence between clauses within the one sentence nevertheless remains unclear. In the following line the commas fail to make explicit whether the "feet" and "word" referenced correlate to "it" and "mine": "There you are now on your feet, I give you my word, I swear they're yours, I swear it's mine"(*TFN*, 11). The link between clauses is similarly unclear in the following line, again from the *Texts for Nothing*: "I won't go so far as to say without my knowledge, but without being encouraged"(*TFN*, 39). Here again it is difficult to ascertain whether that

which is not being encouraged is the narrator's lack of knowledge or their reluctance to "go so far as to say." And later again, a similarly misleading statement whose clausal syntax (modified as it is by recurrent commas and conjunctions) leads to a certain semantic precariousness that is difficult to clarify despite the sentence itself intimating a type of epanorthosis in the form of a successive series of clarifications: "no, I'm not in the open, I'm under the ground, or in my body somewhere, or in another body, and time devours on, but not me"(*TFN*, 45). Time doesn't devour the narrator, or time devours on, altering future to present and past, but he (the narrator) does not devour on, despite the syntax of the sentence appearing to suggest that he might.

Beckett's regular utilisation of the comma can be contrasted with Stein who displayed an extreme aversion to the appearance of certain punctuations in her prose from her early writings onwards;[427] variously labelling them "the completely most uninteresting [...] positively revolting [...] unnecessary, [...] ugly [...] things in punctuation."[428] Indeed, Stein's aversion to the comma is resolutely manifest throughout *How To Write*, a text that contains no commas and one that is thus comparable to Beckett's *How It Is*; a text that, while extreme in its lack of punctuative entities, corresponds to an overall lessening of punctuation throughout Beckett's later writings.[429] *How It Is* contains a multitude of references to punctuation and orthographic marks but aside from instances of selective capitalisation, the orthographic spaces that separate the sentences or

[427] Specifically from *The Making of Americans* on; *Three Lives* is fairly orthodox in its use of the comma whereas, while commas are employed throughout *The Making of Americans*, they follow an irregular and idiosyncratic pattern of usage. The text contains significantly less punctuation than it would were it to be "translated" into standardised, grammatically correct English.
[428] Stein "Poetry and Grammar" in *Writings 1932-1946*, 316-17.
[429] For a thorough analysis of the bilingual nature of aspects of Beckett's punctuation see Karine Germoni, "Play/Comédie, Come and Go/Va-et-vient, Footfalls/Pas de Beckett; ou, Le va-et-vient de la ponctuation entre deux langues" in *Samuel Beckett Today/ aujourd'hui* (26) 2014, 283-98.

sentence fragments, and the occasional reference to punctuation marks that do not materialise beyond lexical references—"just enough to speak enough to hear not even comma a mouth an ear"(*HII*, 68); "here a parenthesis"(*HII*, 56)—the text itself is unpunctuated.

As a consequence, though the following line can and has been read as a description of the text of *How It Is* itself, it also serves as a adequate description for large sections of Stein's *How To Write*: "unbroken no paragraphs no commas not a second for reflection"(*HII*, 61). Aside from the fact that *How To Write* contains periods and *How It Is* does not, the syntactic similitude between *How It Is* and the latter half of *How To Write* in particular is, at times, quite remarkable. While it is important to acknowledge the clear distinction between Stein as a theorist of atypical syntax and grammar or, as she puts it, a "grammarian"(*HTW*, 109), and Beckett as a practitioner of atypical syntaxes, similarities exist between the two texts that extend beyond instances of orthographic likeness. Both writers seem to have recognised the advantages of lengthy unpunctuated sentences as a tool in the manipulation of semantics across syntactically complex passages; though this itself can be seen in their earlier writings too, in *Watt* for example, and also in *The Making of Americans*. Both texts see a melding of punctuation and syntax wherein punctuation cedes its traditional role as an enabler or tool of the syntactic modulation of sentences and instead serves to instil syntactic imprecision and, accordingly semantic indeterminacy or ambiguity.

While Stein's *How To Write* contains a degree of punctuation and typographic shaping in the form of periods and paragraph spacing, what it has in common with *How It Is* is their mutual eschewing of commas. Stein articulates

the particulars of her disliking of commas in the following well known passage again from "Poetry and Grammar":

> A long complicated sentence should force itself upon you, make you know yourself knowing it and the comma, well at the most a comma is a poor period that it lets you stop and take a breath but if you want to take a breath you ought to know yourself that you want to take a breath.[430]

That commas are unnecessary and can be equated with a lack of agency is an interesting concept to consider in relation to the lack of punctuation throughout *How It Is*. This text, and the power dynamics enacted throughout, would seem to justify Stein's association of commas with breath pauses for the weak-willed. Without them the reader of *How It Is*, much like the narrator, is forced to identify the opportunities for in- and ex-halation as they present themself, a task that is aided by the unique typographic presentation that isolates specific passages from each other.[431] Where otherwise we would rely on punctuation to tell us when a sentence begins and ends, the typographic isolation of the passages on the page throughout *How It Is* creates the appearance of sentence fragments throughout; fragments that neither begin nor end with the expected syntactic formulae associated with the initiation and conclusion of a sentence. In this way then they can be considered a particularly innovative syntactic approach to transgressing the "the inevitable narrative of anything"[432] and the "feeling that anything that everything had meaning as beginning and middle and ending"[433] discussed in Chapter Two.

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[430] Stein "Poetry and Grammar" in *Writings 1932-1946*, 320-21.
[431] This of course can be read thematically and compared to thematic, philosophical, and metaphysical notions of "going on" in Beckett. But, being beyond the scope of this thesis, it's not an angle I will pursue here.
[432] Stein, "Narration 2," *Narration*, 25.
[433] *Ibid*.

Whereas many of the conjunctions referenced throughout the previous section came with a comma or an equivalent punctuation mark, in *How It Is* they appear unpunctuated. Accordingly, just as commas regularly appeared in conjunction with conjunctions, in these passages it is the conjunctions in particular that, un-modulated by punctuation, serve to instil syntactic and semantic uncertainty:

> that's enough end of extracts yes or no yes or no no no no witness no scribe all alone and yet I hear it murmur it all alone in the dark the mud and yet (*HII*, 72)

> flown then sudden same again then then where do I go from then to then and in between (*HII*, 83)

The following examples are more acute and display in a clearer manner the syntactic confusion that has been further enabled by lack of punctuation. When the narrator/ narrated[434] refers to something "in my free hand or left an undefinable object"(*HII*, 23), in the absence of a punctuative modulator it is uncertain whether the "undefinable object" is "in my free hand," in their "left" hand, to the "left" in general; or indeed whether the object is not in their hand at all but merely "left" somewhere. Similarly, and from the same page, it is equally difficult to parse the lines "and I the same instant to my right the object now a little pale grey brick the empty hands mingle the arms swing the dog has not moved I have the impression we are looking at me"(*HII*, 23). Finally, an example that, in the absence of a comma to modulate the activity described, immediately

[434] Cordingley's term. See Cordingley, "Beckett and 'l'ordre naturel': The Universal Grammar of *Comment c'est/ How It Is*," 185.

brings to mind the "halting, without halting"(*TFN*, 7) passage discussed previously: "if it stops to piss it will piss without stopping"(*HII*, 24).[435]

Later in texts such as *Worstward Ho*, commas that previously indicated clausal separateness are replaced with periods creating, as a consequence, a high proportion of sentence fragments and truncated clauses. This can be compared to Stein's creation of apparently unfinished sentence fragments throughout texts such as *Tender Buttons* wherein semantically incomplete sentences are enclosed by a period: "There is no use there is no use [...] Why should that which"(*TB*, 37). The arbitrary nature of this enclosure is entirely in line with Stein's aestheticizing of the period throughout her *Lectures in America*. For Stein, "periods [...] come to have a life of their own to commence breaking things up in arbitrary ways"[436] and "one could come to stop arbitrarily stop at times in one's writing."[437] Again, the act of "breaking things up in arbitrary ways"[438] accords with Beckett's conception of Stein as a figure who made language porous through her atypical rearranging of phrases and words in a logographic manner.[439]

Thematically it can be observed that many of the topics covered by these lesser modifiers refer to recurring acts of quantifying: to semantic uncertainties

[435] While *How It Is* is very much a particular of Beckett's *œuvre*, an idiosyncratic tendency to withhold commas is at times still much in evidence throughout the later works and throughout the *Nohow On* texts in particular.
[436] Stein "Poetry and Grammar" in *Writings 1932-1946*, 318.
[437] *Ibid.*, 318-19.
[438] *Ibid.*
[439] This is something we not only see to a high degree throughout later Beckett, but something that is particularly interesting in terms of the variant punctuations that exist between the English and French versions of Beckett's texts wherein he has integrated differential line breaks and punctuative markers. Again, this is discussed by Germoni in "Play/Comédie, Come and Go/Va-et-vient, Footfalls/Pas de Beckett; ou, Le va-et-vient de la ponctuation entre deux langues," 283-98. It is also thoroughly delineated by Krance throughout both volumes of his bilingual variorum editions of *Mal vu mal dit/ Ill Seen Ill Said* and *Company/ Compagnie*. See Krance ed., *Samuel Beckett's Mal vu mal dit/Ill seen ill said : a bilingual, evolutionary, and synoptic variorum edition.* (London: Garland Publishing: 1996) and Krance ed., *Company/Compagnie and A Piece of Monologue/Solo: A Bilingual Variorum Edition*, (London: Garland Publishing, 1993).

in relation to acts of quantifying, to the taking of measurements, movements, to ascertaining time or pinpointing distance. This accords with their grammatical function as delineators of more semantically determinate terms, but it is also a particular characteristic of the aesthetic interests of both authors who were respectively seeking out ways to enact processes of specification through language. When it comes to these more acute nondescriptive terms, the following two techniques are identifiable throughout the writings of both authors:

> i) Using a term's semantic content against itself through immediate single-word repetitions that serve to undo or undermine the term's heretofore definitive meaning. Such repetitions have much the same effect as the variant levels of whiteness discussed in Chapter Three's analysis of colour in *Ill See Ill Said* (*Ill*, 46).
>
> ii) Manipulating the syntax of the sentence through the use of other lesser modifiers (conjunctions in particular) to enforce oppositional or incompatible semantics and incite a term to suggest its own asymptote.

These techniques can be considered examples of the authors' enacting strategic manipulations of the syntax of the language so as to induce what can metaphorically be referred to as a "tearing" at "the fabric of the language."[440]

Despite the at times exhaustive specificity seen throughout passages in both writers' works, their use of grammatical and punctuational delimiters to set limits upon certain terms is regularly unsuccessful; or rather, it can be said to successfully enact the act of writing *unsuccessfully*. Both authors, it is fair to say, appear to employ these lesser modifiers to undo semantic connections as opposed to set them in place, to make un-specific that which determiners normally work to make more specific. With this in mind, the following final chapter will examine this technique of writing unsuccessfully (of writing

[440] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 519.

“worser”(*WWH*, 97)) through a study of their engagement with error. The chapter will examine the role played by error in the grammatical strategies of Beckett and Stein with a view to making it explicit that each instance of Beckett's employment of literary techniques that facilitate writing “worser”(*WWH*, 97) has a similar if not identical counterpart in the works of Stein. The chapter, and thesis, will then conclude with a brief section delineating the comparable nature of Beckett and Stein's bilingual aesthetics of writing in English.

Chapter Five:

Error, pejoration, and bilingual English.

Waste no more time trying to get it right (*TFN*, 42).

I. Error and pejoration.

i) Beckett and Stein's "fidelity to failure"(*Dis*, 145).

Stein, unlike Joyce, did not purport all errors to be deliberate and the work or by-product of genius. Yet, many of the examples of error I will presently discuss appear particularly suited to the context within which they appear throughout her narratives. Taken together, they make for a persuasive argument that Stein not so much took advantage of errors when they occurred in her writings, seeing them perhaps as an opportunistic "portal of discovery,"[441] but rather saw the promotion of certain semantically or syntactically appropriate errors throughout her texts as opportunities to create increasingly (in)exact narratives. That is to say, that Stein adopted a mode of pejorative writing that is directly analogous to Beckett's own pejorative late prose style. Approaching *The Making of Americans* from the perspective of the author's intentions for it to be a "history of every one who ever was or is or will be living"(*MOA*, 176) for example, suggests that grammatical inexactitude and error are necessary—if not essential—aspects of Stein's vast schema of peoples. A "completer"(*MOA*, 330) one in this "history of all of the kinds of them and of each one of all the millions of each kindof [*sic*] them"(*MOA*, 177) would naturally incorporate error, with these errors frequently taking the form of semantic and syntactic aberrations that serve to

[441] Joyce, *Ulysses*, ed. Gabler (London: The Bodley Head, 2007), 156 (9.156.228-29).

"make a completer [*sic*] one of that one"(*MOA*, 330) the narrator is currently in the process of describing.

But beyond the necessary presence of a degree of error in this history of all peoples, Stein appears to have embraced an aesthetic credo that placed error, and the associated act of failing (particularly of intentional failure) on a similar par with correctness, exactitude, and accuracy. In other words, that Stein was equally as interested in getting it wrong as she was in getting it right; a sentiment that is encapsulated in the following line from *How To Write*: "When I have not been right there must be something wrong"(*MOA*, 573). Acknowledging the existence of this "something" and attempting to further articulate it, irrespective of its morphological status as "right" or "wrong" in the context of acceptable English grammar represents as valid an enterprise for Stein as the pursuit of the "right." I propose then, that Beckett's aesthetics of failure, as epitomised in his statement regarding a "fidelity to failure"(*Dis*, 145) in *Three Dialogues* and discussed previously in Chapter One, is more directly compatible with Stein's similarly held attitude to error in her writings, than the Joycean conception of error as a "portal of discovery."[442]

Joyce made error, deliberate or otherwise, an explicit aspect of his aesthetic credo by means of Stephen Dedalus's clever retort from the "Scylla and Charybdis" episode of *Ulysses*: "A man of genius makes no mistakes. His errors are volitional and are the portals of discovery."[443] Assiduous in the proofing of her texts, Stein was less inclined to claim all instances of error as being "volitional."[444] This can be seen for example in her insistence that Jolas reprint

[442] Joyce, *Ulysses*, 156 (9.156.228-29).
[443] *Ibid.*
[444] *Ibid.*

transition's poorly set "An Elucidation."[445] That said, many of Stein's texts were subjected to the kind of typesetting errors that similarly plagued both Beckett and Joyce. The following passage from *The Making of Americans*, where the word "thin" is misspelled as "thing," is such an example:

> There is one and this one is almost an old one is changing the size in her in being and this one was really a fat one and is now quite entirely a thing [*sic*] one, this one then is one changing being in this one and this one is really not a fat thin one but really then a really thin one (*MOA*, 676-7).

It is relatively obvious in this instance that we are dealing with a transcription or typesetting error that would have been amended had the text been subjected to further corrected editions, which it was not.[446] Similarly, Dydo's study of the original drafts of the text of *Stanzas in Meditation* lead to a full-scale revision of the *Stanzas*, restoring "may" in place of every occurrence of the heretofore ubiquitous "can,"[447] with Dydo correctly deducing from the manuscript drafts that "may" was the intended word.[448]

In contrast with these instances of typographic and proofing errors, we see regular examples of apparently deliberate syntactic or semantic errors throughout Stein's prose writings, from early works such as *The Making of Americans* through to later writings, such as "Enface" or "Pfoems pritten on Pfances of George Hugnet"[449] These instances of seemingly deliberate lexical

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[445] "Miss Stein had another complaint: one of the pages of her contribution entitled, ironically, 'An Elucidation,' which was to have explained her technique in her own style, had been printed in the wrong place, thus creating a certain confusion [...] I got hold of [Elliot] Paul by telephone and we agreed that we would try to print a correction; but this proved technically difficult and we finally decided to order a reprint of her entire contribution, to be inserted in the number as a supplement." Jolas, *Man from Babel* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1998), 91.
[446] See Meyer, "Note on the Publication History" in Stein, *The Making of Americans*, xxxvi.
[447] Dydo, "*Stanzas in Meditation*: The Other Autobiography" in *Gertrude Stein Advanced: An Anthology of Criticism*, ed. Richard Kostelanetz (London: McFarland, 1990), 118.
[448] *Ibid.*, 112-127.
[449] Dydo, *Gertrude Stein: The Language that Rises*, 301.

errors are directly comparable with Beckett's proposed enactment of deliberate lexical sabotage, expressed in Kaun 1937.[450] Beckett identifies the subversive potential of error through the incorrect application of "Grammar and style"[451] in Kaun 1937 when he notes that the aesthetics he is leaning towards have thus far only been achieved by accident while writing in German; that is, working in a language other than English, a tertiary language he was not at the time fluent in. When making such (unintentional) errors he undermines the standard dialect he is attempting to emulate in his German writing. His errors in German thus qualify as subversions to the set rules of the German language, but they are subversions made in ignorance and Beckett desires to do more than enact linguistic porosity through morphological ignorance. Instead, he wishes to knowingly subvert his own language (at the time, English). To achieve the same or similar effects through deliberate action would thus involve writing in incorrect English, employing the grammars of the English language against the language system itself. This action is remarkably proximate, if not aesthetically identical, to Stein's similar harnessing of the subversive potential of error through certain technical and stylistic mechanisms adopted in her literary writings in English in the 1910s, 1920s and 1930s, and to the technical praxis of renarration as outlined throughout the preceding chapters of this thesis.

As noted in Chapter One, English was Stein's tertiary language. Studies of her undergraduate workbooks indicate that she was not fully fluent until her early twenties. Indeed, Stein made similar errors relating to English grammar in college prose exercises to those made by Beckett in his German prose of the

[450] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 518-20.
[451] *Ibid.*, 518.

1930s.[452] Like Beckett, the errors were brought on by unfamiliarity with the language as opposed to deliberate play or intentional acts of sabotage. These unintentional grammatical errors on both Beckett and Stein's part stand in stark contrast to the examples of what Beckett classified in *Worstward Ho* as "best worse" or "worser worst. Unlessable least best worse"(*WWH*, 95) and what Stein classified as "say[ing] it simplier" (*HTW*, 147); pejorative acts of linguistic sabotage identifiable throughout their respective later writings.

While it is fair to observe, as Wineapple does,[453] that Stein's English remained imperfect throughout her teens and into her early twenties, the famed account of her publishing house's reaction upon reading her draft of *Three Lives* occurred at a time when her command of English was fluent:

> One day some one knocked at the door and a very nice very american [*sic*] young man asked if he might speak to Miss Stein. [...] He said, I have come at the request of the Grafton Press. [...] You see, he said, slightly hesitant, the director of the Grafton Press is under the impression that perhaps your knowledge of english [*sic*]. [...] perhaps you have not had much experience in writing (*AABT*, 76).

Stein's response, as relayed in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, was to firmly assert the intentionality behind her prose style:

> I [Stein] will write to the director and you might as well tell him also that everything that is written in the manuscript is written with the intention of it being so written and all he has to do is print it and I will take the responsibility (*AABT*, 76).

The Making of Americans sees Stein employ more elaborate repetitious formulae to those seen throughout *Three Lives* that so concerned her first publisher. As

[452] Wineapple, *Sister Brother: Gertrude and Leo Stein*, 15; 424n.
[453] *Ibid.*

demonstrated throughout Chapter Two, these syntactic manipulations force words into unusual or inaccurate declensions, forcing a noun to operate as a verb, for example, or creating neologisms whose closest comparison can only be in the language skills of a non-native non-fluent speaker.

Rather than seeking to be as accurate as possible, in the knowledge that linguistic expression is a fundamentally unsatisfactory medium where all is inaccurate and all representation is ill-represented, these deliberate incorporations of error and the outright pursuit of error seen throughout *Worstward Ho* bring about a sort of reverse procedure to the traditional understanding of literary representation as mimetic. Instead, it creates a scenario wherein both Beckett and Stein can be said to mine inaccuracies in the search for the "best worse"(*WWH*, 95); a conscious and deliberate de-mimeticising of language. Both authors appear to use error to create a "completer" portrait, a more exact inexactitude created in the certainty that exactitude itself is unobtainable. This concept has its non-fiction counterpart in the third of Beckett's *Three Dialogues* which sees the dialoguer—"B"—bring up the issue of a "fidelity to failure, a new occasion, a new term of relation, and of the act which, unable to act, obliged to act"(*Dis*, 145). The third dialogue relates to the visual artist Bram van Velde. Thus, much like the first dialogue on Pierre Tal Coat discussed in Chapter One, it cannot be too much divorced from its initial context. This recognition on Beckett's part of an artist endeavouring to fail as opposed to succeed hints again at what it was about Stein's writings that so attracted him in 1937 when, as he notes, she displayed a distinct disinterest in "the solution of the problem," instead presenting it, like the crazed

mathematician, as being "of very secondary interest, yes, as the death of numbers."[454]

Beckett and Stein's use of neologisms stands in contrast to Joyce's, and indeed to Beckett's own early works which displayed strong imitative tendencies towards Joyce's style. Banfield marks out the distinction between Beckett's more mature employment of neologisms and his earlier attempts, using Joyce as the aesthetic counterpoint against which Beckett's development pre- and post-1937 is measured. Banfield is right to connect the "profuse vocabulary of learned terms and neologisms"[455] evident throughout Beckett's early works with the influence of Joyce. To suggest, however, that Beckett's later writings, wherein he displays a strikingly sparse prose style, together with a tendency to employ neologisms that read not as clever lexically inventive new word forms, but rather as overtly simplified language—what Van Hulle and Weller classify as "pejoration"[456]—language that could in fact be considered lexically uninventive to the point of being grammatically incorrect, is again somehow tied to Joyce, creates a connection that is of dubious relevance. Banfield suggests "Beckett abstracts Joyce's principles of lexical productivity to stem the tide of his verbal expansiveness." [457] Given the definite distinction Beckett established between his proposed aesthetics and Joyce's in Kaun 1937, this suggestion is unconvincing.[458]

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[454] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 518-19.
[455] Banfield, "Beckett's Tattered Syntax," 12.
[456] Van Hulle and Shane Weller, *The Making of Samuel Beckett's L'innommable/ The Unnamable* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 209.
[457] Banfield, "Beckett's Tattered Syntax," 12.
[458] Banfield displays an overtly psychoanalytic approach to Beckett's aesthetic development, as can be seen in her suggestion that Freudian motivations led Beckett to reduce his writings in "the mother tongue [...] to a baby talk: a series of reduplicative syllables."[458] Rather than reaching for such stylistically and theoretically tenuous interpretations, readings that again posit Joyce as the aesthetic centre of Beckett's creative praxis, Stein can be considered an altogether more rewarding author against which to situate the error-strewn prose of Beckett's later writings. This connection can be made without recourse to a reading of polylingualism that relies on myths of

Rather than refer back to an influence that was at work throughout juvenilia and early writings, an alternative influence that was confirmed at the onset of his transition to a mature style and a fully bilingual aesthetics should logically be considered more relevant. Beckett and Stein's respective attitudes to error—and in particular their shared use of distinctive (and distinctively non-Joycean) neologisms—can be seen as a direct bridge through which we can segue from the Beckett of 1937—who aspired to certain aesthetics similar to those Stein had already achieved—and his later writings wherein these once proposed aesthetics have been actualised; where the "worser worst"(*WWH*, 95) is manifestly evident, and evident across writings that span two languages.

Beckett notes in the van Velde dialogue that van Velde "is the first to admit that to be an artist is to fail, as no other dare fail, that failure is his world"(*Dis*, 145). It has previously been observed that Stein considered *Tender Buttons* to have "as much failure as success in it,"[459] and while this suggests a capacity on her part to identify failure when it occurs in her work,[460] her classification of the text as part-failure appears to me to be specific to the aesthetic aims of the piece as an attempt to do nothing less than "replac[e] the noun."[461] In contrast, the following passage from *The Making of Americans* sees Stein not only express satisfaction with being occasionally incorrect, but go so far as to explicitly pursue error:

> I have always been very interested in seeing how very wrong I can be when I am telling about any one how they are going to be living from day

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the mother by instead making pragmatic comparisons between their favoured grammatical errors.

[459] Stein, "A Transatlantic Interview," *A Primer*, 29-30.

[460] Earlier in the interview she admits "This early work is not so successful. [...] Here I am groping. I have not mastered my material"(*Ibid.*).

[461] Stein, "Poetry and Grammar" in *Look At Me Now*,136.

> to day in their living [....] and always then I want to be mistaken I want to make mistakes so that I can see something in them which makes of that one a more complete one, always then I want to be feeling more certain of all the variations that makes some one so very much like some one really different from that one (*MOA*, 538).

This explicit embracing of error in the form of "want[ing] to be mistaken" should serve to correct Beckett's assertion that van Velde was "the first to admit that to be an artist is to fail, as no other dare fail, that failure is his world"(*Dis*, 145). If, as David Lodge suggests, the work is a failure, it is so

> because it attempts something that violates the very essence of her medium, language: the combination axis of language cannot be so brutally dislocated without defeating the system's inherently communicative function. *Tender Buttons* is a feat of *de*-creation.[462]

Having established the compatible nature of Beckett and Stein's aesthetics of failure, error, or inexactitude, the following section will display and contrast concrete examples from their prose texts that illustrate the extensive comparability of their approach to the deliberate promotion of error throughout their writings, beginning with their similarly atypical use of the suffix.

ii) Suffixation and composite terms.

The supposedly Francophone overtones of the title of Stein's *Tender Buttons*, are regularly relayed in critical analyses of the text, most explicitly by Perloff who sees the title as a

> kind of Dada joke for, by definition, buttons are not tender. [...] It has been suggested that Gertrude Stein is referring to buds (the French *tendre boutons*) or to nipples, but perhaps the best way to take the title is simply

[462] David Lodge, *The Modes of Modern Writing: Metaphor, Metonymy, and the Typology of Modern Literature* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), 154.

> as an indication that the text itself will emphasise metamorphosis: hard objects become soft, wet objects dry up, persons turn into objects, buttons sprout before our eyes.[463]

Perloff's eagerness to classify Stein's work can be detrimental in that it overburdens the works with aesthetic labels, to the neglect of the writings contained therein.[464] In the above passage, not only is Stein's work presented as being "kind of" Dada, but it is also presented as Surrealist, despite Stein's well known aversion to the Surrealist movement (she considered it derivative and vulgar).[465] These two drastically different cultural and aesthetic movements are attached to Stein within an essay that earlier similarly argues that her writings should be considered in the context of cubism.[466]

Perloff is not the first to make a connection between the English *Tender Buttons* and its French homophone *tendre boutons*. She herself incorrectly accords this to David Lodge's 1977 study *The Modes of Modern Writing: Metaphor, Metonymy, and The Typology of Literature* (1977):

> Since buttons cannot literally be tender, "Tender Buttons" must be a metaphor. For what? Nipples have been suggested, but without a context there is in fact no way of knowing what an expression like "tender buttons" might mean, and this is generally true of the whole collection.[467]

Instead, the dubious honour seems to lie with Paul Padgette who, in his 1971 letter to *The New York Review of Books*, claims "the title *Tender Buttons*, of

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[463] Perloff, "Poetry as Word-System: The Art of Gertrude Stein," *The Poetics of Indeterminacy*, 99.
[464] Lodge similarly collates Dada, Surrealism, and Cubism in his attempt to assign *Tender Buttons* a context within the visual arts movements active during its composition in Paris in the 1910s (Lodge, *The Modes of Modern* Writing, 152-53).
[465] "The Surréalistes are the vulgarization of Picabia as Delaunay and his followers the futurists were the vulgarization of Picasso"(*AABT*, 227; also see 212).
[466] For a critique of cubist readings of Stein's work see Perloff's essay "Poetry as Word-System: The Art of Gertrude Stein," *The Poetics of Indeterminacy*, 67–108.
[467] Lodge, *The Modes of Modern* Writing, 153.

course, refers to a woman's nipples."[468] Padgette's letter to the *NYRB* was written in response to an essay on Stein written by Virgil Thompson. Padgette reproaches Thompson for not emphasising the work's supposedly titular specificity. Thompson, in reply, disputes the validity of Padgette's reading by wryly observing "There is another erogenous zone in female anatomy that could just as easily be called a tender button."[469]

Both Padgette and Thompson neglect to make reference to the French phonemic pun (*tendre boutons*, with *bouton* here suggesting a nub or bud-like gathering of skin) that could have strengthened either of their readings. Nevertheless, Thompson is right to stress that the tender button or tender buttons in question have dubious fixity to any given anatomical appendage, even if, as Perloff notes, the French *boutons* (the term is employed in the plural) suggests buds or nipples. There are limits to the usefulness of the French phonemic pun. It serves mainly as a facile metaphor for Stein's treatment of language throughout the text. Reading the title as metaphor encourages readings such as Perloff's own, quoted previously: "perhaps the best way to take the title is simply as an indication that the text itself will emphasise metamorphosis: hard objects become soft, wet objects dry up, persons turn into objects, buttons sprout before our eyes."[470]

The Germanic nature of the title is more interesting, with *Tender Buttons* forming a sort of compound word for Stein, and one she clearly contrived out of

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[468] Paul Padgette, Letter in response to "*A very difficult author*, from April 8, 1971," *New York Review of Books*, 1 July 1971, http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1971/jul/01/tender-buttons/?pagination=false [Accessed 30/11/2015].
[469] Virgil Thompson, "In response to Paul Padgette," *New York Review of Books*, 1 July 1971.
[470] Perloff, "Poetry as Word System: The Art of Gertrude Stein," in *The Poetics of Indeterminacy*, 99.

necessity, finding no suitable alternative in English.[471] It is also an aspect of the text that, to my knowledge, has received little or no attention, despite the fact that during the years 1912-14, Stein's command of (her first language) German would have been as advanced, if not more advanced, that her grasp of French. With this in mind, the text's title, *Tender Buttons*, can be presented as an Anglicised version of the Germanic *komposita*, the forming of compound words out of two otherwise unrelated terms. This sees Stein continuing the tendency to subject the English language to Germanic syntaxes or certain idiosyncrasies of German grammar that did not have a counterpart in English, as is manifestly evident throughout *The Making of Americans*. Indeed, it is a development on the polylingual merging seen throughout *The Making of Americans* because it sees Stein transcend the limits of strictly Germanic or English syntaxes and instead enact a sort of syntactic code-switching between standard English or German and a curious non-standard alternative dialect that seemed unique to its author, one Susan Gubar classified as "Steinese."[472]

This places Stein in a complementary position with respect to Beckett's similar use of *Komposita* throughout his early writings. Nixon, commenting on the "generally irreverent tone of *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*," observes that this irreverence is "compounded by Beckett's mocking attitude towards the German language and the pedantry it so often expresses. This is particularly evident in the fun Beckett has with compound nouns, a German speciality, when coming up with names."[473] Nixon presents Beckett's adoption of *Komposita* as

[471] It also usefully serves to maintain attention on the technical manipulations being enacted on the language throughout.
[472] Susan Gubar, *Critical Condition: Feminism at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 40.
[473] Nixon, *Samuel Beckett's German Diaries*, 10.

particularly reflective of certain negative aspects of Beckett's early prose style, as indeed it was. More importantly, however, is their shared tendency to import syntaxes or attributes of a foreign language dialect onto their work in English. This not only anticipates Beckett's later switch to preferring the unusual "logographs" of Stein to the work of Joyce, it suggests both authors were using their polylinguistic skills to merge and mutate that which could be considered standard in English prose.

Nixon ties Beckett's use of *Komposita* to *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*. But it is not unreasonable to suggest that this action continued far beyond this early work, and in fact became a recurrent feature of Beckett's mature prose style, albeit in a more subtle format than the showy compound terms to be found throughout *Dream.* This takes effect largely through Beckett's adoption of the suffix "-er" in conjunction with terms that do not normally take the "-er" suffix, an approach that is also particularly noticeable in the case of Stein's *Tender Buttons*. In grafting suffixes on to such supposedly incompatible terms, Stein was transgressing the syntax of standard English, employing a pejorative praxis that merits comparisons with the Germanic technique of *Komposita* wherein new terms are formed out of compound terms; she literally made new words out of old terms, or parts of old terms.[474] Stein's frequent addition of the "-er" suffix to terms that are not just incompatible semantically, but incompatible functionally too (making adjectives function as verbs, and so on) lends the syntax a somewhat Germanic feel that mirrors (or more correctly, anticipates) Beckett's

[474] See "-er, suffix1". OED Online. September 2015. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/63869 (accessed November 30, 2015) and "-er, suffix3". OED Online. September 2015. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/63871 (accessed November 30, 2015).

own use of the suffix in association with terms that do not take the "-er" suffix in normative English dialect.

The suffixation of words that do not comply with the morphemes used sees both authors import their own endings, and thus impose their own meanings (or non-meanings) onto various terms with minimal interference to the word unit itself; for, as Beckett's narrator makes clear in "Texts for Nothing VIII" without ending, a word has no meaning "like a single endless word and therefore meaningless, for it's the end gives meaning to words"(*TFN*, 33). The "-er" suffix thus plays an integral role in the deliberate enticing of error into their narrative because it sees both authors focus in on the manipulation of grammatical modifiers as a means of subverting that which is considered standard or normative within English dialect and, by means of a renarration that appends a suffix, presenting the word as semantically deviant. The suffix plays an important role in both the diminution and expansion of descriptive attributes in grammar. In the following examples from texts by both authors this attributive tendency is co-opted to suggest a specificity that is belied by the fact that the words themselves break new ground by becoming new versions of their head term, the unsuffixed root term that has been so modified.

Stein is particularly partial to incorporating the "-er" suffix into her writings. Often the appearance of an aberrational use of the suffix is preceded, as it is in the following example, by an orthodox employment of same: "Anyway, to be older and ageder"(*TB*, 38). This accords with the tendency, noted throughout the previous chapters, to surround an instance of semantic or syntactic diversity with correspondingly archetypal language, so as to better emphasise the atypical modification that is taking place. In the previous example, the adjective "old,"

modified to “older” by appending the “-er” suffix is followed by an atypical suffixation of the adjective “aged” to form “ageder.” This junctured approach to the introduction of error is also used by Beckett in a similar instance of aberrational suffixation discussed in Chapter Three, albeit in a reversed format, with the “incorrect” term preceding the “correctly” suffixed word: “So Watt busied himself a little while, covering the lamp, less and less, more and more, with his hat, watching the ashes greyen, redden, greyen, redden, in the grate, of the range”(*Watt*, 30). A word such as “distincter”(*TB*, 13) in Stein's description of “A Piece of Coffee” is directly analogous to Beckett's similar coining of the word “greyen”(*Watt*, 30) here. In these grammars of “the same sight slighter”(*TB*, 13), objects are assigned a certain descriptive characteristic only for that to be tweaked throughout the minute grammatical renarration that is the addition of a suffix.

The following instance of suffixed modification, taken from *Tender Buttons*, is a nice example of cumulative repetitions that incite error through the addition of the “-er” suffix first to an indeterminate adjective/noun, and then to a noun: “The sight of a reason, the same sight slighter, the sight of a simple negative answer, the same sore sounder, the intention of wishing, the same splendor [*sic*], the same furniture”(*TB*, 13). First, the adjective “slight,” a term that has phonemic similarities with its associated noun/ verb “sight,” is modified to read as “slighter,” a term that is indeed a slighter version of “slight.” Syntactically, in the context of this passage, this term should function as an adjectival qualifier of “sight,” but the word itself is also capable of functioning as a noun, and as a verb. This modification of “slight” to “slighter” alters the semantics of the term and renders it semantically incompatible with its

surrounding modifiers. Reading the term as a noun is within the horizon of plausible interpretation—the noun "slighter" refers to "one who slights or disdains."[475] But in the context of the phrase "the same sight slighter," this makes little semantic sense, unless it relates a truncated account of seeing this "slighter" figure again, which is unlikely as the passage belongs to a paragraph supposedly describing "A Piece of Coffee"(*TB*, 13). The syntactic arrangement of this clause makes the modified term read as a semantic error, one that defers our capacity to make sense of what is being seen, of what (or who) is being slighted, or is considered a "slighter." In short, it hinders our capacity to make sense of the passage at all. Had the term been deployed as part of a slightly different sequence (as "slighter sight" for example instead of "sight slighter"), it would not bring about such a jarring, semantically incompatible pairing of terms. With its iteration of "the same sight slighter," the passage appears to have found a favoured pejorative format. It recurs as the grammatical template for three subsequent repetitions, two of which similarly adopt the "-er" suffix in precisely the same manner. Incorrectly appended or conspicuous suffixes occur in the line "the same sore sounder" with "the same" remaining "the same" while the associated pairing "sore sounder" presents a similarly semantically dubious portrait of a pained figure who is engaged in uttering sounds, a "sore sounder."[476]

The reader accustomed to European or British English spelling, will also "read" an error in the penultimate phrasal iteration in this passage, "the same

[475] "slighter, n.". OED Online. December 2015. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/181793?redirectedFrom=slighter (accessed January 19, 2016).
[476] "sounder, n.2". OED Online. December 2015. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/185142?rskey=Kzfx0M&result=2&isAdvanced=false (accessed January 19, 2016).

splendor [*sic*]." This is not the case and is—or at least appears—to be an Americanised spelling of the term. Coming off the back of a steady stream of phrases involving "the same" in association with a suffixed term that conveys dubious semantic activities, the line invites the reader to incorrectly read "splendor" as a term that has received a suffix in the form of the "-or," when in fact it has not. This free-handed application of the suffix to inappropriate terms thus entices the reader into a state of distrust regarding the surrounding phrases, as to whether or not they are grammatically correct or whether they have similarly been made strange by means of suffixation. Thus, "splendor" may indeed refer to the mass noun that bears the same name, but it could also, in the context of the preceding tripartite passage of renarrations involving atypically applied suffixes, be a composite nonsensical term combining the nonexistent term "splend" with the suffix "-or."

While each of the suffixed terms discussed above appear to skirt the line dividing correct from incorrect, the same can not be said for the following passage from "Roast Beef" which contains a glaring example of invalid suffixation: "All the time that there is use there is use [...] there is that there then and not oftener"(*TB*, 35-6). Aside from the wonderful array of adverbs in the clause "there is that there then," the passage concludes with the observation that that that "there is that there then" occurs then and "not oftener," with the adverb "often" relayed as "oftener," an archaic or colloquial version of the more commonly used "more often" or "most often."[477] The connectivity or semantic transferability between clauses in this passage is compromised by these

[477] "often, adv. and adj.". OED Online. December 2015. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/130795?redirectedFrom=oftener& (accessed January 19, 2016).

unusually declined terms. One passage redirects the semantic portrait constructed in the preceding passage to the point where each sentence seems to make sense only on a clausal basis, and even that is doubtful, as each of the clauses examined above are particularly difficult to decipher. Employing the "correct" phraseology throughout any of these previous passages is far from Stein's intention. The courting of error appears here, as elsewhere, to be altogether deliberate, and brought about through the precise and skilful manipulation of syntax in tandem with semantically obscure terms, so as to fashion passages that are invariably difficult to resolve to any set meaning.

The Making of Americans contains an array of similar such inelegantly declined terms:

> More and more it is surer that this kind of describing leads to complete understanding of men and women (*MOA*, 283).
>
> This one never comes to be a completer one (*MOA*, 645).

While "surer" and "completer" are to be found in the *OED*, the definitions provided therein do not suit the contexts in which they are employed within each of their respective sentences. The syntax or phraseology of each passage serves to make aberrations of what would ordinarily be semantically acceptable. In the previous two examples, the suffixed term was itself technically a grammatically sound term, just employed in an atypical syntactic context. An exception occurs in the following example in the form of the term "sordider" which, it seems, is a definite instance of neologism brought about through English language *Komposita* involving a suffix: "He did not mind much that she was larger then and paler and a little dirtier in her dressing a little sordider [*sic*],

grimier"(*MOA*, 244). A similar instance of Anglophonic *Komposita* occurs in the following line by means of the appendage of the "-ly" suffix: "sometimes it comes very repeatingly [*sic*], sometimes very willingly out of me, sometimes not very willingly, always then it comes out of me (*MOA*, 327)."[478]

Beckett shows more variety than Stein in terms of the suffixes he adopts,[479] though *How It Is* contains the following example of an "-er" suffix appended in a manner identical to the Stein ones discussed previously: "resurrect an instant then leave for deader than before"(*HII*, 95). In this instance, however, the surrounding modifiers further enhance the nonsensical nature of the passage as it is theoretically impossible for a figure, once dead, to be considered more dead than they had heretofore been. This presents a finite event as something that instead exists on a spectrum of varying levels of "deadness." The ontological impossibility of this is correspondingly indicated by the semantically inappropriate terms used to relay the event; namely, what is biologically impossible is correspondingly relayed in a manner that is grammatically incorrect.

The use of neologisms in the work of both authors largely involves instances where the language gets worse (worser) as the narrative progresses; as the narrative progresses, the language regresses, reverting to syntactically inelegant, grammatically incorrect phrases that induce a corresponding and discernable semantic uncertainty. In this way then, it is fair to argue that such tactical deployment of suffixes, when paired with appropriate (and by that I

[478] Further examples are to be found elsewhere throughout the text, such as: "they are commoner [*sic*]"(*MOA*, 82); "It makes it realler [*sic*] then when in a story there are twelve women all alike"(*MOA*, 385); "It would not have any meaning excepting as words [*sic*]"(*MOA*, 429).
[479] Beckett deviates from the "-er" suffix so favoured by Stein in the following clause from *How It Is*: "end of part two part one is ended"(*HII*, 64).

mean inappropriate or atypical) surrounding modifiers, are clear instances of both authors strategically employing grammatically derived strategies to incite semantic fissures or tears in "the fabric of the language"[480]; the activity of Stein's Beckett so wished to emulate in Kaun 1937. The following section will examine instances of phonetic neologism in the work of both authors.

iii) Phonetic neologisms.

The following neologic terms are, in the context of their surroundings, presented as faithful phonetic reproductions of various sounds. Banfield covers phonetic neologisms in her essay "Samuel Beckett's Tattered Syntax" but focuses on what she considers to be Beckett's "personal motive[s]" against "the mother tongue," making use of a strained analogy between Beckett's first language[481] and his later switch to working between English and French, his second language. Banfield claims that "Beckett's linguistic crisis is [...] one of the mother tongue"[482] and a "surrogate mother tongue"[483] at that. Beckett's biological parents and his literary parentage in the form of Joyce, (for Banfield, even in 1949, Beckett is still "post-Joyce"[484]) are of little relevance here, with Joyce being useful only insofar as his aesthetics can be said to differ from Stein's. That said, Banfield's delineation of terms relating to her theory that "in Beckett both mother and mother tongue are reduced to excrement"[485] is thorough, and as a result I will avoid mentioning instances where "the mother tongue is reduced to

[480] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 519.
[481] The "mother" tongue, or less dramatically, Beckett's L1, his first language.
[482] Banfield, "Beckett's Tattered Syntax," 9.
[483] *Ibid.*, 7.
[484] *Ibid.*, 6.
[485] *Ibid.*, 9.

baby talk" or "nursery language"[486] and instead focus on neologisms that are not explicitly mother-related or matricidal.

Aside from the babbling phonetics Banfield relates from *Molloy*, "Waiting for Godot," and *How It Is*, other phonetic terms appear throughout, such as the "brief blacks then zzizz the next all that"(*HII*, 89) of *How It Is*. Similar misspellings relating to transcription of speech are a regular feature of *Watt*:

> and the three frogs croaking Krak!, Krek! and Krik! (*Watt*, 117).
>
> Tis only me turd or fart (*Watt*, 123).
>
> Now to Watt Mr Graves did not say, in so many words, Tell me wat to do, Mr Watt, in order tat I may get on wid me wife (*Watt*, 124).
>
> But once he thought he heard him say Tweet! Tweet! to a little bird, and once he heard him make a strange noise, *PLOPF* PLOPF *Plopf* Plopf *plopf* plopf plop plo pl (*Watt*, 126; emphasis in original).

These examples are not particularly challenging as each one is assigned to the speech of a particular character (or, in the case of the third example, is identified as something "Mr Graves did not say") and so the reader can consider the misspellings instances of the author sacrificing grammatical exactitude for colloquial realism. In this way, they are comparable to the following example from Stein, which contains an instance of improper verb declension: "She had thrown the umbrella in the mud and no one heard as it burst from her, 'I have throwed [*sic*] the umbrella in the mud,' it was the end of all that for her"(*MOA*, 388). This error occurs in a passage of speech assigned to a young girl, so can hardly be considered a strategic instance of authorial sabotage against normative English dialect; rather it appears as an endearing instance of

[486] Banfield, "Beckett's Tattered Syntax," 13.

grammatical inaccuracy on the part of a child that, like Stein, had a live-in governess in the form of a "foreign woman who knew german and french well [*sic*]" and would "talk french or german with the children [*sic*]" as opposed to English"(*MOA*, 240-1).

In contrast, the following appears to be a further instance of Stein employing English language *Komposita* in the form of the word "bycicling" which appears to be a merger of the verb "bicycling" and the phrase "by cycling," one that also has a pleasant phonemic similarity: "taking excursions [...] in bycicling [*sic*]"(*MOA*, 396). That this instance of *Komposita* is deliberate is confirmed by its reoccurrence in a similar context some 139 pages later: "he [Henry Fisher] and David Hersland did a great deal of bycicling [*sic*] together"(*MOA*, 535). In both these instances we either have a misspelling of bicycling, an English version of a Germanic *komposita*, or, like certain passages from *Watt*, the word is like "Bando. Spelt as pronounced"(*Watt*, 145). Much like the transcription of *Watt*, which the narrator admits to having likely "missed I suppose much I suspect of great interest touching" the various stages of "Watt's stay in Mr Knott's house"(*Watt*, 141), the narrator of *The Making of Americans* displays a similar indifference to the thoroughness of her narrative, one that is directly comparable with the uncertainty surrounding the relative completeness of *Watt*'s narrative: "There are many then that I know, and I know it, I know it and mostly always sometime I tell it. Each one sometime is a whole one to me, always sometime I know it, mostly always sometime I tell it"(*MOA*, 325-6). This attestation towards incomplete narration is not confined to a single glib utterance, however, the following are just some of the phrases used to convey the narrator's commitment to delivering a(n) (in)complete narrative:

> "I tell it"; "to some of them I tell it"; "always sometime I tell it"; "always sometime then I tell it"; "very often I tell it"; "mostly always when it is complete in me I tell it"; "mostly always I tell it"; "mostly I tell it"; "mostly then I tell it"; "Always then I tell it [...] mostly always then I tell it" (*MOA*, 322-23).[487]

Further errors or potential errors relating to structural completeness are identifiable elsewhere throughout Beckett and Stein's fictions in their use of misleading titles, contents and summaries. The incomplete content listing for "Foods" in *Tender Buttons*, for example, or the doubly misleading title of Stein's 1929 libretto *Four Saints in Three Acts*,[488] which is not restricted to four saints nor three acts. It is also present in the sectional summaries throughout Beckett's *Mercier and Camier*.[489] The following section will move to examine instances of whole-word neologisms in Beckett and Stein's writings.

iv) Composite term neologisms.

Aside from ad hoc suffixations and phonetically spelt words one can also identify a number of seemingly deliberate spelling errors, particularly in Stein's work. The misspelling of kind as "knid" in a passage concerned with delineating

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[487] In addition to this laxity of recall on the part of the narrator of *The Making of Americans*, Stein displays an overall indifference to the efficacy of her prose in terms of its capacity to relay meaning: "What is the interest in character by saying he understood others. There is no use in finding out what is in anybody's mind. There is no use in finding out what is in anybody's mind"(*HTW*, 16). This statement, if it can be correctly read in the context of Stein's attitude towards her own prose, further strengthens Beckett's presentation of her as an author for whom "the solution of the problem is of very secondary interest, yes, as the death of numbers"(SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 519).

[488] Dydo dates the composition of this libretto to 1927. Because of its relevance to the comparative in terms of historical context, I am referring here to the date of its first print publication in 1929 in *transition* 16/17 (the "Revolution of the Word" special issue) alongside Beckett's first forays into the pages of *transition* with his essay "Dante… Bruno. Vico.. Joyce" and the poem "Assumption." Wilson, *Gertrude Stein: A Bibliography*, 131; Dougald MacMillan, *Transition 1927–38: The History of a Literary Era* (London: Calder and Boyars, 1975), 235-65; 255–78.

[489] Beckett, *Mercier and Camier*, ed. Seán Kennedy (London: Faber and Faber, 2010), 26-27; 55-56; 78-79; 101; These misleading structural prompts are less relevant to the present study and so will receive no further attention.

the various kinds of men and women that suffer from anxiety, impatience or have what Stein classifies as a kind of "queerness in them" (*MOA*, 194) allow both for the inclusion of alternate kinds of "kind"—indeed of "every kinds" of kind, even kinds that are not spelt as kind—and also enacts a lexical queering of the term "kind":

> the kind they have in them of mixtures inside them which gives to them the knid [*sic*] that is in them of the impatient being and anxious being in each one, the kind in them of such being inside them that the servant living makes inside such a servant queerness (*MOA*, 194).[490]

The succeeding page in the novel contains an account of an unpleasant woman wherein the word unpleasant is presented unpleasantly, or made more unpleasant because it is spelt incorrectly: "she had a very umpleasant [*sic*] nature"(*MOA*, 195). Similarly, Stein's description of a figure who craves inconspicuousness is, unfortunately, made more conspicuous by means of a misspelling: "That one does not want to be conspucious [*sic*] in living"(*MOA*, 644). Later still, Stein manages to successfully regale the "really stupid being in" her description of an ambitious but unintelligent figure by means of a further misspelling: "As I was saying really aspiration and amibition [*sic*] was really stupid being in him"(*MOA*, 668). Similarly, Stein's account of a "Patrick Moore," a figure who lived a lively life, is accompanied by a descriptive passage that is correspondingly lively in its lexical inventiveness: "he was one having really all his living livelily [*sic*] in him"(*MOA*, 695). Finally, the very last page of the novel contains a particularly effective mnemonic that bears a striking similarity to

[490] A further example of lexical queerness occurs earlier in the novel in the line "Perhaps real ly [*sic*] the queerness of them came from there not being enough in each one of them to fill the inside in them and so they did not have much meaning or any power or any sense of appealing"(*MOA*, 81).

Joyce's "mememoreme,"[491] similarly found on the last page of *Finnegans Wake* but published fourteen years after *The Making of Americans*, and some fifteen years after the novel was serialised in the *transatlantic review*:[492] "Very many are quite certain that family living can go on existing. Very many are remmbering [*sic*] that they are quite certain that family living can go on existing"(*MOA*, 925).[493]

These contextually appropriate errors contrast with instances of error brought about by misspelling elsewhere that do not easily lend themselves to successful thematic incorporation into the surrounding passages. The following lexical reversal, for example, is likely an error of transcription that has remained uncorrected throughout successive editions of the text: "Sometime prehaps [*sic*] there will be written a complete history of this one, sometime perhaps there will be written a complete history of every one"(*MOA*, 376). Throughout *Watt* we can identify similar instances wherein the insides of a word are re-arranged to create semantically uncertain words that the characters comment on and correct in a way that does not happen in Stein:

> The two figures are related, said Mr O'Meldon, as the cute to its roob. The cute to its what? said Mr Fitzwein. He means the cube to its root, said Mr

[491] Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, ed. Robbert-Jan Henkes, Erik Bindervoet, and Finn Fordham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 628.14.
[492] Though written between the years 1903 and 1911, the novel was not published in its entirety until the 1925 when it was published by Contact Editions, Dijon (Dydo, *A Stein Reader*, 17). Prior to that, in 1924 excerpts from the text were serialised across nine separate issues of Ford Madox Ford's *transatlantic review* (Wilson, *Gertrude Stein: A Bibliography*, 127).
[493] The following is brief selection of similar such neologisms to be found throughout Stein's *The Making of Americans* and *Tender Buttons*: "He was young then, he thought she had deceipt [*sic*] in her, this was not true of her, she was honest as most people are"(*MOA*, 217); "Mrs. Henry browned potatoes, pealed [*sic*], when she roasted her meat the way french [*sic*] people do them" (*MOA*, 535-6); "It is very difficult in quarrelling for either one to be certain what the otner [*sic*] one has then in them that is making him do quarrelling"(*MOA*, 665); "It is a very pleasant thing to some to see in any one, tosee [*sic*] in themselves little growing difference in them"(*MOA*, 844); "A centre in a table: "Next to me next to a folder, next to a folder some waiter, next to a foldersome waiter and re letter [*sic*] and read her. Read her with her for less"(*TB*, 60).

> MacStern. What did I say? said Mr O'Meldon. The cute to its roob, ha ha, said Mr de Baker (*Watt*, 161).

This procedural approach to the appearance of lexical errors and inversions sees the incongruities identified, commented on, and corrected or explained by the participant characters. While Cordingley observes, "[Watt] is prone to ungrammaticality and inversion (*hyperbaton*),"[494] a similar movement towards correctitude is identifiable throughout the extended section wherein Sam recounts Watt's gradual descent into nonsense brought about by periodic and cumulative alterations to the word order within sentences and the lexical arrangement of the words themselves. Each aggregated inversion is explained to the reader by narratorial asides that serve as an aide in the "correcting" of Watt's statements so that they make semantic sense (*Watt*, 140-44). Such conscientious catering to the explicability of the sentences is again testament to Beckett's prioritising of certain degrees of semantic certainty being obtainable from his writings in a way that Stein does not.

Doubtless a large number of typographical errors remain throughout *The Making of Americans*, with Meyer in his brief "Note on the Publication History" making the matter-of-fact observation that "a fully corrected and edited text would be immensely desirable but is not feasible at present."[495] Despite the presence of these manifold errors, Meyer himself acknowledges that this is the "literally authoritative" text, the text "that Stein and Toklas proofread during the summer of 1925.[496] However, Meyer's direction to "proofread while one

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[494] "A factor he links with Beckett's familiarity with hyperbaton as a particular syntactic feature of Hiberno-English: "the tendency of Hibernian English to syntactic inversion sharpened Beckett's ear to exactly this feature of language." Cordingley, "Beckett and 'l'ordre naturel': The Universal Grammar of *Comment c'est/ How It Is*" 195.
[495] Meyer, "Note on the Publication History" in Stein, *The Making of Americans*, xxxvi.
[496] *Ibid.*

reads"[497] is impractical as without Stein's manuscript and typescript drafts of *The Making of Americans*, such an approach would likely categorise each instance of lexical inventiveness or digression as a typographical error. As the previous sections have made clear, many of these instances are particularly pertinent to Stein's particular praxis of instigating semantic tears in "the fabric of the language"[498] and they reward further integration into the text as uniquely Steinian "portals of discovery."[499] Indeed, many of the lexical errors that occur throughout present the text as something akin to the texts described in Jorge Luis Borges "The Library of Babel"[500] wherein there exists "books that differ by no more than a single letter, or a comma"[501] or where "there is no combination of characters one can make—*dhcmrlchtdj*, for example—that the divine Library has not foreseen and that in one of more of its secret tongues does not hide a terrible significance."[502]

Without overstressing this analogy, one that is useful largely as a thematic touchstone, the following instances of what appear to be punctuational errata can be similarly rationalised as being literally reflective of their contextual semantic surrounds. One side effect of Stein's attempt at describing all peoples past, present, and future, it that the people described, because they are collectively being catalogued through a particularly limited and repetitive lexicon of terms, begin to merge.[503] Much like her presentation of people as a

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[497] Meyer, "Introduction" to *The Making of Americans*, xxxvi.
[498] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, 518.
[499] Joyce, *Ulysses*, 156. (9.156.228-29)
[500] Jorge Luis Borges, "The Library of Babel," in *Collected Fictions*, tr. Andrew Hurley (London: Penguin, 1999), 112-118.
[501] *Ibid.*, 116.
[502] *Ibid.*, 117.
[503] This tendency towards mass merger on the part of the figures depicted throughout *The Making of Americans* was previously noted in Chapter Two and Stein's depiction of "mushy mass with a skin to hold them in"(*MOA*, 383).

"mushy mass with a skin to hold them in"(*MOA*, 383) Stein sees her lexical counterparts of these figures similarly merge and coalesce throughout the text:

> Some one is one to whom some one is regularly teaching something. Someoneisonewhomwomeoneisteaching [*sic*]. Someoneisonewhomsomeone is regularly teaching something (*MOA*, 767).

> Any one being one being living is onehaving [*sic*] been saying something. Any one beingin [*sic*] any family living is one saying something again (*MOA*, 915).

As with the "knid" passage discussed previously which sees the word "kind" undergo a lexical rearrangement that reflects the "queerness"(*MOA*, 194) of its associated persons, the following passage again sees a drastically different "kind of" the word pairing "kind of": "Sometime there will be a history of all of the kinds of them and of each one of all the millions of each kindof [*sic*] them"(*MOA*, 177). Within this history of all peoples, a history Lodge aptly describes as "a fragment of some huge universal history or chronicle"[504] there is certainly room for a composite "kindof" within "the millions of each kind of them"(*MOA*, 177).

Similarly appropriate errors of typesetting also occur in respect to rogue punctuation marks, as in the following two examples:

> Always then. as [*sic*] I was saying, Martha was a whole one (*MOA*, 406).

> Dead is dead. [...] Dead is dead yes dead is really dead yes to be dead is to be really dead yes, but still, yes to be dead is to be dead, to be really. [*sic*] dead yes (*MOA*, 498).

The first of these ironically sees the sentence declaring Martha Hersland to be "a whole one" rendered incomplete and grammatically inaccurate. The second sees

[504] Lodge, *The Modes of Modern Writing*, 146.

the concept of "death" made punctuative in the form of an aberrational full stop that further emphasises the narrator's insistence (made over a particularly challenging succession of pages) that "to be dead, [is] to be really. [*sic*] dead"(*MOA*, 498). A counterpart to this can be seen in the concluding passage of *Malone Dies* where death is similarly literalised stylistically in the form of abrupt termination of narrative:

> or light light I mean
> never there he will never
> never anything
> there
> any more (*MD*, 119).

II. Lexical renarrations and the goodbye to standard English: Stein's role in the development of Beckett's bilingual English praxis.

i) "Her métier is writing and her language is english [*sic*]"(*AABT*, 83): Stein's bilingual orthography.

Stein's use of composite terms and her adoption of the compound "-er" suffix, explored throughout the preceding sections made explicit the fact that her writing displays a linguistically diverse orthographic style. This is also discernible in her approach to spelling and typographic variants between languages and dialects. Stein maintained an uncompromising preference for Americanised spelling throughout the entirety of her career. The Americanised spelling "color" appears in multiple iterations throughout *Tender Buttons*, a text largely disseminated in an environment accustomed to British English spelling.[505] As a result, Stein's "color," as it appears throughout *Tender Buttons*,

[505] Tender Buttons was written in 1912 and first published in 1914 by Claire Marie Press, a small New York publishing house. It was later published in its entirety in issue fourteen of

both intimates and distinguishes itself from the more familiar spelling "colour," the more grammatically correct variant employed throughout that geographic region. In this way Stein infuses a cross-dialectical orthography throughout her prose, asserting the distinctions that exist between Anglophone dialects, and managing in the process to make the English language orthographically divergent even from itself.[506]

In contrast to this steadfast adherence to American English spelling, Stein's choice of orthography was also, at times, decidedly non-Anglophonic. That Stein's engagement with punctuation was contingent on her adoption of a multi-dialectical Anglophone style that incorporated non-Anglophone syntaxes is apparent from her adoption of Francophone orthography from her early prose work on. Stein adopts Francophone orthography in relation to the application of capital and small letters, and did so in a manner that was particularly idiosyncratic. According to Stein "anybody can really do as they please"[507] apropos the application of capital or small case letters to the extent that, "sometimes one feels that Italians should be with a capital and sometimes with a small letter, one can feel like that about almost anything."[508] *Three Lives* employs Francophone orthography throughout in its referencing of the nationalities of various characters described therein, as is the case with the "good Anna [who] was a small, spare german woman."[509] In her retrospective theorising of the

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transition (1928). Bruce Kellner, "Ex-Libris: The Published Writings of Gertrude Stein," in *A Gertrude Stein Companion: content with the example*, ed. Kellner (London: Greenwood Press, 1988), 62. For a detailed account of Beckett and Stein's crossovers in the magazine *transition* see Nugent-Folan, "'Ill buttoned': Comparing the representation of objects in Samuel Beckett's *Ill Seen Ill Said* and Gertrude Stein's *Tender Buttons*," 54-82.

[506] The distinctions Stein establishes between American and British English language and literatures were discussed in detail in Chapter One.

[507] Stein "Poetry and Grammar" in *Writings 1932-1946*, 321.

[508] *Ibid.*

[509] Stein, "The Good Anna" in *Three Lives* (New York; London: Penguin, 1990), 5.

development of her aesthetics of language, Stein places strong emphasis on the fact that the manuscript that was to become *Three Lives* began as an exercise in the translation of Flaubert's *Trois Contes*; an activity she embarked upon at the encouragement of her brother Leo with a view to improving her French.[510] The extent to which this is an accurate rendition of the genesis of *Three Lives* is unclear as indeed is the length of time Stein persevered with the translation project before switching to a strictly compositional process. What is certain, however, is that when it came to the writing of the first story in the collection, "The Good Anna," Flaubert's "Un Coeur Simple" served as what Ann Charters describes as Stein's "point of departure."[511] Rather than contribute to the improvement of Stein's French, it instead had the effect of enabling Stein to commence writing in a very particular English idiolect, complete with its own author-specific bilingual orthography.

Of further interest in the context of Stein's hybridised and cross-lingual orthography is the very clear orthographic distinction that exists between *Three Lives*, and its immediate precursors *Q.E.D.* and *Fernhurst*. Written in 1903 and 1904-5 respectively,[512] when Stein was already in Paris, both texts are notable for their adherence to Anglophone orthography throughout, as can be seen from the dialectically appropriate use of capital letters in the following examples:

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[510] "En ce même automne 1904, Leo avait recommandé à Gertrude la lecture des *Trois Contes* de Flaubert, figure alors emblématique de l'engagement artistique. Il l'avait même encouragé, à titre d'exercice, à l'essayer de le traduire." Satiat, *Gertrude Stein*, 160.
[511] Ann Charters, "Introduction" to *Three Lives*, viii.
[512] Donald Gallup, "A Note on the Texts" in Gertrude Stein, *Fernhurst, Q.E.D., and Other Early Writings*, ed. Gallup (London; Peter Owen, 1972), unpaginated; Charters, "Appendix: Q.E.D," in *Three Lives*, 201.

> All three of them were college bred American women [...] They were distinctly American [...] She was the American version of the English handsome girl.[513]
>
> "She was an American woman still"; "Also in our American life"; "these were things that were simply not done in coeducational middle western America."[514]

To be in Paris and surrounded by French speakers—as Stein was at the time of writing these pieces—was obviously not quite enough to instigate an adoption of atypical non-Anglophonic syntaxes. Rather, it took a direct engagement with the French of Flaubert's *Trois Contes* to instigate her dismissal of certain orthographic habits particular to Anglophone writing. If nothing else then, aside from the obvious plot correlations between "The Good Anna" and "Un Coeur Simple," the Flaubert text encouraged Stein to discard aspects of Anglophonic orthography in favour of a hybridised bilingual style.

The extent of Stein's commitment to such an unorthodox practice and style is apparent in the following passage from *The Making of Americans*:

> What she was was [*sic*] just what he wanted for his children, a foreign woman who knew german [*sic*] and french [*sic*] well and a good musician. [...] Then when she left them after a little while with them because her sister had become a teacher and so she could leave her and she wanted to leave America, when she left them Mr. Hersland thought it was better that the children should have american training. They were american [*sic*], they did not need french and german [*sic*] (*MOA*, 240).

This passage displays Stein's incorporation of Francophone orthography into English prose, moving between capitalised and non-capitalised terms according to standard French style for proper nouns and adjectives. This can be seen in the

[513] Stein, "Q.E.D" in *Three Lives*, 206.
[514] Stein, "Fernhurst" in *Fernhurst, Q.E.D., and Other Early Writings*, 4; 29; 39.

proximate repetitions of the orthographically dissimilar "America [...] american [*sic*] [...] american [*sic*]." The final iteration of "American" here—"they were american [*sic*]"—is particularly noteworthy in that, following French capitalisation rules, if read as an adjective the term should be left uncapitalised, but if read as a proper noun—also possible in this scenario—the term should be capitalised. Thus Stein, using English, manages to concoct a scenario wherein her Francophone orthography *in English* treads a tenuous line between being correct or incorrect; this then is a masterly example of orthographically induced semantic tearing in action. Stein's writing here showcases a hybridised orthographic mode of writing wherein letters may be subjected to capital or small letter case-size alterations on a case-by-case basis. In addition to the aforementioned influence of Flaubert, this changeable attitude to orthography was likely related to Stein's polylingualism and consequently, to the variant orthographic practices she was exposed to, subsumed, and adopted. As can be seen in the above excerpt, the orthography is Americanised when explicitly referring to America, and made Francophone when referring to the governess's task of speaking in "german [*sic*] and french [*sic*]" (*MOA*, 240). Similarly, in *Paris, France* Stein modifies the orthographic practices to suit the country she is speaking of, with "the french [*sic*]" referred to using French orthography and "the English" using English: "I like the word pastime as the french [*sic*] use it, it sounds so like the English word and yet the french [*sic*] make it so completely their own."[515]

Stein adhered to this particular orthographic preference through to her later writings, as can be seen from the following passage from *The Autobiography*

[515] Stein, *Paris, France*, (London: Peter Owen, 2003), 33.

of Alice B. Toklas; indeed, the *Autobiography* is a particularly good example of Stein's commitment to this idiosyncratic orthographic practise as its primary issuance was in the Americas and Britain where her use of non-Anglophonic orthography would have been particularly noticeable to the reader: "She [Stein] is passionately addicted to what the french [*sic*] call métier and she contends that one can only have one métier as one can only have one language. Her métier is writing and her language is english [*sic*]"(*AABT*, 85). The orthography here is bilingual as opposed to multi-dialectical, mixing English and French, with one instance of code-switching identifiable in her use of the French *métier*. Of specific interest is the final sentence—"her métier is writing and her language is english [*sic*]"(*AABT*, 85)— because it succinctly demonstrates the hybridised and complex nature of her orthographic style. Stein uses a French term to classify herself as an English writer, referring to her *métier* as English, but at the same time, she employs French orthography to relay that English is her chosen language; thus the French *métier* is classified as English while the "english [*sic*]" is relayed in a distinctly Francophone manner. These examples again highlight that while Stein's English was distinctly atypical, it is not beyond categorisation and these technical effects can be systematically delineated for the purpose of comparative study.

ii) Beckett and Stein's idiolectic bi- and polylingualism.

> Now in English they mean very well for once.
> Now translate that to now in English they mean very well for once (*HTW*, 17).[516]

[516] This is unusual as, to my knowledge, it's one of the only places in Stein's work where English has been capitalised.

Read purely from the point of view of Beckett's aesthetic development, and with a view to eschewing the tendency to fall into the coterie driven divisions that have impeded a full appreciation of Beckett and Stein's comparable styles, Kaun 1937 clearly demonstrates Beckett's move away from a particular mode of writing that disrupted the English language by importing non-English terms—what Montini classifies as "monolingual polyglottism"[517]—and towards a mode of writing that affected similar semantic disturbances through syntactic manipulations in an ostensibly unilingual situation.[518] This unilingual style became increasingly bilingual, with Beckett's work developing first in a direction Montini classifies as "le bilinguisme anglophone"[519] and subsequently towards a style Montini classifies as "le bilinguisme francophone."[520] As Montini makes clear, this transition away from Joycean polyglottism and towards a bilingual English praxis was an integral step in the development of what ultimately became a fully bilingual *œuvre* with Beckett working in both French and English. Beckett's mature writings in English and French enact similar strategies of semantic tearing to those studied throughout the preceding chapters, and do so across a bi-textual corpus whose oscillations between the English and French are integral to their author's efforts at challenging the efficacy of language as a descriptive medium. In this the final

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[517] Montini, *"La bataille du soliloque,"* 33.
[518] Declaring a text or indeed an author's *œuvre* to be bilingual or multilingual without delineating further on the specific technical glosses that accompany such an inherently complex practice poses difficulty when it comes to assessing the particular strand or variant of bilingualism identifiable, or, as is the case in this study, assessing the comparable nature of the renarrative practices of different authors. Montini's orthography is therefore particularly valuable as a tool for differentiating between the variant strands of multilingual writing discernible throughout Beckett's writings. Concordantly, while I will shortly distance myself from aspects of her argument, this thesis adopts Montini's terminologies for classifying bilingual and polylingual writing.
[519] Montini, *"La bataille du soliloque,"* 95.
[520] *Ibid.*, 178.

section of the chapter, I propose that Stein's unique idiolectic English facilitated the development of Beckett's bilingual English writing style, ultimately allowing him to not only transition away from the monolingual polyglottism that permeated his early writings, but to successfully evolve his aesthetic praxis so that it was no longer as inhibited by the English "grammar and style"[521] that was posing him such difficulty at the time of his writing of Kaun 1937. Before turning to compare Beckett and Stein's bilingual English praxis and forward the thesis regarding Stein's role in Beckett's transition from bilingual English to bilingual French writings, the following will first situate Beckett and Stein's respective bi- and polylingual aesthetics within the specific context of extant critical studies of Beckett's bilingualism and how these variant models relate to the terms forwarded by Montini.

In *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*, Juliet Taylor-Batty posits Beckett as an author employing "bilingual and translational processes to explore and expose the failure of language."[522] Taylor-Batty astutely observes that "the modernist 'linguistic turn' might more accurately be called a *multilingual* turn."[523] Corrine Scheiner declares "Joyce, Eliot, and Pound [...] employed polyglot quotations as a stylistic device in their works and thus produced what might be called a bilingual or multilingual text."[524] Both Taylor-Batty and Schneider are here describing that strand of modernist monolingual polyglossia Montini classifies as "monolingual polyglottism."[525] Taylor-Batty contends that "Beckett['s] turn to composition directly in French [was] a [...] mode of linguistic

[521] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1,* 518.
[522] Taylor-Batty, *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*, 14.
[523] *Ibid.*, 23; italics in original.
[524] Corrine Scheiner, "Self-Translation," 370.
[525] Montini, *"La bataille du soliloque,"* 33.

self-estrangement."[526] Mooney similarly classifies Beckett's transition to French alternately as a "sought-for linguistic self-estrangement"[527] though she also problematises this theory, observing that "Beckett's post-war adoption of French as a language of original composition was as much an assertion of self as an abdication."[528] Banfield stresses the metaphoric aptness of Beckett's estrangement from the colloquial "mother tongue"[529] when speaking about Beckett's first language and, as previously noted, employs maternal estrangement metaphors when discussing his transition to the French. Montini posits this same argument, stressing the importance of *Watt* as "le premier roman écrit entièrement en France,"[530] written in both geographic and linguistic exile: "Le dernier roman en anglais de Beckett représente d'abord la coupure du cordon au sens littéral et métaphorique, précède a séparation de la langue maternelle."[531] Stephen Stacey usefully challenges these metaphoricically-tinged interpretations of Beckett's transition to French by instead arguing for the economic practicalities of Beckett's move to French. Stacey's can be considered a particularly strong and practical minded counter-argument to Taylor-Batty and Mooney's identical contention that Beckett's transition to French was "a mode of linguistic self-estrangement"[532] or "sought-for linguistic self-estrangement."[533] Stacey observes:

> in the Paris of March 1946 there was in fact *no* market for English language prose. [...] By writing in French, however, he [Beckett] changed

[526] Taylor-Batty, *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*, 14.
[527] Mooney, *A Tongue Not Mine*, 76.
[528] Mooney, "Beckett in English and French," 196.
[529] Banfield, "Beckett's Tattered Syntax," 12.
[530] Montini, *"La bataille du soliloque,"* 101.
[531] *Ibid.*, 103.
[532] Taylor-Batty, *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*, 14.
[533] Mooney, *A Tongue Not Mine*, 76.

> his prospects markedly, opening up the possibility of publication with one of the French-language reviews whose flourishing was a defining feature of French cultural life following Liberation.[534]

Despite these variant interpretative approaches to why it was Beckett adopted a bilingual writing praxis, Beckett's status as a bilingual writer is, by now, firmly established.[535] Beckett was not bilingual from birth however, but became bilingual through determined and sustained effort; a fact discussed previously in Chapter One. This facet of his bilingualism is noted by Montini—"Beckett n'est pas bilingue de naissance, il le devient grâce à un effort rationnel"[536]—with Beer similarly observing that "he [Beckett] made himself bilingual,"[537] both previously noted in Chapter One. Stein, in contrast, was born into a polylingual family, speaking German, French, and English, coming to English comparatively later that the preceding two. There is significant biographical evidence pointing towards the fact that Stein was polylingual from birth and carried many of the associated traits of such schooling through to her adult writing career.[538] Further still, it is without question that the emergent and

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[534] Stephen Stacey, "Translating for Sense: Samuel Beckett's writing in English, French and English," emphasis in original.
[535] See Cohn, "Samuel Beckett: Self-Translator," *PMLA* (76; Dec 1961), 613-21; Fitch, *Beckett and Babel*; Federman, "The Writer as Self-Translator," 7-16; Montini, *"La bataille du soliloque"*; Mooney, "Beckett in English and French," 196-208; Mooney, *A Tongue Not Mine*; Slote, "Continuing the End: Variation between Beckett's French and English Prose Works," 205-218; Slote, "Bilingual Beckett: Beyond the Linguistic Turn," 114-125, to name but these.
[536] Montini, *"La bataille du soliloque,"* 129.
[537] Beer, "Beckett's Bilingualism," 214.
[538] Beer makes an observation regarding critical attempts to fully comprehend the psychological motivations behind Beckett's bilingualism, one that is interesting in terms of its particular prevalence to Stein's own writings: "Bilingualism leads inescapably back to the author. It becomes visible only when the reader has some sense of 'Beckett,' even as a creation of the texts rather than a person of flesh and blood" (Beer, "Beckett's Bilingualism," 218). This critical reaction to Beckett's bilingual and dialectically complex writing can be paralleled with the unusual form of biographically inclined scholarly criticism of fictional texts found throughout Dydo's *Gertrude Stein: The Language that Rises*. In her introduction, Dydo openly acknowledges how, in the face of the semantic complexity of Stein's writings, she has sought to appropriate textual "elements that *can be read* biographically": "To provide context […] I have torn from the texts elements that can be read biographically" (Dydo, *Gertrude Stein: The Language That Rises*, 420; emphasis added).

most coherent early articulations of what were to become Beckett's signature aesthetics of language were not only made in relation to writing in a language other than English, but were *articulated in* a language other than English. Moreover, they were concerned with importing the de-familiarisation felt while working in these other languages into a unilingual scenario involving Beckett's first language, English, with a view to making this language similarly strange from itself.

In *Samuel Beckett's Library* Nixon and Van Hulle problematise the critical presumption that Beckett "read Mauthner first to come up with the idea of comparing Gertrude Stein and James Joyce's diverging writing methods to Nominalism and Realism"[539] by observing how, "six days before he wrote the letter to Kaun, he told Thomas MacGreevy that he was reading 'Schopenhauer on women.'"[540] This text, held as it is in the essay collection *Sämmtliche Werke*:

> is surrounded by essays on language and writing, books and reading, noise and silence. In particular chapter 25 ('Ueber Sprache und Worte,' only two chapters before the essay on women) is almost certain to have drawn the attention of [the] young writer.[541]

The potential for a lack-of-connection with Mauthner prior to Beckett's decision to place Stein and Joyce in counterpoint at the centre of Kaun 1937 and his famous "poetical statement on logoclasm"[542] is important, because, irrespective of the potential for a Schopenhauerian reading trace,[543] it further strengthens the extent of the connection Beckett establishes between nominalism, nominalistic

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[539] Nixon and Van Hulle. *Samuel Beckett's Library*, 145.
[540] *Ibid.*
[541] *Ibid.*
[542] *Ibid.*
[543] Nixon and Van Hulle's suggestion that Beckett "may not have needed to read Mauthner first" is made in the absence of definitive reading traces relating to the Schopenhauer's essay 'Ueber Sprache und Worte,' remains just that (*Ibid.*).

irony, and Stein. Furthermore, it shows Beckett (whether he was aware of the fact or not) turning to the naturally bilingual and polylingual writers like Stein or Fritz Mauthner and finding in their writing something he wished to emulate in his own; something that, in his case, could only be acquired through considerable effort.[544]

Nixon and Van Hulle's contention is particularly interesting when read in tandem with an insightful observation made by Knowlson in "Images of Beckett." Knowlson suggests that Beckett began to compose in French "not [...] out of a desire for greater clarity," but rather "to attain an art in which, referring to Gertrude Stein, the 'texture of language has become porous.'"[545] In introducing this quote from Knowlson, I am not seeking to mark Beckett's transition to composing in French as an event that was catalysed solely by his readings of Stein, but rather to suggest that Stein, and Stein's "logographs"[546] played an integral role in Beckett's evasion of the "grammar[s] and style[s]"[547] of the English language. In Beckett's adoption of an aesthetic praxis that sees him engage in acts of renarration akin if not identical in their technical execution to those found in Stein, he induces the very porosity Knowlson speaks of.

Cordingley and Montini situate "Beckett's bilingual writing" in "contrast with Joyce's multilingualism, which challenges and modifies 'standard' English by accommodating foreign idioms."[548] "[Joyce's] multilingual practices," they

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[544] This is a facet Taylor-Batty extrapolates when she suggests "Mauthner's radical linguistic scepticism might itself be related not only to his own complex linguistic heritage [...] but to the methods of language teaching to which he was subjected" (Taylor-Batty, *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*, 156.).
[545] Knowlson, *Images of Beckett*, 37.
[546] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 519.
[547] *Ibid.*, 518.
[548] Cordingley and Montini, "Genetic translation studies: An emergent discipline," *Linguistica Antverpiensia*, *New Series: Themes in Translation Studies*, *14*, 10.

assert “generate a liminal space between languages.”[549] Yet Stein's work also “challenges and modifies 'standard' English,'”[550] and it does so without the overt introduction of foreign idioms. While Beckett's move between English and French is obvious by virtue of the different nature of the languages, Stein manages to make her prose strange without adopting the polyglot style of Joyce or indeed the mature bilingual praxis of Beckett.

This fact is of particular relevance to the semantically and syntactically atypical modifications seen throughout *Watt*, a text Montini contends is of particular import within the bilingual *œuvre* as it is the first major Beckett text wherein “l'anglais et le français commencent à interagir”:[551]

> Cette interaction, où l'anglais annonce la version française et où le français complète le texte anglais, grâce à l'explicitation par l'autre langue de la technique sous-jacente aux choix de certains mors; est caractéristique de beaucoup de versions bilingues de Beckett.[552]

Mooney similarly classifies *Watt* as a “tenuous English which leans perceptibly and disconcertingly towards French.”[553] Beer refers to it as a text that marks “a point of extreme bilingual tension” but one that also “begins an exploration of English which continues, hidden and exposed, right through to *Worstward Ho*.”[554] As Beer rightly observes, Beckett's exploration of English, much like his exploration of French, continued through to the late writings and, as I am arguing, the pejorative processes identifiable in *Watt* have definite precursors in the “simplier”(*HTW*, 147) writings of Stein.

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[549] Cordingley and Montini, “Genetic translation studies: An emergent discipline,” 10.
[550] *Ibid.*
[551] Montini, *“La bataille du soliloque,”* 154.
[552] *Ibid.*, 160.
[553] Mooney, *A Tongue Not Mine*, 75.
[554] Beer, “Beckett’s Bilingualism,” 213.

Watt certainly contains what Montini classifies as "les germes du bilinguisme,"[555] not only in relation to the bilingual inter-texts outlined throughout her study, but in the form of a more lexically conservative understanding of bilingual writings as a writing that incorporates or combines more than one language. Montini's study focuses in particular on the evolution of the bilingual *œuvre* in relation to Beckett's development of the double-narrator trope:

> Sam et Watt [...] marquent le début de l'œuvre spéculaire: chaque livre aura alors son double original, deux versions do même récit dans deux langues différentes, mais aussi un narrateur «dédoublé» (qui narre et s'observe narrer).[556]

Montini classifies *Watt* as a bilingual Anglophone text because of its interactions with the French. But until the publication of the French in 1968 the text was available solely in English; a curious English, but English nonetheless. Aside from this, the fact remains that *Watt*, or the writing of *Watt*, represented a climacteric moment in Beckett's development towards the aesthetic schemata (or anti-schemata) he outlined throughout Kaun 1937. Mooney acknowledges the multi-dialectical nature of Beckett's English and sees Beckett "as a writer who comes to French with habits and linguistic impulses formed in English, or Hiberno-English."[557] Like Montini, Mooney sees *Watt* as "a form of farewell to English [...] which is characterised by the deformation of English away from its usual syntactical forms"[558] and further contends that *Watt* is "a text which itself

[555] Montini, *"La bataille du soliloque,"* 23.
[556] *Ibid.*, 128.
[557] Mooney, *A Tongue Not Mine*, 3.
[558] Mooney, "Beckett in English and French," 201.

reads like a work of faulty machine-generated translation."[559] Montini similarly suggests that the language of *Watt* is of interest from a bilingual perspective because it has been in some way translated by the character/ narrator "Sam" so as to make it understandable or intelligible for the reader:

> De même, Watt raconte une histoire, ensuite Sam traduit et trahit cette histoire; car en l'écrivant, il fait référence à une convention qui permet à nous lecteurs de lire et de «comprendre». Watt, en revanche, ne peut faire référence qu'à son système intérieur, système qui, privé du langage [...] se révèle tellement chaotique qu'il est incompréhensible aux autres.[560]

Though less concerned with the evolution of the Beckettian narrator, Mooney makes a similar connection, noting that

> What is said, or heard, or repeated, appears to need to be interpreted or translated as if from an alien source; speakers draw attention to their own foreignisms, linguistic oddities, and mispronunciations [...] deictically making language visible both *as* language and as *a language.*[561]

The critical contention then seems to be that *Watt* marks a definite stylistic progression away from the English language but one that is largely enacted through the English language. To this end, Montini later asserts "il [Sam] n'est plus simplement le narrateur du roman, il est aussi l'interprète, le traducteur de Watt et son *créateur*."[562]

This awareness that the resultant narrative would have been incomprehensible were it not for the interference (the translations) of a narrator-figure (in this instance, the presence and interference of Sam), is similarly present throughout certain of Stein's writings. This is the same role the

[559] Mooney, *A Tongue Not Mine*, 2.
[560] Montini, *"La bataille du soliloque,"* 143.
[561] Mooney, *A Tongue Not Mine*, 2-3; emphasis in original.
[562] Montini, *"La bataille du soliloque,"* 148; emphasis in original.

narrator “Alice B. Toklas” provides throughout *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, with Stein appropriating the voice of “Alice B. Toklas” as a means of producing work with a higher communicability rate than her previous outputs. In *Watt*, as Montini notes, we are provided with the first example of a Beckettian narrator narrating (translating, rewriting) the narrative of another so as to make their incomprehensible narrative that bit more comprehensible for the reader. Throughout many of Stein's texts are presented with passages equivalent in their esotericism to the Watt-narrative, albeit without the aide of Sam's narratorial translations, imperfect and half heard though they may be (*Watt*, 144). Thus, certain of Stein's more esoteric texts can be considered as displaying a narrative that is pre-renarration, pre-translation and without any aids provided in relation to comprehensibility.

Aside from such obvious instances of narratorial interference, in her other texts, unlike Beckett who we have already seen develops a particular type of narrating (and narrated) narrator, Stein steadfastly refuses to provide the semantic “keys” to unlock or make wholly unambiguous her writings. Commenting on her line “rose is a rose is a rose is a rose,” Stein is articulate in her awareness that her prose style does not accord to standard English dialect, and she appears committed to the obfuscation this engenders: “Now I don't want to put too much emphasis on that line, because it's just one line in a longer poem. [...] I'm no fool. I know that in daily life we don't go around saying '…is a…is a…is a….'”[563] Rather, she states, these peculiar syntactic patterns and atypical semantic connections are adopted out of a dissatisfaction with extant language, a language Stein feels to have lost “the excitingness [*sic*] of pure being” and now be

[563] Stein, quoted in “Editor’s foreword” to *Look At Me Now And Here I Am*, 7.

composed of "wornout [*sic*] [...] stale literary words."[564] Much like Beckett, these linguistic and syntactic manipulations are adopted so as to enact an attack on the representative capacity of language, discrediting the mimetic capacity of language by drawing consistent attention to language *as language*, as an arbitrary and ill-functioning representative medium.

Montini's detailed delineation of the various interactions between Beckett's English and French texts sees her forward a thesis regarding "la co-présence des deux langues dans chaque texte."[565] For Montini, the interactions between the two versions of a given text across the languages of English and French, or vice versa, the inter-textual vicissitudes she identifies between the English and French versions of each text is what is characteristically bilingual in Beckett. This is also the particular model of Beckettian bilingualism presented by Banfield, Mooney, Schneider, and Beer; with each of these stressing the metaphorical aptness of English as Beckett's "mother tongue."[566] Indeed, throughout the majority of interpretations of Beckett's bilingual *œuvre*, bilingual writing is presented as a scenario wherein "les deux langues qu'on peut mieux les déchiffrer."[567]

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[564] Stein, quoted in "Editor's foreword" to *Look At Me Now And Here I Am*, 7.
[565] Montini, *"La bataille du soliloque,"* 153.
[566] "there is a halt in Beckett's writing in his mother tongue" (Mooney, *A Tongue Not Mine*, 8); "Beckett has [...] exchanged a mother tongue for a foreign language"; "the inhibiting mother-tongue"(Mooney, "Beckett in English and French," 197; 201); "show Beckett seeking an audience in his dominant and mother tongue"(Beer, "Beckett's Bilingualism," 212); Scheiner uses the more neutral phrase "native tongue"(Scheiner, "Self-Translation," 370).
[567] Montini, *"La bataille du soliloque,"* 160. Beer similarly notes this effect, specifically in relation to the *Louis Lambert* intertext between *Malone Dies* and *Malone meurt*: "Only when the two texts are set side by side can this reference be found"(Beer, "Beckett's Bilingualism," 218). Schneider also observes that "Beckett's moves between English and French [...] are not unidirectional (from one to another) but bidirectional (back and forth)"(Scheiner, "Self-Translation," 370). Mooney observes "the existence of virtually all of his work in French and English versions [...] operates less upon a single movement of renunciation or ascesis than upon a career-long embrace of [...] self-translation [that] both doubles and abolishes the original by compromising its originality"; "The proximity, even the mutual infection, of translation and composition, is evident" (Mooney, "Beckett in English and French," 196; 203).

This understanding of bilingual writing or a bilingual poetics would be more accurately classified as bilingual inter-text as opposed to bilingual writing proper. In (or between) the texts that comprise Beckett's bilingual *œuvre*, a solution of sorts in the form of a satisfactory semantic description is, if not provided by means of inter-text between the versions, then at least gestured towards by some aspect of the inter-textual trafficking between the two texts (between the English or the French); what Banfield conservatively identifies as "cross-lingual connections."[568] As Slote puts it in "Continuing the End: Variation between Beckett's French and English Prose Works,"[569] "rather than exist in either the English and/or French versions, Beckett's texts exist *between* the French and English versions."[570] Even if, as Mooney observes, this space is a "quasi-Proustian textual flickering between widely divergent moments in time."[571] As such, this sees an author-specific variety of bilingual inter-text wherein the inter-text is confined to only two texts,[572] or two texts that are versions of each other. It can be considered a minimal or greatly restricted variant of the "monolingual polyglot"[573] writings Montini classifies as characteristic of Beckett's pre-1937 work. Rather than collate inter-textual, polylingual references within the confines of a single text (as Beckett does throughout *Dream*, for example), specific and nuanced inter-textual references

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[568] Beer, "Beckett's Bilingualism," 218.
[569] Slote, "Continuing the End: Variation between Beckett's French and English Prose Works," 205-218.
[570] Slote, "Continuing the End: Variation between Beckett's French and English Prose Works," 205; emphasis in original.
[571] Mooney, "Beckett in English and French," 199.
[572] This is an author-specific simplification of the intra- and inter-textual process, one that, for the purpose of this study, excluded the manifold other intertextual or "new cultural field" references Schneider notes Beckett encodes into each version "so that it may resonate for the new reader"; what she later refers to as "Beckett's practice of cultural transposition" (Scheiner, "Self-Translation," 374-5; 377).
[573] Montini, *"La bataille du soliloque,"* 33.

are codified between two texts that are versions of each other in two different languages; with the polylingual references themselves largely confined to two (bi-) languages (lingua) that constitute the authors first and second languages. These intra-textual bilingual interactions are spread between the two versions, creating a complex, but nonetheless largely traceable bilingual pairing.[574]

No such inter- or intra-textual pairings or solutions are proffered by Stein's writings. Just as her logographs in *Tender Buttons* and elsewhere refuse to provide a clear passage of semantic reconciliation between term and description, her writing throughout texts such as *The Making of Americans* and *How To Write* inhibit even the most determined efforts to "make sense" of her prose. In doing so, Stein denies the reader access to the explanations behind the esoteric and atypical semantics and syntaxes that are infused throughout the regular English prose of her writings. While not conducted in a bilingual English of the sort proposed by Montini in her categorisation of Beckett's *Watt* as a bilingual Anglophonic text, Stein rather presents a version of English that incorporates non-standard syntactic patterns, phrasal formulations, and semantic associations. A poly- or mixed-dialectical English wherein the atypical semantic connections established between certain words remain particular to the author; in short, an author-specific idiolect that merges standard English with idiolectic phraseology and semantic connections.

This primarily involves the use and manipulation of a single (mono-) language (lingua), but is nevertheless distinct from Montini's "monolongual polyglottism" because it:

[574] *The Beckett Digital Manuscript Project* is a particularly valuable and innovative platform for the study of these bilingual intra- or cross-textual pairings.

i) involves a form of code-switching that is dialectical and esoteric in that the alternate semantic terms are neither codified nor consistent.

ii) involves manipulations that are syntactically atypical in standard English.

That which is incorporated into the writings to make the language strange from itself comes in the form of the uniquely Steinian syntactic aberrations that bring about semantically atypical word associations; or alternatively, semantic aberrations that hint at or instigate syntactic dysfunction that cannot be rectified or made determinate. These associations are not relayed through the incorporation of terms that can be identified as belonging to a non-English lexicon, nor through the pairing of that text with an alternate, rewritten or translated text in an other language as in the case of Beckett's bilingual *œuvre*.

Tender Buttons saw Stein produce what Joshua Schuster refers to as "an extraordinary new grammar"[575]; one that was largely achieved on a semantic, lexical, and orthographic level. Prior to this *The Making of Americans* saw Stein not only advance the hybridised orthographies discussed previously, but develop an equally extraordinary new syntax. The inter-clausal syntactic manipulations employed by the authors in texts such as *Watt* and *The Making of Americans* saw them similarly attempt to subvert normative English grammars, breaking the English language up in arbitrary ways. Instances of semantic sense or certitude last roughly for the period of a clause or phrase before a syntactic recalibration sees these values deferred or modified, or translated in phrase by phrase or clausal semantic recalibrations. This was an aesthetic Stein pursued in a

[575] Joshua Schuster, "The making of 'Tender Buttons':Gertrude Stein's subjects, objects, and the illegible," *Jacket 2* (April 21, 2011).

unilingual format but one that was multi-dialectical and, to borrow Montini's terminology, effectively saw Stein writing in an author-specific bilingual English. While Beckett's bilingual English as delineated by Montini involves the gradual introduction of Francophone assonances into the English prose, Beckett's writing through *Watt* also sees him employ techniques identical to those of Stein. That Stein played a key role in facilitating what ultimately became a transition away from the English language should, by now, be manifestly evident. Beckett identified Stein's logography as a necessary stage "on the road towards this, for me, very desirable literature of the non-word."[576] For Beckett, this nominal logography ultimately evolved beyond a uni- or mono-lingual scenario with the splitting of each of his works across two languages, creating two versions of every "well-built phrase"(*M*, 29) and inducing inter-textual porosities of the kind Stein was content to facilitate solely within the English language.

Just as in Stein's "rose is a rose is a rose is a rose," linguistic arbitrariness is similarly highlighted throughout *Watt*, as Montini makes explicit: "L'écriture de *Watt* vise plutôt à mettre à nu l'impossibilité d'une correspondance entre mots et choses et l'absurdité d'utiliser le langue comme s'il représentait quelque chose de réel."[577] Montini's argument here accords with one of the two main techniques I have forwarded as being an implicit aspect of both authors' renarrative styles, namely the use of syntax to highlight semantic arbitrariness. Montini classifies Watt as "le deuxième roman du *bilinguisme à dominance anglophone*, que le mécanisme frayant le chemin vers le «dévoilement du langue» (souvenons-nous de la lettre à Axel Kaun)."[578] Further still, she observes "que la

[576] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 520.
[577] Montini, *"La bataille du soliloque,"* 150.
[578] *Ibid.*, 96; emphasis in original.

langue anglaise est portée à l'extrême et marque pour cela un point de non retour."[579]

Aside from a curious reference to an "asylum," Mooney puts it nicely when she observes that "The novel [*Watt*] moves between the poles of the intricately reversed, cryptic idiolect Watt speaks in the asylum, and which the narrator, Sam, has to decipher or translate, and, on the other hand, a nostalgia for 'the old words, the old credentials.'"[580] It could be said that Watt's speech throughout his exchanges with Sam is logographic, and logographic in a manner similar to that of Stein's *Tender Button*, presenting words in other words, with a clear key or route to making the non-sensical sensical, a route Stein does not provide for her readers. Indeed, the syntactic arrangements of the passages throughout the Watt/ Sam exchange do not accord with standard English word order and Ackerley consistently refers to these passages as ones that "might"[581] be translated/ translatable; they are, in other words, English language logographs or exercises in logography.

If 1937 marked the turning point for Beckett away from the polyglot writings of Joyce and towards a bilingual Anglophone writing, then *Watt* sees Beckett address the nominalistic irony he references in Kaun 1937 and move beyond it, precisely through the development of the narrator Montini identifies as being an integral facet of the Sam/ Watt interchange. I propose that it was in these specific passages of *Watt* that Beckett took on and transcended the nominalistic irony or logography he saw as a facet, (but an integral facet

[579] Montini, *"La bataille du soliloque,"* 97.
[580] Mooney, "Beckett in English and French," 201.
[581] In the case of each of these lexically convoluted passages, Ackerley usefully elucidates the passage with the observation that "a 'translation' might read"(Ackerley, *Obscure Locks, Simple* Keys, 156).

nonetheless) in his progression towards a "literature of the non-word."[582] Stein's logographs, together with her lengthy and relentless renarrations, ultimately facilitated Beckett in the crafting of an aesthetics that transcended the limitations posed by such grammar bound nominally-focused practises.

Beckett's more orthodox bilingualism serves the same purpose as Stein's partly esoteric multi-dialectical writing in that it similarly "denies the reader access to any unified or originary surface of interpretation, consciousness, or meaning."[583] Ultimately, both achieve what Mooney describes as "the blurring of boundaries by the existence of two imperfectly matched versions of most texts, among which the reader can find no clear sense of the definitive or authoritative, [an effect that] renders the idea of the individual work oddly porous."[584] Whereas Beckett's work is split between two texts, Stein's remains within the single body; keeping core aspects of the semantic assonances from her readers. Again, as observed in Chapter 2, Stein's work can be considered "no symbols where none intended"(*Watt*, 223) put to work in the very body of a prose text.

[582] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 520.
[583] Mooney, "Beckett in English and French," 199.
[584] *Ibid.*, 197.

Conclusion

Say it simply. [...] Say it simplier (*HTW*, 147).

Not till nohow worse missay say worse missaid (*WWH*, 97).

What emerges throughout the course of this comparative study is the validity of positing Stein as a key influence on Beckett's developing aesthetics of language throughout the 1930s; of Stein as an integral stylistic touchstone against whom we can situate Beckett's aesthetics and in particular, the emergence of a bilingual English creative praxis that made use of the technique of renarration as a deliberate method for inducing semantic and syntactic inconsistencies, indeterminacies, and—metaphorically speaking—*tears* in the veil or fabric of English language.[585] This situates Beckett's nascent bilingual praxis and his "literature of the non-word"[586] within a wider continuum of influence and stylistic comparability than his writings have thus far been exposed to. It repositions Stein as a central figure in the development of Beckett's aesthetics of language in particular and it situates Beckett and Stein as two figures whose aesthetics and creative praxis display remarkable confluences that reward further study. This redresses the critical perception of Stein as marginal or somewhat isolated figure whose work progressed "by accident"[587]—a major figure in literary modernism whose esoteric writings have left many critics and readers at a loss in terms of establishing relatable connections (other than coterie driven connections) to the other key figures in the European modernist scene.

[585] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters 1,* 518-19.
[586] *Ibid.,* 520.
[587] *Ibid.,* 519.

This thesis argues that both authors' explorations of the problems of language and their solutions to these problems as evident in their fictional writings, are remarkably coherent and compatible; more so than any other writer either figure has been associated with in previous studies, rendering their aesthetics confluential. The thesis presents Stein as a key influential figure on the aesthetics of Beckett, whose early writings have continually been presented through the lens of Joyce. That Beckett is making use of a deliberate renarrative technique involving grammatical manipulations that was similarly employed by Stein has been shown to be evident. This thesis has made clear that both authors employ deviant renarrations involving the minutiae of grammar to undo semantic stability both on a clausal level and on a larger scale. In addition to their shared adoption of semantic strategies of renarration that induce indeterminacy, antonymous and conflicting meanings, and deferred or asymptotic semantic certitude, their manipulations of syntax have similarly been revealed to play a major role in the displacing of semantic certainty in the English language. Stein has been shown to be particularly effective at enabling such nuanced instances of grammatically incorrect writings. This is a literary style that, while evident throughout certain of his early-to-mid period works (such as *Watt*), Beckett himself did not embrace outright until the "best worse"(*WWH*, 103) of *Worstward Ho*.

Throughout this thesis the technique of renarration has been shown to display a number of recurrent characteristics when employed by both authors to facilitate acts of sabotage against the English grammar system. Stability of semantic meaning in one aspect of the statement or clause enables the introduction of semantic indeterminacy in the other. To enable semantic

modification at least one aspect of the surrounding clause needs to retain stability as an anchoring device so that the reader can identify the grammatical indiscretion and register its effect on the narrative. Stein's use of conspicuous errors in particular relies on series of near-identical repetitions and passages containing "correct" terms, or "correctly spelled" terms, if nothing else; these provide the counterpoint against which the deviations from standard spelling and semantic usage set themselves apart. Many of the examples discussed throughout this thesis merit being read with Stein's concept of "naive realism"(*MOA*, 445), as articulated throughout *The Making of Americans*, in mind. Similarly, her statement from *How To Write* that "literalness is not deceptive it destroys similarity"(*HTW*, 70) is particularly pertinent to the technique of renarration and can be seen throughout both their engagements with the major and minor grammar modifiers; having precisely the effect Stein observes in the preceding statement in that literal renarration serves to "destroy" the term's capacity to signify the otherwise usually semantically nuanced items they signify. Harnessing these instances of excessive literalness—"naive realism"(*MOA*, 445)—through repetition with nuanced modifications, is particularly effective in relation to lexical units that are themselves primarily (if not exclusively) vehicles for conveying non-descriptive lexical concepts; concepts or relations that exist only within the context of a literal linguistic construct, terms that function solely within the realm of grammar for whom there is no set, concrete counterpart.

This thesis has demonstrated that the links between Beckett and Stein go beyond abstract stylistics, such as those previously explored by Perloff and Porter Abbott. Rather, this comparability can be delineated in an empirical, qualitative manner, as well as through stylistic comparatives. This enables the

positioning of Beckett's work and aesthetics alongside that of a writer whose work is stylistically proximate to Beckett's own, a writer whose work demonstrates similar aesthetic interests, and linguistic concerns. Indeed, while not altogether identical in terms of their practical output, their respective aesthetics of language appear, at times, to be almost identical in terms of the theoretical concepts they engage with. In the context of this comparative study, Stein emerges as a writer whose work epitomises the subversions of "grammar and style"[588] Beckett was looking to develop in his own work as declared in Kaun 1937. Furthermore, just as Beckett's own writings have been classified by scholars such as Nixon as being one text, "a continuous 'work in progress', a writing process that is never complete,"[589] Stein's work charts a similarly progressive, similarly incomplete, concentrated series of interconnected experiments from her earliest works through to the later pieces. Like Beckett, her writings demonstrate what Perloff observes as "the mathematical neatness of the permutative process."[590]

By centralising attention on the primary texts by both authors and conducting a study that compared Beckett and Stein's writings on a micro-stylistic level—that is, using the components of language systems to ground and structure the comparative—this thesis has argued for the comparability of both authors' works by conducting a study of their work through the language systems they employ across the entirety of their careers—presenting an alternative, vital (and much neglected) methodology for assessing the comparability of literary writing in general, and of these two authors in

[588] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters 1,* 519.
[589] Nixon, *Samuel Beckett's German Diaries*, 35.
[590] Perloff, *21st-Century Modernisms*, 59.

particular. This micro-stylistic component is key to redressing extant negative critical readings on Stein's esoteric writings (indeed, it demonstrates the short-sightedness inherent in the very notion of presenting Stein as an "esoteric" writer). The result is a stylistic and aesthetic overlap so markedly extensive and a body of work so compatible that the connection between Beckett and Stein proves to be more than a mere convenient pairing; rather, it situates Stein as a major confluential figure against which the aesthetics of Beckett can be better understood and situated; a figure whose writings are, as Beckett himself states in Kaun 1937, perhaps the closest contemporary counterpart to the aesthetics of language Beckett envisioned for himself throughout the 1930s and later realised in his mature writings.

This thesis has introduced a major authorial connection into the field of Beckett studies in the form of Stein's influence on Beckett's aesthetics, and their role as confluential figures within literary modernism. This now-established connection will benefit from further research that expands its remit to include both writers' dramatic works—many of Stein's experiments with dramatic form merit immediate comparison with Beckett's later dramatic works—and their shared interest in the genre of film and cinema—Stein's "Film: Deux Soeurs Qui ne Sont Pas Soeurs," published in *Revue Européene* 1930[591] demonstrates that Stein was experimenting with the medium, and doing so in French, at roughly the same time Beckett would have had significant access to the Paris-based periodicals and magazines through which he likely first encountered her writings. Indeed it is even possible that Beckett's first encounter with Stein's work occurred in French, be that in the form of a French composition Stein

[591] Wilson, *Gertrude Stein: A Bibliography*, 131.

herself authored (such as "Film," referenced above) or in the form of a translation, an altogether exciting prospect.[592] In addition, while my publications elsewhere have introduced the comparable nature of Beckett and Stein's engagement with the visual arts,[593] further research is sorely needed in this particular area. Whereas this thesis has been resolutely language-focused, such research would provide welcome historical context for the aesthetic similitude this thesis has argued exists between Beckett and Stein, as well as exploring the role the visual arts played in their respective linguistically atypical aesthetics.

This thesis has introduced an alternative, pragmatic methodology for the study of literary influence and stylistic confluence, what they are, and how they can manifest and be delineated; both in a writer's developing aesthetics, and in their mature styles. The technique of renarration, as it has been delineated throughout this thesis, can also be adapted and used as a model for other comparative confluential studies, as has recently been the case with its technically proximate predecessor denarration.[594] This pragmatic comparative model may be adapted for further studies, in the form of a sorely needed comparative study of Joyce and Stein's divergent aesthetic praxes, for example; such a study would provide some much needed specificity in the form of concrete examples of their long-established divergent styles. In addition, I strongly suspect it has the potential to reveal a significant amount of similitude between the writers. It also has the potential to be useful in the comparative study of other writers similarly influenced by Stein's writings, such as William

[592] See Wilson, *Gertrude Stein: A Bibliography*, 146-51 for details of Stein's book-length and journal publications in French.
[593] See Nugent-Folan, "Personal Apperception: Samuel Beckett, Gertrude Stein, and Paul Cézanne's *La Montagne Saint Victoire*," 87-102
[594] See Van Hulle, *Modern Manuscripts*.

Carlos Williams. Indeed, a full-scale study of the renarrative poetics of modern and contemporary American writers would provide an illuminating insight into what seems to be a particularly manifest characteristic of American poetics, from the epic and far-reaching renarrations discernible throughout Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself" through to the understated and nuanced renarrative poetics of observation and revision seen throughout the works (and writing practices) of Elizabeth Bishop or the contemporary recursive poetics of Jorie Graham. This thesis has attempted to reinvigorate Stein studies by working against the isolationist tendencies that have seen her cordoned off from certain branches of her contemporaries. In doing so, the thesis has made clear the need for a thorough reassessment of Stein's relationship with the English (and other) languages and the impact of her polylingual upbringing on her literary writings.

Stein is more liberal in her execution of this kind of semantically dense renarrative writing than Beckett, whose writings—at least up until *Worstward Ho*—tend to make relative semantic sense despite having undergone severe manipulations or syntactic rearrangements. Stein's ambivalence to the need for her writings to make sense results in a liberal application of often extreme grammatical distortions that render her sentences very difficult to understand semantically. This is perhaps a major factor in the marginalisation of her *œuvre* from a comparative perspective, particularly in relation to how her writings fit into Beckett's aesthetic credo as explained throughout Kaun 1937; how their aesthetics are or can be said to be confluential. One necessity to the recognition of "abuse" apropos language is a capacity on the part of the reader to set the writing in contrast against "normal" or "standardised" semantic contexts. In Beckett, by and large, prior to entering into renarrations that enact modifications

that could be considered "abusive," the preceding and subsequent non-renarrated passages are relatively typical and consistent semantically. This is not always the case in Stein who, as I have stated, was less concerned with semantic consistencies; favouring instead a relentless assault against coherency, semantic surety, and stability across the grammars of the English language. In neglecting to attend to the syntactic coherency of the sentence unit in favour of the "logographs"[595] Beckett identifies in Kaun 1937 Stein develops an idiosyncratic, changeable, and author-specific idiolect that is exceedingly difficult, but as this thesis has made clear, not impossible to parse. What further links Beckett and Stein, is that their writings (irrespective, in Beckett's case, of whether these writings are conducted in English or in French) both focus on encounters that, much like the inter- or poly-lingual writings of their contemporaries, are characterised by what Taylor-Batty refers to as "misunderstanding, incomplete comprehension and distortion."[596]

Beckett and Stein also emerge as being comparable and confluential because they are writers who made, what Brian Fitch determines in the case of Beckett, "the choice of a second acquired language over a first, native language."[597] But moreover, the thesis also demonstrates the insightful nature of Bruno Clément's comment in his introduction to Montini's *La bataille du soliloque* that while Montini's work on Beckett's bilingualism is the first of its kind, "cette poétique ne se réduit pas à lui."[598] I propose that Stein represents just such another writer whose work operated by means of a poetics of bilingualism. In contrast with Beckett, however, this bilingual methodology was

[595] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters 1*, 519.
[596] Taylor-Batty, *Multilingualism in Modernist Fiction*, 39.
[597] Fitch, *Beckett and Babel*, 8.
[598] Clément, "Logique du bilinguisme" in Montini *"La bataille du soliloque*," 15.

pervasive throughout her career from early pieces through to the later works, and, in further contrast with Beckett, her work remained predominantly of the kind Montini categorises as bilingually Anglophonic.[599] The specificities of this Anglophone bilingualism vary between the two authors for as mentioned earlier, this study is primarily a study of two aesthetically compatible idiolects, but one that nevertheless situates Stein as a direct and immediate predecessor to the poetics of bilingualism—Anglophonic or otherwise—Beckett develops from *Murphy* through to the complex lexical renarrations of *Watt*.

Stein's capacity to underscore the grammars of the English language clearly caught Beckett's attention, explaining her incorporation into Kaun 1937. In adopting and adapting the strategic and systematic techniques of semantic and syntactic estrangement seen throughout Stein's writings, Beckett was ultimately able to transcend the limitations of the English "grammar and style"[600] that impeded his aesthetic development throughout the 1930s; an act that was an integral factor in the development of his bilingual *œuvre*. Whereas Joyce, and Joyce's writing in the *Wake*, can be considered an exemplary model of Montini's "monolingual polyglot"[601] writing, Stein's work exists in stark stylistic opposition to this model. Resolutely Anglophonic, resolutely monolingual, Stein nevertheless seemed to consider English *her* language, with the possessive determiner here being of pivotal importance:

> It does not make any difference to me what language I hear, I don't hear a language, I hear tones of voice and rhythms, but with my eyes I see words and sentences and there is for me only one language and that is english [*sic*]. One of the things that I have liked all these years [spent living in

[599] Montini, *"La bataille du soliloque,"* 96; emphasis in original.
[600] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters 1*, 518.
[601] Montini, *"La bataille du soliloque,"* 33.

> Paris] is to be surrounded by people who know no english [*sic*]. It has left me more intensely alone with my eyes and my english [*sic*]. I do not know if it would have been possible to have english [*sic*] be so all in all to me otherwise. [...] I like living with so very many people and being all alone with english [*sic*] and myself (*AABT*, 77-8).

Montini underlines the importance of *Watt* as "le premier roman écrit entièrement en France,"[602] written in both geographic and linguistic exile: "Le dernier roman en anglais de Beckett représente d'abord la coupure du cordon au sens littéral et métaphorique, précède a séparation de la langue maternelle."[603] Stein too seems to have attached particular import to this similar geographic and linguistic estrangement in terms of the development of her own idiolectic variant of standard English. Indeed, Stein says as much in the above excerpt when she states "I do not know if it would have been possible to have english [*sic*] be so all in all to me otherwise"(*AABT*, 78). This geographic and linguistic exile facilitated her capacity to think of the English language as belonging "all in all to me"(*AABT*, 78), to develop a unique bilingual idiolect, and in the process to transcend the habits of English "grammar and style"[604] that were so pertinent a problem to Beckett in and around the year 1937.

Given Stein's reluctance to deviate from the particular dialect of "english [*sic*]"(*AABT*, 78) she crafted, this thesis has compared her English/english writings solely with Beckett's English language prose texts. This is not to say that Stein becomes of less relevance to Beckett's writings following the completion of *Watt*. As the preceding chapters of this thesis have made clear, their comparability on a stylistic level remains consistent through to Beckett's later

[602] Montini, *"La bataille du soliloque,"* 101.
[603] *Ibid.*, 103.
[604] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters 1,* 518.

writings. Rather, Stein's work served as an integral aesthetic pivot for Beckett, and that this process was arguably serialised or dramatised lexically throughout the novel *Watt*. Specifically, this can be seen in the text's exploration of the particulars of Watt's relationship with the English language, and in his unique and consistently changing idiolect. Indeed, like Stein, Watt's lexical output seems to vary on an almost passage by passage level. Throughout *Tender Buttons*, for example, the prose pieces that accompany a quadruple repetition of the noun "Chicken" each contain vastly different lexical content:

> Chicken
> Pheasant and chicken, chicken is a peculiar third.
>
> Chicken
> Alas a dirty word, alas a dirty third alas a dirty third, alas a dirty bird.
>
> Chicken
> Alas a doubt in case of more go to say what it is cress. What is it. Mean. Potatoe [*sic*]. Loaves.
>
> Chicken
> Stick stick call then, stick stick sticking, sticking with a chicken. sticking in a extra [*sic*] succession, sticking in (*TB*, 54-5).

This successively changing content is no different to Watt's paragraph by paragraph altering of the lexical arrangement of his speech output, or indeed from Sam's concordantly changing translations of Watt's ever-changing narratives:

> *Day of most, night of part, Knott with now. Now till up, little seen sooh, little heard so oh. Night till morning frim. Heard I this, saw I this then what. Thing quiet, dim. Ears, eyes, failing now also. Hush in, mist in, moved I so.* [...]

> *Ot bro, lap rulb, krad klub. Ot murd, wol fup, wol fup. Ot nicks, sorg sam, sorg sam. Ot lems, lats lems, lats lems. Ot gnut, trat stews, trat stews* [*sic*] (*Watt*, 142-43; emphasis in original).

They are both then figures that, like the "crazy mathematician"[605] of Kaun 1937, prioritise process over result, figures from whom the interacting characters or readers (in the case of Stein) can learn, but only through selective appropriation and translation. The influential affect between Stein and Beckett, as such, operated rather like one of Beckett's own self-translations or the exchange of nonsense for sense that occurs between Watt and Sam throughout the passages quoted above, with Beckett taking Stein's crazed logography, and adapting it to his own more conservative—but nonetheless still subversive—and semantically coherent setting. This setting was subsequently made fundamentally and materialistically indeterminate by Beckett's subsequent decision to split each text between two languages, creating versions of each narrative, and of each word within each narrative; insoluble logographs across and between two languages.

[605] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters 1*, 520.

Appendix

1. Kaun 1937:

> It is indeed getting more and more difficult, even pointless, for me to write in formal English. And more and more my language appears to me like a veil which one has to tear apart in order to get to those things (or the nothingness) lying behind it. Grammar and style! To me they seem to have become […] irrelevant […]. Since we cannot dismiss it all at once, at least we do not want to leave anything undone that may contribute to its disrepute. To drill one hole after another into it until that which lurks behind, be it something or nothing, starts seeping through– I cannot imagine a higher goal for today's writer.
>
> Or is literature alone to be left behind on that old, foul road long ago abandoned by music and painting? Is there something paralysingly sacred contained within the unnature of the word that does not belong to the elements of the other arts? Is there any reason why that terrifyingly arbitrary materiality of the word surface should not be dissolved, as for example the sound surface of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony is devoured by huge black pauses, so that for pages on end we cannot perceive it as other than a dizzying path of sounds connecting unfathomable chasms of silence? […]
>
> At first, it can only be a matter of somehow inventing a method of verbally demonstrating this scornful attitude vis-a-vis the word. […]
>
> In my opinion, the most recent work of Joyce has nothing at all to do with such programme. There it seems much more a matter of an apotheosis of the word. […]
>
> Perhaps Gertrude Stein's Logographs come closer to what I mean. The fabric of the language has at least become porous, if regrettably only quite by accident and as a consequence of a procedure somewhat akin to the technique of Feininger. The unhappy lady (is she still alive?) is undoubtedly still in love with her vehicle, if only, as a mathematician is with his numbers; for him the solution of the problem is of very secondary interest, yes, as the death of numbers, it must seem to him indeed dreadful.
>
> To connect this method with that of Joyce, as is fashionable, appears to me as ludicrous as the attempt, as yet unknown to me, to compare Nominalism (in the sense of the Scholastics) with Realism. On the road towards this, for me, very desirable literature of the non-word, some form of nominalistic irony can of course be a necessary phase. However it does not suffice if the game loses some of its sacred solemnity. Let it cease altogether! Let's do as the crazy mathematician who used to apply a new principle of measurement at each step of the calculation. Word-storming in the name of beauty. […]
>
> In the meantime I am doing nothing. Only from time to time do I have the consolation, as now, of being allowed to violate a foreign language as involuntarily as, with knowledge and intention, I would like to do against my own language, and […] shall do.[606]

[606] SB to AK, 9 July 1937, Beckett, *Letters Volume 1*, 518-20.

2. “Classification des différentes figures de répétition relevées par la rhétorique.”[607]

Phonemes	Words	Type of Constr. +No. of syllables	Idem + Phonemes	Semantic Content	Recall	+ Convergence
Sound relation only: – same phonemes inside or at beginning – similar inflexions – similar terminations – assonance – rhyme – broad homophony – total homophony	With modification of semantic content: –play on polysemy –play on proper sense and 1 figurative sense –play on homonym (pseudo-repetition of the same term	– similar – identical	—	– synonym – epanalepsis – pleonasm – tautology	—	
Sonic and semantic relations: – repetition of a term + variation/ inflexion – terms with the same root	Without modification of semantic content: • criteria= no. of elements – one single word – several words • criteria= place – immediate contact, ...XX... – interrupted contact, ...X...X... – interrupted contact, ...X...X... + convergence – ...X/X... – extension of previous, ...X/X...Y/Y...Z/ etc. – X...X – X.../X... – X.../X... + convergence – repetition with disassociation, XY.../X.../Y.../ – repetition, in the middle, of the begining – repetition, at the end, of the middle – repetition of the middle – mixture – repetition of the early and middle – repetition by refrain – repetitive distribution • criteria= modality – repetition in the same order – repetition of an order with/ without this meaning – • criteria= effects – • criteria= cause – • criteria= cause+ place – • criteria= stylistic factors+ effects					

[607] Frédéric, *La répétition: Étude linguistique et rhétorique*, 74.

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