THE CRITICAL FIGURE:

NEGATIVITY IN SELECTED WORKS

BY PROUST, JOYCE AND BECKETT

WD Watson

THE CRITICAL FIGURE:

NEGATIVITY IN SELECTED WORKS

BY PROUST, JOYCE AND BECKETT

William David Watson, B.A. Hons

Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Magister Artium in English at the Potchefstroomse Universiteit vir Christelike Hoër Onderwys.

Supervisor: Prof AM De Lange

Co-Supervisor: Prof HM Viljoen

POTCHEFSTROOM

1999

Contents

Opsomming

Hierdie verhandeling bied 'n interpretasie van die verskillende vorms van negatiwiteit in die modernistiese werk wat verstaan kan word in terme van dit wat nie gesê is nie, nie gesê kan word nie, of enige ander wyse waarmee die werk weier om affirmatiewe proposisies te gee aangaande die wêreld wat beskryf word. Dit ondersoek hierdie negatiwiteit as beide 'n representasie van dit wat nie gerepresenteer kan word nie, en as 'n aktiewe negatiwiteit, of negering, wat deelneem in die vernietiging van die figure van die werk. Hierdie funksie van negatiwiteit, soos geanaliseer in Marcel Proust se *Remembrance of Things Past* (1913-1927), James Joyce se *Ulysses* (1922) en *Krapp's Last Tape* (1959) deur Samuel Beckett, is dan om die representasies van die werk te herskryf. Negatiwiteit word dan ook hier verstaan as 'n kondisionering en transformering van elemente reeds teenwoordig is in die literêre werk, wat dan lei na ambivalente en problematiese representasies in die werk. Binne hierdie terme kan negatiwiteit ook verstaan word as 'n herskrywing van die werk se representasies.

Die analises van Proust, Joyce en Beckett wentel om hierdie interpretasie van die funksie van negatiwiteit - soos uiteengesit in die inleiding. In die analise van Proust se werk, in "The Unmaking of Proust: Negation and Errors in *Remembrance of Things Past*", word hierdie vorm van negatiwiteit gesitueer in relasie tot Proust se hantering van epistemologiese vraagstukke, en mimetiese verwysings na die werklikheid in sy werk. Die analise van Joyce se werk, in "The Wandering of Language in James Joyce's *Ulysses*" bespreek sy hantering van taal en die oorsprong van taal as gekarakteriseer deur 'n negering wat beide sy taal bemoeilik sowel as poog om die oorsprong van hierdie taal te negeer. Die voorfinale hoofstuk bevat 'n analise van Beckett se werk in "Beckett, Proust and the End of Literature", en daar word getoon dat negatiwiteit kondisioneer beide Beckett se resepsie van Proust se invloed, en sy drama se poging om die einde van letterkunde te suggereer. Ten slotte word daar in die verhandeling teruggekeer na die idee dat negatiwiteit 'n vorm van herskrywing is, en word daar kortliks aangedui dat funksie van negatiwiteit in hierdie werke as 'n vorm van ontdekking verstaan kan word.

[**Sleutelterme**: Marcel Proust, James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, *Remembrance of Things Past*, *Ulysses*, *Krapp's Last Tape*", negatiwiteit, negering, affirmasie, herskrywing, ontdekking.]

Summary

This dissertation represents an interpretation of the different forms of negativity in the modernist work that can be understood in terms of that which is unsaid, unsayable, or any other means of refusing to give an affirmative proposition regarding the world the work describes. It explores this negativity as both a representation of that which cannot be represented, and as an operational negativity, or negation, that takes part in the unmaking of the work's figures. The function of this negativity, as interpreted in Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* (1913-1927), James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and *Krapp's Last Tape* (1959) by Samuel Beckett, is to rewrite the representations of the work. Negativity is then also understood as a transformation and conditioning of elements already present in the literary work, that lead to ambivalent and problematic representations in the work. In this sense, negativity can be understood as a form of rewriting of the work's representations.

The interpretations of the works of Proust, Joyce and Beckett are guided by this understanding, as given in the introduction, of negativity. In the analysis of Proust's novel, in "The Unmaking of Proust: Negation and Errors in *Remembrance of Things Past*", this form of negativity is situated in relation to Proust's handling of epistemological questions and mimetic references to reality in his work. The analysis of Joyce's work in "The Wandering of Language in James Joyce's *Ulysses*" discusses his treatment of language and the origins of language as being characterized by a negation that increases the difficulty of the language, and attempts to negate its origins. Finally, in the analysis of Beckett's "Krapp's Last Tape", in "Beckett, Proust, and the End of Literature", it is shown that negativity conditions both the reception of the influence of Proust by Beckett, and the play's attempt to suggest the end of writing. In conclusion the dissertation returns to the idea of negativity as a form of rewriting, and briefly indicates that the function of negativity in these novels can be understood as a form of invention.

[**Key Terms**: Marcel Proust, James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, *Remembrance of Things Past, Ulysses, Krapp's Last Tape*, negativity, negation, affirmation, rewriting, invention.]

Acknowledgements

Financial assistance afforded by the Human Science Research Council (National Research Foundation), and by the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (Focus Area 04), is hereby gartefully acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions reached in this study are those of the author and should not be ascribed to either the Human Science Research Council, or to the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education.

*

Special thanks to Prof. A.M. de Lange and Prof. H.M. Viljoen for their guidance and patience (even when it was not deserved).

*

Thanks to the staff of the Ferdinand Postma Library for their help (and, sometimes, patience).

*

A very special thanks to my mother, without whom this would not have been possible, and to Carine, who saw me through to the end. This dissertation is dedicated to them.

***

Notes on the Text

1 Primary Works

The publication history of many modernist works is marked by errors and uncertainties. As a result several versions of many of these works - of which, in a few instances, the original version is no longer available – have been in circulation for the last few decades. Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* (1913-1927) and James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) are no exceptions to this situation. The versions used in this dissertation are the following: all references to Proust's work refer to the translation of the corrected French Pléiade editions of 1954 by C.K. Scott Moncrief and Andreas Mayor (that, in turn, also corrects the translation of this work by Terence Kilmartin) that was published in 1982. All references to *Ulysses* refer to the 1993 reprinting of the original 1922 version of the work that, through a system of annotations, also gives the corrected version of several lines and words that were printed incorrectly in the original 1922 version.

Proust's work presents this dissertation with another problem with regard to the dissertation's interpretative fidelity to the original written work. Originally published in French as *A la recherche du temps perdu*, the version of the work consulted in this dissertation is not in the original French, but, as has been noted, in English. While this does not conform to current academic practices, it is a decision that has been enforced by practical necessities. It is believed, however, that the terms in which the discussion of Proust's work take place prevent it from being compromised by this decision, as it rarely involves grammatical or linguistic concerns. If this proves not to be the case, then this interpretation is, as I have said of Proust's work, a necessary 'error'.

They were seen leaping desperately out of their enclosure, floating, secretly slipping forward, but when they thought they were on the point of victory, trying to build out of the absence of thought a stronger thought, which would devour laws, theorems, wisdom…then the guardian of the impossible seized them , and they were engulfed in the shipwreck

-Maurice Blanchot, *Thomas the Obscure* (1941).

Introduction

Approaching the Negativity of Literary Modernism

'On Margate Sands.
I can connect nothing with nothing.
The broken fingernails of dirty hands.
My people humble people who expect
Nothing.'
-T.S. Eliot, "The Waste Land" (1922).

When one of the Thames-daughters, in T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" (1922, 1992: 51-74), remarks that she can add 'nothing to nothing' , thereby giving her 'people' that which they expect, namely 'nothing' (1992: 62), she indirectly highlights a central aspect of literary modernism. This dissertation represents an entry into and interpretation of the aspect of modernism that the Thames-daughter refers to as 'nothing' - or, rather, the different forms of negativity in the modernist work that can be understood in terms of that which is unsaid, or unsayable, or any other terminological means of indicating a refusal on the part of the work to give an affirmative proposition regarding the world it describes. It explores this negativity in the modernist work as both a paradoxical representation of that which cannot be represented, and as an operational negativity, or negation, that takes part in the unmaking of the work's propositions regarding the existence and nature of its figures. The function of these forms of negativity in literary modernism, as this dissertation will attempt to show through the analyses of Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* (1913-1927, 1982), James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922, 1993) and *Krapp's Last Tape* (1959) by Samuel Beckett, is to rewrite the representations of the work. Negativity, from this vantage point, appears as not just an invocation of the unsaid and unsayable dimensions of literary experience, but as a modification and conditioning of elements already present in the ambit of the work that lead to - as it will be argued - the emergence of ambivalent and problematic representations in the work. The dissertation will focus on this particular function of negativity - which, as will be suggested, should be understood as a critical function (in the sense given to this term by modernity) - in an attempt to come to terms with both the nature of the negativity present in the literary work, and with the role played by this negativity in several modernist literary works.

* * *

A literary work is read in part through the paradoxical identification and interpretation of those elements in the discourse, which have not been said or appear to be unsayable. Part of the literary experience is the cognition of how these unsaid or unspeakable elements - what Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser, in their introduction (1989: xi-xxi) to *Languages of the Unsayable: The Play of Negativity in Literature and Literary Theory* (1989), identify as 'negativity' (1989: xi) - function inside the signifying context of the work. Since the emergence of literary modernism in the nineteenth century, the status of this negativity has been one of the most crucial and problematic aspects of writing. Indeed, the literary work is understood more and more in terms of its resistance to the use of indicative or affirmative propositions - the type of linguistic proposition Ludwig Wittgenstein, in his book *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1918, 1961) describes as '[t]he simplest kind of proposition, an elementary proposition, [that] asserts the existence of a state of affairs' (1961: 4.21). Through its resistance to linguistic utterances that attest to the 'existence of a state of affairs', the work ceases to be a stable constellation of descriptive and declarative statements apparently imbued with a sense of epistemological certainty. Instead, it appears as an unstable and uncertain configuration traversed by networks consisting of the different forms of negativity that define literary experience - the '[...] denials, erasures, contradictions, pretiritions, negative rhetorical schemes, apophases, insubstantial presences, and the unspoken supplements' (1994: 1) that Daniel Fischlin identifies in his "Introduction: Negation, Critical Theory and Postmodern Textuality" (1994: 1-40) as the instances of negativity that 'violate the signifying fixity of any text' (1994: 1). Reading as the unproblematic access to a represented world gives way to an ambivalent form of reading, where the written word becomes no more than a notation of that which has not been stated, or that which escapes linguistic formulation entirely. Witness the perplexity in the early response to such works as T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land", James Joyce's *Ulysses*, or the writings of Franz Kafka. To the difficulty of these work can be assigned the same origin as that given by Hugo Friedrich in his influential book *The Structure of Modern Poetry* (1956, 1974) for the cryptic difficulty of the modern lyric:

> In attempting to understand modern poetry, we are faced with the task of finding descriptive categories. We cannot sidestep the fact (on which all critics concur) that negative categories predominate. [...] They are, in fact, applied as a result of the historical process by which modern poetry has departed from older literature (1974: 7).

Negativity is, of course, not the only interpretative locus for an engagement with literary modernism. The discourse of literary modernism is, like any other form of literature, constituted of various elements and mechanisms. These include, for example, an affirmative experience of life as a seamless flow of intuitions and evolutions that stemmed in part from

the work of Henri Bergson in, among others, his book *Creative Evolution* (1912). Influencing the modernist conception of time, experience, and language (with the development of "stream of consciousness" narration), this affirmative strain in modernism presents itself as another obvious locus of interpretation for a reading of modernist works. Equally, while in this dissertation negativity is discussed in relation to modernism, the concept has a vast and complex history that only contains literary modernism as one of its moments. As an inherently linguistic phenomenon rather than a historical category, negativity, in its most general sense, as will be suggested in conclusion, is not unique to modernism. In fact, the differences between the form and function of negativity in modernism, and, for example, the nature of negativity in the Hegelian dialectic or postmodernism is far more relevant to the historical project of periodization than merely the fact of its presence in the literature of a specific period. This study, however, for the most part suspends such other sources available for interpretation in order to focus on, and investigate, the various forms and functions of negativity in the signifying context of specific works associated in one way or another with literary modernism - Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, James Joyce's *Ulysses,* and, as a possible challenge to the paradigm of modernism, *Krapp's Last Tape* by Samuel Beckett. While these forms and functions might be various and even disparate, they all involve one moment that resists being interpreted as an affirmative proposition or as a form of indicative language, which, in turn, renders them part of the same identifiable problem of negativity in the literary discourse of modernism.

* * *

How is it possible to identify through reading that which is unsaid or unsayable? This is more than simply a methodological question - it pertains to the very nature of negativity that is in question here. If negativity is that element in literature which resists declarative propositions, then how, paradoxically, can it declare itself? How is the unsayable and the unsaid spoken? Pierre Macherey states in his book *A Theory of Literary Production* (1966, 1978) that 'in order to say anything, there are certain things, which must not be said [...]. Silence shapes all speech [...]' (1978: 78). From this vantage point silence, or negativity - to use Budick's and Iser's terms - would be inherently pre-linguistic. While enabling the emergence of speech, it remains in a strict dichotomy with speech as that which must be excluded for an utterance to take shape. As Wolfgang Iser remarks in a similar context in his book *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (1978): '[N]egativity is not formulated by the text, but forms the unwritten base' (1978: 226). By its very nature this negativity escapes indicative terminology, a situation which leads Iser and Budick to suggest that 'negativity can only be described in terms of its operations, and not by any means in terms of a graspable entity' (1989: xii). To conceptualize negativity in 'terms of its operations' is to distinguish this

readable form of negativity from the unsaid and unsayable that, according to Iser and Macherey, underlies all written and spoken utterances. Instead of this originary-excluded negativity, this operational negativity would be visible in the effects it has on the discourse of the work. The preferential locus for an engagement with the literary work that takes place in terms of negativity would then, accordingly, be this active and visible negativity.

How then does one conceptualize these operations of negativity, or negative gestures, in the work in a manner that allows for its paradoxical reading? Negation, or negativity as an operation, stands antithetically to the affirmative discourse of the work and its propositions regarding 'the existence of a state of affairs', to return to Wittgenstein's definition. The negative form, or negation, of this type of affirmative proposition (p) will assert the non-existence of this 'state of affairs', either by stating the direct opposite of the affirmative proposition (not-p), or through a denial that asserts a different, but not oppositional, situation (non-p). This distinction in the role of negativity in discourse originates with Plato's splitting of logical negation into an opposite or contrary utterance, on one hand, and, on the other, the stating of 'something else' (Plato, *Sophist* 257B-258b; *in* Horn, 1989: 5) or a contradictory statement. The distinction in question here again resurfaces in Sigmund Freud's essay "Negation" (1953-1966, XIX: 233-239) when he distinguishes between a negative judgement regarding the properties of an object, or, in linguistic terms, its predicates, and the object's existence (1953-1966: 233).

Negation in the literary work can then be understood according to two functions that are not necessarily compatible. In the first instance, negation can occur through the inscription of silences, gaps, blanks, erasures, absences, or any other discursive figure that asserts the non-existence of an object. Consider for example the final lines of Wallace Stevens's 1923 poem, "The Snow Man":

> For the listener, who listens in the snow
> And, nothing himself, beholds
> Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is
> (1923, 1955: 9).

The marking of the closing lines of the poem by the repetition of 'nothing', even in a cursory reading of the poem, suggests the activity of a discourse that casts doubt on the existence of its objects. Accordingly, three direct assertions of non-existence occur in these lines. Two of these negations - the negation of the 'listener' and that which 'is' - function as erasures of the affirmative propositions that construct the poem's basic representational world of viewer and viewed object. Both these figures are constructed as absences - non-existent figures that occupy a space in the discourse of the poem. Although both these negations function as erasures, there should be carefully distinguished between the different products of these

negations. While 'nothing himself' is an uncomplicated assertion of non-existence, 'the nothing that is' functions not only as an erasure of that which 'is', but, through the use of 'the' also attempts to figure 'nothing' as an object of representation. In this instance, 'nothing' is not only a predicate of a noun, but is raised or sublimated to the status of a noun itself. The third negation ('Nothing that is not there') presents a more complex case for analysis. What is negated here is not an actual proposition present in the discourse of the poem, but the possibility of such a proposition. Wallace Stevens denies the existence of an object to be experienced by the listener that is not immediately present to his or her sensory experiences. He forecloses on the possibility of the existence of a non-literal figure of transcendence or the imagination that exists beyond the poem's tableau of snow. Although not present in the poem as such, this figure is denied entry to the discourse of the poem through the force of a negation that asserts its non-existence. The negation of the existence of an object appears here not just as an uncomplicated denial of that which is, but also as a mediating figure in a discourse concerned with excluding certain figures from its circumference. Similarly, the programmatic elimination of extrinsic elements from the work of abstract art that Clement Greenberg, in his essay "Modernist Painting" (1966: 98-107), identifies as taking place in this kind of painting (1966: 101), functions according to the same type of negation - this time directed at objects and figures not unique and inherent to the work of art. This process of purification demands the implicit presence of an *a priori* - to use Stevens's term - 'nothing' that functions as an agent of the elimination of that which is not given figure to in the work.

The second form of negation, Plato's contradictory negation, presents a more complex instance for interpretation than the type of negation that asserts the non-existence of its object. Rather than denying the existence of an object or an affirmative proposition regarding a state of affairs, this form of negation negates only specific qualities of the object. The target of this, perhaps, partial negation, is the explicit or implicit chain of predicates that defines a specific object or proposition. Whether understood in terms of disfiguring, deformation, reduction, or any other terminological indication of the processes whereby the qualities pertaining to an object are negated, this form of negation leaves the existent object or proposition intact, while modifying, through negation, the qualities pertaining to this figure. To turn to another example from the body of work of Wallace Stevens, let us this time consider his 1942 poem, "The Poems of Our Climate":

> [...] The day itself
> Is simplified: a bowl of white,
> Cold, a cold porcelain, low and round,
> With nothing more than the carnations there
> (1942, 1955: 193).

The form of negation that occurs in this extract from Stevens's poem is, in traditional rhetorical terms, best understood as an *aphairesis*. Distinguished from the traditional understanding of negation as an *apophasis* (or, in the terms used here, Plato's idea of a contrary negation) *aphairesis* negates an object by subtracting or abstracting qualities from this object. The object itself is not negated, it is rather the predicates through which it is understood which are modified by a negation. Stevens's image of the 'simplified' 'day' - reduced to the minimal configuration of 'white', 'cold' and 'carnations' - operates according to a similar subtraction of possible qualities. Instead of being given image in mimetic terms, the day is reduced to the status of a 'porcelain' figure in a 'room' (1955: 193), with only the 'carnations' metonymically indicating a space exterior to this closed interior. The existence of the 'day' is, however, not denied. What has been negated are the predicates through which the term 'day' is generally understood. Their subtraction constructs the figure given shape to in this passage from the poem.

If, in "The Snow Man", 'nothing' is the linguistic marker of the negation that occurs, then in this poem the marker of its *aphairetic* negation is the word 'simplified'. In terms of logic, it is the agent of the negation that brings about the reduction of the day. Significantly for the interpretation of the negativity of literary modernism, these two forms of negation occur not only through the creation of linguistically marked negatives. These cases of the negative, depending upon the visible presence of such negative prefixes as "in-, un-, dis-, non-" as well as "no" and "not" (Ruthrof, 1995: 220), or, terms such as 'nothing' and 'simplified', are empirically secure and observable items of reading. Together with this use of observable and direct grammatical negatives to construct negations, a form of negation is also possible that needs interpretation to be recognized as such. It is sometimes necessary to read an affirmation as both an affirmation and as a negative gesture against a prior affirmative proposition (Ruthrof, 1995: 219). To interpret the negations in modernism is then, from this perspective, not merely to read the work for specific, immediately observable instances of linguistically marked negations.

Beyond these direct instances of negation there exists also the further possibility of a literary negation observable in the interaction between apparently affirmative propositions or contexts. Consider, for example, the following line from W.B. Yeats's poem, "Byzantium": 'Shade more than man, more image than a shade' (1930, 1990: 153). Although the persistent use of the word 'more', and the lack of a visible linguistic marker of a negation, suggest that the line should be read as an affirmative proposition, such a reading is clearly contrary to the meaning of the passage. To pass from 'man', to 'shade', to 'image', is to render 'man' a largely insubstantial presence. It is a negation of the idea of substance and presence, which predicate the notion of 'man'. If negation were to be understood only according to the presence of a visible and readable marker of this action, then its presence in the passage would go

unnoticed. The presence of negation here is not visible through the presence of a linguistic marker, but requires interpretation to be recognized as such.

Understood in this sense the negativity of a discourse resides in those explicit or implicit negative gestures or negations which deny and contradict (or negate) the work's affirmative propositions. Implicit to this understanding of negativity is the sense that this form of negativity, the active negation of an affirmative proposition, is always an addition to an affirmative discourse (Kurrick, 1979: 207). It is a linguistic act performed on a pre-existent construct of language that negates the latter through the negative judgement inherent to the former. From this perspective negation is always, in part, a form of self-referential language. It is an operation by language on language. The negation is a split signification that signifies both the prior affirmative discourse and the negative element it introduces into this discourse to negate its affirmative significations - a situation perhaps most clearly visible in instances of negation taking place through the use of negative prefixes, such as "un-" or "non-". It is the experience of writing as loss, as the passage from an affirmation to the negation of this affirmation. In this passage the illusion of temporality is created. Rather than existing in a paradigmatic or vertical relationship with the work, like the 'unwritten base' Iser posits does, this form of negativity is situated on the syntagmatic or horizontal line of the work. It appears as a diachronic movement between two states of discourse. To speak of writing as loss is not only to posit this absence, but also to posit a past, belonging to the work or to history, where the negated affirmation existed as an affirmative proposition.

Negation, or the operation of negativity, becomes visible as a deviation from, or disruption, of a previous state of discourse. This is the case in instances like T.S. Eliot's description, in the "The Dry Salvages" (1941, 1983: 1013-1018) section of the "Four Quartets", of '[...] the movement of pain that is painless and motionless' (1983: 1015). Eliot's line is self-consuming; its later part negates the existence of its beginning in a clear diachronic movement. What is more, neither 'painless', nor 'motionless' can be read as instances of negation without the presence of a prior discourse that affirms exactly the situation that these terms negate. Only through the passing of one state of discourse to another does negation occur and become visible to the act of reading. What, however, to make of instances such as Hart Crane's question in "Voyages" (1926, 1983: 1055-1058), '[...] What words / Can strangle this deaf moonlight?' (1983: 1057)? The interpretative difficulty of Crane's question lies in the use of the word 'deaf' as a predicate of 'moonlight'. On the one hand, what occurs here is simply a case of personification or *prosopopoeia* - the ascription of human qualities to an inanimate object. Through the personification of 'moonlight' that the word 'deaf' effects moonlight can be read as the animate object of the actions detailed at the beginning of the line. On the other hand, 'deaf' is also a negation of exactly some of the human attributes that it ascribes through its presence to the inanimate figure of 'moonlight', a negation compounded by the image of 'words' that 'strangle'. As a matter of fact, it appears as

if 'moonlight' is personified purely as a prelude to its negation. Only after its personification can it be described as disfigured ('deaf') and as a living object to be killed ('What words / Can strangle'). At this point, the movement from affirmation (through *prosopopoeia*, in this instance) to negation appears to be exactly the same as that encountered in the line from T.S. Eliot's "The Dry Salvages": a prior affirmation is negated through a series of explicit or implicit negations that negates either the existence or qualities pertaining to the original proposition or object. What complicates this reading is that the personification that occurs in the line from Crane's poem depends on exactly the terms which serve as its negation. Both 'deaf' and 'strangle' simultaneously suggest the personification of 'moonlight' and negate this personification. Nowhere else in the line is such a personification suggested. What this situation points to is the self-referential quality of negation. It appears inherently as a term joined to an already established proposition, which it, in turn, negates. While this is true also of Eliot's discourse in the line from "The Dry Salvages", Crane's question makes this situation explicit. Negation appears here as a split signification that points both towards a prior affirmation and the negation of this proposition. Even if the prior affirmation is not stated as such in the discourse, it is invoked and connotated by the act of negation. It is only due to this situation that Crane's question can imply the negation of the personified figure of moonlight. Negation then still appears as a diachronic process. Whether the prior affirmation it negates is explicitly denotated by the discourse it is present in, or connotated by the negation itself, negation adds a temporal dimension to the discourse it is present in. It describes and constructs the movement from a prior proposition to a state of discourse in which this prior statement is subjected to negation (in whatever form it might take).

This operational negativity, which would be the same as the substitution of a negation for an affirmation, lends itself to structural elaboration as far as its role in literary discourse is concerned. Negativity as negation is a diachronic process, its temporal duration grounded in the passage from a prior affirmation to the negation of this affirmation. Nevertheless it is possible to describe, in part, the functioning of this temporal succession according to Saussure's dualistic interpretation of the sign as consisting of a linguistic mark, or signifier (or, rather, its mental correlative) , that represents a signified - the object of signification (or, again, its mental correlative). While this relationship is usually understood as arbitrary, the co-existence of these two aspects of the sign in discourse is a normative given. Negation, however, as Mark C. Taylor recognizes in his book *Disfiguring: Art, Architecture, Religion* (1992: 9), operates partially through a negative gesture aimed at either the signifier or the signified (the linguistic means of representation, or, that which is represented), and becomes readable as such through the cognition of the negativity inscribed by this gesture.

In the first instance negativity operates through the negation of aspects of the signifier that either render it a transparent vehicle of representation, or make its act of representation possible. At its most extreme the effect of this on the reading process, as Friedrich suggests,

is that the signifier cannot be grasped or understood. The disrupted and distorted language of James Joyce in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* (1939, 1994) would be a good example of this. While Joyce's deformation of the signifier is ultimately a tool for the multiplication of language, a similar negation of the signifier occurs in Samuel Beckett's minimalist works. As Shira Wolosky suggests in "Samuel Beckett's Figural Evasion" (1989: 165-186), writing for Beckett occurs through an incessant negation of the figural dimension of the signifier. Beckett strips from his language all connotative effects to arrive at a purely literal language. Whether it is by removing the signifying fixity of the signifier, or by negating its figural potential, both Joyce and Beckett take part in an application of negativity that strips from the signifier aspects of its signifying function.

In the second case - the negation of the signified - the reader is often faced with a work that withdraws from the world, to paraphrase Gerald Bruns in his *Modern Poetry and the Idea of Language* (1974: 261). The signified is posited as an empty or ambivalent space from the vantage point of the discourse, which leaves the reader confronted with an apparently empty signifier that carries the full burden of signification in the work. The work is framed as existing separate from the world indicated by referential signs. The negated space of the signified signifies then the '"lack of reality" of reality' (1979, 1984: 77) that Jean-Francois Lyotard speaks of in his seminal *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1984) in relation to modernism, and also allows for Walter Benjamin's framing of the modern novel, in his essay "The Storyteller" (1936, 1973: 83-110), as incommensurable with 'human life' (1973: 87). Whether by way of reference to the lack of presentation of the totality of the world (as in Georg Lukács's *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism* (1957, 1963)), or through the identification of the structural occlusion of the signs of history and colonialism, as in Fredric Jameson's "Modernism and Imperialism" (1990: 43-69), it is in this negation of an apparently referential signified that many of the critiques of modernism find their impetus. After all, in this specific sense Georg Lukács appears to be quite right in his discussion of modernism as breaking with realistic art when he states that modernism is 'the negation of art' (1963: 46).

Either of these paradigmatic negations (which still remain dependent upon either an actual prior affirmation in the work, or on the affirmative conventions of a prior form of art) can, in turn, become disruptions in the syntagmatic chain of signs that constitutes, beyond its negations, the temporal line of the work's discourse. The work's flow of signs and the coherence of these signs in relation to each other are interrupted or problematized by the perception of an emptiness on either the level of the signified or the signifier. The work is rendered formally incoherent or fragmented through the introduction of an empty space between different segments of its discourse.

Consider for example the confusion and sense of fragmentation that surrounds the multiple and incompatible voices in Eliot's "The Waste Land" resulting from its negation of a

signifier that would function as a controlling poetic voice. This negation is a complete negation. The central poetic voice in Eliot's poem is perceived only as an omission, a blank or gap in a traditionally occupied place. It is left to the reader to reconstitute the missing object of the narration and to arrive at an epistemologically valid account of the passage. Wolfgang Iser gives, perhaps, the most extensive reading of this specific version of negativity in his *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* and its account of blanks and negations conditioning the reception of a narrative. These blanks or gaps represent a special case of the activities of negation. While still to be interpreted as negations of a prior affirmation, these prior affirmations cannot be identified according to the negation itself. The status of these negations as complete negations, or, empty spaces, forecloses upon such an interpretation. The reader is forced to turn towards the context of the negation - constructed through either the conventions of literary discourse (such as in the case of Eliot's poem), or the discourse of the work itself (Jauss's's 'horizon of expectations') - to, in the first instance, recognize the negations as negations, and, secondly, to interpret these negations according to prior affirmations. Without this possibility of accessing the context of a blank or empty space, it would be impossible to give an account of the impact of these blanks and gaps upon either the discourse of the work, or on the act of reading. (Iser also suggests that these blanks can be interpreted according to reviously acquired frames and schemata. In cases like these, the recognition of negations would depend on the act of reading itself.)

This positioning of negativity as occupying a syntagmatic position in the signifying chain of the work, or, functioning as a gap or blank in its temporal sequence, indirectly points towards a fourth context for negation, namely the relationship between different works. No longer strictly reducible to an interpretation according to the structure of the sign, this form of negation is both historical and intertextual. Negation is one of the revisionary ratios that Harold Bloom in *Poetry and Repression: Revisionism from Blake to Stevens* (1976: 224), identifies, among others, as shaping the intertextual relationship between different works. Following Bloom it is possible to suggest that negativity can function as a mediating figure in the intertextual relationship between works. This intertextual relationship would be the opposite of intertextual repetition, and would consist of a writer negating or emptying out the significations of his intertextual precursor.

From this vantage point the negativity of the modernist work would be indistinguishable from the operation of negation. Whether it be the negation of the signifier or the signified, the interruption of the chain of signs that constitutes the work, or the intertextual negation of a precursor, negativity appears in literary modernism as a negation of elements involved in the act of signification. Through this movement the modernist work establishes a complementary discourse to the affirmative propositions of the work, a negative discourse that initiates the problematization and destruction of these affirmations. What these negations achieve are to incorporate into an affirmative discourse signs of negativity, signs

that appear to signify that which has been unsaid, or is unsayable. What is constructed is a linguistic discourse that contains an interplay between affirmations and negativity, a discourse that installs the haunting of the latter in the former through the largely self-reflexive act of negation.

Of course, the negativity which is signified, is not the actual silence or unwritable that Macherey and Iser speak of. Calvin Bedient in his essay "Modernism and the End of Beauty" (1992: 99-115) quite rightly asks: 'But isn't the unrepresentable, in art, necessarily only an allusion, an idea, a paper panther?' (1992: 102). These concepts by their very definition elude signification. Their signification is rather a performance of negativity, and should be understood as performative signs (Fischlin, 1994: 6). Rather than being read as constative signs of a describable reality, these signs are, in John Austin's terms in *How to Do Things with Words* (1962), performatives that operate through an act of language, and, as J.Hillis Miller would have it in "Parable and Performative" (1991: 135-150), '[bring] something into existence that has no basis except in the words' (1991: 139). It is through the self-referential and linguistic interplay of the affirmative proposition and its negation that the appearance of negativity is constructed. It is, however, exactly this interplay of affirmations and negativity that prevents the negativity given form to by the work's negation from being constative signs of an unsaid or unsayable figure that exists prior to language. Negation, as has been shown, is dependent upon the prior existence of an affirmation that forecloses upon access to this original negativity. Even Wallace Stevens's apparently direct representation of a series of 'nothings' in "The Snow Man" is only an approximation and performance of the 'nothing' that pre-dates the coming into being of language. The complete negation of language from inside language cannot take place. A written sign that asserts the existence of a particular state, even a state of non-existence, remains. The play of negativity that the act of negation unleashes in the work is then primarily the establishment of a simulacrum of the unsaid and unsayable figures that remain beyond signification. As T.S. Eliot aptly remarks in "The Dry Salvages": 'There is no end, but addition [...]' (1983: 1014).

Thus, in reading the negativity of the modernist work, three elements that come into play are postulated - an original affirmative proposition, the active negation of this proposition, and the resultant product of this negation which appears to signify negativity (as the unsaid or unspeakable). These three elements, in succession, constitute a diachronic series that gives the appearance of signifying a visible shift in the discourse of the work. To pass from an affirmation to a negation of this affirmation is not the same reading experience as simply being confronted with an apparently stable statement regarding an existing state of affairs. While the latter contains no notation regarding the transformations it has undergone as an act of writing; the former is, inherently, signified as a temporal narrative of exactly such a transformation in the discourse of the work. The transformed or original discourse might be an actual written statement, a discourse that pre-dates the work, or simply a normative given

of the signifying context of the work. Whatever the case might be, this originary affirmative statement is transposed into and transformed by the negation effected in the particular work. The duality of negation - its indication of both a negated object and an agent of negation - ensures if not the actual presences then at least the connotated presence of this original proposition. It remains as the element of the signifying act that has been emptied out, an insubstantial presence that points to a prior discourse. The work produced by the negation is a secondary proposition (in temporal terms) occupying the space previously maintained by the original affirmation. This secondary work - as this configuration will be referred to from this point on - substitutes itself for the original signification it is founded upon, while still through the duplicity of signification indicating the temporally primary discourse - or, primary work - it replaces.

The act of negation then renders visible in the discourse of the work the process of conversion, which Michael Riffaterre describes in his book *Semiotics of Poetry* (1978):

> If he is to perceive the converted verbal sequence, the reader must make a mental comparison between the sequence and a hypogram that is the text imagined by him in its pretransformation state. This hypogram [...] may be made out of cliché, or it may be a quotation from another text, or a descriptive system. Since the hypogram always has a positive or negative "orientation" the constituents of the conversion always transmute the hypogram's markers - in some cases the conversion consists of nothing more than such a permutation of the markers (1978: 63-64).

The transformation that occurs in the passage from hypogram to 'converted verbal sequence' involves for Riffaterre, among other things, the conversion of its 'positive or negative "orientation"'. Such a conversion is for him an essential process through which the production of the text takes place. It is one of the strategies through which the work expands and modifies the hypogram it is founded upon. The act of negation does not, however, leave the cognition of this process up to only the 'mental comparison' made by the reader between hypogram and work. The hypogram is signified in the act of negation as a primary work, together with the secondary, or converted, work produced by the negation of the propositions of the primary work. The transformations in the discourse of the work are rendered readable, or rather visible, by the sign of negation. Negation gives the appearance of allowing the reader entry into the modes through which the work is produced and transformed. It signifies not only negativity but also the movement of writing that constructs a new discourse over the corpus of another.

The function of negation is similar to the purposes Sigmund Freud assigns to the acts of distortion (*Entstellung*) and repression in the dream-work. When discussing the repression occurring in the dream-work in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1948) Freud explicitly links

this repression to distortion, calling it a 'censorship over this dream-wish' (1948: 149). Accordingly, in everyday language, as Jean-Francois Lyotard points out, *Entstellung* refers to a violent act: 'to disfigure oneself [...] to do violence to language' (1974, 1989: 21). For Sigmund Freud *Entstellung* or distortion acquires further semantic layers of meaning. In *Moses and Monotheism* (1953-1966, XXIII: 43) distortion 'resembles a murder [...] It should mean not only "to change the appearance of something" but also "to put something in another place, to displace"'. In *The Interpretation of Dreams* the idea of distortion accordingly comes to signify both the act of construction and the effects of the dream-work on a prior figure. Latent thoughts are transposed and distorted (through condensation, displacement, figuration and secondary revision) into manifest figures or tropes which require interpretation for the latent meaning to be uncovered. To phrase this in terms of negation: in the manifest dream-work both the content of the latent thought and the negation of its meaning (through the revisions enacted by the system of tropes) appear in the form of a (distorted) figure. The analyst signifies both the latent dream-work and its negation, thereby allowing for the dream-work to be interpreted.

What is the role of negativity, in its active form as a negation, in this movement between primary and secondary, latent and manifest, affirmative and negative works? In Budick's and Iser's terms, '[I]t does not [...] negate the formulations of the text or saying. Rather it conditions them through blanks and negations' (1989: xii). Negation is the instrument through which the transitions between a primary and secondary work are effected. It is an instance of writing that is implicitly an act of rewriting. The operations of negativity on an original affirmative proposition are the simultaneous signification and negation of the primary work into the secondary work. Negativity, as negation, is from this vantage point a modality of literary production. It is the mediatory figure between two contradictory works that are tied to each other by a complex configuration of distortion, conversion, affiliation, copying and erasure. The function of what James Joyce, succinctly, in *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* (1914, 1992) names 'heaps of dead language' (1992: 178) is then intimately related to its apparent opposite: the engendering of the literary work. Negation emerges as a constitutive figure on which the work might be posited.

* * *

Gustave Flaubert occupies a strategic position in this understanding of negativity: he is among the first who have blurred the lines between negativity and the engendering of the literary work. The critical history of the relationship between negativity and literary modernism begins perhaps with his now famous letter dated 16 January 1852 to Louise Colet. In this letter - which contains Flaubert's programme for a projected book, *Madame Bovary* - negativity is explicitly treated as a form of writing that enables the production of the work:

> What seems beautiful to me, what I should like to write, is a book about nothing, a book dependent on nothing external, which would be held together by the internal strength of its style [...] a book which would have almost no subject, or at least in which the subject would be almost invisible, if such a thing is possible. The finest works are those that contain the least matter; the closer expression comes to thought, the closer language comes to coinciding and merging with it, the finer the result. I believe the future of art lies in this direction [...] Form, in becoming more skilful, becomes attenuated; it leaves behind all liturgy, rule, measure; the epic is discarded in favor of the novel, verse in favor of prose; there is no longer any orthodoxy, and form is as free as the will of its creator. This progressive shedding of the burden of tradition can be observed everywhere: governments have gone through similar evolutions, from oriental despotism to the socialism of the future (1926-1933, 1981: 154).

Although, arguably, not realized in the novel itself, this programme for the writing of *Madame Bovary* remains suggestive regarding the understanding of the negativity in literary modernism. Flaubert's desire is to write a novel conditioned by an *aphairetic* prohibition - a demand for it to be about nothing external to itself. The signifying trajectory of the novel is instead turned inward, directed towards a purification of its style, form and language until it signifies nothing except style, form and language. This purification through the negation of an extra-textual signified (Flaubert's primary work), leads to the performance of negativity that negation initiates. For Flaubert the product of this negation of the signified is a form of writing - or, secondary work - marked by the almost complete loss of subject or content. The presentations of the work occur then through the use of negation; they emerge as partially negated copies of an original exterior referent that open a breach in this referent through the presence of this negation. It is this distance between a referential sign and the sign founded on the negation of its signified that authorizes Flaubert to speak of his book as a 'book about nothing'. From this perspective the play of negativity Flaubert intended for *Madame Bovary* is, ultimately, the performance of writing as loss, as the inscription of lack.

The secondary work constructed by Flaubert's negation of the work's referential signifieds is, however, not only to be interpreted as the opening of an absence in the configurations of the work. Implicitly, Flaubert's discourse reverses this movement from affirmation to negativity. The negation of that which is external to the language and style of the novel is for Flaubert also an act of self-legitimization or self-grounding. The novel supplies its own foundations and reasons for being and it does not depend on an outside authority or determinative agent. It gains an autonomy similar to that assigned, by Flaubert, to thought, and to the evolution of government This self-authorization is then also intimately related to the temporal status of the novel as it implies a 'shedding of the burden of tradition'

as history is negated in favor of the authority of the present and the 'will of its creator'. Thus matters of history, ideology, biography, psychology and countless others which ground a mimetic narrative are eliminated in the letter as the determinative agents of *Madame Bovary*. Analogously, whereas a mimetic narrative is grounded in the suggestion of the prior existence of these matters, in Flaubert's phantasm of his work these elements are, if at all present, grounded in the formal and stylistic aspects of the novel's language. These aspects function as the newly constructed origin of the work's representations - which are no longer to be read in referential terms. This self-originating and self-determining framing of the work arises not from a constructive affirmative act, but from a negation that opens up an *aporia* - Jacques Derrida in his book *Aporias* (1993) relates the figure of the *aporia* specifically to the negative experience of 'impassable borders, thresholds that no step could pass' (1993: 9) - between the work and its outside. From the absence opened by this negation the work arises as a purified and autonomous system of language from which representations can emerge without this coming forth grounding the novel in its direct relation with this prior *plenum*. If a mimetic narrative seeks to encapsulate the *plenum* of the world that it represents through the affirmation of its representational relation with this *plenum*; the modernist narrative, from the vantage point provided by Flaubert, offers its own formalized structures - attributed with the same autonomy as that which, for Flaubert, belongs to thinking - as the *plenum* from which representation originates. The representations of the novel double - in the sense given to it by J. Hillis Miler as that which 'puts in question, and at the same time reestablishes in a new form, what it doubles' (1995: xiv) - the world in image. This image is not grounded in the determining presence of the world, but in its absence and what is uncovered by this negation - the potentiality of language to act, like thinking, in an originary rather than reflective capacity. With keen insight, Wallace Stevens forcefully refers to this in "The Idea of Order at Key West" (1935, 1955: 449) as the 'ghostlier demarcations' and 'keener sounds' of 'our origins'. The function of negativity inside this context is to affirm the potential of the language to function as the origin of its representations, while simultaneously erasing any other possible space that might function as an origin for the work.

Mark C. Taylor (in a different context concerned primarily with modernity, not literary modernism), also notes this affirmative turn in the fate of negativity inside modernity (which he understands as containing literary modernism):

> [M]odernity is obsessed with discovering ways in which negation can serve as an indirect means of affirmation. Transcendence is negated to affirm immanence; essence is negated to affirm appearance; the modern is negated to affirm the primitive; individualism is negated to affirm universality; the objective is negated to affirm the nonobjective; form is negated to affirm formlessness; ornament is negated to affirm

structure; figuration is negated to affirm abstraction. Each of these gestures can, of course, be reversed (1992: 273).

The function of negation that Taylor describes does not end in the performance of negativity. This performance is only one stage in the diachronic account of negation that Taylor constructs. The negativity inherent in the logical negation is itself negated (1992: 274). This negation leads to an affirmation, just like Flaubert's negation of a referential signified leads to the affirmation of the language of the work (its signifiers) as the originary *plenum* of the novel. The most formally sensitive and methodologically sophisticated approaches towards modernism today converge on this reading of its negativity. From Lyotard's consideration of 'the unrepresentable' (1984: 77) in modernism which is indistinguishable from the completion of a projected totality, to Fredric Jameson's conceptualization in "Modernism and Imperialism" of the spatial language of the modernist work as arising from the erasure of the historical realities of imperialism, negation is treated as a gesture which determines, conditions, and originates elements of the modernist work nominally not identical with the negation, or, then, the negativity it performs. Thus, as opposed to the antithetical understanding of negativity as simply that which is opposed, in its gesture of negation, to an affirmative proposition, the interpretation of negativity in modernism has to take into account this strange trajectory of negation which sees it transformed into an affirmative moment.

Following Flaubert's discourse, the form and function of negativity can therefore be envisaged in two different ways. In the first instance, one might interpret the negativity of Flaubert's work according to the relationship between the work marked by negation and the original negated relationship or object. In this interpretation the mediation of the gesture of negation would appear to produce a secondary work stripped of the negated object, the work would be marked by the absence or negativity that negation performs. Or one might prefer to stress the relationship between the negation and the work produced by this negation. In this relationship the new configuration founded on the experience of a negation would be qualitatively different from the subtraction of a referential signified performed by negation. Instead negation leads, here, indirectly to the affirmation of that which remains after the negated object has been subtracted. Indeed, the language of the work is affirmed in Flaubert's letter as taking over the originary role of what he sees as its negated opposite - the external referent of the work. What from the first vantage point would appear as the play of negativity in the work - its unveiling through negation of that which no longer constitutes the affirmative propositions of the work - appears from the second as the construction of a new affirmative proposition.

The interpretative difference between these two accounts of the negativity of Flaubert's work is largely a matter of origins. In the first instance the work is marked by the loss of a (referential) origin, accordingly it appears as an object marked by loss. In the second

instance the empty space opened by negation creates the possibility for a new origin of the work, its non-referential language, to emerge. The negative relationship between a primary and secondary work is thereby repressed. The completed work occupies both the position of origin and that which negates its origins. In Flaubert's account of the writing of *Madame Bovary* these two different accounts are not treated as exclusive opposites. The possibility of both is kept in play in this account: his book is simultaneously framed as a 'book about nothing' that is marked by its lack of content, and a book in which its own language acts as an origin for its content. Negativity, as negation, in Flaubert's letter, functions both as an opening of loss and absence and as the origin of a series of affirmative propositions. To employ a different set of theoretical terms: the presentations of the work are posited as simultaneously being presences and absences. The presence of a negation in the discourse both problematizes and creates the possibility of any further presentations. These presentations are at the same time affirmative propositions, and propositions regarding a world that is marked by a negation that formulates them as being empty, without subject. The negativity in Flaubert's discourse is then not only negated but also affirmed in the completed work as a sustained discourse.

In the first instance negation (or nothing) is, indirectly, posited by Flaubert as the origin of the content of the work, and this content is marked by a complicated interplay of affirmative and negative elements that resists easy partition into oppositional figures. Resulting from the constitutive role attributed to negation, the negativity of the discourse slides between being negated and being affirmed in the completed work. Walter Benjamin's discussion of Marcel Proust's work of remembrance in "The Image of Proust" (1929, 1973: 203-217) locates both a similar turn towards origination in the negations that constitute the work and the same complex weaving of affirmations and negativity in the figures of the work:

> For the important thing for the remembering author is not what he experienced, but the weaving of his memory, the Penelope work of recollection. Or should one call it, rather, a Penelope work of forgetting? Is not the involuntary recollection, Proust's *mémoire involontaire*, much closer to forgetting than what is usually called memory? And is not the work of spontaneous recollection, in which remembrance is the woof and forgetting the warf, a counterpart to Penelope's work rather than its likeness? For here the day unravels what the night has woven. When we awake each morning, we hold in our hands, usually weakly and loosely, but a few fringes of the tapestry of lived life, as loomed for us by forgetting. However, with our purposeful activity and, even more, our purposive remembering each day unravels the web and the ornaments of forgetting. This is why Proust finally turned his days into night, devoting all his hours to undisturbed work in his darkened room with artificial illumination, so that none of those intricate arabesques might escape him (1973: 204).

For Benjamin Proust's work is the obverse of the weaving and unweaving of Penelope. While Penelope unravels what she wove at night while weaving by day, Proust, paradoxically, proceeds in the opposite direction, making by night, while unmaking by day. The distinction here is between purposive activity and remembering that occurs in the daytime, and the negation, or forgetting (Benjamin's paradoxical interpretation of Proust's involuntary memory), that is associated by Benjamin with the darkness of the night. The day-work, for Benjamin, is ultimately affirmative: it establishes links between memories and experience, it engages in the 'purposeful activity' of remembrance that, paradoxically, unravels the objects of forgetting. The night-work, on the other hand, consists of the unmaking of these links between memory and experience. It falsifies memories and disconnects them from experience in the looming of an imaginary 'lived life'. The suggestiveness of Benjamin's passage resides in the explicit positing of this negative act of forgetting as the constructive centre of Proust's work. The night-work of forgetting is responsible for the secondary work of 'intricate arabesques' that Proust collects in the undisturbed artificial light that fills his nights. It is in this negative gesture of forgetting that the memories of a world that never necessarily existed are born and given figure to. As in Flaubert's letter this negation is ultimately a negation of an existing referential signified - the discourse is no longer grounded on an unmediated relationship with the world or experience, but instead looms an imaginary and insubstantial life.

Benjamin repeats and extends this formulation in a passage that is devoted not to 'the image of Proust', but the creation of the Proustian image:

> The similarity of one thing to another which we are used to, which occupies us in a wakeful state, reflects only vaguely the deeper resemblance of the dream world in which everything that happens appears not in identical but in similar guises, opaquely similar one to another. Children know a symbol of this world; the stocking has the structure of this dream world when, rolled up in the laundry hamper, it is a "bag" and a "present" at the same time. And just as children do not tire of quickly changing the bag and its content into a third thing - namely, a stocking - Proust could not get his fill of emptying the dummy, his self, at one stroke in order to keep garnering that third thing, the image which satisfied his curiosity - indeed, assuaged his homesickness. He lay on his bed racked with homesickness, homesick for the world distorted in the state of resemblance, a world in which the true surrealist face of existence breaks through (1973: 207).

In this passage Benjamin, like Freud, understands the relation between the day-work of remembering and the night-work of forgetting in terms of distortion. What appears identical

in the affirmative work of memory (which is then also a basic form of affirmation: a proposition that renders two objects equal) is distorted in Proust's work of forgetting - which is also the work of involuntary memory - into a state of opaque similarity. What this distortion makes possible is the creation of the image itself. The image does not operate according to the affirmative principles of identity. Just as there is no ground which would render a bag and a present and a stocking identical, rather than opaque resemblances of each other, so, in the same vein, there is no relation of identity, except resemblance, between Proust, his purposive memories and the image. The image arises instead out of a negation - Proust's emptying out of himself through the act of forgetting. The forgetting of voluntary memory and the simultaneous emptying out of the self as the locus of experience and recollection give, like the reversal of the bag and present into a stocking, birth to the image. The image does not stand in a relationship of identity and correspondence with Proust and his memories; it arises from the emptying out of the former, and, what is the same thing, the forgetting of the latter. As such the image is posited as emerging from a negation. A negative act of forgetting gives figure to the image, and accordingly the image is marked by the lack of an affirmative narrative that would ground it on actual experience or memories - its apparent origins.

The relevance of Benjamin's work on Proust for an examination of the role of the negative in the modern work lies, in part, in this account of the emergence of the image. The Proustian image is not constructed according to an affirmative act of presentation that would frame it as identical with another prior object; it is figured through a negative act. The act of forgetting that destroys memory and empties out the self is the condition of possibility for the figuration of the image. This negativity is maintained in the status of this image as being a falsification - a distortion of true experience and the objects of purposive memory. The inscription of an *aporia* in the work - an *aporia* opened by the negation of an affirmative link between memory, experience and the self that is the *plenum* of these objects, on the one hand, and the Proustian image, on the other - leads not to the destruction or negation of the work of art. On the contrary, this *aporia* functions as that which gives shape to figures. The image (always to be understood in Benjamin's work in allegorical terms, according to J. Hillis Miller in his *Fiction and Repetition: Seven English Novels* (1982: 6-12)) is constructed by a negation. Just as, for Mark C. Taylor, modernism's negation of representational figures lies at the heart of its shaping of abstract shapes (1992: 2-14), so, for Benjamin the presence of the image is inscribed through the negation of the literal, affirmative ground of the novel's representations. At stake in this negation for Benjamin are a turning away from, and the replacement of, the literal grounds of representation that would link these representations to a pre-existing object or experience. What is constructed through this negation is then simply the figural (rather than literal) figures of literary representation; in other words, its visible rhetorical dimension. These figures, like the content of Flaubert's novel, are marked by a

double claim that frames them both as a distortion or forgetting of the literal signified of the discourse, but also as, again, an affirmation which 'assuaged' Proust's 'homesickness', to use Benjamin's description of the affirmative effects of the Proustian image. Despite the negativity of the Proustian image, it remains, after all, an image that stands in the service of memory, albeit involuntary memory. What is paradoxically remembered by involuntary memory is not, however, actual experience or events, but, as Benjamin refers to it, the 'surrealist' image of reality; a world that never was except in the discourse of forgetting or, what is the same, involuntary memory. The affirmation of the dream-world that Benjamin identifies here, is identical, again paradoxically, to the engendering of the distorted image. Just like Flaubert's treatment of negativity opens itself to a double and contradictory reading, so Benjamin's reading of Proust identifies both an opening of an absence in the discourse, and an affirmative production of rhetorical figures and propositions as the effects of the grounding of the work on a negative gesture. It is this refusal of the discourse to cohere into a single reading or interpretation that separates Benjamin's treatment of Proust's negations from a dialectical consideration of these acts. Through his interpretative resistance to the synthesis that ends the dialectical experience of contraries, Benjamin maintains the contradictions and paradoxes he identifies in Proust's discourse when he figures a single act - involuntary memory - as both forgetting and remembrance.

A passage in Sigmund Freud's "Negation" gives a similar interpretation of this contradictory nature of the secondary work produced by negation. Speaking of *Verneinung* or negation (also often translated as denial or denegation), Freud offers a phenomenological description of what occurs when a patient utters a negation or, then, denegation. In the first instance the patient constructs a negation to overcome the repression of a representation or a thought. Thereby, as Freud remarks significantly in a subsequent passage, through the 'symbol of negation' (1953-1966: 235) the mind 'enriches itself with material that is indispensable for its proper function' (1953-1966: 235). The second phase of the negative utterance is the construction of the negation itself. Here a victory over repression is achieved, the repressed content enters in a negated form into discourse. This content is not yet accepted; however, it remains conditioned by its negation. In a third phase this negation is partially overcome (the negation is negated), the content of the negation is accepted intellectually by the patient. The repressed content appears together with its negation, or the negation is overcome while the original negativity of the repression still persists due to the patient's refusal to emotionally accept the content of the negation:

> 3. Thus the content of a repressed image or idea can make its way into consciousness, on the condition that it is negated. Negation is a way of taking cognizance of what is repressed; indeed it is already a lifting of the repression, though

not, of course, an acceptance of what is repressed. We can see how in this the intellectual function is separated from the affective process.

With the help of negation only one consequence of the process of repression is undone - the fact, namely, of the ideational content of what is repressed not reaching consciousness. The outcome of this is a kind of intellectual acceptance of what is repressed, while at the same time what is essential to the repression persists. In the course of analytic work we often produce a further, very important and somewhat strange variant of this situation. We succeed in conquering the negation as well, and in bringing about a full intellectual acceptance of the repressed; but the repressive process itself is not yet removed by this (1953-1966: 234).

What Freud outlines here is a passage from a latent to a manifest work as a 'repressed image or idea' enters consciousness. This passage is effected by negation through the denial of either the repressed content's attributes or existence. The status of this negation in consciousness is, however, uncertain. The repressed content is expressed but its status remains in question. It remains marked by the negativity inherent - due to the ego's disavowal of its content as unsaid or unsayable - to the repression in the first instance. These movements are best described by Mark C. Taylor as an 'un-negation that affirms rather than negates negation' (1992: 7). In other words, while negation effects the production of a figure - what Freud calls a 'symbol' - in consciousness, this status of this figure is unsure. It is at the same time put forth as an affirmative proposition, while still being marked by a negativity that puts its existence or attributes in question. The secondary work, or product, of negation cannot simply be read as a new stable presentation. The negation persists and introduces an equivocity into the heart of the secondary, or manifest, work. Julia Kristeva in *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1974, 1984) notes a similar ambiguity in the symbol constructed through the act of negation. It '[...] is always in the process of being posited' (1984: 148) she remarks, thereby never acquiring the signifying fixity of a purely affirmative proposition.

It is this equivocity in the status of the work produced by negation that haunts W.B. Yeats's famous poem "The Second Coming":

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of the *Spiritus Mundi*
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, it hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

(1919, 1990: 99-100).

Considered in the terms outlined earlier, the mimetic presentations of negativity in the poem ('Things fall apart [...] / Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,') are secondary to the negation responsible for the poem's turning away from the scene of history to the private interior world of symbols and apocalyptic revelations. In the original draft of the poem, the opening lines are firmly grounded in history by the proposition that 'The Germany of Marx has led to Russian Communism / There everyday some innocent has died' (Smith, 1994: 152). Yeats's veiling of this grounding of the poem in historical reality is an exemplary instance of the negation that Jameson identifies, of the historical primary discourse from which the work's representations originate. Instead of legitimating the poem in terms of the events of history, Yeats affirms its poetic nature (which tends towards the abstraction of symbolism and the negation of the signified of the work's significations) through the authority of a poetic voice that controls the presentation of abstract symbols and the uncovering of a revelation. This affirmation remains untroubled by the history that the poem originally tried to grasp. The abstract nature of the symbols of the collapse that Yeats employs opens not on to a contingent reality but into the eternally fixed and certain meanings of symbolic signification (even if these symbols are rendered in negative terms).

What is striking, however, is that the poem does not proceed from this scene of substitution with the certainty assumed to belong to a work that has affirmed itself through a turning away from the contingent realities of the world. The ambiguity that questions this affirmation enters with the performative that begins the turn of the poem from the poet's own assessment of the collapse of the age to the revelation that would confirm this experience:

'Surely some revelation is at hand; / Surely the Second Coming is at hand'. The repetition of 'surely' attempts to perform the validation of the discourse of the poet, yet this validation cannot occur through the use of this performative since it lacks any grounding in an historical reality outside the poem. It is purely an instance of persuasive rhetoric that attempts to legitimate language through only language. This failure constructs this performative as a question rather than a validation. At this point the poem, instead of validating its representations, implicitly, through this failure, questions the validity of these representations.

The failed validation through persuasion seems to be mended by the vision itself, an image from the *spiritus mundi* that appears to ground the interpretations of the poet in a figure not part of this hermeneutic. Yet this reading would reverse the trajectory of the poem. The revelation of the second coming is first imagined and posited by the poet before it becomes part of the revelation. The sequence of the narrative still leads from the consciousness of the poet - that is not grounded in reality - to the image of revelation that significantly 'Troubles my sight [...]' rather than gives the clarity of objective vision associated with revelation. There is nothing to ground this revealed image in objective reality. Certainly the *spiritus mundi* cannot accomplish this grounding since it is nothing but a general storehouse of images without any *a priori* truth value. The poem concludes then with a question that simultaneously asserts its central vision as it seems to question its nature: 'And what rough beast [...] / Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?'.

The handling of negation in the poem is not reducible to the construction of a stable affirmative proposition. Although these are the opening moves of the poem, the negation that points to the outside or the unrepresentable components of the poem soon leads to an interrogation of what is affirmed in this negative gesture, namely the poetic sign that can be sublimated into an abstract and autonomous symbol or into the objectivity and clarity of a revelation. The language of the poem is threatened by a negativity that would frame it as inadequate for and unrepresentative of that which it attempts to signify - the non-referential and eternal order given form by symbols. This is not a negativity that can be framed only in terms of an unrepresentable or occluded object; instead, it also casts doubt on the representational and significatory potential of the language of the poem itself. The difficulty the poem has in validating its representations - a difficulty that is not, as has been shown, overcome in its discourse - indirectly suggests that these representations (and their medium) should be read in terms of uncertainty, and the failure of signification to give shape to its intended object. In this specific sense, the signs of the poem are inadequate to that which it attempts to represent. The poem interrogates its signifiers, while also rendering the (historical) referent unrepresentable. Considered as a linguistic utterance the language of the poem is more akin to what Maurice Blanchot in *The Writing of the Disaster* (1971, 1986) describes as '[r]uin of words, demise of writing, faintness faintly murmuring: what remains without remains (the fragmentary)' (1986: 33) than to the abstract clarity of symbols.

Negation in the poem leads not only to the construction of an autonomous and abstract linguistic sign, but also to a devalued writing, a writing that questions its capacity to refer to the unrepresentable (in mimetic terms) dimensions opened by its negation of historical reality; or, for that matter, to the truth of the world because it is continuously placed in doubt by the negativity that it performs.

* * *

From this perspective the rewriting effected by negation in the modernist work resists closure in an affirmative proposition - a closure that would be inherently Hegelian. As Daniel Fischlin remarks regarding Hegel's treatment of negativity: '[...] the wounds of the negative are decisively healed in the systematic metaphysical utterance of the absolute idealist' (1994: 9). It is, however, this healing of 'the wounds of negativity' that Lyotard (1984: 77) identifies in modernism when he suggests that the modernist work only gestures in the direction of negativity; that instead of incorporating and maintaining negativity in its signifying system (as postmodern literature does in his analysis) modernism replaces it with the experience of pure form or abstraction (a view shared by Mark C. Taylor (1992: 10-11)). Modernism would from this vantage point enact a negation of negativity (through a dialectical movement that ends in a pure affirmation) even as it employs it (as negation) as a mechanism of production. The ideological context of these readings of the negativity of literary modernism becomes clear when Fredric Jameson's account of the occlusion of historical and colonial realities in the modernist work is taken into consideration. Through the transformation of negation into an affirmative proposition the modernist work effects a totalization. It constructs itself as autonomous and self-originating, and thereby inflicts representational violence on that which is excluded from it totalizing structure. The modernist work in this analysis ultimately negates difference and alterity together with the performative negativity which its negation promises.

Understood in these terms the negativity of literary modernism frames it as an extension of the project of philosophical modernity as both Mark C. Taylor and Robert B. Pippin in *Modernism as a Philosophical Problem: On the Dissatisfaction of European High Culture* (1991: 16-45) would have it - and then especially the critical aspects of the work of Immanuel Kant. Used here not in its general sense of merely criticizing, Kant's criticism contains an interplay of differentiation and self-grounding. In the *Foundation of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785, 1969) this criticism is described in terms of the activity of reason: 'Man now finds in himself a faculty by means of which he differentiates himself from all other things, even from himself in so far as he is affected by objects, and that faculty is reason' (1969: 80). The task of criticism is two-fold: on the one hand it distinguishes and separates the subject from that which it experiences as difference, and, on the other, in a complementary movement, the subject is determined as that which is identical with itself -

autonomous in other words (Pippin, 1991: 56). Implicitly this is a movement out of a world structured in terms of difference through a negation of this difference. This negation of a previously existing difference (which is the same movement as the negation of a primary work) produces the subject as an autonomous, self-grounding subject.

The negativity that Jameson and Lyotard (but then also Benjamin and Lukács) associate with the modern work is, from this perspective, a critical negativity. Jonathan Culler, in his essay "On the Negativity of Modern Poetry" (1989: 189-208), defines it as such when he speaks of the negativity that '[...] in the critical tradition [...] reduces heterogeneity to prepare for aesthetic recuperation, the negativity that assembles or resolves' (1989: 203). In his essay "Modernist Painting" Clement Greenberg accordingly writes that 'I conceive of Kant as the first real Modernist. The essence of Modernism lies, as I see it, in the use of the characteristic methods of a discipline to criticize the discipline itself' (1966: 101). Critical negativity, or, then, negativity in the 'critical tradition' that Culler speaks of, functions as a negation of that which is perceived to belong to the exteriority (whether spatial or temporal) of the work to establish the purity and autonomy of the work itself. Implicitly the task of this critical negativity would be self-definition. The work is affirmed against structures of alterity and difference. This function of criticism (in the Kantian sense of the term) is explicated by Phillippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy in their examination of German Romanticism (which they see as the historical origin of modernism) in *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism* (1978, 1988). According to them:

> Criticism itself must be, is expected to be, practical and productive, if not of works then at least of capacities to make work; it must be formative, not in the pedagogical sense of the term [...] but in the specific sense of the formation of putting-into-form (1988: 114).

Criticism replaces the picture of the work as reproductive of a prior identity with the understanding of the work as being constructed by a 'critical identity' (1988: 112). As Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy remark: 'Criticism at the origin is also the construction of the work at the origin, for art itself must always be [...] the construction of its work' (1988: 110). The work is constructed and completed by its positing of itself as auto-constitutive, containing its own point of origination and agency of determination. The construction of this critical identity occurs, as in Kant, through the negation of that which stands antithetically to the work (as occurs in Kant's criticism), and (in a complementary movement that dialectically negates this negation) through the affirmation and construction of the work as self-grounded and self-constitutive.

To view the modern work as arising from a critical negation is, from this perspective, to see the work as being, in the first instance, self-determined, and in the second instance

(which cannot be separated from the first) as the ground which functions as the origin of it own representations. Similarly, the negation is determined as a critical negativity: it opens not into the performance of the termination of writing and presentation, but functions instead as an agent of determination and constitution. Its negativity is itself negated through the affirmation and constitution of the work. The interplay between the primary and secondary work ends then in the occlusion of the former as the latter, through negation, is framed as the origin of its own representations (which was also Flaubert's central insight).

Still, as Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy note, this projected determination of the work as self-constitutive and self-originating never reaches a conclusion: 'The Same, here, never reaches its sameness' (1988: 123). The work is never completed as an idealistic affirmative proposition, '[s]omething always seems to be missing, either due to a lack of Concept or to an excess of Form' (1988: 124). This failure (or negativity, as Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy's invocation of that which is 'missing' and 'lack' would suggest), which they discuss in terms of the 'equivocity' of the work, authorizes Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy to speak simultaneously of the 'absent and absolute Work' (1988: 126). Presence and absence simultaneously, as Flaubert and Benjamin have shown, mark the work. To negate a prior or primary work in the construction of a secondary work is not only to create an affirmative proposition but also to put this proposition in doubt. The critical negativity of the modernist work is then again refigured, not as a negation lapsing into an affirmative but as a reversal of this trajectory. The affirmed figure is questioned by the further apparent negation of this figure. Aptly the negativity of modernism appears both as an intertwining of negative and affirmative moments, as well as an incessant reversal between these moments. Its turnings make it incommensurable with itself, it constantly departs from and returns to its own nature as that which indicates that which is unsaid or unsayable. In this sense it restores to the critical act (from this vantage point a form of negation) not only its meaning in Kantian terms as a gesture of self-formation, but also, as J. Hillis Miller points out, its original meaning as a derivation of the Greek *krinein*, or "to divide or sift" (1995: xiii).

This would suggest that the negativity in modernism requires a more generous reading than Lyotard and Jameson would afford it. What would be necessary for a more inclusive reading of the use of the negativity in literary modernism would be a conception of negation (found in Flaubert and Benjamin) that, at the very least, does not presuppose its coming to rest in an affirmative turn, and at most would trace the subsistence of the negativity in the work through and beyond this affirmative moment - a subsistence that would radically question the conflation of literary modernism with philosophical modernity in the form given to it by Taylor and Lyotard. This understanding of critical negativity as both productive and as the writing of loss is close to what Jacques Derrida in his book *Aporias* (1993) describes as 'the experience of the *aporia*' (1993: 19):

> How to justify the choice of *negative form* (*aporia*) to designate a duty that, through the impossible or the impracticable, nonetheless announces itself in an affirmative fashion? [...] The affirmation that announced itself through a negative form was therefore the necessity of experience itself, the experience of the *aporia* as endurance or as passion, as interminable resistance or remainder. [...] A plural logic of the *aporia* thus takes shape. It appears to be paradoxical enough so that the partitioning [*partage*] among multiple figures of the *aporia* does not oppose figures to each other, but instead installs the haunting of the one in the other (1993: 19-20).

What Derrida describes is a handling of the negative elements in discourse that, in the first instance, is based on the 'experience of the *aporia*', or, then, the experience of the critical negation from which the discourse emerges. In the second instance, however, this emergent discourse does not, however, appear as either purely negative in character or affirmative. An affirmation is 'announced', but in 'a negative form'. The *aporia* or negation initiates in the discourse an interplay between negativity and affirmation that does not allow for the establishment of a rigorous opposition between these figures. The one continuously lapse into the other, the insubstantial presence of the one always inhabits the other.

This interplay of negativity and affirmation is one of the distinguishing features of Roy Fuller's translation of Charles Baudelaire's famous second "Spleen" from *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857, 1997):

> More memories than the fossils of the ages...
>
> A chest of drawers stuffed with novels, pages
> Of verse, love letters, writs, old balance sheets,
> Forgotten curls of hair wrapped in receipts
> Hides fewer secrets than my poignant skull.
> That is a pyramid, a massive hull,
> Rottener than mass graves of despotic states.
> - I am a cemetery moonlight hates,
> Where the long worm, remorse, extends its dread
> And feeds on the most precious of my dead.
> I am a boudoir full of browning blooms
> Whose fashions are those of excavated tombs.
> Where naive pastels and Boucher's pale style
> Exude the faintness of an empty phial.
>
> Nothing as these lame days could go as slow,

When under heavy flakes of years of snow
That offspring of incuriousness, ennui,
Stretches as long as immortality.
- O life, your truthful visage now appears!
A stone reared in the midst of unknown fears,
Sightless, surrounded by a Gobi's patience,
A sphinx left by the world's migrations,
White on the map, whose dotty soul cries out
Only as twilight conjures dread from doubt
(1997: 89-90.).

One of the most persistently recurring movements that runs through the lyric is the rewriting of the 'I' that speaks the poem. The 'I' is distorted by a repeated reversal of inside and outside in the figures of the poem. This chiasmic reversal is the origin of some of the poem's most negative images: '- I am a cemetery moonlight hates' and 'I am a boudoir full of browning blooms / Whose fashions are those of excavated tombs,'. These personifications of external spaces are not just acts of *prosopopoeia* - the ascription of a face to the inanimate, absent or dead. They take part in a turning that ascribes subjectivity to the dead and inanimate, while internalizing in the consciousness of the lyrical 'I' the negativity encountered in the objects thus named as characteristic of the lyrical voice. The negativity, which is encountered in the framing of the self as being threatened by 'ennui', 'memories' and poignancy, is sublimated into an actual negation of the self, a depersonalization that prematurely grants the speaker his place among the non-living. The negation of the lyrical self as a personalized figure reaches hyperbolic heights in the last lines of the poem. Any possibility of reading the negation of the self as a purely metaphorical construction without epistemological validity is removed when the speaker exclaims:

- O life, your truthful visage now appears!
A stone reared in the midst of unknown fears,
Sightless, surrounded by a Gobi's patience,
A sphinx left by the world's migrations,
White on the map, whose dotty soul cries out
Only as twilight conjures dread from doubt.

The chiasmic undoing of the self, which is also then the undoing responsible for the proliferation of negative figures in the poem, comes to a rest in this final depersonalization. The speaker is identified with the sphinx, a blind and exiled figure, invisible on the map,

capable only of the ironic cry of a 'dotty soul' haunted by doubt. The self has, as prophesized earlier ('That is a pyramid, a massive hull'), been transformed into stone.

This final depersonalization of the lyrical 'I' is indicative of the motif behind Baudelaire's rewriting of the 'I' as a depersonalized self. At stake in this depersonalization is nothing less than what Baudelaire understands in "The Painter of Modern Life" (1863, 1964: 1-41) as the essential gesture of modernism, namely 'to distil the eternal from the transitory' (1964: 12). The 'I' as a transitory, fugitive figure is through its depersonalization replaced by the eternal figure of the sphinx, who is surrounded only by the 'Gobi's patience'. The 'I' is, in fact, sublimated as a figure not vulnerable to the procession of time, but is affirmed as an eternal figure. The passage from the present to the eternal effected in the figuration of the 'I' is, ultimately, Baudelaire's critical gesture in the poem. The negation of the 'I' as a subjective and transitory figure is an act of rewriting that re-figures this 'I' as the *a*temporal figure the poem closes with. The negation of the 'I' concludes with its hyperbolic affirmation.

The lines with which the poem finally brings its undoing of the transitory self to rest ('White on the map, whose dotty soul cries out / Only as twilight conjures dread from doubt') point directly towards the equivocity in the status of the secondary 'I' that this figuration opens in the lyric. This enigma can be framed simply in question form as "Who is speaking?". The trajectory of the poem has shifted the space of enunciation from the place occupied by the embattled lyrical 'I', to that of a sphinx surrounded by the Gobi deserts - a movement which, as has been suggested, cannot be read only in metaphorical terms. How can the self speak this destruction, its own passage into impersonality personified? Such a speech would be a literal (a qualification on which the poem appears to insist) impossibility, an absence giving subjective structure and intention to language. The obverse possibility, that the poem is an apocalyptic (understood here as the uncovering and revelation of eschatological truths) disclosure of the correspondence between the 'I' and the eternal, exiled voice of the ancient sphinx, encounters similar interpretative impossibilities. To speak from a position that is 'White on the map' is already to speak from an empty and unrepresentable position. It is an *a priori* introduction of the possibility of error and undecidability into the voice of the speaker. Accordingly, this negation of certainty stands, from this perspective, in an irreconcilable ironic tension with the exclamatory uncovering of a literal truth ('- O life, your truthful visage now appears!') that opens the possibility that the sphinx is the speaker of the lyric. This irony together with the semantic contradictions encountered when this perspective is entertained ('Boucher's pale style' and 'heavy flakes of years of snow' are figures of ennui that are incommensurable with this interpretation) would suggest that this interpretation is also contaminated by its own impossibility.

Both the personalized and depersonalized accounts of the 'I' of the poem encounter, as has been shown, a discourse of absence, contradiction and impossibility that casts doubt on the existence of the poem as the enunciation of a lyrical voice. Yet this positing of the origin

of the poem in a lyrical voice is not an interpretative act, but a performance of the poem's beginning enacted by the employment of the grammatical category of the "I" in the poem itself. The inevitable conclusion to be drawn from this is that the apocalyptic uncovering that the poem performs when it claims to uncover the true face of life is not a revelation of the depersonalized nature of the lyrical voice, a revelation responsible for both the interpretations constructed here around the nature of the lyrical 'I'. Rather it is an uncovering of the error inherent in the positing of either a personalized or depersonalized 'I' as a poetic origin or voice. From this vantage point the position from which the poem is spoken is not undecidably personalized or depersonalized but empty of reference to any actual, referential self. It is a linguistic space maintained only by the force of grammatical signifier - literally the presence of the 'I'. The significatory force of this reading, its effect on the poem, is that the lyric is framed, according to its own discourse, as impossible. At its origin there exists only an emptiness kept open by the indicative force of a grammatical pronoun. The poem then is structured as emerging from an enunciative space marked by the absence of a speaker understandable in terms of the lyrical 'I' - an *aporia* that it itself opens and maintains. The lyrical voice speaks silence, because it occupies a position prior to the coming into being of language. It is the appearance of a subjective agent distorted and uncovered as an *aporia* of origination from which nothing can emerge. The 'I' is the locus for the poem's performance of negativity.

Yet, the reading of the poem cannot be concluded here. An incommensurable figure to this interpretation remains. The poem still remains as a construct irreducible to silence or to the universal mechanisms of grammar. Neither of these points where the 'I' of the poem, its beginning, vanishes, can account for either the incessant production of imagery encountered in the poem, or for the powerful subjectivity that transforms boudoirs and cemeteries into landscapes complicit with the undoing and uncovering of the 'I'. From what position is this uncovering of the 'I' done? How can an illusory figure announce itself as such in the poem's apocalyptic moment? To restore this rift opened in the poem it is necessary to posit the existence of a doubled and divided lyrical subject. The 'I' that speaks the poem stands radically heterogeneous to the 'I' that is presented in the poem as the speaking subject. This division between an 'I' posited in language (the signifier which is the locus of the poem's negations) and an 'I' that accomplishes this positing, or the signified poetic voice, would, through the exclusion of the latter from the significations of the poem, restore its fragmented unity. The difficulty of this restorative act is that these two selves would be brought into contact with each other and assimilated into one another at the points in the lyric where the 'I' is not questioned but where it functions as a locus of subjectivity that effects transformations on the other signs of the work. At these intersections the inevitable conclusion of a reading of the lyric would be that there is no difference between the 'I' of grammar and the 'I' as subjective agency. The abyss of origination that the poem opens would then not be closed but

infinitely deepened. The only response left open, from this perspective, to the lyric's construction of its 'I' is to see it as deeply ironical - as containing within itself contradiction and oppositions that cannot be mediated. It is both the 'I' of grammar and the 'I' of lyrical subjectivity (two irreconcilable figures in the poem); it is both its own negation and its own affirmation. Roman Jakobson's comment in "Linguistics and Poetics" (1958, 1987: 62-95) regarding ambiguity is worth repeating here: 'Ambiguity is an intrinsic, inalienable character of any self-focussed message, briefly, a corollary feature of poetry' (1987: 85). Although Jakobson's remark is not directly concerned with negativity or the effects of negation, it underlines the equivocity that lies at the heart of the self-reflexive act of negation when it is considered as a form of rewriting. By rewriting the 'I' of his lyric, Baudelaire opens this figure to contradictory readings or interpretations.

The movement that has been traced in Baudelaire's lyric is inherently the movement of negativity outlined by Freud and Derrida, even if it has been complicated by the specificity of the poetic work. The 'I' (undone in this poem not by an emptying out of memories but through a series of reversals) is constructed through a series of distortion that strips from it its status as the subjective lyrical 'I' that speaks the poem. Through this movement the poem does not, however, only posit the 'I' as an absence or, obversely, as the eternal 'I'. Nor is the lyrical 'I' simply excluded from the poem as its negative antithesis, which would indirectly affirm the presentation of the 'I' as a grammatical category. The 'I' is maintained as a distorted 'I'. It is both the lyrical 'I' and its visible undoing. In Benjamin's terms it resembles both these figures without being identical with either. This divided 'I' is the rift from which the poem emerges, it is the opening which mediates the impossible passage from negativity to affirmation and figuration, a passage which is indistinguishable in the poem from its reversal.

* * *

This then, is primarily the equivocal paradox of the negativity in modernism with which this study is concerned: the duality of the critical act of negation - it is both an act of writing that is responsible for distortion and the introduction of negativity into the work, and a mechanism which conditions and constructs the affirmative propositions of the modernist work - that points towards an ambiguity in the function of negativity. From this perspective negation would simultaneously perform a negativity and constitute an affirmation. It would function both as a negation of a prior or primary work and as the figure that anticipates and gives rise to the engendering of a new and secondary work. This negativity - which should be understood as critical in the sense given to this term by modernity even though the equivocity of the negation interrogates the felicity of this identification - functions, first of all, to differentiate the work or discourse from a prior affirmation. The *aporia* opened by this negative differentiation is surpassed and sublimated, however, by the literary figures that

emerge from, and are grounded in and affirmed by this fissure in the signifying system of the work. The initial negation is indirectly negated to serve as an affirmation. Negativity is itself occluded by being transformed into an affirmative proposition. Together with this occlusion, the negativity of the secondary work is also paradoxically maintained in its confines. What takes place, in denial of the logical law of non-contradiction, is a simultaneous making and unmaking, figuration and disfiguration, affirmation and negation.

Posited as emerging from an absence, or negation, the work produced by negation is marked, from both the perspective of the reader and the language of the work, by the instability of its significations. While the work does signify, even if it signifies negativity, the act of signification is problematized - as the equivocity that mark the poems by Yeats and Baudelaire indicates. To understand negation as a form of rewriting is also, it appears, to take account of the capriciousness of the secondary work produced by this negative gesture. This study is an attempt to explore the consequences of this for the reading of the works in question. The modernist work is interpreted in part, as Friedrich suggested, through the identification and reading of different forms and functions of negativity such as those outlined in this chapter. This study is an exploration of some of the ways these contradictory forms function inside the context of some modernist work, and inhibit the readings of these works as consisting of only a series of affirmative propositions. Every work to be considered in this dissertation contains a complex weaving of the various forms and effects of negativity outlined here and then, obviously, not only these various forms and functions. In each case there are negations relating to the work or discourse itself as well as forms of negations playing a role in the relationship between the work or discourse and its outside - a represented beyond, social and historical reality, other discourse, other works, a structure of alterity, a theological or mental sublimation. Also, in every work to be considered these negations (or operational negativity) of a present or implied primary work give rise to the complex configurations of secondary works consisting of affirmative propositions and instances of negativity that question these affirmations. In every instance of negativity to be encountered the questions that will be posed are: How does this negativity function? What interpretative and methodological assumptions will allow for a reading of this function?

Each chapter of this study attempts to elucidate these matters for one specific work, by exploring the workings of negativity as fully as possible in it. It has been suggested above that negativity plays a role in determining the relationship between the work and that which stands in an extrinsic relation to it, whether this, to extend the list, be the reader, the author or the represented world. While this relationship between the work and an outside frequently portrayed as unrepresentable will play a part in the study, the central concern here is not with the relation between the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of the work, but rather with the functioning and effect of negativity in the language of the work. Equally, while the nature of negativity does draw attention to the historical relationship between literary modernism and

modernity as exemplified by the German idealism of the nineteenth century as has been shown, these historical concerns generally fall outside the specific scope of this study. When the question of literary history enters into this study as it does explicitly in the chapter on Samuel Beckett's response to the work of Marcel Proust in *Krapp's Last Tape* (as mediated through his critical engagement with Proust) it does so not in the form of a discussion regarding the relationship between different periods, but in the shape of an examination of the intertextual relationship between two different works constructed in negative terms.

My readings in this study focus not primarily on what is signified or represented inside each particular work, but rather on how the act of signification takes place inside a context determined extensively by the presence of negativity. This perspective demands a focus on the nature and role of language in a specific work. Whether this is the explicit focus of a section - as occurs in the reading of Marcel Proust's treatment of the signified in *Remembrance of Things Past*, or the negativity inherent in James Joyce's handling of the signifier in *Ulysses* - or implicit as in the chapter devoted to the temporal negativity given form to in *Krapp's Last Tape*, the primary question remains that of how negativity takes part in the act of signification. These readings, moreover, do not claim to account for all the possible permutations of negativity inside literary modernism, nor do they claim to render the entire edifice of modernism in resolutely negative terms. Even so, the concern of this dissertation in its readings of Proust and Joyce's works is the role of negativity in discourses generally associated with modernism such as the desire for epistemological certainty, autonomy, origins and renewal. Whether any of these readings can be generalized to account for more than the works specifically addressed here is a matter left entirely to the judgement of other readers. Equally, each of the works discussed here has not been selected for its canonical value, nor for its centrality to any possible theoretical construction of literary modernism, but simply for being the best examples of the appearance and function of specific forms of negativity that I know of. If my general hypothesis - that the theoretical interpretation of the nature of modernism's critical negativity outlined in this chapter accounts for its function inside the works to be discussed - proves to be true, then it does so only for the works in which it has been shown to do so. The rest remains speculation.

Chapter One

The Unmaking of Proust: Negations and Errors in *Remembrance of Things Past*

> We guess as we read, we create; everything starts from an initial error; those that follow (and this applies not only to the reading of letters and telegrams, not only to all readings), extraordinary as they might appear to a person who has not begun at the same starting-point, are all quite natural
>
> - Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past* (Vol. III) (1913-1927).

> This destructive moment, which ceaselessly involves a sensible presence in equivocation and dispute [...] is obviously the actual method of *Recherche du temps perdu*
>
> - Gérard Genette, "Proust Palimpsest" (1966).

Once a particular literary work - Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*[1] - is designated as being produced by a 'destructive' method and as questioning the act of reading as an 'error', both the status of its propositions as mimetic representations of a referential signified and the epistemological felicity of these representations are put into doubt. If Proust's work may itself be described as a series of destructive, negative gestures, what then in the work still threatens the itinerary of reading as the unmediated decoding of affirmative linguistic configurations? To read Proust becomes a more remote possibility once we try to name the 'error', epistemological negativity, or 'destructive moment' that inhabit the event of this writing. If Proust is read at times as containing a sort of destructive negativity, this negativity bears directly upon the relation between his figures and their decoding, the methods whereby the work's propositions come into being and their status as conveyors of truth and epistemological certainty.

This dissertation attempts to trace exactly this interplay between the role of negativity in the establishment of the work's representations, and the influence of this negativity on the status of these representations. Although this chapter takes the first step in the analysis of this configuration in a specific modernist work (Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*) it is also concerned with the relation between this discourse of negativity and several discourses associated with literary modernism. After all, considered in the terms used so far, Proust's work exists at the intersection of a number of discourses generally understood as being present in literary modernism. If, as Genette suggests, Proust's work proceeds through the 'destruction' of a 'sensible presence'; or, rather, to employ the terms used in the previous chapter of this dissertation, it attempts to negate the referential signified its discourse appears

---

[1] I shall refer to the work throughout this dissertation by volume and page number, for example (I: 123).

to be grounded in, then, indirectly this would indicate that Proust's work takes part in what Gerald Bruns (among others) has described as the withdrawal of the modernist work from reality - its turn towards non-referential modes of signification. If this common move of the modernist literary work appears to place Proust in the same literary lineage as, for instance, Gustave Flaubert (whom, as has been shown, also understands his work as taking part in this retreat from reality) then Proust's description of any discourse as necessarily taking place under the sign of error further compounds its ties with literary modernism. As Brian McHale has suggested in *Postmodern Fiction* (1991), a central aspect of the body of work of literary modernism is its preoccupation with epistemological questions where this preoccupation usually takes the form of a search for epistemological certitude from inside a context governed by epistemological uncertainty and ambivalence (1991: 13). If negativity (or, in its active form, negation) plays an integral role in the putting into doubt of the work's representations - as has been shown in relation to W.B. Yeats's "The Second Coming" - then it inevitably raises questions regarding the epistemological felicity of the work it is present in.

The central concern of this chapter is to discuss Proust's work in terms of epistemological ambivalence, or 'error', and, the withdrawal of the work from the world. This discussion, as will be shown, inevitably leads to the problem of the role of negativity in both these discourses, and in the general ambit of Proust's novel. Proust's work, it will be argued, through these different discourses ultimately questions the possibility of literature functioning as either a source or a representation of direct and unmediated experience. Obversely, this questioning will be shown to be inextricably linked to the critical function of negativity as being active in the establishment of the work's representations. Through the linking of two different moments located in the work by the act of negation - the operational negativity which initiates the movement between a primary, or prior, figure and its secondary representation - Proust succeeds both in establishing a new representation that cannot be read in referential terms, and in putting the epistemological status of this representation in doubt.

* * *

Negativity inscribes the possibility of 'error' in a discourse, disrupting the 'signifying fixity' (1994: 1) of the work, as Daniel Fischlin remarks. Thus Paul de Man, in "Reading (Proust)" (1979: 57-78), speaks of Proust's work as narrating '[...] the flight of meaning, but this does not prevent its own meaning from being, incessantly, in flight' (1979: 78). Not only does Proust's discourse contain a thematic narrative concerned with the partition of truth and representation, but this negativity which blocks easy epistemological verification is also the 'error' which forms and marks the Proustian discourse. Even the adoption of the authorial name 'Marcel' by the narrator of Proust's work may be read as the introduction of such an error. An unquantifiable uncertainty is introduced into the work regarding the relation

between the life of the author and the lived life of his double: 'Marcel'. It is also this uncertainty regarding the relation between a representation and its understanding that informs another narrative in the novel, namely that of jealousy (whether it be Swann's jealousy of Odette, or the narrator's jealousy of his 'captive' Albertine), the overcoming of which Marcel revealingly refers to as the exorcism of 'my hallucinations' (III: 14). Along the same lines the question can be posed whether the narrator's love for Albertine arises from her 'great qualities of intelligence and heart, and of the defects of character, which Albertine [...] had added to a nature that formerly could scarcely have been said to exist' (III: 63), or, from the 'superimposition [...] of the successive images which Albertine had been for me' (III: 63). Is the seductiveness of Albertine located, from Marcel's perspective, in the activity of signs, independent, but constitutive, of her? In other words, is it grounded in the error that mistakes a subjective sign for its object? Or is it grounded in the reality of her existence (as represented in the novel), in other words, in a direct epistemological relationship between her and the signs which reflect her in the consciousness of Marcel? To pose these questions is indirectly to ask whether the signs that constitute Marcel's consciousness reflect or constitute his reality. Should his mental constructs be regarded as rewritings of the world that is figured in the novel as existing outside his consciousness?

While Marcel's various personal and intimate relationships with the various characters in Proust's novel seem to give a sense of concreteness to the problem of the conflict between epistemological uncertainty and negativity - it is treated as part and parcel of the narratives of love and society - I will in this chapter mostly focus on the discursive configuration that determines what Paul Ricoeur, in the second volume of *Time and Narrative* (1984, 1985), refers to as the interlinked dual poles of *Remembrance of Things Past*'s narrative: the narrator's attempts to recover through mnemonic signs and images the presence of lost time, and the realization of his vocation as a writer (1985: 144). This configuration, as will be shown, subsumes and transcends in importance the various narratives of love, friendship and society in the novel, and is also a possible locus for the investigation of negativity in the work. My intention is to read Proust's work in search of a moment where negativity becomes the inevitable marker of both the method whereby his work is produced, and the destructive error that blocks an epistemological discourse concerned with attaining truth and interpretative felicity.

How then to read the negativity identified here with Proust's work? Uncompleted at the time of his death on 18 November 1922, Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* is already historically marked by a complex network of gaps, interruptions and incomplete revisions. It is part of Proust's literary legacy that his vast work should be read as being conditioned by this negativity of the unwritten and that which will remain unwritable. While Proust's death produced this negativity in the work, it remains, however, exterior to the circumference of the work. Unreadable in the work, it cannot be given adequate interpretative

shape in relation to the form and content of the novel, except as the dead-end that brings the writing of the novel to a halt. It is best understood as an arbitrary interruption of an unrepresented and unrepresentable time and history into the configurations that constitute the work. Like the relation of the life of the author to the life of his double in the novel - the narrator Marcel - Proust's death cannot in any adequate theoretical way be treated as a referential figure in the discourse of *Remembrance of Things Past*. It is, from inside work, the absent - or, rather, unwritten - origin of a silence that is located by its very nature beyond the reach of interpretation and criticism.

To what extent, then, does Proust's work authorize a reading that would locate a negativity existing beyond, or rather prior, to the point where reading is terminated? What negativity still remains to be read in the work itself? In what terms should this negativity be understood? The negativity of Proust's discourse - its discourse composed of, among others, misrecognitions and negations - seems occasionally to become the overt subject of the narrative. One example are the 'misperceptions and distortions' (1999: 660) that Edward J. Hughes in "Proustian Metamorphosis: The Art of Distortion in *A La Recherche Du Temps Perdu*" (1999: 660-672) identifies in the opening sequence of Proust's work. The slow awakening of Marcel from a dream-world into consciousness contains a moment that negates his own identity. His own self becomes invisible to him as he identifies with a church, the quartet and the rivalry that historically links Francois I and Charles V (I: 3). These distortions of his identity, entirely possible and plausible in the dream, linked by Proust to Marcel reading himself to sleep (I: 3), appear incomprehensible from the vantage point of the waking world. The world of dreams, in which, as Walter Benjamin remarks in "The Image of Proust", 'the true surrealist face of existence breaks through' (1973: 207), is both the crucible in which identity undergoes a transformation, and the configuration of signs that cannot be comprehended from the anterior space of the waking world.

This same incomprehensibility marks, for instance, the novel's representation of characters. In the case of such characters as Albertine and M. de Charlus this disruption occurs through the narrator's discovery of their homosexual affairs with Jupien and Andrée, which, in the case of M. de Charlus, he describes as 'a transformation in M. de Charlus as complete and as immediate as if he had been touched by a magician's wand' (II: 635). The 'magician's wand' that transforms the characters is the realization on the part of the narrator that aspects of their character have previously been invisible to him. The effect of this on the reader is that the characters in the novel often appear as bifurcated and doubled figures consisting of irreconcilable and unmediated differences. Marcel himself registers surprise at the appearance of Rachel, formerly Saint-Loup's mistress and formerly a prostitute, at the final gathering at Mme de Guermantes's reception (herself not the original Mme de Guermantes to which the reader was introduced, but the remarried Mme Verdurin) as a celebrated actress giving a poetry recital (III: 1053). It is their identification (as signs) with a

specific immutable epistemological referent that is in question in these transitions. Proust's tale sometimes appears to be exactly about the negativity and errors that, as have been postulated here, define its discourse.

Paul Ricoeur locates a similar thematic narrative of errors in Proust's work that, although epistemological and optical in nature, is indirectly overcome by the linguistic construct of metaphor. He speaks of 'optical errors' (1985: 149), of a 'sense of misunderstanding' (1985: 149), and a discourse 'not simply marked by the sign of death but also by that of non-recognition' (1985: 149). Yet Ricoeur draws back from this possible terrain for the analysis of negativity in Proust's work by reading the introduction of Gilberte's daughter to Marcel (III: 982) as a scene of recognition that both exorcises the discourse of error from the work, and unifies the novel by reconciling its two diverging vectors or ways (as identified by Marcel): that of Swann and that of the Guermantes (1985: 149). According to Ricoeur, '[t]his crucial text establishes the equivalence between metaphor and recognition, making the first the logical equivalent of the second' (1985: 149). Through the identical operations of metaphor and recognition Proust overcomes the partitions and errors in his work. The recuperative regaining of time which brings Proust's search to a close 'is the metaphor that encloses difference "in the necessary links of a well wrought style". It is also the recognition, which crowns [...] vision' (1985: 151). Through the interlinked figures of recognition, metaphor, and time regained, Proust, from Ricoeur's perspective, overcomes the negativity of error and partition that marks his work. For this discursive negativity he substitutes the clear vision of time regained that, through the mediation of metaphor, allows for the fulfilment of Marcel's vocation as writer. Gilles Deleuze, in "Signs and Thought" (1972, 1987: 131-143), accordingly observes that the 'Search is oriented towards the future, not the past' (1987: 132); it is the narrative of the narrator's 'apprenticeship to signs' (1987: 132) with the ultimate aim of realizing his development into the author of a novel that would duplicate the narrative of his apprenticeship. *Remembrance of Things Past* is then marked by both a final epistemological overcoming of error, and the surmounting of the various forms of difference and disjunctive configurations that threaten the unity of the work. The end of the work affirms its realization of unity and epistemological certitude as the grounds for, as Ricoeur would have it, the complementary realization of Marcel's vocation as an author, and then specifically, as the author of the work just completed by the reader.

* * *

For the negativity of Proust's work to be read as more than a transitory state of discourse that is itself negated in the completion of the work (through the affirmations accomplished by the different discourses that Paul Ricoeur identifies), several figures must then be rethought: the unity of the passage from Marcel's recovery of lost time to the realization of his vocation as a

writer; the strange repetitive doubling that makes the narrative of this passage the narrative of the novel Marcel will write at the end of Proust's work; and, above all, the completion of the Proustian search in the 'contemplation of the essence of things' (III: 909) or an unveiled truth. Each of these resists the reading of Proust's work that would frame it in terms of error or misrecognition, disjunction and partition, destructive methodology, or any other form of sustained negativity. Thus Genette - in relation to the success of Proust's narrative concerned with the unveiling of truth (which is also the truth of the work of art) - suggests that '[...] the negative experience that was to be no more than a stage in the overall progress of the work sweeps it up whole and entire into a movement that is the reverse of the one proposed' (1982: 225). To uncover the errors inherent to the Proustian discourse it becomes necessary to read this discourse in a manner that contradicts its overt intentions and narratives. Proust's negativity must be shown to subsist beyond, and in, the affirmative realizations that appears to bring the play of errors and negations to an halt.

The paradigmatic example of this subsistence of error occurs in the second book of *Remembrance of Things Past - Within a Budding Grove* (I: 465-1021) - during a trip taken by the narrator through the countryside surrounding the sea-side town of Balbec. Viewing three ordinary trees, the young Marcel observes that

> I could not succeed in reconstructing the place from which they had been as it were detached. But I felt that it had been familiar to me once; so that, my mind having wavered between some distant year and the present moment, Balbec and its surrounding began to dissolve and I wondered whether the whole of this drive was not make-believe, Balbec a place to which I had never gone save in imagination [...] I looked at the three trees; I could see them plainly, but my mind felt that they were concealing something which it could not grasp, as when an object is placed out of our reach, so that our fingers, stretched out at arm's-length, can only touch for a moment its outer surface, without managing to take hold of anything (I: 771).

The scene opened by this passage functions in Proust's work as moment marked by its failure to recover lost time; or, then, its inability to present the 'familiar' space, which Marcel attempts to recollect. Later offered as a correlative to the moment in which time is regained by the narrator (III: 899), it subsists, due to some error on the part of Marcel, in the novel as a moment where the possibility of this recovery existed without actually taking place. The discourse of the passage yokes together two distinct narratives: in the first instance, Marcel's failure to synthesize the three trees either with the surrounding country-side of Balbec or with an object of memory introduces a motif of epistemological failure into the passage. This epistemological failure is, however, grounded in a second narrative of negativity. Marcel's epistemological uncertainty is to be resolutely understood in terms of a negativity related to

that which remains invisible or unrepresented. The trees demarcate a space 'out of reach' for Marcel. This beyond is, however, only pointed to as a space out of reach, concealing something which the narrator 'could not grasp'. These are the ratios of a negativity that are understood in terms of that which is not representable - the unsayable and the unsaid that Budick and Iser refer to, or rather in Marcel's instance, the invisible. This unrepresentable space beyond the signifiers of Marcel's vision - a space paradoxically connotated by the passage - is the lost affirmative space of verifiable experience - identified by Benjamin (1973: 206) as the space in which a direct correlation exists between the signifiers and referential signifieds experienced in the work of remembrance. The act of destruction or negation, which 'detached' the trees from their original space, disrupts the relation between epistemological experience and the object of that experience, thereby creating this sense of an unrepresented object. Negation, here active in the play of vision (as an agency of occlusion and demarcation), is framed as a moment of loss and destruction. Marcel's view of the trees is not grounded in the presence of a verifiable signified; instead, it detaches the viewed object from exactly such a ground thereby activating an epistemological discourse that can only be experienced as inadequate in the face of the negativity opened by the gesture of negation. Jacques Derrida, in "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials" (1987, 1989: 3-70), describes an analogous moment to this epistemological failure when he finds the assertion that 'every predicative language is inadequate' (1989: 6) to be the central trait of a discourse of negativity. The epistemological failure experienced in relation to the three trees then spreads through the passage, leading to the erosion of his certainty regarding the place he finds himself in, and giving rise to the statement that 'Balbec [is] a place to which I had never gone save in imagination'.

However, Marcel's musings on the three trees open the way for a continuation of this reading inside a literary context:

> Balbec and its surroundings began to dissolve and I wondered whether the whole of this drive were not a make-believe, Balbec a place to which I had never gone save in imagination, Mme de Villeparis is a character in a story and the three old trees the reality which one recaptures on raising one's eyes from the book which one has been reading and which describes an environment into which one has come to believe that one has been bodily transported [...] I chose rather to believe that they were phantoms of the past, dear companions of my childhood, vanished friends who were invoking our common memories (I: 771-773).

What occurs in this passage is a rumination on the nature of the work of fiction in the face of a negativity that points to the beyond of representation - the unrepresentable or unsayable which through the signs of literature can only be apprehended as an object beyond reach. This

rumination is significantly portrayed in terms of an interruption; the reader is distracted from the work, he or she is confronted by the reality 'which one recaptures on raising one's eyes from the book which one has been reading'. The interruption uncovers the work of fiction for what it is, an error, a series of signs that can be mistaken for reality but that cannot be equated with it. Negation with its attendant performance of negativity unveils the purely literary, and therefore linguistic, nature of the literary sign, a sign which can only be taken for invoking a real object located in the world through the mystified identifications of the imagination which seems to transport the reader 'bodily' into the work. The unrepresentable beyond is transformed into a raised or sublimated sign of the real. This unrepresentable space is then simply more real because it exists beyond (and outside) inadequate linguistic and epistemological constructs. Simultaneous with the demystification of the work's constructs as literary signs, a beyond is pointed to by the work that is more real and immediate than the representation of these signs. Linguistic and epistemological narratives of this beyond are by definition filled with errors, because they cannot approximate or give an account of its nature. Writing and vision are inadequate constructs.

Marcel's narration cannot sustain this unveiling, however, and moves into a series of restitutions which attempts to replace this realization with representations of the beyond that would make it legible in terms of his corresponding experience: 'they were phantoms of the past, dear companions of my childhood, vanished friends who were invoking our common memories'. This is then, finally, the secondary work produced in the wake of a negation. It can perhaps best be explained by a detour through Neil Hertz's notion of blockage, explored in his "The Notion of Blockage in the Literature of the Sublime" (1985: 40-59). Hertz speaks in this essay of a moment in the encounter with the sublime (understood by him in the terms outlined by Immanuel Kant and Longinus) where 'an indefinite and disarrayed sequence is resolved (at whatever sacrifice) into a one-to-one confrontation, when numerical excess can be converted into that supererogatory identification with the blocking agent [...]' (1985: 53). For Hertz the epistemological uncertainty that is part of the sublime experience is resolved when the subject identifies with exactly that which produces this uncertainty - 'the blocking agent' that disrupts and problematizes epistemological certainty. A new affirmative proposition is constructed that equates the self with that which has previously hindered its mental movement. This latter figure is through this movement defused as a threat to the activities of the self's consciousness. A new figure emerges that both conflates the subject with that which has previously threatened it, and renders both terms of this equation in affirmative terms. '[T]he moment of blockage', Hertz remarks, 'is a confirmation of the unitary status of the self' (1985: 53). Proust arrives at a similar affirmation that replaces - as a new construct - the negativity previously present in the passage. Proust restores the affirmative status of his discourse by framing the negativity he has constructed in the narrative of the passage - its 'blocking agent', in Hertz's terms - as a temporal and mnemonic

absence in Marcel's consciousness. The temporal absence invoked here in relation to lost and missing friends is easily crossed and rendered legible by an act of remembering. It becomes a page to be written on by memory, thereby restoring to Marcel the power of his mental faculties. The unrepresentable beyond Proust invokes is affirmed as a mnemonic sign that, on the one hand, connotes, rather than describes, the narrator's past, and, on the other, is reformulated as existing in his consciousness rather than in a location external to it. This passage from negativity to affirmation is the production of a secondary work that occurs in the passage. It takes place through the rewriting of an earlier, subsumed scenario whose inherent negativity is itself negated in the passage to an affirmation.

Yet, the awareness of this affirmation as being another fiction or a misrecognition is retained. Marcel describes its performance as a choice, a choice made after several restitutive substitutions, such as have already been cited, have been considered and discarded (I: 772-773). Taken as such these affirmative propositions are inherently a subjective inscription, another error in a long line of fictional misrecognition and failures of interpretation. They remain inadequate in the face of an unrepresentable beyond understood in terms of the real as authorized by the novel. The only place in which the play of negativity in the discourse is brought to a halt is in the mind of Marcel, and even here this overcoming is understood as a subjective and groundless choice. To read this overcoming as belonging to the general discourse of the narrative would be to share in Marcel's conscious error. Instead, the negativity lingers on and casts doubt on the constructs of subjectivity of the narrator. There is in the novel no epistemology based on verifiable and literal experience that offers an easy mediation between the image of the trees and the memories of absent friends. The conflation of these two figures is, in rhetorical terms, a catachresis - a 'metaphor which names something that previously had no name' (Culler, 1981, 1983: 205). Indirectly, this indicates why these constructions of the work remain predicated by notions such as misrecognition and error. There is no possibility in a catachresis of relating a figure to its ground in an interpretative act. The referential signified of the catachresis remains absent, thereby foreclosing any epistemological movement that would interpret the signifier according to the signified or the sign according to its ground. The figure Marcel constructs remains marked by error because it is an imposition upon, and a renaming of, an absence that cannot be rendered in terms of any epistemological or linguistic construct that would frame it solely in terms of presence and affirmation. The unsaid and unsayable can only be named through a process of error and misrecognition - the features of fiction, as Marcel would have it.

* * *

The turning away from the world towards Marcel's consciousness as the restitutive agent of the negativity played out in this narrative from *Within a Budding Grove* foreshadows a similar

turn at the end of *Time Regained* (III: 709-1107), that can serve as an entry point into its configuration of time regained, the realization of a vocation and the achievement of truth or epistemological certitude. The privileged figure for the reversal of the negative experience of lost time into time regained (and the realization of Marcel's vocation) is, surprisingly for a novel ostensibly concerned with the intricacies of memory, a spatial configuration structured according to the antithetical figures of inside and outside. For Proust the space of affirmation and recovery is also the space of the contracted interior and its privileged exponent - the consciousness of the narrator. Complementary to Marcel's realization of his vocation as a writer at the end of *Remembrance of Things Past*, the spatial topography of the novel - once extended and multiplied by among others the lines that marked the ways of Swann and the family Guermantes - undergoes a process of reduction and contraction. Voluntarily separated from society ('a sacrifice of easier duties' (III: 1035)), attempting to forsake his social obligations (most now 'happily forgotten' (III: 1098)), Marcel turns to the solitude and isolation of the night (III: 1101) to compose his '*Thousand and One Nights* [...] of another age' (III: 1102). Here the narrative of literary production is posited as being privileged above, and transcending the various narratives of love and society.

This reduction of lived space reaches its apotheosis at the end of *Time Regained* when Marcel sinks into the 'vast dimension which I had not known myself to possess' (III: 1106) in which time is finally recaptured upon hearing the sound of bells at the house of Prince de Guermantes, bells which correspond to the garden bell at Combray:

> [...] I was obliged to block my ears to the conversation which were proceeding between the masked figures all around me, for in order to get nearer to the sound of the bell and to hear it better it was into my own depths that I had to re-descend. And this could only be because its peal had always been there, inside me, and not this sound only but also, between that distant moment and the present one [...] the whole of the past which I was not aware that I carried about with me (III: 1105).

With the represented space of the novel reduced to and confined in the consciousness of Marcel the continuity between the narrator and his past is finally established by the atemporal pealing of bells. It is this continuity that creates for him the possibility of accomplishing his work. The possibility of the work emerges not only from this reduction of the expanse of the novel to the 'depths' of Marcel, but also from the passage of figures into this interior. Marcel's blocking out of the 'conversation proceeding between the masked figures', a blocking out which establishes a discontinuity between inside and outside, occurs simultaneously with the crossing of sound of the bells into his 'own depths', 'inside me'. Only when this process of interiorization and demarcation has taken place does the recognition of the temporal continuity of the self occur.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty describes an analogous moment of self formation occurring through specular reflection in his book *The Visible and The Invisible* (1964, 1968) where the 'I' 'lost in its perceptions, rediscovers itself by rediscovering them as thoughts' (1968: 44). However, the effects of this interiorization and delimitation is a subtle shift in the representational status of the peals of the bells. No longer just denotative echoes of the bell - secondary representations of an object, or primary work, denoted by their presence - they have been transformed into, first of all, general signs of other bells tolling in other times, always present in Marcel's mind. This connotation is sublimated or amplified in the passage into the signification of the sound of the bell as a synecdoche of the 'whole of the past' submerged in the narrator's consciousness. What occurs here in Proust's discourse is a negation of specific qualities of the sign that ultimately leads to a negation of the status of the bells as signifiers of an actual literal and referential object in the world presented by the work. Through a negation of exteriority and outside spaces the echoes of the bells are not just re-figured as their immediate presence passes into atemporality, but the tolling also becomes a figure for a past it could not have signified without the passage's discourse of interiorization and a devalued and discontinuous exteriority.

The use of negation to shift the representational grounds and status of the sign from specific and literal exteriority to general interiority - a movement whose temporal nature, together with the presence of a negation, defines it as a shift from a primary to a secondary work - is a frequent gesture in Proust's work which determines not only the novel's closing redemption of time or its valorization of dreams as a possible method of 'rediscovering Lost Time' (III: 950), but also, as will be shown, many of its general representations. Not surprisingly, one of the side effects of this negation of exteriority is the frequent positioning of Marcel in the position of a voyeur. Whether observing the sadism of Mlle Vinteuil (I: 176-180), or the revelation of M de Charlus's homosexuality in his meeting with Jupien, Marcel frequently moves through the world of the work as if his own image has been negated or rendered insubstantial. However, as Marcel remarks in a statement with attendant implications for all the signs of perception in the novel: 'I had realized before now that it is only a clumsy and erroneous form of perception which places everything in the object, when really everything is in the mind' (III: 950). To arrive at this general and extended interiority - which is, on the one hand, a doubling of the sign into exterior and interior figures and, on the other, a negation of the specificity and singularity of the exterior sign - the mediation of a negation is required which effaces the exterior origin of the sign and replaces it with a beginning in (among others) the consciousness of the self - a gesture also found in Flaubert's discourse regarding *Madame Bovary*. Samuel Weber correctly remarks in "The Madrepore" (1972: 915-961) that 'It is the mortal materiality of the signifier that the Proustian discourse - its theory of art and its *vouloir-dire* - seeks to reduce and master' (1972: 960). The rediscovery of time that determines the narrative of the novel is doubled by this second

discursive strategy that Weber points to, a strategy that is primarily concerned with the invention of interiority and solitude. What takes place in this discursive strategy is, primarily, an act of rewriting. The signs that - from the perspective of the perceiving consciousness of Marcel - define and constitute the object are unmoored through the negation of their referential signified. This negation allows for their transformation from strictly denotative or descriptive signs grounded in the existence of an object external to consciousness, into mutable signs to be amplified, distorted and, ultimately, rewritten by the consciousness they are internalized in.

The withdrawal of the signs of the object into the solitude of the narrator's consciousness, or rather the plenitude of this solitude, is the critical, affirmative use of the negation in Proust's work. It governs, for instance, the logic of what Paul de Man calls the 'main text on reading' (1979: 58) in the novel, a passage in "Combray" that describes Marcel reading behind the 'almost closed shutters' (I: 89) of his room. De Man argues convincingly and significantly for a reading of the novel that equates the process of reading described here with that of writing: '[T]he passage from "life" to writing corresponds to an act of reading that separates from the undifferentiated mass of facts and events, the distinctive elements susceptible of entering into the composition of a text' (1979: 57). If this is indeed the case, then this scene of reading should primarily be understood as a scene of instruction for the fulfilment of Marcel's vocation as a writer:

> The dim coolness of my room was to the broad daylight of the street what the shadow is to the sunbeam, that is to say equally luminous, and presented to my imagination the entire panorama of summer, which my senses, if I had been out walking, could have tasted and enjoyed only piecemeal; and so it was quite in harmony with my state of repose which (thanks to the enlivening adventures related in my book) sustained, like a hand reposing motionless in a stream of running water, the shock and animation of a torrent of activity (I: 90).

The same ratios encountered in the description of the sound of the bells that almost close the novel are present here near its beginning. An interplay between inside and outside (established here by the opposition between the 'dim' room and the 'panorama of summer') ends in a metonymic figure where the container ('daylight') is taken for the contained - the dark cool room. Marcel finds all the markers of a summer day present in his room, but these signs are, again, transformed from loose fragments to be encountered 'piecemeal' into 'the entire panorama of summer'. This fluctuation in the representation of the scene of reading is also the controlling figure for the passage's representation of the act of reading. The experience of summer in its entirety rather than in fragments corresponds to the experience of reading, which is framed as the reception in a 'state of repose' of 'the shock and animation of a

torrent of activity'. Just as the transposition between inside and outside ensures the presence of the 'entire panorama of summer' for Marcel's imagination, so the interiorization that reading effects translates between the primary experience of 'a torrent of activity' and a secondary representation of a 'motionless' repose. The specificity of that which is read (an 'enlivening adventure') is negated in this translation, joining in and disappearing into the sense of 'harmony' that Marcel experiences in his repose. The signs of the book that is read pass from actual verifiability into the oppositional double that Marcel's reading transforms them into. They are, seen in epistemological terms, actual misreadings, or readings composed out of a series of errors that deviates from a referential or empirical ground. Whether concerned with summer or with the book, the sentence is determined by the representational logic which, beginning with a negation of exteriority, interiorizes and transforms the sign into a secondary work that replaces the primary work, or 'enlivening adventure'. Whether this transformation antithetically doubles or sublimates the originally exterior sign (ironically already located, in part, in a book) is less important than the movement itself. Proceeding from a negation aimed at a perceived outside, the representations of the passage continue to form their own interiorized representation of the partially negated and distorted object. This representation is, due to the presence of a negation, characterized by a discrepancy between it and the signs it purports to represent. It is an error.

How then does one understand this representation that forms around, but removed from, an object excluded from the grounds of representation (the demarcated interior), as well as being marked by what is ultimately a misreading founded on the presence of a negativity related to that which is not represented, or actively unsaid? What is the status of a sign that is inextricably linked to negation? Following the sentence on summer and reading, Proust turns to exactly this question as Marcel meditates on the status of his perceptions. With solitude and demarcation again framed as the grounds of perception (which invariably in Proust is considered as identical with the grounds of representation), Marcel explicates what occurs when - from a 'sort of recess' (I: 90) in which he can 'bury myself and remain invisible' (I: 90) - his attention is turned to an object outside himself:

> When I saw an external object, my consciousness that I was seeing it would remain between me and it, surrounding it with a thin spiritual border that prevented me from ever touching its substance directly; for it would somehow evaporate before I could make contact with it [...] Upon the sort of screen dappled with different states and impressions which my consciousness would simultaneously unfold while I was reading, and which ranged from the deeply hidden aspirations of my heart to the wholly external view of the horizon spread out before my eyes at the bottom of the garden, what was my primary, my innermost impulse, the lever whose incessant movements controlled everything else, was my belief in the philosophical richness

and beauty of the book I was reading, and my desire to appropriate them for myself, whatever the book might be (I: 90).

Behind the seductiveness of this account of perception or reading - a seductiveness deriving from the apparent gathering of both 'the deeply hidden' desires of Marcel and the 'wholly external' horizon in the 'richness and beauty' of a book open to appropriation - is a conception of perception that resists exactly this understanding of reading. Simultaneously with the discourse in the passage that interprets the act of reading as, at the very least, providing access both to the intricacies of the heart and the panorama of the 'horizon', Proust unfolds a discourse that casts doubt on this easy mediation. The perceived 'external object' cannot be touched directly in its 'substance'; it escapes direct reference through being placed on the outside of the border that constitutes the solitude of the perceiving self. If the written page appears to offer access to this object it is necessarily in the form of that which is already a representation: an image on a 'screen'. At the outset the signs of the external world are denied their literal status, they are *a priori* framed as 'states and impressions', as unmoored signs. The origins of these signs are then also displaced from their external location to Marcel's 'consciousness', which, rather than the written word, is responsible for their unfolding upon the screens of his mind. This double negation of origin and literal presence forecloses on any access to the actual presence of the outside world even through the mediation of reading and the book. Perception is a play of figures negatively marked by the impossibility of returning the perceived signs to their original location and beginning. Perception, whether as vision or reading, is then by definition constituted as a misrecognition or error.

Proust's demystification of reading and perception as establishing a complementary unity between inside and outside also identifies the central characteristic of representations formed by the book's negative marking of the external presence of sign and objects. Most importantly, these representations of signs are rhetorical tropes or figures, substitutions for an originally verifiably present sign in the work that was open to a literal interpretation and contingent on a representational space outside the consciousness of the narrator. Considered in these terms, they are also substitutions for the signs that constitute the literary works of realism. In this specific sense, Proust's work is not only modern, but performs in its discourse the passage from realism to literary modernism (when understood in terms related to the autonomy of the sign). Resulting from the negative incision between an original outside and an inside that functions as the new beginning of representation in the work, a sign is constructed that functions as a deviation from the genealogy of literal signs. Deviation also functions as a principle in distinguishing between literal and figural signs in the works of what Paul Ricoeur refers to as the 'New Rhetoric' (1975, 1977: 134). For Jean Cohen in *Structure du langage poétique* (1966: 13) and Gérard Genette in "Figures" (1966, 1982: 45-61), the central mark of the figure is that it deviates from a literal, proper, or standard

signification. Arising from Aristotle's view of metaphor as a discrepancy in naming (attributing the name of one object to another), this 'new rhetoric' is taken to task by Paul Ricoeur for failing to determine what standard is deviated from (1977: 137). While this is a serious theoretical objection, Proust's novel - through its discourse of inside and outside - depends on exactly this perception of a deviation for the reading of its figures as figures. Although the literary work is necessarily a construct consisting of figural signs, Proust's discourse depends on an interpretation of his signs as existing either as figures to be read in a literal manner, or as purely figural or rhetorical figures - a possibility that Paul de Man discusses in "Semiology and Rhetoric" (1979: 3-19) as an inherent quality of literary language (1979: 10). The drama of his discourse occurs in the passage between these different states of the figure. The verifiable beginning of Proust's vocation as a writer, the descriptive passage that the young Marcel writes of the church steeples at Martinville, takes its instruction directly from this sense of a deviation from the literal presence of a material and exterior sign:

> I was obliged, in default of other company, to fall back on my own, and to attempt to recapture the vision of my steeples. And presently their outlines and their sunlit surfaces, as though they had been a sort of rind, peeled away; something of what they had concealed from me became apparent; a thought came into my mind which had not existed for me a moment earlier, framing itself in words in my head; and the pleasure which the first sight of them had given me was so greatly enhanced that overpowered by a sort of intoxication, I could no longer think of anything else (I: 197).

The discourse of this passage contains, in rapid movements, a movement away from the literal presence of the vision of the steeples. Interiorized in Marcel's mind in the now familiar movement, their denotative image is replaced by a 'thought' which 'had not existed [...] a moment earlier'. This thought is not a direct representation of the steeples however; instead it is directed towards that which is not immediately apparent (or, for that matter, present at all) in the steeples. Coded as an uncovering of that which the direct image of the steeples obscures, like a 'rind', the material and literal image of the steeples is replaced by a figure framed in words that point beyond and behind the actual steeples. The page that Marcel writes to describe the steeples and the beyond opened by the uncovering performed by his mind gives some indication of the nature of this figure. Following on a denotative description of the steeples and their perception by him, the tone of the discourse shifts and Marcel remarks that:

> [...] I caught sight of them for the last time, far away, and seeming no more now than three flowers painted upon the sky above the low line of fields. They made me think, too, of three maidens in a legend, abandoned in a solitary place over which night had

> begun to fall [...] and after some awkward, stumbling movements of their noble silhouettes, drawing close to one another, gliding one behind another, forming now against the still rosy sky no more than a single dusky shape, charming and resigned, and so vanishing in the night (I: 198).

Whether understood as metaphorical figures constructed by a process of substitution, or as metonymical figures determined by their contiguity with the water-lilies of the river landscape and the first sight of the Duchesse de Guermantes in the chapel, the shift in the discourse from pure description to rhetorical figuration is apparent. (Both Paul de Man (1979: 70) and Gérard Genette in "Proust Palimpsest" (1982: 203-213) observe this tendency of the Proustian figure to be interpreted either as a metonymic construct or as a metaphorical substitution, suggesting that contrary to his direct statements Proust usually employs metonymical figures even where he suggests otherwise.). The material reality of the steeples that Marcel perceives disappears behind their figural image. Through another of the work's negations of aspects of the object a distorted image is created that is open to the play of the written word and the mind.

Is Proust's work then primarily, when considered from this perspective, concerned with the liberation of the decorative and pleasing rhetorical figure from the dead materiality of the actual object? In other words: does the work of memory primarily veil a purely stylistic and aesthetic exercise indulging in purely rhetorical play? In the primary scene concerned with memory, the tasting of the famous madeleine, the narrator of *Remembrance of Things Past* remarks that the taste, 'remain poised a long time, like souls [...] amid the ruins of all the rest' (I: 50-51). The taste of the madeleine - with its attendant 'vast structure of recollection' (I: 50) which brings Combray into being out of a cup of tea - is the fleeting remnant of a long-distant and obliterated past which looms in the present only as 'broken and scattered' (I: 50) rubble. The structure of the sign of the madeleine is paradigmatic for many of the signs of recollection, or, rather, involuntary memory, that circulate through Proust's work: the presence of the past is evoked not through a direct link between experience and its mnemonic sign; but, as Walter Benjamin suggests in 'The Image of Proust", through the subterranean logic of a sign that only opaquely duplicates its temporally anterior figure, or, then, functions as a figure.

Considered as a signifying constellation this structure consists of three clearly articulated components: in the first instance, the existence of the mnemonic sign would be predicated on an absence; the possibility and necessity of the madeleine to bring Combray into being depends on the dual negation of the historical presence of the Combray which is evoked and of the ability of direct or purposive memory to furnish the necessary sign for its completion. The second component is determined by the signifying function ascribed to the fleeting taste of the madeleine: transformed by the demand to signify a historical and

mnemonic absence - thereby promising the closing of both these rifts in the consciousness of the narrator - into a durable and fixed sign, the taste of the madeleine no longer refers to the madeleine itself but to the Combray of Marcel's childhood. This transposed and transformed sign refers then also not to the historically situated town of Combray (understood here as an irrecuperable referent) but, in the third instance, brings it into being as a double (but not identical) figure. The taste of the madeleine does not recover the lost image of Combray empirically - it creates Combray anew from a cup of tea.

The linguistic correlative of this would be the performative speech act. Proust's signs here are uncovered as performatives that simultaneously bring into being that which they appear to describe diegetically. The relation between the taste of the little piece of pastry and the image of Combray is in no sense naively mimetic or constative. Instead it is conditioned and determined by exactly the negation of the possibility of a convergence between a present signified and its proper signifier. The sensations evoked by the madeleine give substance to the image of Combray because Combray is no longer available as a direct, unmediated referent for the narrative. The relationship between the past of the narrator and the sign through which it is recollected is far from being the simple procession from a mnemonic sign to an object located solidly in the past; rather, it is conditioned by the dual absence of the possibility of such a recollection and the proper, or literal, meaning of the taste of the madeleine. This scene at the end of Proust's "Overture" obliquely demonstrates again why all mnemonic discourse in the novel is saturated with the possibility of epistemological error. If the image of Combray, which is grafted on the distorted sign of the madeleine, is conditioned by its own referential absence, then the figure, which arises, is bound to be ambivalent. It claims to refer to the Combray located in the past of the narrator, but this ground for the sign turns out to be the substitution of a created image for the actual signs of history. Similarly then, Proust's discourse surrounding the figure cannot be framed as a purely decorative, stylistic arabesque. The construction of rhetorical figures (considered as figures) stands central to the work's attempt to regain time.

The work's discourse on figure, rather than its figural discourse, reaches something of an apotheosis in the critical scene that marks the transformation of Marcel from an agent of memory and perception into a writer. Suspended between the narration of decline and death that occupies the first part of *Time Regained,* and the contraction of space that marks its conclusion, the true beginning of Marcel as a writer is prompted by apparently insignificant details. Just like the taste of the madeleine, the tripping over cobblestones is an event normally hardly worth indicating in the work. From this minuscule, everyday detail Proust, however, constructs the apparent birth of a writer. In this insignificant figure Marcel recognizes the diverse experiences of his life. Tripping over the cobblestones, he discovers the

> [S]ame happiness which at various epochs of my life have been given to me by sight of trees which I had thought that I recognised in the course of a drive near Balbec, by the sight of the twin steeples of Martinville, by the flavour of the madeleine dipped in tea, and by all those other sensations of which I have spoken and of which the last works by Vinteuil had seemed to me to combine the quintessential character [...] And almost at once I recognised the vision: it was Venice, of which my efforts to describe it and the supposed snapshots taken by my memory had never told me anything, but which the sensation which I had once experienced as I stood upon two uneven stones in the baptistery of St. Mark's had, recurring a moment ago, restored to me complete with all the other sensations linked on that day to that particular sensation, all of which had been waiting in their place [...] in the series of forgotten days (III: 899-900).

Here one strand of the novel's narrative, the search for lost time, is completed. Time is regained, not in the 'snapshots' of memory but as the simultaneous synchronic existence of a series of epiphanies at one point in time. Like the steeples of Martinville folding into one figure, the events of the narrator's past are folded together in one single moment that is only given duration by the narration of this moment. In what sense is time then regained? At stake in this recovery is not time as a series or as duration but what Marcel later calls the 'extra-temporal' (III: 904). Various points of past time intersect at one point in the present, making Marcel doubt whether he 'was in the one or the other' (III: 904). The recovery of lost time is accordingly then indistinguishable from the 'suspension of time' (Ricoeur, 1985: 144). What is at stake in this transition is exactly what Charles Baudelaire in the "The Painter of Modern Life" defined as the essence of artistic modernity, namely, 'to distil the eternal from the transitory' (1964: 12). Proust's struggle with lost time is not concerned with establishing the present as both a recuperation and a continuation of the past; his central purpose is rather to lift both points of time into the atemporal time of the extra-temporal or eternity. This move, which also confirms Proust's intentional literary modernity, renders the novel not just a flight away from the literal referential material of the sign, but also away from the time of duration that, as both Marcel and Proust knew well, ends in death (III: 1100). The novel is an overcoming of both the representation of the material world and its signs, and the line of time that ends in termination.

What role does the figure, or non-literal sign, play in this flight from time to eternity? Its place already insured inside this discourse by the intimacy of the realization of Marcel's vocation with this regaining and sublimation of time, it turns out to be the sole agent of exactly this flight. Marcel later remarks that

> I had made the discovery of this destructive action of Time at the very moment when I had conceived the ambition to make visible, to intellectualize in a work of art, realities that were outside Time (III: 971).

The figure functions as a negation of temporal duration, a denial of time that does not end in no time, but in its opposite and equal, the affirmative co-existence of several points in time. An extrapolation of the figure that Proust has in mind can be read in the following lines - identified by Paul Ricoeur as 'one of the hermeneutical keys' (1985: 148) to the novel:

> An hour is not merely an hour, it is a vase full of scents and sounds and projects and climates, and what we call reality is a certain connexion between these immediate sensations and the memories which envelop us simultaneously with them - a connexion that is suppressed in a single cinematographic vision, which just because it professes to confine itself to the truth departs widely from it - a unique connexion which the writer has to rediscover in order to link for ever in his phrase the two sets of phenomena which reality joins together. He can describe a scene by describing one after another the innumerable objects which at a given moment were present at a particular place, but truth will be attained by him only when he takes two different objects, states the connexion between them - a connexion analogous in the world of art to the unique connexion which in the world of science is provided by the law of causality - and encloses them in the necessary links of a well-wrought style; truth - in life too - can be attained by us only when, by comparing a quality common to two sensations, we succeed in extracting their common essence and in reuniting them to each other, liberated from the contingencies of time with a metaphor [...] The link may be uninteresting, the objects trivial, the style bad, but unless this process has taken place the description is worthless (III: 924-925).

The relation of this passage (and the scene in the library from which it is taken) to the rest of the novel is ambiguous. As Paul Ricoeur states, it is effectively a 'grand dissertation on art' (1985: 143), bearing out Jean-Luc Nancy's and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe's comment that Proust's work constructs its own 'critical identity' (1988: 112). It is both part of the narrative and a comment on that narrative that seek to double its technique in what is essentially a critical commentary on that technique. What is outlined in this passage is a theory of figuration that sees it in terms of the establishment of a 'connexion' between 'different objects', a theory of 'metaphor' in Proust's understanding of the term. The proper procedure for the writer is to extract from the manifold sensory experiences of reality the essence of objects, to move from the fugitive and transitory aspects of the object to their essential nature. This then is part of the motivation behind the novel's negation of exteriority, as this negation

enables the movement from random and ephemeral sensory experience towards the uncovering of the real (which for Proust is always a facet of consciousness, not the external world).

This transposition and translation are, however, only the opening move in the construction of the figure. Following on this negation the shift from the literal to the figural sign is compounded by the establishment of an affirmative link between two terms which renders them identical, or, at least, open to conflation - Charles Baudelaire, in his "Correspondences", indirectly gives a summation of this aspect of the modernist aesthetic when he declares that: 'In a unity umbrageous and infinite, / Vast as the night stupendously moonlit, / All smells and colors and sounds correspond' (1857, 1997: 17). The sign marked by its original orientation in the present is rendered equivalent with a sign framed by an implied or explicit temporal anteriority, a movement that (obviously) occurs in the opposite direction as well. This unification connects the past and present in the novel's deepest definition of time regained, the affirmation of the extra-temporal figure. This figure does not present the duration inherent in the passage from the past to the present. The appearance of this is an illusion engendered by the temporal extension of any description. It rather presents these moments unified as a synchronic structure outside of time. The object is not only 'liberated' from the exteriority of space but also from the 'contingencies of time' by the construction of the figure. This figure then also retains the pleasure the narrator experiences when he notices these extra-temporal configurations by being presented in a 'well-wrought style'. The signs of the work are grafted together in an infinite unified structure that lifts up the differences between them to accentuate their phantasmic status as doubles of each other. To encounter the one is also to encounter the other and every other. Just as the sign is shorn of its unique specificity, it is also overdetermined as the locus of various other significations which it resembles. The literary sign is effaced and expanded, it is negated as a literal sign in the service of an affirmation.

From the vantage point of this passage figuration in the novel occurs through a simultaneous effacement and sublimation of the sign. Shorn of its spatial and temporal identity the sign is first of all constructed by a rigorous critical negativity that both effaces and constructs. After the initial negation the sign is, on the one hand, raised to the heights of eternity while, on the other, it is expanded by the 'connexions' established by the figure of the metaphor. The 'connexions' established by the metaphor then also, from the perspective of this passage, function as a mending of the epistemological rift opened by the negation. It might no longer be possible to read the signs as literal or denotative figures of a referent outside them, but their sublimation to unified objects grounded in the possibility of the extra-temporal determines them as significations that has passed beyond the possibility of error or devaluation. Their extra-temporal status (acquired through the unification inherent for Proust to metaphorization) places them in a transcendent position to the error of literal or denotative

interpretation. Their flight from time and space entrenches them in the signifying heights which guarantees their access to truth.

This flight into the extra-temporal is, as Gérard Genette notes, indistinguishable from a destructive act aimed against the sensible, or, in other words, the objects of direct empirical reference. Jacques Derrida, discussing the structure of metaphor in "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy" (1972, 1982: 207-271), remarks of this form of metaphor that it 'remains [...] a metaphysical concept' (1982: 219). Derrida cites Martin Heidegger's judgement that metaphor is 'a transposition into the non-sensible of the supposedly sensible' (1982: 226): 'The notion of "transposition" and of metaphor,' Heidegger argues, is based on the distinction and the separation between the 'sensory and the non-sensory, between the physical and the non-physical' (Heidegger *in* Derrida, 1982: 226). Derrida argues that the 'transposition from the proper sensory meaning to the proper spiritual meaning by means of a detour and of figures' is nothing but 'a movement of idealization' in a framework that 'sets to work the oppositions [...] sensual/spiritual, sensible/intelligible, sensory/sense' (1982: 226). From this perspective the Proustian figure would ultimately, through its negation of the sensible, be a metaphysical construct that promises a more complete, sublimated essence by taking a detour through negation. Its valorization of unity and extra-temporality in the construction of its signs and enactment of the recovery of time would be grounded in a desire to transcend and sublimate reality to join in the higher reality of the spiritual. Of course, this is not a theological turn in the work. Proust rigorously finds his transcendence in the sphere of the aesthetic. Leo Bersani aptly comments that Proust's work is an 'inventory of techniques which make for a highly artful life' (1976, 1987: 181). The solitude from which the representations of the novel arise would then be a preparation for this transcendence into the realm of the aesthetic.

* * *

To what extent, apart from his commentary on the technique of the novel he is writing, does Proust succeed in accomplishing this transcendence? In other words: to what extent are Proust's metaphors successful? At stake in asking this question would be more than simply the formal and discursive unity of Proust's novel, but also its status within the interpretation of literary modernism of Jameson and Lyotard. If Proust's novel succeeds in completing this move of transcendental totalization its use of negation would indeed be indistinguishable from, as Lyotard would have it, the completion of a projected totality.

One of the central figures that emerge when Marcel trips over the cobblestones is the 'connexion' between these cobblestones and 'two uneven stones in the baptistery of St. Mark's' (III: 900). From this figure of correspondence there emerges a vision of Venice that surpasses the 'snapshots' of memory, that, indeed, restores all the sensations that corresponded to the

visitation of the baptistery: 'A profound azure intoxicated my eyes, impressions of coolness, of dazzling light, swirled around me' (III: 899). This, however, constitutes a misreading of the description of the baptistery:

> My mother and I would enter the baptistery, treading underfoot the marble and glass mosaics of the paving, in front of us the wide arcades whose curved pink surfaces have been slightly warped by time, thus giving the church, wherever the freshness of the colouring has been preserved, the appearance of having been built of a soft and malleable substance like the wax in a giant honeycomb, and, where time has shriveled and hardened the material and artists have embellished it with gold tracery, of being the precious binding, in the finest Cordoba leather, of the colossal Gospel of Venice. Seeing that I needed to spend some time in front of the mosaics representing the Baptism of Christ, and feeling the icy coolness that pervaded the baptistery, my mother threw a shawl over my shoulders (III: 661).

Instead of corresponding to the ice-cold, pink and gold interior of the baptistery, Marcel's vision is instead complemented by other figures, namely the topography of Venice where the 'street was entirely paved with sapphire-blue water, cooled by warm breezes' (III: 638) and the angel on the campanile of St. Mark's whose glitter in the sunlight 'made it almost impossible to keep one's eyes upon it' (III: 637). To substitute the impressions of these figures for the impressions of the baptistery is inherently a metonymical movement that, through a relationship of contiguity (in this case outside and inside), presents signs in close proximity to the object itself. In the metaphorical correspondence that recovers the 'sensations' experienced in the baptistery in Venice a metonymical shift takes place that questions exactly the correspondence between the two poles of the metaphor. Marcel's tripping over the cobblestones opens into a vision of Venice that signifies the exterior of the baptistery, while the inside of the baptistery (signified by the 'two uneven stones') activates a descriptive system incompatible with the terms of the vision. To conflate these two representational systems is not a metaphorical construction where, in Proust's terms, a 'connexion' between two similar objects are constructed; it is a misreading of these objects determined by a metonymical code existing due to an error inherent in Marcel's discourse.

Similarly the origin of the happiness Marcel associates with the returning vision of Venice resides not in this image but again in a figure closely associated with this experience:

> To-day I am sure that the pleasure does exist, if not of seeing, at least of having seen, a beautiful thing with a particular person [...] it is no longer a matter of indifference to me that, beside me in that cool penumbra, there should have been a woman draped in her mourning [...] and that that woman, with her red cheeks and sad eyes and in her

> black veils, whom nothing can ever remove from that softly lit sanctuary of St. Mark's where I am always sure to find her because she has a place reserved there as immutably as a mosaic, should be my mother (III: 661).

The proximity of his mother to, on the one hand, Marcel and, on the other, the mosaics of St. Mark's is here interpreted as the origin of the aesthetic pleasure the narrator derives from his perceptions. This figure is, however, strangely occluded from the vision of Venice Marcel experiences later. The visibility of this occlusion is compounded when Marcel gives the cause for his departure from Venice:

> My mother must be nearing the station. [...] The town I saw before me had ceased to be Venice. Its personality, its name, seemed to me to be mendacious fictions which I no longer had the will to impress upon its stones. I saw the palaces reduced to their basic elements, lifeless heaps of marble with nothing to choose between them, and the water as a combination of hydrogen and oxygen, eternal, blind, anterior and exterior to Venice (III: 667)

Indirectly this passage is a restatement of the novel's representational project in terms of a crisis. With the departure of his mother Marcel is faced with what his discourse constantly attempts to negate and repress throughout the work: the material, 'anterior and exterior' signs of the world, temporally not framed as 'extra-temporal' but as eternal duration. Without her presence Venice is transformed into a horror for the narrator. As a matter of fact, the passage suggests that the representational value of Venice resides not in the city itself, but in the figure of Marcel's mother. She is curiously positioned as the ground and origin for a representation of Venice that is not left open to collapse into ruin. Yet, the recuperated image of Venice and the interior of St. Mark's, where she remains as 'immutably as a mosaic', appear without the representational determination she effects. She remains only as an absent figure in the vision, thereby implicitly questioning its status.

What appears implicitly in the interplay between the experience of Venice and its recovery in the vision is a questioning and subversion of the status of the vision itself - one of the mediums through which lost time is recovered. Through apparent misreadings and occluded figures that were central to the original event, the representational and epistemological value of the vision (and then the discourse of metaphor which constructs it) as a recovery of lost time is questioned. These two sections of the novel stand next to each other as, on the one hand, indirect repetitions, but, on the other, as misreadings and distortions, or rather rewritings, of each other. This incompatibility and discontinuity resist any reading that would frame them in metaphorical terms and then especially metaphorical terms that depend on the identity between a present and past moment. Rather than a

metaphorical relation, the latter representation stands as an allegory - in the sense given to it by Paul de Man in "Pascal's Allegory of Persuasion" (1996: 51-69) as an 'emphatic clarity of representation [that] does not stand in the service of something that can be represented' (1996: 51) - of the former that both suggests and effaces the original figure. The negation (rather than disappearing into the completion of a totality or an affirmation) is shifted from its position as a break between inside and outside that determines the passage from literal to figural signs in Proust's discourse, to that of functioning as a rift and cleavage between two temporal or syntagmatic periods. The narrative, the novel's temporal ordering, is divided and bifurcated by the cleavage introduced here between the original image and its later appearance as recovered time. When exposed to the temporal duration of the narrative the signs in Proust's work exist in an epistemologically suspended state, marked by uncertainty regarding whether they are accurate reflections or readings of the object they are about or images which put the object in abeyance, as the unrepresentable, while performatively weaving their own image - as, in other words, errors (or, what is for Marcel the same, fiction).

This temporal account of reading as a passage proceeding from the negativity of error frames the narrative as being fragmented by the occurrence of two representations of the same object or event - the narrator's experience of Venice and his mnemonic recovery of these events when he stumbles over the cobblestones. Between these two representations an incision is made which renders them incompatible with each other. Their continuity as signs to be recovered by the process of metaphorization (a process, which depends at least on the possibility of the establishment of correspondences that traverses the temporal flow of the narrative,) is deeply in question. Just as there is very little possibility of establishing a figural correspondence between the dualistic splitting of the object between exterior and interior representations, this same impossibility appears along the temporal lines of the work. The negativity of misreading or error remains a permanent incision, a threshold that cannot be crossed without the emptying out and destruction (even as they multiply) of signs. The relation between the original visit to Venice and its later recovery on the cobblestones is one of rewriting through negation. The latter representation is formed on the destruction and revision of the details of the former. Considered as such, these two events cannot be linked by a narrative concerned with epistemological certainty or, then, a narrative that attempts to uncover the essence of things. They are rather linked by an ambivalent chain of errors, misreadings and destructive moments - which can perhaps be understood as the true nature of Proust's concept of involuntary memory.

Read in these terms, these two events (the visit to Venice and its recovery on the cobblestones) are in formal terms best explained according to Paul de Man's notion in "Allegory (*Julie*)" (1979: 188-220) regarding the 'unreadability' (1979: 205) of an allegory of a temporally prior event. While an allegory, according to de Man, does not completely erase a prior figure, it negates one specific quality of this prior figure: its readability and openness to

the unmediated experiences of the reader. The allegory - understood in this case as the recovered image of Venice - narrates its temporally prior figure, but does so in terms that make it incompatible with a discourse concerned with truth and verisimilitude (1979: 206). Instead, the original figure is transformed from a simple statement or proposition into an unstable configuration of signs that refuses access to this original figure itself (1979: 205). The prior work is both transformed in and replaced by the new configuration, its openness to reading or epistemological experience thereby being foreclosed upon. Instead of, through the return of a prior figure, heralding the construction of a series of analogies and 'connexions', the work puts exactly these lines of correspondences and correlations into doubt, and frames their experience in these terms as an error or misrecognition. Despite the apparent representational unity of its elaborate structure of recollection and aesthetic transformation (both of sign and of Marcel into the writer of the novel), Proust's work is marked here by the negativity of a syntagmatic rift or *aporia*. This sense of a negativity that subsists beyond the narrator's proclaimed recovery of lost time (with its attendant epistemological discourse of uncertainty and the final uncovering of truth) places exactly this regaining of time in question. It is not time (whether understood in its strictly historical or extra-temporal sense) that is regained in the shuffling between these two scenes of the work; it is rather the scene of the construction of a new and ungrounded representation on the reworked and partially negated body of an earlier event.

Moreover, if the recovery of time is marked by a series of errors and negations, then the interplay between these two scenes casts doubt on the realization of Marcel's vocation as a writer. If, as Ricoeur points out, this realization depends on the attendant double discourse of time recovered and epistemological certainty regained, then the realization of Marcel's vocation is simply another error in the work. This appears to be the case even more so when the dubious role played by metaphor in this passage between the past and the present is taken into account. Rather than establishing a durable epistemological 'connexion' between the past and the present, it is exactly this 'connexion' that is questioned here as a contingent and provisional construct. It even appears as if the naming of the figure that connects the events in Venice with the present is saturated with error - the identification of the play of a metaphor in the recovery of lost time (which is for Marcel the same as the act of writing that he hopes to accomplish) is shown to be a misreading when the play of metonymical figures and negations is recognized in the discourse. The work that Marcel begins at the end of the novel can then neither proceed directly from Proust's narrative, nor be considered identical with it. The framing of it as, on the one hand, taking place through the construction of metaphors with a claim to truth, and, on the other, accomplishing the recovery of time that Marcel fails to achieve here, inscribes a partition between it and the present work. As the double of the actual novel, but with its discourse of error and negation exorcised, it is the work that has yet to be written, the work that would be another rewriting, and not a direct repetition.

* * *

This putting into doubt, or unworking, of configurations central to Proust's work would be the starting point of a reading of the novel that attempts to untie its complex interplay of error and truth or negation and affirmation - a project that due to the vastness of Proust's work and the inherent limitations of this study cannot be accomplished here in the form of a reading of the entire work. Beginning with a critical negation of its referential signified - in contrast with James Joyce's preliminary negation of the signifier (to be discussed in the next chapter) - the discourse of the work is constructed as the complex interplay of affirmative propositions and negativity that casts doubt on exactly these affirmations in the manner that Freud and Derrida describe. The status of the novel's representations remains uncertain. They are products of the critical act of rewriting, secondary works constructed on the partially negated body left by the negation of a referential signified or a prior representation. In contradiction to the overt narrative concerned with the recovery of time and the realization of Marcel's vocation, the discursive negativity of Proust's work shows this affirmative discourse to be saturated with moments of error and irreconcilable differences.

The ruse of Proust's writing is that a linear reading of the novel fails to uncover the negativity that is posited here as forming a central component of Proust's work. Its discourse of errors and negation appears to be undone by the affirmative conclusion of the work. To read this discourse of negativity it is not only necessary to read the novel in opposition to the overtly stated intentions of its discourse, but to read it against its linear sequence of beginning, middle and end. The reader must have the entire book in mind, and must proceed from its end to its middle again. To read Proust's errors and negations is to re-read him. Otherwise - a Proustian irony - the reader reads in error through mistaking the affirmation that concludes the novel as more than just a provisional and contingent figure. Just like, from this vantage point, rewriting replaces writing as the preferential mode of production in Proust work, so re-reading replaces linear reading as the primary mode of interaction with the novel. While this subversion of reading as a linear activity will be radicalized by Joyce's inter- and intra-textual subversions of this movement, it – indirectly - highlights a central aspect of Proust's work. Just like the work's complex network of errors and negations puts Marcel's experiences and their translation into writing into serious doubt, so this determination of reading as re-reading puts the experience of literature in question. The work not only resists reading but transforms error into an integral aspect of the process of reading. Neither its overt intentions nor its formal sequence is to be trusted as the source of essential truth regarding the novel. Indeed, Proust seems to in suggest indirectly that the uncovering of such a truth through fiction and writing is inherently an activity marked by error - the mistaking of contingent affirmations for essential truths.

This is perhaps the proper meaning to be attached to the negativity of Proust's work. While James Joyce and Samuel Beckett would put into question the status of writing and literature itself, Proust is concerned with the negation of another aspect of the literary experience. Proust's work, or rather unworking, is identical with a specific darkening of literature. In his work, Proust questions and problematizes literature as a source and representation of direct and verifiable, epistemological experience. For Proust the literary work is rather to be thought of as an interruption in the experience of epistemological certainty and truth. Neither Marcel - ostensibly the writer of the novel - nor the reader of the work is able to escape its discourse of misrecognition and errors, to arrive at a certain and direct experience of the truth of the novel or the world it describes. In both instances this type of unmediated epistemological experience is compromised and put into doubt. To write and read is to insert an hiatus into the certainty that experience seems to grant. It is to subsist in error, as Marcel recognizes.

* * *

Through the mediation of a critical negation a shift in Proust's work takes place that, on the one hand, sees its apparently referential signifieds transformed into the figures that exist in Marcel's consciousness; and, on the other hand, transforms a prior event in the novel into an allegory of this event (a transformation also grounded in consciousness through the operations of memory and remembrance). Considered in these terms, Proust's work is marked by the incessant transformations of a primary construct into its secondary representation. These secondary representations, or works, do not, however, subsist as affirmative propositions in the consciousness of Marcel. A negativity remains that, largely without Marcel's recognition, puts these secondary representations into doubt and suggests that Marcel's understanding of them is inherently faulty, an error. The secondary works constructed by the work's negations are not figures that can be understood in terms of the uncovering of the essence of things, or the regaining of time. They are, rather, failed affirmations of these discourses. The divergence in the novel between this status of these secondary representations, and their overt framing in the context of the work (which appears to substantiate the reading of them in affirmative terms) then also, indirectly, casts doubt on the felicity of epistemological experience (as far as both Marcel and the reader of the novel is concerned). Proust's work is marked by a duplicity that forecloses upon the understanding of it in terms of direct and unmediated experience.

Chapter Two

The Wandering of Language in James Joyce's *Ulysses*

> A plagiarist. A soapy sneak masked as a literateur. It's perfectly obvious that with the most inherent baseness he has cribbed some of my bestselling books, really gorgeous stuff, a perfect gem, the love passages in which are beneath suspicion
>
> - James Joyce, *Ulysses* (1922).

> [T]he present/presence of the modern is affirmed by the negation of the past. Rupture announces itself in the modernist dictum "Make it new!" In the modern epoch, the effort to make it new usually presupposes an erasure of the past
>
> - Mark C. Taylor, *Disfiguring: Art, Architecture, Religion* (1992).

Most readers and critics of James Joyce's *Ulysses* seem to agree that the difficulty of Joyce's work resides in its problematic treatment of language. Indeed, many critics of Joyce begin their critical exegesis with exactly this statement regarding the linguistic difficulty of the work to be interpreted. Stephen Heath, among others, comments on this aspect at the beginning of his essay "Ambiviolence: Notes for reading Joyce" (1972, 1984: 31-68): 'Reading Joyce remains a problem [...] The writing opens out onto a multiplicity of fragments of sense [...]' (1984: 31). While it is true that the difficulty of Joyce's language certainly appears to have passed into the realm of critical clichés, it still points to an essential aspect of *Ulysses*. If one pole of the reading experience of *Ulysses* appears to be determined by the naturalistic rendering of a normal day in Dublin, then the other pole of the novel - its treatment of the linguistic signifier - draws the reader away from this familiar territory. Joyce's use of language defamiliarizes its naturalistic referent and opens the work to a linguistic play of distorted signs, clichés, parodies and pastiches of other literary styles and works, to mention only a few agents of this disfiguring of familiar and conventional representations.

At stake in these difficulties are not only the possibility of reading through Joyce's language to a referential signified existing beyond these signifiers - a reading that would repair the work's distortion of its naturalistic landscape - but also the legibility and significatory status of the signifiers of the Joycean language. What in Joyce's use of language affects the readability of his linguistic signs? What is the function and effect of this disruption and deformation of the signs through which the work communicates? In the terms employed by this dissertation, this disfiguring is, as will be shown, ultimately to be understood as a negation of the signifier. Necessarily partial - since Joyce does not render the signifier as a blank or a gap - this negation mediates between the actual or implied presence of a legible

signifier that, through its transparent presence, appears to point to a referential signified, and the refiguration of these signifiers into the defamiliarized linguistic constructs common to Joyce's work. If, in Proust's work, this mediation, or then rewriting, takes place between two representations that purport to give figure to the world (whether as contingent reality or the essentialist realm of time regained), this passage between two different constructions of the signifier in Joyce finds its beginning not in the desire to give a different account of the world - the naturalistic rendering of Dublin remains, provisionally, a fixed pole of the novel's discourse. Joyce's secondary renderings of the signifiers of his discourse, rather, point to an engagement with the base material of linguistic signification - language itself - that Proust's discourse appears to be in flight from.

What is more, while the primary work against which Proust's negations are directed - whether to be understood as a literal figure or a prior representation - is given form to in the confines of his work, Joyce's invocation of a prior signifier to be rendered as a secondary figure repeatedly leads to the invocation of a discourse existing prior to the novel itself. Joyce often seems to deny his work the status of functioning as the origin of that which is read and interpreted. A strategy of misdirection is employed. Instead of reading what is written, the reader is repeatedly directed to one of the work's numerous intertexts as a source of meaning or context for the legible signifier. Even more so than Marcel Proust, Joyce forces his reader, as Hélène Cixous recognizes in "Joyce: The (r)use of writing" (1970, 1984: 19), to read in a manner that is no longer determined by the linear forward motion of his work. If reading Proust appears to be largely a matter of re-reading, then Joyce shifts the locus of reading from his work to other works intertextually linked to his own - Homer's work being perhaps the salient example of this movement. Joyce quotes and plagiarizes at the expense of his reader. While this situation increases the difficulty of reading Joyce's work, it also presents to this dissertation a complication of its account of the rewritings (through negation) effected in the modernist work. Contrary to the interpretation of Proust, an account of Joyce's work in the terms used in this dissertation necessarily has to take into account not only the diachronic movements of negation in Joyce's *Ulysses*, but also the possibility of Joyce's work effecting a negation of discourses both existing prior to it, and not specific to its discourse.

In this chapter I shall attempt to address these interpretative complications by situating the difficulty of the Joycean signifier in relation to the thematic and formal discourse in *Ulysses* concerned with origins and affiliations. My argument is that the difficulty associated here with Joyce's language needs to be rethought in terms of a ceaseless negation of its own origins - whether belonging to Joyce's discourse or not. The aspiration of Joyce's discourse is to exist in a state of perpetual exile, to wander without origin or home. Considered in terms of a negation of its own origins, Joyce's discourse seems to share in a particularly modernist problematic, that, as Mark C. Taylor suggests, can be understood as an effort to 'make it new' through the 'erasure of the past'. Indeed, both Gyorgy Markus, in his essay "A Society of

Culture: The Constitution of Modernity" (1994: 15-29), and Stan Smith, in his book *The Origins of Modernism: Eliot, Pound, Yeats and the Rhetorics of Renewal* (1994: 6), regard modernism's discourse against the past and its origins as the defining characteristic of this epoch. As Markus states, modernism 'meant the replacement of the authority of the *origin* as the standard to be followed, with the demand of *originality*' (1994: 19. His italics). As Markus' statement (and that of Taylor) implies, modernism's discourse against origins (here to be discussed as a negation) involves not only a gesture against a prior figure attributed with role of origin, but also an affirmation of the work in terms of 'originality' and the 'new'. The negation of the past leads, in a dialectical movement that negates the negativity of this negation, to the affirmation of the work or discourse that effects this negation as that which is 'new' and 'original'. The discussion in this chapter of Joyce's negation of the origins of his signifiers also then involves an interpretation of this configuration in Joyce's work. Is the secondary work that Joyce's negations produce to be understood in these terms: as an affirmation of itself as the 'new' and 'original'? Ultimately, this problem brings me back to one of my original problems regarding the status of the secondary work produced by negation. What negativity subsists in the work after a re-affirmation has taken place? In this chapter, it will be suggested that the secondary work that Joyce's negations produce cannot be interpreted solely as that which is 'new' and 'original'. They are ultimately marked by an ambivalence that Paul de Man, perhaps, best describes in his essay, "Literary History and Literary Modernity" (1971: 142-165) as the dilemma of an author who '[...] cannot renounce the claim to being modern but also cannot resign himself to his dependence on predecessors' (1971: 162). The oscillations in Joyce's work between his affirmations of his representations as the 'new' and as 'original', and the questioning of these propositions, are, it will be suggested, the defining characteristic of his secondary representations.

* * *

What does it mean to speak of an origin in relation to literature? The Western conception of the origin has one of its earliest expressions in the Platonic model of original and copy. Linked by repetition, the original functions as the origin of the copy. The copy, by its very nature, is dependent upon some thing or idea which exists prior to it; some thing which is autonomous and self-determining. The copy is therefore subordinated to the idea of the original (its origin), it is considered to be secondary and inessential - which, for Plato, is the status of all mimetic figures. This Platonic discourse links two figures identical in everything except value through a temporal narrative of repetition, filiation and devaluation. These same ratios appear in Edward Said's book *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (1975). According to Said, metaphors of filiation - this time centred not on the idea of a Platonic original but

human origin - are the preferential images of creation in the traditional novel. As he remarks in his essay "On Repetition" (1983: 111-125) regarding these metaphors:

> Making is repeating, repeating is knowing because making. [...] I think it can be shown that narrative fiction during the European eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is based on the filial device of handing on a story through narrative telling; moreover that the generic plot situation of the novel is to repeat through variation the family scene by which human beings engender human duration in their action (1983: 117).

If for Plato origin is a matter of an original object copied through mimesis, then Said offers a different narrative, which, however, remains marked by the same discourse of repetition. The traditional novel repeats 'narrative telling'. Its origin is a human being narrating a story, and the novel repeats this origin through the positing of a narrating consciousness. This human origin is complemented by a discourse of familial relationships. Translated into strictly literary terms, this 'family scene' is, as Said suggests, not only a matter of basing the novel mimetically on the 'course of human life' (1983: 117), but also a matter of existing in a familial relationship with a literary precursor (1983: 117).

At least three different notions of what constitutes a literary origin emerge from this account: it is either an original presence that is duplicated in the work, or a narrating voice, or it is a literary precursor. In each instance the literary work is linked to its origin through a discursive configuration of repetition, affiliation and production. The origin is then pointed to by the work at the same time as it is framed as giving rise to, or grounding, the work. It is both the temporal predecessor of the particular work and, through repetition, a constitutive component of the work's discourse. It is in this sense that Jacques Derrida remarks that '[r]epetition does not reissue the book, but describes its origin from the vantage of a writing which does not yet belong to it' (1967, 1978: 295). From this vantage point the work literally writes its own origin through repetition. '[R]epetition is the first writing' (1978: 295), Derrida significantly asserts.

This miming of the origin of a particular discourse inside the discourse itself delimits the discourse pertaining to the origination and engendering of the literary work. What is at stake is not the actual origin of the work, but the act of its production. The actual work of production or writing precedes the work as the writing of the work, not a representation of writing - although postmodern meta-fiction sometimes effectively repeats the process of composition itself. The locus of interpretation is rather the repetitions that the work offers as descriptive elaborations of its own origin - its illusion of mimetic correlation and being grounded in an objective reality (it is exactly this point of origin that Flaubert rejects), its act of narration, or its intertextual engagement with a literary precursor (and, for that matter, its negations). Considered as such, the work's denotation of its own origin is a process inherently

similar to, in the first instance, the work's representation of a primary work on which its secondary representations are founded; and, secondly and more specifically, Proust's projection of a literal figure from which the figures which Marcel constructs deviate. What is present in these instances is not an actual and present prior figure to be rewritten, but an act of representation, or illusionary repetition, that brings these primary figures into being.

What is important, however, is that through these inscriptions and repetitions, the work's image of its own origin is opened to an act of further writing. As a component of the work it is open to the same interplay of negativity and affirmation as any other discourse in the work. This is what occurs, for instance, in Charles Baudelaire's distortion of the lyrical 'I' in his second "Spleen" (examined in the introduction of this dissertation). The offered origin of the poem is subjected to a complex interplay of affirmations and negations, thereby casting doubt on the representational status of the poem itself. It is this rewriting of its denotated origins that this chapter attempts to chart in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. What is at stake in this analysis is then not the actual, literal origin of the representations of the work, but its representation of its own origins, and the negations and affirmations these representations are subjected to.

* * *

A reading of Joyce's work in terms of origins and affiliations should begin not with the language of the work, but with a fully realized account of exactly the negation of these figures given by Stephen in "Scylla and Charybdis"[1] during his exposition of his theory regarding Shakespeare or then rather Stephen's compound 'Rutlandbaconsouthampton-shakespeare' (1993: 199). Stephen's premise regarding Shakespeare - that, as Karen Lawrence notes (1981: 81), a writer disguises and fragments his own obsessions in his work - leads into an account concerned with origins and paternal affiliation:

> No. The corpse of John Shakespeare does not walk the night. From hour to hour it rots and rots. He rests, disarmed of fatherhood, having devised that mystical estate upon his son. Boccaccio's Calandrino was the first and last man who felt himself with child. Fatherhood, in the sense of conscious begetting, is unknown to man. It is a mystical estate, an apostolic succession, from only begetter to only begotten. On that mystery and not on the madonna which the cunning Italian intellect flung to the mob of Europe the church is founded and founded irremovably because founded, like the world,

[1] Due to Joyce's frequent shifts in style from episode to episode in *Ulysses*, this study will situate its references to specific scenes and passages in Joyce's work according to the titles of the chapters as given by Joyce to Carlo Linati (1993:801-802).

> macro and microcosmos upon the void. [...] Paternity may be a legal fiction. Who is the father of any son that any son should love him or he any son? (1993: 199).

What begins as a denial of the correspondence between the ghost of Hamlet's father and the father of Shakespeare develops in Stephen's rhetoric into a negation of paternal affiliation. Paternity, the filial relationship of begetting and origination that links father and son, is shown by Stephen to be a 'fiction' - a partial negation that renders fatherhood an insubstantial presence stripped of all reference to reality. Fathers do not beget sons. The 'void' left by the negation of paternal affiliation is the origin and foundation of the 'begotten'. Stephen's literary theory is, of course, a disguise for his own feelings regarding his father and mother, whom he scorns. After all, he thinks of himself as 'made not begotten' (1993: 38) and describes history - for him a network of filial attachments that includes the Catholic church, England and his parents - as a 'nightmare from which I am trying to awake' (1993: 34). Accordingly the scene in "Scylla and Charybdis" swerves away from Shakespeare and becomes the locus of Stephen's increasingly intensified and agitated rhetoric against filial attachment. The impossible denial of actual paternity in the discussion of Shakespeare momentarily gives way to an almost oedipal scene - Joyce's antipathy towards Freud must be kept in mind here - where the son is portrayed as the destroyer of the father. For Stephen this is not a meditated but a natural and inevitable process: 'born, he [the son] brings pain, divides affection, increases care. He is a male: his growth is his father's decline, his youth his father's envy, his friend his father's enemy' (1993: 199). With the birth of the son the father's decline begins.

Once again, however, Stephen's rhetoric intensifies. The picture of the son destroying an already existing paternal bond is not, as he is well aware, a negation but indirectly an affirmation of paternity and origins. 'Am I a father? If I were?' (1993: 199), he thinks. For a son to destroy a father is merely to affirm the historical and temporal line whereby the son becomes, in time, the father. The son becomes the begetter and will also be destroyed in the procession of origins that constitutes history. It is this procession that his final rhetorical destruction of paternity seeks to negate through the assertion of the non-existence of any actual parental origin for Shakespeare:

> Sabellius, the African, subtlest heresiarch of all the beasts of the field, held that the Father was Himself His Own Son. The bulldog of Aquin, with whom no word shall be impossible, refutes him. Well: if the father who has not a son be not a father can the son who has not a father be a son? When Rutlandbaconsouthamptonshakespeare or another poet of the same name in the comedy of errors wrote *Hamlet* he was not the father of his own son, merely but, being no more a son, he was and felt himself to be the father of all his race, the father of his own grandfather, the father of his unborn grandson (1993: 199).

Stephen's account leads to a discourse that is increasingly marked by the rhetorical figure of *metalepsis* - the reversal of two different points in time. Stephen's rhetoric leads the reader on a bewildering path from Sabellius, through St. Thomas Aquinas ('the bulldog of Aquin' whom Stephen implicitly refutes) back again to his compound of Shakespeare (the name fragmented here by the yoking together of the different identities attributed to the author of *Hamlet*). This bewildering genealogy veils, however, an argumentative rhetoric concerned with paternity and origins. The proposition of Sabellius ('the Father was Himself His Own Son') establishes a metaleptic or 'transumptive' (Bloom, 1982: 74) discourse where later ('Son') is substituted for earlier ('Father') - the father becomes the son and the son the father. Aquinas's refutation is taken note of before Stephen proceeds to prove Sabellius's case by returning to the discussion of Shakespeare. This return is preceded by Stephen's ritual negation of paternity ('can the son who has not a father be a son'), before the distinction between father and son (begetter and begotten) is transumptively negated, or made non-existent in the instance of Shakespeare. Shakespeare ceases to be a product of history and paternal affiliation. He is the 'father of all his race' and 'the father of his own grandfather'. Surprisingly, he is also his own son: 'the father of his unborn grandson'. It is impossible to locate a temporal origin for Shakespeare; he has, through the negation of his status as a 'son', been transformed into his own father, and grandfather, and, presumably, so on in infinite regress. In addition, he has also been transformed into the 'father' or origin of all that comes after him: his son, grandson and those that come after his grandson. The negation of a prescribed origin for Shakespeare institutes him as the eternal and multiplied origin of all that comes after him. He is affirmed as not only his own father but also the father of multitudes. His own origin is, however, the 'void' - the negated temporal category of origin and filial attachment. For Stephen, Shakespeare repeats nothing, he is always the object of repetition, the expansive 'father of all'.

The compounding of metaleptic or transumptive movements and negations in the discourse of the passage is, indirectly, a configuration that attempts to ascribe to Shakespeare (a substitute for Stephen in the passage) what Smith and Markus see as the defining characteristic of modernism: its search for the 'new' and for 'originality'. Understood here according to what Paul de Man describes as, in the first instance, the moment in modernism where 'all anteriority vanishes' (1971: 147), and, secondly, modernism's investment of trust in 'the power of the present moment as an origin' (1971: 149), these two predicates of the literary work suggest the simultaneous denial of the past as an origin, and the refiguring of the present as that which functions as its own origin. Rather than being a repetition, the construct, which exists in the present, is affirmed as its own origin, thereby denying the anteriority, which would belong to it if it were to be a repetition of a prior object or discourse. Stephen's conflation of *metalepsis* and negation in his discussion of the relation between Shakespeare and paternal affiliation effects exactly this affirmation. Shakespeare is discussed as a figure

without any precursor that functions as the origin of 'all'. Considered in these terms he is both that which is without origin, and, indirectly, that which is new and original through being without exactly such an origin or precursor. Paradoxically, he - a historical figure - is figured as that which is pre-eminently modern.

As Harold Bloom points out in "Transumption: Towards a Diachronic Rhetoric (Blanks, Leaves, Cries)" (1982: 73-107), *metalepsis* or transumption 'relies upon a diachronic concept of rhetoric' (1982: 74); it is a 're-troping of earlier tropes' (1982: 74). Considered as such this play of origins that Stephen outlines points towards one possible critical figure for Joyce's work. As Joyce (and Stephen) are well aware, the negation and metaleptic reversal of origins that take place in Stephen's rhetoric depend on the prior existence of exactly these origins - the 'legal fiction' of paternity. This diachronic earliness opens the circumscribed origin to echoing and deformation. These are the familiar ratios of a primary and secondary work linked by an intricate network of affirmations and negations. The critical act of rewriting that takes place in Stephen's discourse depends on the dual possibility of affirmation and negation. The prior origin is affirmed through an act of repetition that inscribes and inserts it inside the context of a belated configuration - the father becomes the son. Simultaneously, this affirmation is negated and the son becomes his own father (and in Shakespeare's instance the father of his father). The son is then affirmed through this process as the new and original, the locus of all origins, while the father is transformed into the 'void' that underlies all accounts of paternity. To move from the recognition of an origin to its negation and transumption by a secondary figure is an act of critical rewriting that actively substitutes a secondary work for a negated primary figure. The absence of paternal origin that Stephen's rhetoric proclaims leads to the framing of the son as his own origin. The negation of paternal filiation takes place between two affirmative moments, it is the inscription of a negation between two affirmative figures, which are both to be understood as paternal origins.

* * *

Does Stephen's negation of a prior presence then necessarily lead into the affirmation of a new figure of origination, a new presence? Is his discourse from this vantage point identical with the procession from negation to affirmation? Passages such as the following taken from the opening of "Proteus" are heavily indebted to the discourse against origins given form to by Stephen's rhetoric in "Scylla and Charybdis":

> Stephen closed his eyes to hear his boots crush crackling wrack and shells. You are walking through it howsomever. I am, a stride at a time. A very short space of time through very short times of space. Five, six, the *nacheinander*. Exactly : and this is the ineluctable modality of the audible. Open your eyes. No. Jesus! If I fell over a cliff

> that beetles o'er his base, fall through the *nebeneinander* ineluctably. I am getting on nicely in the dark. My ash sword hangs at my side. Tap with it : they do. My two feet in his boots are at the end of his legs, *nebeneinander*. Sounds solid : made by the mallet of *Los Demiurgos*. Am I walking into eternity along Sandymount strand? (1993: 37).

After the first few words ('Stephen closed his eyes to hear his boots') the rest of the passage, like much of "Proteus", is given over to Stephen's interior monologue. The reader is handed over to what Stephen sees and thinks, and he becomes the point of orientation of what is represented in the chapter. Often in "Proteus" this discourse is determined exactly by questions regarding origins. Stephen, who reads the '[s]ignatures of all things' (1993: 37) is both the origin and observer of the presentations of the chapter. Stephen transforms the objects of his perceptions into the images collected in "Proteus" ('Shut your eyes and see' (1993: 37)). These transformations occur frequently through the annotation of these images with various other discourses related to fourteenth-century Dublin (1993: 45), sixteenth-century Denmark (1993: 45), to the works of heretics (1993: 40), philosophers (1993: 37, 48), writers (37, 49), to memories of visits to his aunt (1993: 40, 42) and the sighting of a woman outside a bookstore (1993: 48), to conversations with Kevin Egan (1993: 41), to his writing career (1993: 43, 50), to the stage roles of Hamlet (1993: 37, 50) and Actaeon (1993: 45), and to the imagined sighting of a drowned corpse (1993: 49), to name but a few[2]. These allusions function as a proliferation of the origins of the chapter's representations that are framed as arising from a multitude of prior figures. Stephen remains, however, oblivious to this proliferation of origins located in prior discourses, directing instead his attention towards the origin and status of his perceptions.

Stephen's interior monologue in this passage transforms the everyday experience of a walk along the beach into a constellation of references to Aristotle ('the ineluctable modality of the audible'), William Blake ('*Los Demiurgos* [...] walking into eternity'), Gotthold Ephraim Lessing ('*nacheinander* [...] *nebeneinander*') and William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (I, iv: 70-71) ('a cliff that beetles o'er his base'). The thematic concern of this configuration is exactly the ability of Stephen's consciousness to act as origin of what is perceived. Stephen is concerned with determining whether the existence of a spatial scene depends on his perception of it. With closed eyes he imagines the act of walking along the beach to be a passage into William Blake's 'eternity': Stephen's interior monologue describes a passage from time and visible space (Lessing's '*nacheinander*' and '*nebeneinander*') created by Blake's '*Los Demiurgos*' into the surmounting and destruction of natural time and space, the 'dark' and 'eternity'. This passage away from time and space is then also an escape from the 'ineluctable

[2] I am indebted to Don Gifford's and Robert J. Seidman's *"Ulysses" Annotated: Notes for James Joyce's "Ulysses" - Revised and Expanded Edition* (1988) for the identification of these and other allusions in *Ulysses*.

modality' of time and space that Aristotle posits, or rather, the inescapable materiality of the physical world. Stephen's mental substitution of this drama for the experience of material reality is at its basis both a transumptive act and a negation. Rather than basing his perceptions on a world whose existence precedes his presentations, his interior monologue (a sign of his consciousness) becomes the imaginative origin of the representations of his perceptions in the chapter. These representations are not, however, identical with the perceived objects. They are partially negated in his consciousness. He both rewrites and appears to give origin to the world.

Stephen is not, however, satisfied with these localized transumptive acts. His discourse is insistently pre-occupied with discerning whether a complete reversal of origins is possible, whether the external world can be posited as being wholly dependent on the originating capacity of his consciousness. It is this negation of all exterior origins that motivates his blind walk along the edges of the sea - provocatively troped in "Telemachus" as a metaphor for mothers ('Isn't the sea what Algy calls it: a great sweet mother' (1993: 5)). This complete transumption that Stephen wishes for remains incomplete. As he affirms after he opens his eyes: 'There all the time without you: and ever shall be, world without end' (1993: 38). What began as a negation of the external world as the origin of what is perceived, ends in the denial of the ability of consciousness to function as the origin of what is perceived. The world remains ever present as an origin that precedes and delimits its perception. The originating capacity of consciousness is itself negated. The felicity of the presentations Stephen constructs around his perceptions as the origin of these perceptions is challenged. Like the Proustian affirmation of time regained, these transumptions are framed as contingent and fugitive. They are isolated negations of a prior origin that fail to establish themselves in a new originary capacity, errors and misreadings directed against the true order of things.

Accordingly, Stephen's discourse in "Proteus" remains marked by the indication of an unnamable and threatening presence that remains outside the sphere of his consciousness and vision: 'Who watches me here? [...] Can't see! who's behind me' (1993: 48-49). This 'who' is that which remains beyond Stephen's presentations; it is the figure that escapes his transumptive act in the establishment of himself as the origin of his perceptions. If Stephen's interior monologue repeats and distorts the material objects of his perceptions, then his discourse also introduces an absence into these rewritten perceptions. An anterior figure remains that escapes perception and presentation, thereby challenging the framing of Stephen's act of seeing as the originary locus of "Proteus". A negativity related to the status of his perceptions - which remain marked by that which is unrepresentable by it - is inscribed in the discourse: Stephen can no longer be affirmed as the origin of what he observes, an unrepresentable and unrepresented figure eludes his active act of perception. The discourse of "Proteus" becomes the terrain of the inscription of two origins (the perception of Stephen and the perceived world), each one challenged by a transumptive movement that figures the one

as emerging from the other. What is negated is not one specific account of what constitutes an origin, but, indirectly, the notion of a single origin. The discourse of "Proteus" becomes the scene of the simultaneous denial and multiplication of origins. What emerges is an unstable discourse marked by an uncertainty regarding what is repeated and what the status of these repetitions are.

This status of Stephen's discourse is indicative of a movement in the discourse of the novel that is not reducible to the ratios of consciousness and the referential world that together circumscribe it in "Proteus". Indeed, even in the passage from "Proteus" analyzed here this movement becomes visible. The partition between the objective narration of 'Stephen closed his eyes to hear his boots [...]' and the subjective interior monologue of the rest of the passage resists being framed only in terms of a passage between the world and consciousness. The partition also marks a turning point in the chain of signifiers that constitute the passage. The movement from the purely descriptive proposition that begins the passage into Stephen's interior monologue is, considered in formal terms, also a rewriting of the linguistic signifiers that function for the reader as the origin of the referential value of the passage. 'Stephen closed his eyes to hear his boots' becomes the onomatopoeia of 'crush crackling wrack and shells'. The denotative signifiers of the passage are rewritten as rhetorical figures that collapse the sound made by Stephen's boots and his perception of this sound into a single sign, thereby increasing the difficulty the reader faces when reading Joyce's language.

This movement away from a purely denotative sequence of signifiers is, of course, extended by the rest of the transformations in the passage of this everyday act into a reverie on the status and possibilities of perception. A shift in the process of reading takes place. Instead of reading the signifiers in the passage as a denotative description of the pre-existent referent given in the opening lines of the paragraph, reading becomes a notation of the passage's permutation of its opening signifier. The reader reads the rewriting of the opening code of the passage, not the signification of an external reality. Joyce's discourse is here identical with what Michael Riffaterre, in his book *Text Production* (1983, 1979), describes as the horizontal axis of signification of the work (1983: 35), or the manner in which signifiers vary from and transform prior signifiers in the syntagmatic structure of the work (1983: 36). As Riffaterre indicates, this form of signification 'subordinates the signified to the signifier' (1983: 15). The signified is perceived as a secondary element in such a reading. The focus is shifted to the transformation of a denotative or referential sequence of signifiers into Stephen's non-referential discourse. What is negated is the status of the opening denotative signs as the referential origin of the significations of the passage. The passage functions not as an extension of the signifiers it begins with, but as a transformation and rewriting (through negation) of exactly these signifiers through the intrusion of Stephen's consciousness as the new origin of exactly these signifiers. The reader is carried away from an apparently stable

origin of the presentations of the chapter (its objective description of Stephen's actions) into a sequence that functions as a negation and disruption of this denotative discourse.

On a linguistic level, the passage negates its own origin in a descriptive sequence. This is not only effected by a substitution of signifiers grounded in Stephen's consciousness for signifiers that denote an objective reality, but also through the introduction of significations that neither repeat objective reality nor the movements of Stephen's consciousness. These significations are the intertextual references to *Hamlet*, Blake, Aristotle and Lessing. Each of these intertextual allusions points to a different origin for the discourse of the passage that is, in turn, framed as repeating each of these external origins. It is certainly this proliferation of origins of the work's presentation that allows D.H. Lawrence to speak of the 'old and hard-worked staleness' (Lawrence *in* Levine, 1979, 1986: 129) of Joyce's discourse. This proliferation of origins is also the impetus for Umberto Eco's critical metaphor of the 'encyclopedia' in *The Role of the Reader* (1979) in relation to Joyce's work. As Eco states: the ideal reader of Joyce's work is the one who is 'able to master different codes and eager to deal with the text as a maze of many issues' (1979: 9). Each of these 'different codes' is a potentially different origin for the written word that appears in *Ulysses*. André Topia correctly remarks in his essay, "The Matrix and the Echo: Intertextuality in *Ulysses*" (1976, 1984: 103-125) that '[w]hen reading *Ulysses* one has the impression that all the material in the book is already contained potentially in the great manuals and dictionaries of language, of the sciences, of popular wisdom' (1984: 110). The effect of Joyce's allusions to other discourses, and of other works on the discourse of his novel is that neither the reality the work attempts to present, nor the consciousness of his characters can be framed as an origin for the signifiers of the work. His signifiers are repetitions of a discourse existing outside the circumference of the work, which - by implication - thereby question the felicity of the work as the origin of its own sequence of signifiers. Joyce's own discourse appears to be purely a repetition, plagiarism. Later it will become necessary to question this belatedness attributed here to Joyce's discourse, to question whether he merely repeats, or, through repetition, rewrites these intertexts. At this point it is sufficient to note the effect of it on the passage in question. Already framed as a departure from its origins due to the negation of its opening denotative signifiers - through the transumptive institution of Stephen's interior monologue - these intertextual allusions further destabilize the grounding of these signifiers on a stable origin. The signifiers of the passage are doubly marked as originating both from Stephen's monologue and from a multitude of other discourses not present in the work itself. The grounding of the passage in the original referential sequence it begins with is problematized: it functions rather as a movement away from this original locus, a movement which marks it with a host of different origins.

In "Proteus" this negation of origins in relation to the signifier together with its effects are to a large extent naturalized by Stephen's interior monologue. The movements of

consciousness - whether through their impositions upon the outside world, or through the mnemonic signs of memory - naturalize these negations and proliferations of origins as part of the drama of Stephen's increasingly agitated and nimble mind. This naturalization becomes more difficult, however, when Joyce turns to the presentation of Leopold Bloom's interior monologues. As an example of these interior monologues from "Lotus-eaters" that are close in nature to the discourse of Stephen in "Scylla and Charybdis", consider the following passage:

> [...] he halted before the window of the Belfast and Oriental Tea Company and read the legend of leadpapered packets: choice blend, finest quality, family tea.
> [...]
>
> So warm. His right hand once more more slowly went over again : choice blend, made of the finest Ceylon brands. The far east. Lovely spot it must be : the garden of the world, big lazy leaves to float about on, cactuses, flowery meads, snaky lianas they call them. Wonder is it like that. Those Cinghalese lobbing around in the sun, in *dolce far niente*. Not doing a hand's turn all day. Sleep six months out of twelve. Too hot to quarrel. Influence of the climate. Lethargy. Flowers of idleness. The air feeds most. Azotes. Hothouse in Botanic gardens. Sensitive plants. Waterlilies. Petals too tired to. Sleeping sickness in the air (1993: 68-69).

Bloom's discourse consists of two subsequent signifying networks involved in a complicated relationship with each other. The second passage functions as a repetition and distortion of the former, re-articulating Bloom's reading of the advertisement in different codes. The most obvious repetition that links these two passages is the repetition of the words 'choice blend'. Given in this earlier passage as a quotation in an advertisement, it appears in the subsequent passage as a sign no longer separate from Bloom's fragmented thoughts. As Topia remarks, the effects of this is a 'faint vibration of the text to which no paternity can be attributed' (1984: 108). Bloom takes over received discourses and, through their separation from their origins, transumptively presents them as his own. This same process informs his description of the 'far east'. Arising in direct response to the signifier 'Oriental Tea Company', Bloom unfolds a series of received clichés regarding the Orient: 'the garden of the world', 'lazy leaves to float about on', 'flowery meads', 'snaky lianas', 'Sleeping six months out of twelve', 'Too hot to quarrel', 'Hothouse in Botanic gardens', etc.

Surprisingly, Topia proceeds to argue that the effect of these clichés and repetitions in Bloom's discourse is to cast doubt upon Bloom as their origin (1984: 108). They are not unique expressions of consciousness or descriptive statements; rather, they are simply discourse - 'reactivated clichés' (1984: 109). They appear as discourse brought into the work from another discourse, to be redeployed in their original form. At this point the origin of the

second passage is displaced from the originating consciousness of Bloom. The repeated first passage and the network of clichés surrounding the orient are the true filial precursors of what is apparently Bloom's interior monologue. The reverse is also, however, true: Bloom's resistance to giving 'choice blends' as a quotation disturbs this narrative of direct repetition. Similarly, the clichés regarding the orient are directed and motivated by the sweltering heat Bloom experiences. If '[t]oo hot to quarrel' is a cliché regarding the orient and therefore part of the rewriting of the advertisement in the code of cliché, it is also motivated by Bloom's consciousness as an effective metaphor for the heat he experiences. Implicitly the cliché is not only repeated and used inside its original context, but also rewritten as a metaphor for a hot day in Dublin. This passage, consisting of clichés and unacknowledged quotations, is then, from one vantage point, a negation of the fact that Bloom's interior monologue is the origin of the content of the sequence of signifiers. The signifiers of his monologue are negated as repetitions of prior signifiers. On the other hand, the passage also effectively negates the precursors it repeats: the advertisement and the system of clichés. The advertisement is negated as a collection of clichés, while the clichés themselves are rewritten as metaphors for a naturalistic scene. Both the clichés and the advertisement are transumptively re-articulated from the vantage point of Bloom's interior monologue.

What is finally negated is the possibility of granting signifying fixity to any of the sequence's signifiers by attaching to them a paternal origin that they directly repeat. Joyce's primary strategy of negation appears to be exactly this removal of a fixed origin to ground the signifier in. The signifier as repetition of a prior signified or signifier is negated in favour of a chain of signifiers that is inscribed with multiple origins, without coming to rest in any of them. This is the negativity that Joyce's discourse performs. As soon as an origin for the discourse is posited, this origin is negated or problematized through the affirmation of other possible origins. A specific form of undecidability in the first instance defines the negativity this movement initiates, and it becomes impossible to assign a single origin to the discourse: such an interpretation is forced to oscillate between multiple variations of this origin, variations which include the possibility of a negated origin, a 'void' as Stephen would have it. Due to this undecidability, the origin of the discourse is framed as unrepresentable and unrepresented. It becomes the locus of the work's negativity. Together with this undecidability, and depending on it, the secondary work that Joyce's rewritings or negations produce is marked by an equivocity in relation to its status. It appears both as an affirmative repetition and transumptive negation of a prior discourse or signifier. At the same time that these linguistic signs fail to frame themselves as the origin of their representations, they also deny the affirmation of an origin outside their circumference as their primary origin. Joyce's signifiers exist in a state of perpetual exile, divorced from a primary genetic origin they appear to come to rest in different secondary origins without authorizing any of these figures

as their own paternal precursor. They are inherently nomadic, wandering like Ulysses without the possibility of a return to Ithaca or, as will be shown, to Penelope.

From the vantage point of a discourse concerned with repetition - which, as has been suggested, is linked to the writing of origins - the negation of the signifier as a direct repetition of a prior figure or origin does not bring repetition to an end; the negation of the signifier in its capacity as a repetition of an originary sign or object rather ensures its repeatability. The signifier becomes repeatable inside different contexts and configurations, thereby claiming various origins as its own. The difference that emerges from these repetitions is that the signifier does not come to a rest in any of these contexts or signifying networks. It is not given closure as a sign firmly grounded in a figure outside itself, or only on itself. The origin of the signifier remains fugitive and undecidable. Commenting on this movement of the sign, Jacques Derrida writes in "Signature Event Context" (1972, 1988: 1-24) that 'A written sign [...] is a mark that subsists [...] and which can give rise to an iteration in the absence and beyond the presence of the empirically determined subject who [...] has emitted or produced it' (1988: 9). In the terms used here Derrida suggests that the written sign remains part of discourse and is open to repetition (what he calls 'iterable') after it has been removed from its origins. It is this movement of the signifier which Joyce's work performs through its negations and rewriting, its negativity residing exactly in the performance and uncovering of this linguistic situation. If writing always takes place, as Derrida would have it, in and over the absence of an origin, Joyce dramatizes and unveils this aspect of the signifying act. His writing insists on and marks this situation as the conditions of its own possibility.

The effects of this on a reading of the discourse is to render this reading strangely ambivalent. The reading process is problematized by the difficulty of assigning an origin to the signifiers of the work. Whether the difficulty lies in assessing the nature of the repetitions that take place on the various levels of the work, whether inter- or intratextual, or in mediating between two different signifying chains that function as rewritings of each other, Joyce problematizes the reading process by simultaneously suggesting and negating potential origins for his work's language. Perhaps this subversion of the reading process takes place most effectively in the "Cyclops" and "Aeolus" chapters of the work. In "Aeolus" the reader encounters what Karen Lawrence describes as a 'kind of double writing' (1981: 55). On the one hand the reader is given a continuation of the narrative - although this time articulated through the mediation of rhetorical tropes (Gifford lists 113 different figures in his "Appendix: Rhetorical Figures in *Aeolus*" (1988: 635-643)). On the other, this narrative is interrupted by boldfaced phrases functioning as headlines for the segment of the narrative that follows (for instance, **'EXIT BLOOM'** (1993: 124), or **'HOW A GREAT DAILY ORGAN IS TURNED OUT'** (1993: 114)). Joyce clearly intended for there to be a genetic connection between these headlines and the subsequent discourse. **'BLOOM EXITS'** is, for instance

followed by Bloom's departure. Similarly, a cryptic headline '**CLEVER, VERY**' (1993: 132) is followed by 'Clever, Lenehan said. Very' (1993: 132). What renders these intrusions problematic is that the discourse following each headline is still the mixture of interior monologue and third-person narration encountered in "Proteus" and "Lotus-eaters". The same origins of a referential signified and narrating consciousness attributed to the discourse of these chapters would appear to hold for these sections of "Aeolus" as well. Joyce's headlines would appear to negate these framing of the origins of the work's presentations. In the first instance, if each section is a development and extension of its headline, then these headlines, rather than the continuing narrative, are the represented origins of each section. It is they that are repeated and rewritten. Secondly, it is impossible to assign either the third-person narrator, or the consciousness of the characters as the origin of these headlines. Of these headlines, Richard Ellman in *Ulysses on the Liffey* (1972) simply says that '[t]heir authorship is unclear' (1972: 73). They appear simply as written facts of the narrative. If they can be spoken of as being narrated, then their narrator is not any narrator previously encountered in Joyce's work. These headlines, in fact, mark the point in the work where the written word appears to be alienated from a narrating consciousness, and which, in turn, appears to negate the existence of a narrating consciousness as the origin of its discourse. The cumulative effect of this reading - which, on the one hand, posits the headlines as the origin of the discourse that follows, and, on the other, frames these headlines as not being narrated by any familiar or identifiable narrator - is that the apparent grounding of the discourse of the characters in either their consciousnesses or in the familiar third-person narrator fails to take place. The different origins given to the discourse in each section is complemented and negated by the presence of the headlines. As extensions of these headlines each of these sections are grounded in a 'void' - an unrepresented and unidentifiable narrator.

In the reading of this section the reader is then confronted with the double responsibility of following the continuation of the narrative and to register the presence of an unnamable and unrepresented origin that also appears to give shape to this narrative. The reader has to read a language that has, despite appearances, no clear and fixed discernible origin; a language that is, as Derrida remarks in "Signature Event Context" 'separated at birth from the assistance of its father' (1988: 8). What appeared as an ambiguous possibility in Bloom's discourse in "Lotus-eaters" - the negation of a narrating consciousness that gives origin to the signifiers of the work - is given form in "Aeolus". The category of a narrating voice is emptied, negated. Instead each headline stands as a new origin for the linguistic section it frames. The possibility is, however, not excluded that this line of origination is equally as problematic as the identification of the narrator of the headlines:

HORATIO IS CYNOSURE THIS FAIR JUNE DAY

J.J Molloy sent a weary sidelong glance towards the statue and held his peace (1993: 143).

The section that follows the headline appears to be a direct negation of its meaning. To pass from a statue described as 'cynosure', in other words as the centre of attraction, to Molloy's 'weary sidelong glance' is, in effect, to distort rather than merely repeat the significations of the headline. The discourse that follows the headline constructs its origin as a trope. It modifies it, distorts it, again undoing the filial bond inscribed by the repetition of origins. Here the flow of the linear narrative with its mixture of first and third person narrators again appears as the proper origin of the discourse. The headlines are framed as misreadings or rewritings of this discourse. The signifiers of the passage are again repeated inside a different context and assigned a different origin. Joyce's discourse refuses to come to an end in a single framing of its origin.

A similar negation of the space of the narrator occurs in "Cyclops". Again the act of narration is postulated as consisting of two clearly marked components: an 'I' that is an unnamed narrator in the pub where the action of the chapter takes place, and another unnamable narrator that intrudes on the first. The relation between the two narrators is one of rewriting and parody. After a discussion in the pub regarding whether Paddy Dignam is dead ('- Dead! says Alf. He is no more dead than you are. - Maybe so, says Joe. They took the liberty of burying him this morning anyhow' (1993: 288)), this scene is parodied by a voice that intrudes into the narration:

> In the darkness spirit hands were felt to flutter and when prayers by tantras had been directed to the proper quarter a faint but increasing luminosity of ruby light became gradually visible, the apparition of the etheric double being particularly lifelike owing to the discharge of jivic rays from the crown of the head and face. Communication was effected through the pituitary body and also by means of the orangefiery and scarlet rays emanating from the sacral region and solar plexus. Questioned by his earthname as to his whereabouts in the heavenworld he stated that he was now on the path of pralaya or return but was still submitted to trial at the hands of certain bloodthirsty entities on the lower astral levels (1993: 289).

This seance for the dead Paddy, done in the style suggested by the Theosophical writing of Madame Blavatsky, parodies Alf's assertions that Paddy is still alive. Again this second sequence is then best understood as a hyperbolic and exaggerated rewriting of the primary scene in the pub. What makes it problematic, however, is that the narrator of this passage is not identical with the 'I' that narrates the events in the bar. Like in "Aeolus" an empty space is posited as the origin of portions of the discourse. This unnamed voice takes over the role of

narrator and re-articulates what is said in the bar, negating both the contents and the agency of that narration. Two portions of discourse are then juxtaposed with each other - radically heterogeneous as far as narrator is concerned, while repeating through distortion the contents of the other. Joyce's work refuses, indeed negates, the possibility of a coherent single voice that can function as the origin of the presentations of its content. Jacques Derrida's remark regarding *Finnegans Wake*, made in his essay "Two Words for Joyce" (1982, 1984: 145-161), is particularly apt in light of this fact: 'The fact of the multiplicity of languages, what was done as confusion of languages can no longer let itself be translated into one language' (1984: 155). Similarly, in *Ulysses*, a confusion of voices cannot be affirmed as a single enunciative voice.

This scene in "Cyclops" points, however, towards a different discourse in the novel relating to origins and paternal filiations, namely that of intertextual repetition. As has been pointed out, the parodic seance duplicates the style of a Theosophical seance. This form of intertextual duplication is a frequent gesture in the chapter. At various points the second narrator duplicates the style of newspaper stories, society columns, letters, court records and biblical texts, to name a few. Stylistically, "Cyclops" offers the reader Joyce at his most plagiaristic and intertextually dependent. On the one hand, this returns the discourse of the novel to the proliferation of origins noted in relation to "Proteus" and "Lotus-eaters"; on the other hand, Joyce not only repeats these styles to assert his dependence upon them, but also to negate and rewrite them. Consider for example the biblical passage that closes the chapter:

> When lo, there came about them all a great brightness and they beheld the chariot wherein He stood ascend to heaven. And they beheld Him in the chariot, clothed upon in the glory of brightness, having raiment as of the sun, fair as the moon and terrible that for awe they durst not look upon Him. And their came a voice out of heaven, calling: *Elijah! Elijah!* And He answered with a main cry: *Abba! Adonai!* And they beheld Him even Him, ben Bloom Elijah, amid clouds of angels ascend to the glory of the brightness at an angle of fortyfive degrees over Donohoe's in Little Green Street like a shot of a shovel (1993: 330).

The style of the passage is biblical, and is an intertextual repetition of Elijah's ascent to heaven. What distinguishes this from a direct quotation of biblical discourse - which would institute this discourse as the affirmed origin of the passage - is that Joyce both repeats and distorts the biblical code. Proceeding from the conflation of Elijah with Bloom ('ben Bloom Elijah') to the description of Bloom's ascent ('at an angle of fortyfive degrees over Donohoe's in Little Green Street like a shot of a shovel'), Joyce continues to insert degrading (inside this context) elements into the biblical discourse. The discourse is marked by bathos rather than by the sublime discourse proper to a religious scene. To conflate this bathos with biblical

discourse is to create discontinuities inside the structure of a discourse. What keeps the passage together, however, is exactly the ironical tension created by the conflation of the scene of Bloom leaving the pub with Elijah's ascent to heaven. The tone of the passage is accordingly mock-heroic - it parodies through their conflation both Bloom and the biblical style. Rather than asserting its dependence upon the biblical style it imitates, Joyce's discourse subverts and distorts this style. Instead of functioning as the origin of Joyce's writing it becomes an object of this writing, whereby Joyce implicitly negates this style as a precursor and influence upon the writing of his work. No direct paternal filiation exists between the biblical style and Joyce's discourse, he mimes it to open it to further writing. Significantly this writing takes the form of a parody. Joyce's writing is by definition transumptive here: it transforms the exalted style of a prior generation into the mock-heroic prose of his own work - thereby simultaneously negating and asserting his dominance over this style.

No chapter in *Ulysses* is as devoted to the establishment of intertextual connections with prior authors and styles as "Oxen in the Sun". Through the initial grounding of his shifting discourse on histories of English prose styles, Joyce wrote "Oxen in the Sun" as a catalogue of different discursive styles. Each new style accordingly prompts Joyce to rewrite the signifier that names Bloom: Bloom is renamed respectively 'wayfarer' (old Anglo-Saxon) [1993: 368], the 'traveller Leopold' (Mandeville) [1993: 369], 'childe Leopold' (Malory) [1993: 370], 'Mr Cautious Calmer' (Bunyan) [1993: 371], Leop. Bloom (Pepys) [1993: 377], Mr Bloom (Burke) [1993: 378], this alien (Junius) [1993: 387], Mr Canvasser Bloom (Gibbon) [1993: 389], the stranger (Pater) [1993: 391], Bloom (Carlyle) [1993: 401] and 'the johnny in the black duds' (slang) [1993: 404]. The introduction of each new style, as these transformations of Bloom's name suggest, prompts a rewriting of the signifier. As a linguistic sign the sign of Bloom's name is susceptible to the discursive shifts of the chapter. It repeats the stylistic codes of each style used in the chapter. The name 'Bloom' is no longer a unique and stable sign pointing towards the subject himself, nor is it grounded in his presence. Instead it has been transformed into the terrain of writing. It repeats prior literary and stylistic conventions, thereby exposing the contingency of the nature of the linguistic signifier in the history of style and language in a narrative that is itself discontinuous.

From this perspective, it would initially appear as if the styles of the different authors invoked intertextually function as the origin of the signifiers of the passage. The narrative continues, but only through the indirect connotative effects of the signifiers of the passage which evoke situations and characters familiar to the reader even as they deny these identification. Wolfgang Iser, in *The Implied reader: Patterns of Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (1972, 1974), correctly asserts regarding "Oxen in the Sun" that '[a]s language approached, reality seemed rather to withdraw than to come closer' (1974: 191). The force of these intertextual styles on the signifiers of the chapter can clearly be seen in this following passage which draws heavily on the gothic style of Horace Walpole:

> The secret passage slid back and in the recess appeared...Haines! Which of us did not feel his flesh creep! He had a portfolio full of Celtic literature in one hand, in the other a phial marked *Poison*. Surprise, horror, loathing were depicted on all the faces while he eyed them with a ghastly grin (1993: 392).

In the passage, Haines - the Englishman Stephen conversed with in "Telemachus" - plays the part of Manfred, the usurper in Horace Walpole's gothic novel *The Castle of Otranto* (Gifford & Seidman, 1988: 431). No longer portrayed as the Englishman who speaks better Irish than the Irish, the intertextual link with Walpole's novel determines his portrayal. Here he is the paradigmatic gothic villain with the prerequisite 'ghastly grin'. Like Bloom's name, his signification has been transformed and usurped by a work standing outside the novel - Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*. Walpole's book is the origin of the passage, its status as such affirmed through the repetition of its gothic discourse. Implicitly, this affirmation negates the novel's discourse against origins. The work is framed as depending on a prior origin. Its discourse appears to encounter a complication similar to that given shape to by Mark C. Taylor in the following terms: 'The forgotten never simply disappears but eternally returns to haunt the present and disrupt presence. Thus modernity remains inseparably bound to the past against which it strives to define itself' (1992: 50). Joyce's earlier negation of origins appears to be reversed. Instead of a negation of origins, the passage appears to provide the discourse of the novel with a multiplication of paternal affiliations.

Should "Oxen in the Sun" then be understood as Joyce's affirmation of an origin outside his work that cannot be negated or rewritten? Is the transumptive discourse of the previous chapters absent in its discourse? Hugh Kenner, in *Joyce's Voices* (1978), formulates one possible answer to this question when he suggests that the section of "Oxen in the Sun" that imitates the discourse of Macauley is in fact 'a systematic deviation from Macauley's method' (1978: 107). From this vantage point Joyce, as in "Cyclops", repeats the style of these authors to systematically rewrite and negate their discourse. This would produce the same ambivalence or negativity noted in relation to earlier chapters where Joyce's discourse seems to offer numerous origins for its signifiers without coming to rest in any of them. As Stan Smith remarks regarding modernism: 'Modernism's originality [...] lies in making the transformative act of translation, adaptation, repetition its real content' (1994: 6). Rather than offering any new content of his own, Joyce in "Oxen in the Sun" finds this newness in his rewritings of the styles of the authors he intertextually alludes to. The act of constructing that which is new - negatively defined here as that which is not a repetition - takes place through the act of rewriting - it is this act (to be understood here in terms of negation, as Kenner's use of the word 'deviation' suggests) which is the locus of Joyce's departure form an origin he appears to depend on.

Another possible answer can be formulated, however, when the chapter is not read for its imitation of specific authors but for its miming of the history of English prose styles. Proceeding from early Anglo-Saxon alliterative rhythmic prose ('Before born babe bliss had' (1993: 369) to imitations of John Ruskin ('Mark this farther and remember. The end comes suddenly' (1993: 401)) and the essayist Thomas Carlyle ('Burke's! Outflings my lord Stephen' (1993: 401)) the development of English prose style is as teleologically directed as the growth of a foetus in a womb that the chapter refers to. Considered as such, this succession of styles presents not merely various intertexts for the chapter but also the progressive and linear history of stylistic development that *Ulysses* takes part in. This discourse would appear to historicize Joyce's novel as the next form of discourse to appear in the English language. Its discourse would then also appear to continue and carry forward these earlier prose styles. From this vantage point "Oxen in the Sun" would reveal both Joyce's debt to the history of the English language and offer this determinative and progressive history as the origin of Joyce's own discourse. The entire history of the English language would appear as the paternal figure and precursor of Joyce's discourse. This linear development is, however, partially negated in the final stylistic discourse quoted in "Oxen in the Sun". Instead of continuing with the development of literary prose styles (or returning to his earlier style in *Ulysses* which would complete this historical movement), Joyce reverts to the repetition and intertextual activation of an entirely different style, namely degraded slang and fragments of various dialects: 'The Deity aint no nickel dime bumshow. I put it to you that he's on the square and a corking fine business proposition' (1993: 407). By inscribing this form of discourse at the end of a chapter concerned with the development of English prose style Joyce both subverts and interrupts this history. The apparently teleological history is shown to cumulate and end in the type of language it has been constantly in flight from: the degraded language of slang and pidgin English.

From this vantage point the history of English prose styles would appear to take the form of a decline rather than a progressive teleological development. The idea of a progressive history of language flowing from the ancients to the moderns is thus negated. The historization of Joyce's novel that would mark it as the next step in this progressive history is then also negated by this interruption of the history of English prose styles by this contextually-degraded language. If the history of prose in English is negated in everyday language, then *Ulysses* cannot be the continuation and successor of this history. The relationship between Joyce's discourse and these historical styles is rather one of re-animation and re-articulation. Joyce revives, from this perspective, a dead and negated encyclopedia of styles to use in his work. The work is not dependent on these prior discourses and the history they construct. These styles and their history are negated by the affirmation of their coming to an end in everyday language. They are refigured from the space of Joyce's discourse.

* * *

At the end of "Oxen in the Sun", Joyce's discourse against origins in *Ulysses* has variously unsettled the relationship between what appear to be his secondary works of rewriting and, among others, consciousness, referential signifieds, the prior and originating signifiers of these rewritten signifiers (whether in specific passages or in the more general form of a linear narrative as in "Aeolus"), instances of narration, the general discourses of styles and linguistic commonplaces such as clichés, and literary precursors (both taken as individuals and as a collective history). The various forms of origins destabilized in *Ulysses* appear to take just as an encyclopedic form as, for instance, the list of literary works mentioned and used in it. Joyce's work appears to be inherently dualistic: it points both towards a discursive configuration of origins for its discourse and to the discourse itself, where these prior figures are rewritten and destabilized (a movement often reversed in the figuring of this secondary work as depending on a prior discourse).

The cumulative effect of these negations and rewritings between these two different orders of signification is often the partial negation of discursive configurations unique to literature. Whether through the negation of the idea of a narrator, or of literary influence or of the grounding of the work in a specific style, the implicit effect of Joyce's discourse is to negate in his novel some of the identifying formal and historical characteristics of traditional literature (while simultaneously questioning these negations). Joyce admits to as much in his letter dated 20 July 1919 to Harriet Shaw Weaver (written during the composition of *Ulysses*) in which he states that '[...] each successive episode [of *Ulysses*], dealing with some province of artistic culture [...] leaves behind it a burnt up field' (1966: 129). The effect of Joyce's discourse against origins is to institute a differential mark between the novel and the traditional tenents of literature. If the effect of Marcel Proust's work is to cast doubt on literature as a form of discourse that stands in a direct relationship to experience (whether through representation or reading), then Joyce's discourse seems to put in question traditional literary forms and figures as the origin and determining agents of his novel. These forms and figures are negated to be replaced with, on the one hand, the affirmation of a transumptive discourse and, on the other, the negativity of a wandering language. This loss of a familiar ground again problematizes the act of reading: the reader is confronted with a discourse that does not conform to traditional conventions, that exceeds and negates these tenents. The signifiers of Joyce's novel are no longer rendered in the legible and stable configurations of traditional literature; they have been inserted into a discursive network that incessantly repeats and rewrites their signification through the displacement of their origins.

The uncanny double of this relationship between the reader and work appears in the form of Bloom in 'nighttown' (1993: 408) during the "Circe" section of the novel. As Daniel Ferrer states in "Circe, regret and regression" (1975, 1984: 127-144), this section fuses the

'strange and familiar' (1984: 129). In "Circe" previous elements in the novel are repeated and consistently transformed. Like the 'cracked lookingglass' (1993: 7) Stephen referred to as the symbol of Irish art in "Telemachus", the chapter functions as a distortion of prior elements - whether literal of figural - in the novel. Joyce turns against his own novel and its prior significations. Bloom's entry into 'nighttown' is an entry into the phantasmagoric and 'uncanny' (Ferrer, 1984: 127) space of the double which distorts rather than duplicates its original figure. Black Liz, for instance, reappears after her appearance in "Cyclops" as an egg-laying rooster ('Gara, Klook, Klook, Klook' (1993: 525). Similarly Elijah returns not as a metaphorical figure for Bloom, but in the form of a second coming that announces the end of the world (*'Elijah's voice, harsh as a corncrake's, jars on high'* (1993:477). Bloom in 'nighttown' exists in a world where the old reappears but clothed in a new uncanny form. As Ferrer (1984: 132) points out, there exists neither for the characters nor for the reader the possibility of establishing which of these transformations are hallucinatory - thereby part of Bloom and Stephen's subjective and interior dramas - or objective accounts of the phantasmagoric world the chapter purports to represent. Their origin is unclear. Are they grounded in the consciousnesses of the characters, or in the world-making activity of the work (which here would finally breach its naturalistic representational intentions)?

There exists no hesitation in the chapter's movement between scenes that would appear to present what actually occurs to Bloom, and these uncanny transformations. Similarly, the formal method of the narration also suspends the possibility of ascertaining the reality or unreality of these transformed figures. The formal conventions of the chapter are ostensibly those of traditional theatrical representation, and as such at the outset inscribe in this chapter a Joycean negation of a prior origin. Joyce's turn against the form of the novel culminates in this negation of its conventions in favour of theatrical representation and its codes of scenic indications, character attributions, printed speeches and notations of expressions. Shorn of an implied theatrical space, however, Joyce's discourse is not given the spatial closure inherent to the printed theatrical text. As Fredric Jameson suggests in "*Ulysses* in History" (1982, 1986: 173-188), the representational effect of this is the 'perception of forms without background, forms or figures sundered from their ground or context, and passing discontinuously across the field of vision in a lateral movement' (1986: 185). Rather than inscribing them in a new representational context or attributing a new originating ground to his figures, Joyce's representations in "Circe" are radically divorced from any formal ground or context. There exists no possibility of granting a formal or mimetic origin to their existence. The figures float across the space of the written page as rewritten doubles of prior significations, they are unmoored from the representational and narratological elements that previously appeared to determine their origin and existence.

Part of the discursive project of "Circe" would then appear to be to negate the narratological and representational contexts in which the signifiers of the work are inserted.

The signifiers of the section, through Joyce's negation of their paternal affiliation with either a referential ground or the continuing prose narrative of the work, appear to exist in a suspended state. They are transformed into the markers of the negativity of the work, or, rather, its discourse against the framing of the sign in terms of a present and visible origin or ground. These negations do not, however, bring the discourse of "Circe" to a rest. If Joyce's signifiers are ultimately grounded in and find their point of origin in the 'void' - the absent space opened by the negation of origins - then they have, up until "Circe", been understood as linguistic signs distorting and problematizing the reader's experience of the naturalistic representations of the novel. The real, to paraphrase Iser, has been consistently in retreat in the novel, the burden of its signifiers becoming increasingly difficult to bear. Increasingly in Joyce's work the signifier (and the discourse it forms) is framed as the sole origin of the work's significations - significations understood implicitly to be divorced from the category of the real because of their existence as language antithetically opposed to referential reality. However, in "Circe", it is exactly this understanding of the linguistic signifier as opposed in some manner to the representation of reality that Joyce puts in doubt. For instance, in the following sequence in "Circe", the signifier is ultimately taken as constitutive of referential reality; it is no longer opposed to direct denotative reference as it becomes the origin of this reference:

Simon

Think of your mother's people!

Stephen

Dance of death.

[...]

(*Stephen' mother, emaciated, rises stark through the floor in leper grey with a wreath of faded orange blossoms and a torn bridal veil, her face worn and noseless, green with grave mould* [...]) (1993: 538-539).

The two previous figural constructions in the sequence ('mother's people' and 'dance of death') are literalized together in the actual raising of the dead - the return of Stephen's dead mother to the world of the living. What previously appeared as figural construction, not descriptive of an actual present object, is rewritten through a collapse of the signified and the signifier into an object present in the representational space of the work. The signifier is objectified; it

becomes an object that constitutes the reality of the representational dimension of "Circe". On the one hand this is a movement made possible by exactly the ambiguity of the chapter's representations as far as their signifying contexts are concerned and Joyce's familiar strategy of rewriting (here he rewrites both prior signifiers in the sequence and Stephen's metaphorical construction in "Telemachus" regarding the 'snotgreen sea' (1993: 5) which functions as a figure for the dead mother). On the other hand, the function of Joyce's discourse is no longer to destabilize the various origins of the signifier, but to transform the signifier into the origin of the work itself. He not only through rewriting turns against the earlier chapters of the novel, but also against his own prior use of language - a use informed by the splitting of the sign into a referential signified and a signifier that problematizes its own signified. These two opposing figures are collapsed into each other, and the signifier appears to give rise to its own signified referent (a movement that further problematizes judgement regarding the reality or unreality of the chapter's presentations).

If *Ulysses* were to have ended in 'nighttown', this movement would have been a homecoming of sorts for the language of the work. Divorced from its own origins it would have been transumptively affirmed as the originating agent in the work. Joyce's negation of its origins and signifying contexts would have been indistinguishable from the establishment and affirmation of the linguistic signifier to act in a constitutive manner, to posit its own referential signified. The rewritings that occur in *Ulysses* would be negations leading to the affirmation of the linguistic signifier as an actual presence, or as an object. To render the signifier in these terms is to, indirectly, assert its modernity in terms of the 'new' and the 'original'. Instead of being figured as a repetition, the signifier is figured as the only origin of the work's representations. It is divorced from any discourse that would assign to it an origin located in or outside the work. Considered as such, it is separated from a discourse concerned with repetition, affiliation and anteriority. The signifiers in "Circe" are, like Shakespeare, 'the father of all', and the son of none. They are both the origin of the chapter's representations and the medium through which these representations are experienced, however problematic this experience might be. As a matter of fact, this division between medium and object of representation is subverted in "Circe" - the signifier and the signified is conflated into a single figure. To experience the one is to experience the other. This compound figure then becomes the locus of Joyce's affirmation of a discourse that comes into being without the presence of a prior or external origin, a discourse that can only be understood in terms of that which is 'new' and 'original'.

Should Joyce's discourse regarding the signifier and its origins then be understood as coming to an end in this affirmative moment? Is the ultimate goal of Joyce's negation of parental affiliation and origins to rewrite the signifier as the origin of his own discourse? In "Eumaeus" and "Ithaca", Joyce turns against exactly this framing of the linguistic signifier as the origin of discursive and representational plenitude. In "Eumaeus", as Karen Lawrence

remarks, 'language misfires' (1981: 167). Gerald Bruns in his essay, "Eumaeus" (1974: 363-383), also calls it 'a world of banal locutions' (1974: 368). Joyce turns against the constitutive and affirmed signifiers of "Circe" and gives the reader a form of discourse that is marked by its own devaluation, its failures and banality:

> Between this point and the high, at present unlit, warehouses of Beresford Place Stephen thought to think of Ibsen, associated with Baird's, the stonecutter's in his mind somehow in Talbot Place, first turning on the right, while the other, who was acting as his *fidus Achates* inhaled with internal satisfaction the smell of James Rourke's city bakery, situated quite close to where they were, the very palatable odour indeed of our daily bread, of all commodities of the public the primary and most indispensable. Bread, the staff of life, earn your bread, O tell me where is fancy bread? At Rourke's the baker's, it is said (1993: 570).

The passage is a pastiche of banal clichés ('Bread, the staff of life, earn your bread [...]), hesitant and indirect significations ('thought to think' and 'associated [...] somehow') and unclear indications (Whose consciousness is the origin of the last two sentences?). What is more, the sequence fails to activate either of its intertextual doubles - Ibsen and the clichés regarding bread - in a new configuration that would rewrite these figures. Both these doubles remain only notations, intrusions of a different discourse that is not transumptively reversed or negated. Stephen only considers thinking of Ibsen, and the banal assertions regarding bread remain only these banal assertions. Instead of retaining the affirmation of the linguistic signifier given in "Circe" as an independent constitutive agent, the language here appears to be exhausted. Its significations are extended only through movements already questioned by the work's discourse against origins: allusions to other authors and works, and the grafting of clichés on to the body of the discourse. Instead of appearing as self-determining and free from any external origins, the signifiers in "Eumaeus" are at best failed transumptions.

The language of the chapter is framed as a failed language through the negation of those aspects of Joyce's language which have consistently throughout the work negated their own origins. It is a dependent and devalued language, incapable of establishing an affirmative secondary work. The signifier is no longer affirmed as an auto-constitutive sign, but figured as an exhausted and failed sign that is marked by its own representational failure and inadequacies. It is also a signifier that appears to merely repeat the discourses it alludes to, thereby neither transumptively mastering, nor negating these discourses. Considered as such, the language of the chapter becomes nothing more than the locus of direct repetition, which would mark it as inherently dependent upon a prior discourse or origin. Joyce's affirmation of his signifiers as existing without origin, as being the 'new' and 'original', fails here. His discourse is opened to the reversal that Paul de Man identifies as taking place in the ambit of

the modernist work, a reversal that consists out of an oscillation between 'experiences of immediacy and their negation' (1971: 177). The flight from time or temporal duration through the repetition of origins that Joyce's work seeks to effect in its struggle to affirm the self-subsistence of the linguistic signifier, is itself negated. A negativity is constructed in this discourse that questions Joyce's affirmative discourse in relation to the signifier. It is understood instead as a linguistic mark that fails to accomplish the representational project of Joyce's work (if this project is understood in terms of the affirmations that occur in "Circe"), a mark that proves to be inadequate to that which it represents.

It is then in the next chapter of *Ulysses* that this negativity is explicitly given form to as that which is unrepresentable or unrepresented. In "Ithaca" Joyce, again, turns against his own earlier discourse that attempted to rewrite the signifier through a negation of its origins. Structured according to a series of questions and answers, "Ithaca" consists largely of a collection of denotative facts regarding a number of objects and events. Fredric Jameson convincingly argues that "Ithaca" functions in *Ulysses* as a return to the world of objects and material reality after their denial in "Circe" (1986: 188). If so, then the chapter, called by Frank Budgen 'the coldest episode in an unemotional book' (1934, 1960: 257) is also inherently concerned with mapping the limits of the signifier. Each question elicits a list that details and expands upon a previous sign:

> What impression of an absent face did Bloom, arrested, silently recall?
>
> The face of his father, the late Major Brian Cooper Tweedy, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, of Gibraltar and Rehoboth, Dolphin's Barn.
>
> What recurrent expressions of the same were possible by hypothesis?
>
> Retreating, at the terminus of the Great Northern Railway, Amiens street, with constant uniform acceleration, along parallel lines meeting at infinity, if produced: along parallel lines, reproduced from infinity, with constant uniform retardation, at the terminus of the Great Northern Railway, Amiens street, returning (1993: 682).

In the first catechism one signifying sequence ('absent face') gives rise to an enumeration that points both towards the inadequacy of one linguistic signifier to capture and encapsulate all its signifieds and towards the exclusions inherently part of the act of writing. To write 'absent face' is both to exclude the list given by Joyce and to fail to give an exact account of what is signified by the signifier. That which is unrepresentable and unrepresented marks it. Similarly in the second catechism, 'infinite' is shown to be signifiable only through an operation on language: the circular structure of Joyce's repetitions is the closest the passage can come to the signification of the concept of infinite. What Joyce's discourse accomplishes here through its extension is, as in the previous chapter, to devalue the signifier as locus of signification.

The signifier always fails in relation to either an unrepresentable idea that cannot be captured in language, or in the approximation of what is actually designated by a word. If the scientific use of language that marks this chapter allows for a closer approximation of material reality (as Jameson would have it), then it still fails to encapsulate this material reality. Joyce's discourse on language ends in negativity: the signifiers of his discourse are not only negated as the constitutive origins of reality, but are shown to provide an inadequate mirroring of this reality. Not only are the literary qualities of the signifier negated in the scientific discourse of "Ithaca", but their capacity to function as a direct repetition of a prior reality as well. They fail in the face of this reality, appearing as a secondary devalued construct. "Ithaca", rather than providing a home for the wandering language of Joyce's work (which would be the same as an unproblematic relationship between the signifier and its origin), hyperbolically asserts the divorce between signifier and origin in the Joycean discourse. The signifier itself no longer functions as an origin. What is more, Joyce's discourse against origins prevents it from coming to rest in reality. The inadequacy of the signifier to express reality prevents its return. From the vantage point of the signifier, reality is posited as the unrepresented and unrepresentable element in discourse that ultimately fails to ground its significations.

At the end of the novel only "Penelope" remains. Molly has the last word. Not surprisingly for Joyce's novel, this last word is deeply paradoxical. Molly's narration affirms that the signifiers of this chapter's discourse are grounded in an object - the body. Out of the failed and exhausted framings of the linguistic signifier in the previous chapters, "Penelope" emerges as a return of language to its origin. On the one hand, language is framed as emerging from a single voice, a single consciousness (that of Molly). On the other, this discourse is also grounded in the presence of Molly's female body. As Joyce wrote of the chapter:

> It begins and ends with the female word *yes*. It turns like the huge earth ball slowly surely and evenly round and round spinning, its four cardinal points being the female breasts, arse, womb and cunt expressed by the words *because, bottom,* [...] *woman, yes* (1975: 285).

Joyce's discourse is here inherently affirmative. Bracketed by the word '*yes*', the "Penelope" chapter is founded upon a correspondence between words and parts of the female body, the one mirroring the other. Implicitly this constitutes a return of language to an origin of sorts in the body. The body becomes the locus of representation that language repeats. What renders this affirmation paradoxical is that Joyce also inscribes a discourse in "Penelope" that makes it not only a new beginning for the discourse of the work, but a negation of what has gone before. Molly remarks that she 'dont like books with a Molly in them' (1993: 728) and 'theres nothing for a woman in that invention made all up' (1993: 706). This is a negation of the

previous chapters of *Ulysses*. Through the discourse of "Penelope" Joyce shows that a return of the signifier to its origins can only take place through a new beginning, a beginning that destroys and interrupts what has gone before. It is necessary to deny the history of the signifier in his work for a restitution of origins to take place. The relation of "Penelope" to the rest of the work is more problematic than it would appear. As Karen Lawrence points out, "Penelope" gives 'a kind of closure that the rest of the novel subverts' (1981: 208). It brings the work to an affirmative close but only through the negation and starting over of the work in a single affirmed origin. Considered as such "Penelope" dramatizes not the home-coming of Joyce's discourse, but its destruction in the name of a new beginning. The proper end of Joyce's work is this destructive backwards glance. Rather than culminating in the presentation of the signifier as the origin of the work's representations, the signifier is figured as inadequate, as a failed construction of language. An origin can only be affirmed through the destruction and re-articulation of the discourse. The language of *Ulysses* does not come to rest in a new origin, it is rather figured as being open to either an interminable wandering that takes it away from its origins, or to the negation that a return would effect.

* * *

Through the mediation of a critical negation, a shift in Joyce's work takes place that, on the one hand, sees its signifiers transformed into figures without any discernible origin, and, on the other hand, attempts to transform these signifiers into the sole origin of its representations. Considered in these terms, Joyce's work is marked by the incessant transformations of a primary construct (whether originally located in, or outside, the work) into its secondary representation. These secondary representations of the signifier do not, however, subsist as affirmative propositions that can be understood in terms of that which is without origin - the 'new' and 'original' - and, which, in turn, function as an origin. A negativity that puts these affirmations of these secondary representations into doubt, that suggests that these affirmations are inherently contingent and provisional remains. The secondary works constructed by the work's negations are not constructs that can be understood solely in terms of the 'new' or their capacity to function as a newly instated origin of the work's representations. They are, rather, figured as failed affirmations of these discourses. The divergence in the novel between this status of these secondary representations, and their attempted affirmation, can be understood in terms of a negativity through which Joyce questions, in the first instance, the status and possibility of language and writing, and, secondly, the possibility of the modern when it is understood in terms of that which is 'new' and 'original'. Joyce's negation of origins is implicitly reversed in the novel into a highlighting of the discourse's dependence on origins, and also, the destructive rewriting that occurs when a return to these origins takes place. His work functions as a questioning and an interrogation of the ascription of origins to the language of the work. He puts into doubt the affirmative nature of a discourse concerned with origins.

The negativity of Joyce's discourse resides in this framing of the signifier as not only being separated from its origins, but also as being opened to destruction and devaluation when a restitution of origins (as occurs in "Penelope" and the object-centred discourse of "Ithaca") takes place. Joyce puts the stability of language in doubt and subverts its signifying fixity. For him, however, this would be the preferential condition of language: to attempt otherwise through the restitution of origins is to negate the signifier itself. Joyce's discourse is then inherently concerned not only with the negation of the signifier's origins, but also with the possible negation and destruction of the linguistic sign (a movement that Samuel Beckett also shares). Just like his discourse puts the conventions of the work in question through its negation of origins, this same movement questions the stability and status of language itself. If Proust's negativity is inherently imbedded in his discourse concerned with the relationship between experience and literature, then Joyce's negativity is inherently concerned with the destruction and limitations of language. While reading (through its links with experience) functioned as the locus and metaphor of Proust's negativity in his *Remembrance of Things Past*, writing fulfils this task for Joyce. It is writing - whether understood as the formal conventions of the novel, the literary use of language, or simply the act of linguistic signification - that is put into question in his novel; or, rather, that which is posited as a non-originary source of its representations. His discourse is indistinguishable from a negation aimed at language, and an unveiling of the negativity inherent to his use of the linguistic signifier. The paradox of Joyce's work is that this negativity cannot be separated from the continuation of the literary work and the multiplication of its signs. Instead of the termination of the literary work, Joyce's linguistic negativity leads to its perpetuation. Writing goes on. The continued existence of the literary work remains unchallenged - it would be up to Samuel Beckett to do so.

What is more, Joyce's engagement, through these negations of the various origins of the signifier (whether existing in a primary work inside or outside the work), with signifying constructs existing prior to the formation of his secondary representations, leads to a similar oscillation in the work with regards to its affirmation of itself as without origin - or, as the 'new' and 'original'. While, on the one hand, Joyce's work asserts the status of its signifying configurations as that which is not a direct repetition of a prior origin (or, in the instance of "Circe" not a repetition at all), he also seems to figure his language as existing in a devalued state. After "Circe", the signifier is figured as reversing the transumptive trajectory that allows for its affirmation. It is instead figured as a belated repetition - as being dependent for its existence on an origin. The secondary work that Joyce constructs in relation to the language of the novel is then inherently ambivalent. It asserts and denies its own 'originality' and 'newness'. A final affirmation is not affected. Instead, Joyce ultimately questions the possibility of the subsistence of the modern (understood in these terms). As soon as that which is modern is constructed, it is, in his work, inevitably, reversed into that which, by

definition, negates this quality: the past of the work. As will be indicated in the next chapter of this dissertation, while Samuel Beckett would make this movement explicit in his work *Krapp's Last Tape* and its engagement with Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, this movement functions in Joyce as a putting into doubt of that which is modern. His work questions the affirmation of itself as 'the new' and 'original'. From this perspective, modernism (understood in these terms) would be indistinguishable from its failure. It both affirms and negates its own existence. Modernism itself might, finally, be what Joyce's novel fails to give representation to.

Chapter Three

Samuel Beckett, Marcel Proust and the End of Literature

> I speak of an art [...] weary of its puny exploits, weary of pretending to be able, of being able, of doing a little better than the same old thing, of going a little further along a dreary road
>
> - Samuel Beckett, "Three Dialogues" (1949).

> No doubt my books too, like my fleshy being, would in the end one day die. But death is a thing that we must resign ourselves to. We accept the thought that in ten years we ourselves, in a hundred years our books, will have ceased to exist. Eternal duration is promised no more to men's works than to men
>
> - Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past (Vol. III)* (1913-1927).

If Marcel Proust and James Joyce seem to make negativity an inescapable element of their literary discourse - whether this negativity is related to the incapacity of literature to enter into a direct relationship with experience, or to the signifier and the act of writing itself - then the 'reductions' (Wolosky, 1989: 165) of Samuel Beckett's work may, in comparison, seem like the intensification of this negativity in a discourse committed to a minimal degree of signification. It is this minimalism which Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari remark upon in *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* (1975, 1991) when they contrast the 'exhilaration and overdetermination' (1991: 19) of Joyce's discourse with the 'dryness and sobriety, a willed poverty' (1991: 19) of Beckett's work. Behind this distinction between Joyce and Beckett made by Deleuze and Guattari lies an understanding of Beckett's work that both distinguishes it from Proust and Joyce's projects, and that is of central importance to the critical exegesis of Samuel Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* (1959) in this chapter of the dissertation.

The negativity that emerge in Joyce and Proust's works cannot be separated from the various affirmations effected in these works. Whether these affirmations are concerned with the regaining of time in Proust's work, together with all which that entail or with the attribution of the function of origin to the signifiers of Joyce's discourse, in both these instances negativity functions as the questioning and putting into doubt of exactly these affirmative configurations. As a matter of fact, it often appears as if this negativity runs contrary to the overt intentions of parts of Proust and Joyce's works. If these works cannot be read as simply giving form to affirmative propositions, then they

also cannot be considered as attempts to arrive at a pure affirmation of negativity by making this construction the direct intention of their works. Rather, in both the works of Proust and Joyce previously discussed, negativity appears only through an interplay between itself and the affirmative dimensions of the work. Beckett's work, as will be argued in this chapter, however, demands to be read as an exemplary instance of a discourse committed to the signification of negativity at the expense of a possibly affirmative discourse. His discourse, it will be suggested, cannot be discussed in terms of an affirmation lapsing into negativity. It is, rather, explicitly concerned with the representation of negativity inside its confines.

In the first instance, this shift in the treatment of negativity raises a specifically literary-historical problem: Jean-Francois Lyotard, in his distinction between modernism and postmodernism in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, explicitly distinguishes between modernism's gesturing in the direction of that which is unrepresentable (discussed in the introduction to this dissertation), and postmodernism's incorporation inside the confines of the work of that which is unrepresentable (1984: 77). From this perspective postmodernism actively puts the unrepresentable - or, then, negativity - into representation, while modernism treats it as a provisional figure in the work's affirmative project. While this understanding of modernism's treatment of negativity has been challenged in this dissertation through the examination of the negativity that subsists in the affirmative configurations of the modernist work, Lyotard's central claim, namely that postmodernism actively represents the unrepresentable in sharp contrast to the representational project of modernism, remains unquestioned. Daniel Fischlin seems to arrive at a similar understanding of postmodernism's treatment of negativity when he suggests that '[p]ostmodernism [...] is defined by an accelerated nostalgia for the negative - an attempt to define the theoretical "space" of the negative [...]' (1994: 2). From these perspectives, the active representation of negativity that this chapter will attempt to identify in the context of Beckett's work would appear to render him part of postmodernism, rather than modernism. If Beckett's project in *Krapp's Last Tape* is to be understood as the active representation of the unrepresentable without the questioning of this negativity by an affirmative instance in his discourse, then it would, in these terms, be properly postmodern. Modernism's treatment of negativity would, in turn, be shown (through this exceeding of its limits) to be still conditioned by an essentially affirmative turn that is determined by a refusal to represent negativity as such, rather than the impossibility of arriving at a pure representation of negativity.

Together with this historical problematic, the understanding of Beckett's work as actively seeking to put negativity into representation raises further questions. What is the

discursive locus of this representational project? Can negativity itself be represented without an affirmation also taking place? In answer to this first question, this chapter will suggest that despite its seeming lack of the extended and complex significatory configurations that is characteristic of Joyce and Proust's work, Beckett's art of reduction actually contains a complex meditation on the fate and possibility of literature. He questions and interrogates the possibility of further writing, pursuing this questioning on every level of the work, from the meticulously stripped-down language, to the entire structure of the work. However, this questioning extends beyond the technique of the work by invoking a broad historical context as its framework. As Thomas Trezise remarks in *Into the Breach: Samuel Beckett and the Ends of Literature* (1990): 'Beckett demands of art that it interrogates, rather than simply assumes, its own possibility' (1990: 10). Beckett's work points towards the possible discontinuation of literature. His 'weary' literature is open to the event of its own demise, its own negation. It is paradoxically rendered as non-existant and unable to enter into representation in his discourse. How is this end of literature proclaimed from inside literature itself? What negativity is operative in Beckett's work that, simultaneously with the writing of the work, figures literature as the unsaid and unsayable component of its discourse? At stake in these questions is an inherently diachronic problem. How does the writing of an end take place? If Beckett is involved in the opening of the possibility of an end to literature or the writing of literature, then how should this temporal configuration be understood? While Joyce and Proust's negations were not immediately to be understood in temporal terms, but as directed against the synchronic structure of the signified and signifier (although both discourses lapsed into diachronic negations of either a prior representation or of a prior origin), Beckett's negation must be understood as a temporal movement. It ascribes an end to that which has gone before, thereby bringing the paradigmatic line of the work to a conclusion. What - to return to the question regarding the possibility of representing negativity as such - is the nature of this end? Is it to be understood purely in terms of negativity, or, is it interrogated by the possibility of a further affirmation?

One possible answer to these questions will be provided in this chapter through an analysis of Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* and its historical and intertextual relationship with Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*. As has been observed earlier, an important narrative in Proust's novel is the affirmation of the continued or newly begun act of literary writing - the realization of Marcel's vocation as an author through the novel's intricate configuration of metaphors, the regaining of time and the uncovering of the 'essence' of things. Even if Proust, as has been shown, deeply questions this progressive narrative, it still remains the affirmative, readable promise of his novel. The

literature that Proust imagines as effecting the unification of self, time and experience is promised as a future event. It is exactly this promise of further writing and the realization of a vocation that Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* negates; it is fragmented, dispersed and ultimately shown to be a hollow figure.

In this chapter, it will be suggested that, on the one hand, this negation of the continuation of the literary work – which should be understood in terms of the termination of writing in silence - is the locus of the negativity of *Krapp's Last Tape*. It is the discourse in which his inscription of that which is unrepresentable takes place. On the other hand, it will be shown that this negation involves Beckett's discourse in the familiar movement between a primary and secondary work that is part of the form of negation discussed in this dissertation. Whether this movement occurs between the different representations that are located in Beckett's work, or is given shape in the discourse that relates it to Proust's work, Beckett's writing of an end to the literary work exists, as will be suggested, as a secondary addition to a primary representation. It is this diachronic movement which allows for the conceptualization of an end. What distinguishes this passage between the primary and secondary work from this same movement in Joyce and Proust's work, is that, rather than Joyce's invocation of a multitude of primary discourses outside the work, or Proust's restriction of this movement to the ambit of the work, Beckett's assumed negation of a primary work is focused on a single prior work existing outside his discourse. The proliferation of intertextual allusions that, for instance, marks Joyce's discourse, is reduced to an encounter with a single primary work existing outside the confines of the literary work.

The question posed by this chapter with regard to Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* is then the following: how does the explicit representation of negativity (understood here in terms of an end to literature) take place in the work? But, as has been suggested, this question cannot be separated either from a consideration of, on the one hand, the possibility of a negativity that remains unmarked by an affirmation, or, on the other, from the distinction between modernism and postmodernism in terms of their respective treatment of the unrepresentable, or negativity. Also, Beckett's intertextual dialogue with Proust's work offers the opportunity to examine the sustained movement between an actual prior work that is not purely a construction of the work, and its secondary representation.

* * *

Jean-Francois Lyotard, in his essay "Newman: The Instant" (1981, 1989: 240-249), offers an important principle for the understanding of Beckett's writing of an end to the literary work by distinguishing between several temporal orders that exist simultaneously in the discourse of a particular work (his central concern in the essay is painting):

> A distinction should be made between the time it takes the painter to paint the picture [...], the time required to look and understand [...], the time to which the work refers [...], the time it takes to reach the viewer once it has been created [...], and finally, perhaps, the time the painting *is* (1989: 240.).

It is this final category, 'the time the painting *is*', that is of interest for a reading of Beckett's writing of an end. Rather than being identical with, for instance, the temporal sequence consisting of the events presented by the work, what this temporal category refers to is the actual representation of time. Beckett's "Waiting for Godot" (1956, 1976) is, for instance, as Lyotard suggests, a representation of time according the principle of 'not yet' (1989: 241). Here time is figured, literally, in terms of waiting, of an arrival that has not yet taken place. While this temporal figure can be inferred from the play's sequence of events, it is not identical with this sequence. Instead, it refers to the understanding of time itself in the play - an understanding of time that determines it as a category open to predication in a manner similar to that of an object located in space. What is at stake here is the possibility to represent different forms of time - Proust's attempt to depict an extra-temporal eternity comes to mind - that is not identical with the actual sequence of representations of events in the narrative. To this sequence, or literal figure of time, is added a figural figure of time (a distinction also encountered in Proust's depiction of referential reality) that refers not to the literal procession of time in the work, but which is, instead, a rhetorical figure that gives a different representation of time than the work's literal, temporal line. If Beckett is concerned with writing an end or conclusion to the literary work, then these are the terms in which this writing should be understood. Beckett's representation of an end would not be identical with the literal conclusion of the work, but would refer to the work's representation of time (rather than the time of its representations). It is also this representation of time itself through a system of tropes, that, through the inherent malleability of such a representation, allows for the figuring of time in a manner not necessarily determined by the literal sequence of the work - which, of course, then also creates the possibility that time can be negated in the temporal sequence of the work.

What is the nature of this depiction of an end in Beckett's work? Thomas Trezise offers one important avenue into Beckett's interrogation of the possibility of literature through this possible conceptualization of its end, when he notes that the possibility of an end is for Beckett 'not the *telos* of a totalizing dialectic' (1990: 168). Beckett's interrogation of the possibility of literature should be distinguished sharply from Hegel's judgement that art is a thing of the past, superceded by the discourse of philosophy. If literature comes to an end because its function and motivations have been taken over and completed by philosophy - thereby rendering art superfluous - then Beckett, by making literature the scene of its own interrogation, resists exactly this dialectical closure. Similarly, Beckett's opening of the possibility of an end to literature resists being read as simply the existential possibility of a free discontinuation of writing. Trezise rightly remarks that Beckett's questioning of the possibility of literature is an '[...] essentially affirmative failure [...] a compulsion and a powerlessness, an exigency and an impossibility, the obligation to speak and the inability not to do so' (1990: 168). Beckett inscribes the possibility of literature's end inside its continuation. These two antithetical possibilities exist at the same time, thereby questioning the possibility of each other. This simultaneous opening of the possibility of an end and the affirmation of the continuation of literature govern works such as *The Unnamable* (1952, 1975), the final part of a trilogy also containing *Molloy* and *Malone Dies*:

> Is there really nothing new to try? I mentioned my hope, but it is not serious. If I could speak and yet say nothing, really nothing? [...] But is seems impossible to speak and yet say nothing, you think you have succeeded, but you always overlook something (1975: 20).

As soon as the possibility of an end is opened, it is negated by the inevitable continuation of the literary work. Yet, this negation of negativity - given shape to here as that which exists beyond and after discourse or language - ends not in an affirmation of the possibility of further writing. The work at the same time says 'nothing' and continues saying this in a reciprocal movement of interrogation and restatement. The end does not end, while writing also does not continue (or the reverse). This a-logical configuration is inherently ironical, the tension and presence of mutually destructive options marking it. The discourse of *The Unnamable*, it appears, consists of this and only this: the search for an end and the impossibility of the realization of this search. It negates without arriving in an absolute silence. Writing always remains until the actual and literal end of the novel - a

fact understood here by Beckett to question the felicity of the end he inscribes in the work..

The problem and difficulty of Beckett's writing appear to be inextricably linked to how negativity appears inside discourse. Beckett's work desires to return to the originary negativity, or the silence and absence from which language emerges according to Macherey and Iser. It seeks to return to the original negativity (which is here indistinguishable from a final silence) that underlies all linguistic utterances, re-finding here the termination of its discourse. If the vector of Beckett's work tends to lead to this originary negativity, it is, however, kept from realizing its aim by exactly the fact that it is a written artefact. It has already effaced this original silence, and a return is impossible. Such a return can only be affirmed from inside the configurations of language; the work has to 'say nothing' by 'speaking'. This contradiction is, from this perspective, the controlling figure of Beckett's discourse. Taken as such this contradiction is the same as that which Maurice Blanchot discusses in his article "Idle Speech" (1971, 1997: 117-128):

> For what comes to haunt us is not this or that unreal figure (thus prolonging beyond life the simulacrum of life), it is the unreality of all the figures, an unreality so extensive that it touches the narrator as well as the reader, and finally even the author in relation to all of those to whom he might speak from this narrative. It seems to me that in entering this space in which every event is doubled by its absence, and where the void itself is not assured, we are only given to hear a light, sarcastic laugh whose echo - a tender echo - cannot be distinguished from some plaintive sigh, itself barely distinct from an insignificant sound or from an insignificant absence of sound. However, when everything has disappeared following a bitter dismissal, there remains a book, the trace that cannot be erased, the reward and punishment of the man who wanted to speak in vain (1997: 118).

A 'laugh' which is indistinguishable from the 'echo' of a 'sigh' is the height of ironical parabasis - the rhetorical name for the yoking together of two antithetical figures without an accessible interpretative context that gives preference to the one over the other (as Paul de Man understands it in his essay "The Concept of Irony" (1996: 178)). This parabasis is identical with the laughter Blanchot defines elsewhere as the 'laughter' in which 'the gods die' (1997: 181), the laughter which introduces ambiguity into unity and sovereignty. The same parabasis is created when the author dismisses his figures as unreal, as doubled by

an 'absence'. This inscription of an absence is for Blanchot inherently a return to a void existing before the inscription of the traces of the book, it is the return to an 'immense erosion that is prior' (1997: 126). Considered as such it is the silence and absence that Beckett desires in his work. The negativity that marks the work's origin - a negativity similar to that encountered in Joyce's discourse regarding origins - is also, after the proliferation of primary and secondary works, the space in which the work is terminated. Yet this movement cannot be completed. The 'contamination of words by muteness and of silence by words' that characterizes the procession of primary and secondary works cannot be brought to a rest. A book 'remains', the absence that terminates the work's language is itself doubled by its own absence. What emerges is a discourse that exists as a constant ironic parabasis: it is a discourse that neither begins or affirms nor ends, yet does both, a discourse which terminates in the simultaneous affirmation and denial of its own end. It is a discourse that stands divided between the figuring of the end, and the literal continuation of the work - with the latter understood as an interrogation of the former. From this perspective the work is marked by an inherent contradiction between its figures and the material condition of its writing. Finally, it is a discourse which realizes that successfully to articulate its own end is, ultimately, to deny its openness to its own demise. Paradoxically, what is implicitly defined as unrepresentable in this configuration is negativity (understood here as silence) itself.

What this discourse then puts in question is the possibility of representing the unrepresentable as such, or writing as its own unwriting. This representation occurs as a process that is inherently unstable. It lacks any signifying fixity, and continually lapses into its opposite: the transformation of negativity into an affirmation. The discourse of Beckett, like that of Proust and Joyce, appears to consist of an oscillation between affirmations and negativity, and between representation and the unrepresentable. An affirmation is maintained, despite the overt intentions of the discourse to give form to a sustained negativity. As has been suggested, this indirectly questions the possibility of a discourse that unproblematically gives representation to the unrepresentable – which is Lyotard's understanding of the postmodern. Such a discourse, it would appear, is open to the same ambiguity - or ironical parabasis - that marks a discourse that through negation seeks to arrive at an affirmation. The interpretative felicity of using this distinction as a paradigm according to which literature is historicically demarcated as modern or postmodern appears to be open to interrogation.

* * *

Would this interpretation, however, be borne out by a reading that attempts to give an account of an entire work by Beckett, together with all of its attendant complexities? More is at stake in the asking of this question than simply the status of a particular interpretation. If Beckett's body of work is marked by the use of ironical parabasis, then any single point in the work, like the passage taken from *The Unnameable*, is open to questioning and negation. The inherent instability of Beckett's representations casts doubt on the possibility of arriving at a measure of interpretative certainty through the reading of only a single sequence in the work. The meaning to be gathered from such a sequence can easily be overturned in a subsequent moment in the work - including the characterization of the discourse in terms of an ironical parabasis. While a more extensive reading of a work by Beckett cannot, of course, foreclose upon the possibility of being placed in doubt by this ironical parabasis, it is a necessary reaction - from the vantage point of a discourse concerned with its interpretative felicity - towards a work that casts doubt both on itself and on its interpretation. What is more, such a sustained reading is required to ascertain whether Beckett's work is indeed marked by the ambivalence and duplicity that is postulated here, through the framing of the work in terms of an ironical parabasis (which, in turn, questions any meaning derived from a single point in the work). (This is perhaps the double-bind of criticism when faced with a work such as Beckett's: more reading and interpretation is required to substantiate the claim that these acts cannot occur with a measure of interpretative certainty.)

Accordingly, this chapter will now attempt a sustained reading of Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* in terms of its attempt to represent negativity through the writing of an end to the literary work. Historically marked by Samuel Beckett's return to English as the language in which his work is composed in rather than translated into, *Krapp's Last Tape* seems to be characterized by - especially in comparison with "Endgame" with which it was originally performed - a more affirmative quality than usually associated with Beckett's work in the trilogy. Like many of Beckett's works (Connor, 1988: 77), *Krapp's Last Tape* is riddled with temporal doubles, or partial repetitions. The sixty-nine year old Krapp (Krapp-69) listens to a tape recorded by him thirty years earlier. On that tape, the thirty-nine year old Krapp (Krapp-39) comments on listening to a tape recorded 'ten or twelve years ago' (1959: 12). At the same time *Krapp's Last Tape* seems to be taking part in the intertextual and historical doubling of Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, a doubling informed by Beckett's early critical monograph on Proust (*Proust* (1957, 1970), originally written in 1931). Considered in terms of time both Krapp and the work are exposed to multiple and partial copies of themselves existing at earlier points in time. Krapp is repeated and repeated again by thirty-nine year old Krapp and the even younger

Krapp he refers to, Beckett himself in *Proust*, and the narrator of Proust's work. Similarly the work is partially repeated at least by the earlier recording made by Krapp-39, Beckett's monograph on Proust, and Proust's work itself. This persistent doubling is the first entry point offered by the work into its temporal configurations. Like the subject in Proust's novel, both Krapp-69 and the work itself are exposed to earlier figures of themselves that are not identical with what they had become through time - both the time of the self and the work. Proust aptly gives this aspect of the relation between them and their prior figures figure to in the following manner:

> [T]hey have been so totally transformed that, without having ceased to exist, indeed just because they have never ceased to exist, they no longer in any way resemble what we observed them in the past to be (III: 966).

Between them they constitute and define the temporal dimensions of the play, the sense of the passage of time that is required for both the work of memory and the writing of an end.

Krapp's Last Tape appears, surprisingly in the contex of Beckett's work, to be informed by the former possibility. Krapp-69, like his intertextual precursors - Krapp-39 and Marcel - is engaged in the restitutive search for lost time. The questions, 'Black ball?' and 'Memorable equinox?' (1959: 11) regarding the ledger entry of Krapp-39 prompt his turn towards the tape containing the narration of Krapp-39. Seeking the immediacy and clarity associated with speech with regard to these past inscriptions, Krapp-69 turns to the tape recorder - the locus of retrievable memory in the play - to decipher the meaning and denotations of what Krapp-39 has written in the ledger. The tape appears as the possibility of affirming both the propositions of the ledger and Krapp-69's unity with the earlier Krapps brought back into being by the tape recording. Taken as such Krapp-69's search is identical with what Marcel at the end of Proust's novel describes as '[the attempt] to describe men first and foremost as occupying a place [...] in the dimension of Time' (III: 1107). Not that this search is ever recognized as such by Krapp-69. Often he appears to reject the mnemonic reliving of past events. 'Thank God that's all done with anyway' (1959: 17) he says regarding the pre-occupation of his past self, before collapsing again in the reverie of memory: 'The eyes she had!' (1959: 18). His approaching death brings with it the renewed desire to 'obliterate' time, to recapture the past in a single present configuration. As Krapp-69 remarks:

> Be again on Croghan on Sunday morning, in the haze with the bitch, stop and listen to the bells. (*Pause.*) And so on. (*Pause.*) Be again, be again. (*Pause.*) All that old misery. (*Pause.*) Once wasn't enough for you (1959: 19).

The Proustian intertexts are apparent here. Proceeding from the same figure that leads to Marcel's affirmation of his unity ('the bells'), Krapp-69 opens the possibility of rendering its past present to the self, to 'be again'. Krapp-69 shares Beckett's judgement of this process as being 'intolerable' (1970: 52). To 'be again' that which one was in the past is to relive 'that old misery'. His final judgement ('Once wasn't enough for you') is, however, an apt comment regarding his own mnemonic exercises. How else to understand the recording and re-listening of past events, except as the attempt to recapture the lost past and the self that occupied that point in time (even if, from any other perspective than that of Krapp-69, these past figures are theatrical illusions), to, as Marcel puts it, 'maintain my hold upon a past which already went down so far' (III: 1107)? Like the aged Marcel (and Krapp-39), Krapp-69 appears to attempt to remember, to hold on to the past and himself.

It is this affirmative desire which conditions and determines both the narrative of Beckett's play and its invocation of the illusion of past doubles, the latter being invoked in an attempt to effect the desired recollection. In Proust's work this recollection of lost time is inextricably bound to the realization of Marcel's vocation as an artist - the promise performed at the end of the novel. It is the mechanism through which the novel appears to affirm the completion and continuation of writing. Invoking the discourse of the search for lost time is to invoke indirectly this narrative concerned with the affirmation of the author and writing. From the '[s]hadows of the opus...magnum' (1959: 13) that the Krapp quoted by Krapp-39 imagines, to Krapp-69's comments regarding '[s]eventeen copies sold' (1959: 18), Beckett's play accordingly also appears to be concerned with the possibility and success of writing and the problems of literary creation. As Sylvie Debevec Henning remarks in *Beckett's Critical Complicity: Carnival, Contestation and Tradition* (1988) regarding the play: '*Krapp's Last Tape* [...] opens onto the problem of art' (1988: 154).

Indeed the final lines of dialogue in the play return the reader to Beckett's understanding of artistic creation in *Proust*:

> Perhaps my best years are gone. When there was a chance of happiness. But I wouldn't want them back. Not with the fire in me now. No I wouldn't want them back (1959: 20).

The affirmative tone of the passage is established through its valorization of 'fire' with its attendant implications of cleansing, inspiration and purposive energy, over the past and the 'chance of happiness'. The discourse of the passage directs the reader to Beckett's valorization of suffering in Proust's work as the 'free play of every faculty' (1970: 9) and therefore the real cause of artistic creation. 'Fire' - which is not happiness, but placed over and above it - contains, when considered as a metaphor, both these connotations of suffering and the transformation of suffering into artistic creation. It surpasses both suffering and happiness in its affirmation of artistic inspiration and creation. *Krapp's Last Tape* closes with the affirmation of both the continuation of art (to which this passage functions as a prelude) and the intertextual dependence of the work of Proust's 'opus...magnum'.

Does Beckett in *Krapp's Last Tape* then merely indirectly double the affirmation of writing with which Proust concludes one strand of his discourse in *Remembrance of Things Past*? At stake in this question is more than simply the interpretation of the play, but also its relation to Beckett's other work (as far as the treatment of negativity is concerned), the relation of Beckett to his precursors, and to the historical distinction between modernism and postmodernism. While these last two problems cannot be immediately decided upon - their interpretation being dependent upon an understanding of the play - the status of Beckett's affirmation of the continuation of writing can be interpreted through the play's echoing of *Remembrance of Things Past*.

As has been shown previously the affirmation of Marcel's realization of his vocation does not proceed unproblematically and unquestioned in Proust's work. His inscriptions of errors in the novel's apparently affirmative discourse of time regained question this realization and affirmation of Marcel's vocation. As will be shown, Beckett, like Proust in *Remembrance of Things Past,* does not construct the relation between past and present figures as one of direct correspondence and unmediated repetition. The time that has passed between the existence of these doubles as figures located in time is also the space of rewriting and negation. Beckett, like Proust, inscribes the critical figure of negation and affirmation between two figures that are separated by the passage of time, thereby questioning the felicity of the search for lost time. These different figures produced through the inexorable passage of time and the relation between them is the configuration in which Beckett's meditation on the end and failure of literature is contained in the play.

Such a reading of Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* necessarily begins not in the play itself, but in an earlier encounter between Beckett and Proust - an encounter where this negation of the affirmative part of the Proustian project becomes apparent. The most

developed and sustained work of literary criticism that Beckett has produced - his critical monograph on Proust's novel - is concerned largely with the rejection of affirmative modes of existence inside the exigencies of time - what he calls the 'Time cancer' (1970: 7). For Beckett, the self in Proust's work is brought into being through its existence in time. Time and the self cannot be distinguished as two separate concepts, the one existing prior to the other. They are mutually dependent and constitutive. But if time is inseparably part of the processes through which the self is formed, it also plays an integral part in the deformation and disfiguring of the self:

> There is no escape from the hours and the days. Neither from tomorrow nor from yesterday. There is no escape from yesterday because yesterday has deformed us, or been deformed by us. The mood is of no importance. Deformation has taken place. [...] We are not merely more weary because of yesterday, we are other, no longer what we were before the calamity of yesterday (1970: 2-3).

If the subject always exists in time, as Beckett insists here, then this existence is always to be located and specified according to its time, not merely according to the present moment of the subject's existence. As he remarks '[y]esterday is not a milestone that has been passed, but a daystone on the beaten track of the years and irremediably part of us, within us, heavy and dangerous' (1970: 3). The effect of this on the self is that the self exists through the dimension of time as a series of incompatible and diverse figures. The passage of time negates the old self to produce a new subject. Later on, Beckett defines the Proustian consciousness as not an enclosing space within the stream of phenomena. For Beckett it is rather 'the seat of a constant process of decantation, decantation from the vessel containing the fluid of future time [...] to the vessel containing the fluid of past time' (1970: 3). The continuity of the subject in Proust's work is an illusion for Beckett, the result of a rewriting or forgetting of the past that erases everything that is strange and unfamiliar about the past subject.

In a confirmation of this, Beckett indicates that the Proustian self is affirmatively reconstructed according to a double movement: the past subject is reconstructed to correspond with the present subject, while the present subject is misconstrued as the illusionary repetition of this past self. Beckett refers to this process, which he associates with Proust's depiction of voluntary memory as 'that most necessary, wholesome and monotonous plagiarism - the plagiarism of oneself' (1970: 20). The contradictions inherent to this process are smoothed out by the force of habit, which is '[...] the generic term for all the countless treaties concluded between the countless subjects that constitute

the individual and their countless correlative objects' (1970: 8). Habit enables the cognition of change without the corresponding experience of change in the nature of the subject. It guarantees the continuity of the self, thereby finding its correlative in Proust's voluntary memory - which serves the needs of a subject determined to sustain itself by a routine of repetition, which erases all signs of difference in the self. Beckett construes voluntary memory as being identical as direct, duplicating repetition.

Through habit and the corresponding process of voluntary memory the continuity of the self as an object existing in time appears to be guaranteed. But this process is, neither for Beckett nor Proust, the complete narrative of the subject in time. Changes and transitions between different states of being necessarily take place, eroding the resistance of habit towards the cognition of these changes. During these passages the subject, despite the processes of voluntary memory and habit, is liable to become aware of the differences within himself - the multiplication of the subject brought about by time. Similarly, voluntary memory gives way in certain moments to the processes of involuntary memory, which beyond the illusory working of voluntary memory restore the subject to himself. Speaking of Proust's involuntary memory, Beckett remarks that

> It restores, not merely the past object, but the Lazarus that it charmed or tortured, not merely Lazarus and the object, but more because less, more because it abstracts the useful, the opportune, the accidental, because in its flames it has consigned Habit and all its works, and in its brightness revealed what the mock reality of experience never can and never will reveal - the real. But involuntary memory is an unruly magician and will not be importuned. It chooses its own time and place for the performance of its miracle (1970: 20-21).

Involuntary memory seems to allow for and create the possibility of repeating or retrieving the past subject as it existed at a prior point in time. An authentic and affirmative repetition of the past becomes possible that replaces the multiplication of inherently fake facsimiles of the subject with the 'accidental' unity of a self from which all difference has been exorcised. In Proust's work it is then also this process that allows for Marcel's realization of his vocation after the eruption of involuntary memory into his consciousness on the cobblestones outside the Guermantes reception. It is during this scene in Proust's work that the recovery of lost time takes place as the opening move of the narrative concerned with Marcel's realization of his literary vocation.

In Beckett's analysis of Proust's book, this restitutive involuntary memory quickly takes on the form of (as Nicholas Zurbrugg remarks in *Beckett and Proust* (1988)) a

"Beckettian nightmare' (1988: 151). Rather than framing it in terms of either an uncovering of the essence of things, or as the realization of Marcel's vocation, Beckett describes Marcel's stumbling over the cobblestones and the correlative experience of Venice as the intrusion of an 'intolerable brightness' (1970: 52) into the present. It is conflated with the other intolerable memories Marcel experiences in the work: the 'intolerable' (1970: 28) contradiction in his memories of his dead grandmother which unites 'presence and irremediable obliteration' (1970: 28), and the cruelty of memory that appears to resurrect the dead Albertine (1970: 44). Beckett's rhetoric regarding involuntary memory continues from this resolutely negative understanding in a similarly antithetical (to the affirmative understanding of this process) manner: the content of involuntary memory is 'rejected by our intelligence' (1970: 55); as an act it occurs 'by accident' (1970: 54) and reduces the object to its 'immaterial and spiritually digestible equivalent' (1970: 55). The scene in which the working of involuntary memory is exposed is an 'anticlimax' (1970: 57) to the novel, behind lies an 'anti-intellectual attitude' (1970: 65).

This framing of involuntary memory indirectly interprets it as another negative mode of existence for the subject. It is an accidental, irrational mode of restitution through which the subject is formed as an immaterial, illusionary unity. As a disruption of the defense of habit it is also then to be understood not as only restitutive but also as an intolerable uncovering of both the subject's lack of unity in time and that which is suppressed by habit. Beckett's rhetoric frames involuntary memory in terms of its negativity, its resistance against purely affirmative and unifying modes of declaration. This expression of the Proustian figure in negative terms reaches an apotheosis in Beckett's description of the working of involuntary memory as the destruction of time: 'Time is not recovered, it is obliterated' (1970: 56). Involuntary memory leads then not to the affirmation of the subject as a unity existing inside time, but to the obliteration of this time of the self. The subject is removed from the sphere of temporality through involuntary memory's negation of time. The dual figure of time and self refuses to be put into affirmative terms; the one or the other is, in Beckett's terms, decanted, or - in the terms used here - negated. The piercing that involuntary memory effects into the illusory configuration of voluntary memory and habit does then not, from this vantage point, succeed in unveiling an essential unified subject existing in time - which are the grounds for the realization of Marcel's vocation. For Beckett the self remains a figure occupying multiple positions in time - an understanding of the subject not modified in the narrative of his analysis of Proust. If involuntary memory negates time, it also affirms the multiplicity inherent to the self for Beckett (and, as he argued earlier, for Proust). It is

therefore indistinguishable from a specific form of violence directed against the unity of the self.

As Steven Connor remarks in his book *Samuel Beckett: Repetition, Theory and Text* (1988: 49), there is a subtle contradiction in Beckett's *Proust*. If the self is for Beckett defined by its presence and multiplicity in time, then involuntary memory (an obliteration of time) leads not to the uncovering of the essence of the self, but instead the self figured here appears as just another misconstrued figure. However, Beckett's fidelity to the Proustian discourse on involuntary memory forces him to offer this process as a movement which returns the self to the self. This tension is the reason for Beckett's negative rhetoric regarding involuntary memory. On the one hand, he is obliged to repeat Proust's overt statements regarding this process. On the other he protests against these statements by rewriting and interpreting them in a discourse characterized by its negativity.

Is Beckett deliberately misreading Proust through the association of involuntary memory with negativity? Or does his rhetoric and paradoxes mirror a similar paradox inhabiting Proust's work, a paradox related to the hidden negativity contained in Proustian involuntary memory as has been argued earlier? In a review of a study of Proust collected in *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment* (1983) Beckett appears to give credence to the latter possibility when he states with regard to Proust's novel that

> The book is the search, stated in the full complexity of all its clues and blind alleys, for that resolution, and not the *compte rendu* after the event, of a round trip. His material, pulverized by time, obliterated by habit, mutilated in the clockwork of memory, he communicates as he can, in dribs and drabs (1983: 64-65).

Framed here in terms of its incompletion - its failure to present the realized search it invokes - Proust's novel, for Beckett, while pointing towards and desiring the realization of its search (for lost time and the realization of Marcel's vocation), is not identical with this realization. The realization of Marcel's vocation and the recovery of lost time in which the search would be concluded remain unrepresented. An ironic tension subsists between what the novel promises to accomplish and what actually takes place. Proust's work opens not into an affirmation but into a negativity of incompletion or failure - the realization of the search remains unrepresented. From this vantage point, the negativity Beckett associates with involuntary memory is justified by its inevitable failure, its failure to affirm the realization of Proust's search (as has also been argued in this dissertation).

Time and the self are not recovered, nor does Marcel realize his vocation as the author of Proust's novel. These affirmations are never given in the novel. In the end only their promise remains, a promise that points to a time beyond the novel, and, in a circular move defines it as inherently incomplete. From Beckett's perspective Proust's work is questioned and ultimately undone by this negativity related to its incompletion, this failure to realize its aims.

This is then a double failure: on the one hand, the Proustian project fails in realizing the desires overtly stated as its motivations; on the other, Marcel as a result of the incompleteness of the work fails to become the author of its narrative. This double denial forms the kernel of Beckett's figuring of Proust's work as existing in a state of failure, as being incomplete. In the first instance this writing is negatively marked by its incapacity to realize its intentions. It can always be put into doubt according to its own intentions as merely performing the promise of an affirmation or realization, rather than being identical with this promise itself. Secondly, for Beckett, Proust's writing opens not necessarily into further writing or even its own completion. Incompletion and silence are always possible. There is no guarantee that writing continues, even in its guise as failure. Writing, and literature, ends by rejoining the silence Macherey and Iser see it as originally emerging from. This is inherently a temporal negativity. An absence is inscribed at the end of the temporal line of the work that is not identical with the naturalized end of the work, but which rather depends on the visible negation - in figural terms - of the possibility of further writing and more representations. To write an end to literature is not simply to conclude the work, but to negate the possibility and affirmation of this work. The sense of an end arrives only with the visible negation of the temporal line of the work's discourse.

Still a supplement to this end of Proust's discourses remains. It still communicates, although in 'dribs and drabs'. All that might be communicated in this fashion is the pulverization and obliteration and mutilation that define Proust's discourse; but even so, the work still puts forth and states its own failure to continue. A slight trembling of writing remains that does not allow for the understanding of Proust's work in terms of a pure absence or end. A mutual contamination of writing and silence takes place. This would appear to return Beckett's discourse to the understanding, that is suggested in *The Unnameable,* of the impossibility of an end for literature being written from inside literature. An affirmation remains. While this merely confirms the status of Proust's work as belonging to modernism, the question that needs to be posed is whether Beckett repeats this configuration he identifies here in Proust's work in a sustained literary engagement with Proust's work as occurs in *Krapp's Last Tape*?

* * *

Beckett does not rest in simply offering this logical possibility of something - literature - not happening. He turns against this possibility to show how it lapses into the obverse: the alogical continuation and affirmation of writing. *Krapp's Last Tape* is both an exploration of this ironical parabasis inside the confines of literature, and through its intertextual dialogue with Proust's work, indirectly a meditation on literary history that understands this history as the passage between a primary and secondary work that takes place through negations and affirmations, that conditions both the fate of this history (its possible end) and the nature of the relation between different authors. As the necessarily temporal rhetoric of this statement implies, what is at stake here is inherently a diachronic movement that leads from the work to its simultaneous negation and affirmation. To perform some kind of an end in the terms outlined here is to double a prior figure (whether the book itself or its precursor) through the figuring of its as unrepresentable, while retaining the possibility of the negation of this negativity in the construction of an affirmation.

How is this complex configuration operative in the play? If negation or rewriting takes place in the apparent passage between two temporal points then the preferential locus for its appearance is contingent and subjective memory (whether voluntary or involuntary). Marcel realizes as much in *Remembrance of Things Past* when he speaks of the 'errors' (III: 1103) regarding appearances that might invade the work of memory he is about to undertake. Proust's narrator did not, however, have the assistance of a mnemonic device like a tape recorder. For Marcel, the mnemonic retention of past images by memory is a suspect and contingent process. The threat remains that conscious memory can fail: '[...] images of the past fade little by little, are effaced, nothing remains of them' (I: 643). Forgetting constantly threatens memory. In *Krapp's Last Tape*, however, memory is externalized, in a move that shifts the concerns of the work away from Proust's preoccupation with consciousness, in the forms of the written ledgers and tapes kept by Krapp. If the writing in the ledgers appears as indecipherable notations giving rise only to more questions regarding the past, then the tapes, each secure in its own box, promise to preserve moments of lost time. As Krapp-39 remarks while listening to a tape made by the Krapp of 'ten or twelve years ago' (1959: 12): 'I often find them - [...] a help before embarking on a new... [...] ...retrospect' (1959: 13). Through returning to the faithful accounts of his old self, he can gauge the differences and changes that time has brought about in him: 'Hard to believe I was ever that young whelp. The voice! Jesus! And the

aspirations!' (1959: 13). Proust's narrator might have warned Krapp-39 that '[...] snapshots taken by my memory had never told me anything' (III: 900) and told him how he failed to recognize Rachel at the Guermantes reception due to the passage of time. Indeed the passage, via the tape spools, between the present and the past proves to be a failure in *Krapp's Last Tape*.

The passage between the past and the present becomes the locus of incessant rewriting and negations. In a transumptive move similar to Joyce's parody of past literary styles and authors, the faithful accounts and representations of the past are re-articulated as the negated and inaccessible figures of the present. The tape recorder - like voluntary memory in Proust's work - retains only the descriptive image of the past without maintaining its connotative meanings and allusions. Krapp-69 cannot, for instance, remember the connotations associated with the 'black ball' (1959: 11) that Krapp-39 describes in his recording as an object that he will 'feel [...], in my hands, until my dying day' (1959: 15). 'The aspirations of yesterday were valid for yesterday's ego, not for to-day's' (1970: 3), remarks Beckett in regard to the relationship between the past and present in Proust's novel. Listening to Krapp-39's account of their mother's death after her long widowhood, Krapp-69 seizes upon the word used to describe this widowhood ('viduity' (1959: 14)) and instead of receiving it according to its intended meaning, translates it into a different figure:

> [...] (*reading from dictionary*). State - or condition - of being - or remaining - a widow - or widower. (*Looks up. Puzzled.*) Being - or remaining?... (*Pause. He peers again at the dictionary. Reading.*) 'Deep wood of viduity.' ...Also of an animal, especially a bird...the vidua or weaver-bird...Black plumage of male...(*He looks up. With relish.*) The vidua-bird! (1959: 14).

To pass from 'viduity' as a term connotating widowhood - which can also in Beckett's context be read as a pun upon the French word *vide* or empty space, gap - to the reception of the term as the name of a bird is a double negation. On the one hand, the original context of the word - its ground and origin - is negated, thereby ensuring, as in Joyce, its repeatability in a different context. On the other a more focused negation also takes place, a negation that Shira Wolosky in "Samuel Beckett's Figural Evasions" sees as characteristic of Beckett's work, namely, 'the turning away from figures' (1989: 165). Stanley Cavell in *Must We Mean What We Say?* (1976) elaborates upon the nature of this negation when he remarks that:

> Beckett shares with positivism its wish to escape connotation, rhetoric, the noncognitive, the irrationality and awkward memories of ordinary language, in favor of the directly verifiable, the isolated, and the perfected present (1976: 120).

In the transformation of 'viduity' into the denotative name of a bird, it is exactly this negation of everything that defines the signifier except its literal, verifiable naming of an actual object that takes place. In *Krapp's Last Tape* the movement of a word from the past to the present is, in contrast to Proust's narrator, identical with the stripping away from everything of the word except its literal, denotative qualities. If for Marcel this movement cannot be separated from the construction of a metaphorical figure (even if it is bound to lapse into failed metaphor or metonymy), then for Krapp-69 exactly the obverse is true.

In effect this negation is also a reversal or then refiguring of the linguistic discourse of Proust's novel. If Krapp-39, like Marcel, can still speak through the use of connotations, metaphors and figures, then this possibility no longer exists for Krapp-69. As a matter of fact, he displays an increasingly impatient and irritated attitude towards his precursor's figural flights of fancy:

> Spiritually a year of profound gloom and indigence until that memorable night in March, at the end of the jetty, in the howling wind, never to be forgotten, when suddenly I saw the whole thing. The vision at last. This is what I have chiefly to record this evening, against the day when my work will be done and perhaps no place left in my memory, warm or cold, for the miracle that ... (*hesitates*)...for the fire that set it alight. What I suddenly saw then was this, that the belief I had been going on all my life, namely - (KRAPP *switches off impatiently, winds tape forwards, switches on again*) (1959: 15-16).

Krapp-39's use of the term 'miracle' to describe the 'vision' he receives after a 'year of profound gloom and indigence' immediately recalls the terms Beckett used in *Proust* to describe the visitation of involuntary memory upon Marcel on the cobblestones:

> His surrounding vanish [..] his anxiety and doubts as to the reality of art and life disappear, he is stunned by waves of rapture, saturated in the same felicity that has irrigated so sparingly his life. [...] the miracle of the courtyard' (1970: 52-53).

This scene, which in Proust's novel is both the culmination of its narrative of memory and the beginning of the realization of Marcel's vocation, is almost directly repeated in the

narration of Krapp-39. It is one of the points where *Krapp's Last Tape* directly echoes and repeats Proust's novel. If, in Proust, this scene opens into Marcel's reverie on literature and metaphorical modes of composition, then Krapp-39 appears to duplicate this movement: the 'miracle' is connected with and metaphorically figured as the 'fire' he referred to earlier ('Sat before the fire with closed eyes [...]' (1959: 11). While indirectly referring to Beckett's description of involuntary memory as an 'intolerable brightness', it is also a figurative description, made possible by and connotating the miracle experienced by Krapp-39. The vision figured here is later significantly rejected by Krapp-69 ('Thank God that is all done with anyway' (1959: 17)), but in this passage Krapp-69's irritation towards and impatience with the account of Krapp-39 arise in a direct response towards the possibility of a further association, the establishment of a further connection between different figures ('What I suddenly saw then was this, that the belief [...]'). Krapp-39's non-denotative and abstract rhetoric is rejected by Krapp-69 through simply fast-forwarding the tape. The figure that Krapp-39 was in the process of constructing is negated, rendered unrepresented in the mnemonic narration, through the dual intrusion of Krapp-69's rejection of figural discourse, and the possibilities of rewriting opened by the mechanical tape recorder.

When considered in terms of the play's intertextual links with Proust's work, this scene takes on the form of a critical commentary on its precursor. A doubling takes place in the work that, operating according to the distinction between Krapp-39 and Krapp-69, makes the former the locus of the repetition of Proust's affirmative discourse, while the latter articulates both Beckett's identification, - or, perhaps, inscription - of negativity in Proust's work and Proust's own undoing of his project. Taking place through the play's discourse on language and representation, and the destructive difference between Krapp-69 and Krapp-39, Beckett's work repeats the negation of Proust's affirmative project - its interlinked configuration of the regaining of time, the realization of Marcel's vocation and the valorization of metaphorical 'connexions'. On the one hand, then, *Krapp's Last Tape* negates its precursor if Proust's work is considered to be identical with its affirmative propositions. On the other, in a doubling of the contradiction Connor (1988: 49) notes in Beckett's critical treatment of Proust, it merely repeats Beckett's interpretation of Proust's interrogation of his own figures. If a difference is to be observed, it is primarily a matter of Beckett establishing a vantage point in his play, the present of Krapp-69, from which this process is temporalized. It is no longer a matter of reading the work for its simultaneous putting forth of affirmations and negations as occurred in Proust - a process hampering the readability of Proust's discourse. It is rather a matter of observing a temporal sequence that leads not into an affirmation but - through the opening of an

untraversable gap between the present and the past - into destruction and reduction. It suggests a history of decline. Beckett ultimately gives a temporal form to what existed in Proust as a spatial configuration of two possibilities present at the same time, thereby effecting a minimal rewriting of his precursor. At this point, Beckett's discourse seems to foreclose upon the possibility of effecting more than a minor adjustment of its precursor. The dominating figure is a repetition, which affirms the intertextual primary work, rather than negation. Paradoxically, this negatively marks Beckett's work as being largely a devalued copy of a prior figure, a secondary repetition, rather than a rewriting.

Three elements emerge from this paradigmatic scene that together constitute Beckett's critical negations in the play: the intrusion of the means of representation (here the tape recorder) into the act of reception; Krapp's differences from his precursors in the form of his earlier selves; and the play's transumptive re-articulation of Proust's work. Each of these elements of the narrative, which together constitute its active engagement with prior figures and its history, becomes the scene where the syntagmatic negation and rewriting of the past is effected. Beckett's play is constructed as arising from exactly this agonistic dialogue between what is written and the figures that appear to lurk behind and are veiled by these written words. These figures are repeated in the play, but their affirmation as the pre-history or primary work of the work is undone by their incessant negation and rewriting. Considered in diachronic terms the figures in Beckett's play pass from affirmation to the performance of negativity. The vector of his work leads inherently to silence - to the void from which language emerges as Daniel Fischlin (1994: 3) would have it. Beckett actively seeks to incorporate the unrepresentable into his work.

Typically, for Beckett, one of the preferential dimensions of the work in which this is articulated is in the language of the work. Beckett, like Joyce, remains aware of the linguistic status of the signifiers of his work, even if they remain notations and codes to be performed in the performance of the play on stage. In the play the possibility of negating the linguistic signifier, whether spoken or written, is retained for the dramatic work - thereby implicitly challenging Alain Robbe-Grillet's judgement made in "Samuel Beckett, or 'Presence' in the Theatre" (1963, 1965: 108-116) that 'the main function of the theatre' is to show 'what the fact of *being there* consists in' (1965: 113). The stage here becomes the locus of signs defined exactly according to their status as being unrepresented or, as being negations.

The first presentation of a work of writing that does not immediately become part of the staging of Krapp's monologue (the act of reading is required for this appropriation) is the written ledger. Beckett insists on the materiality of this heavy ledger and its inaccessibility to the failing eyesight of Krapp-69. Similarly, the act of page-turning is

loaded with negative connotations: 'Farewell to - (*he turns page*) - love' (1959: 11). By highlighting the gesture required for reading, Beckett inscribes a gap in the read discourse. 'Farewell to' and 'love' are linked with each other by an action across a blank space that mimes the absence opened by the propositions of the sentence, a blank space that functions for both the reader (whether Krapp-69 or the actual reader of the work) and the audience as a momentary interruption of the flow of signifiers that constitutes the message. Attention is directed towards its status as an inscription that is written. However, these local examples of negativity or negative connotations stand secondary from this vantage point to the actual mode of reading that Krapp-69 employs and the illusion of his verbal repetition of this reading. Fragmented and truncated, the words of Krapp-69 do not merely repeat the contents of the written ledger:

> Mother at rest at last...Hm....The black ball....(*He raises his head, stares blankly front. Puzzled.*) Black Ball?...(*He peers again at ledger, reads.*)The dark nurse...(*He raises his head, broods, pears again at ledger, reads.*) Slight improvement in bowel condition....Hm.... Memorable...what? (1959: 11).

Proceeding through a process of selection, hesitation and questioning, Krapp's verbal repetition extracts these quotations from the ledger from their context and links them together in a non-sensical fashion. Instead of cohering as a communicative message, this narration is interrupted by the gaps and uncertainties this process of reading and repetition opens in it. The act of reading becomes an act of negation or rewriting that transforms the assumed legible script through the inscription of a negativity related to that which is not said or escapes understanding. Instead of repeating the signifiers of the ledger, these signifiers are removed from their suggested original context, and, as such, problematize their reception. Just like the material reality of the book (the turning of pages) opens gaps in the original discourse, so Krapp's reading effects a similar negation of the uninterrupted flow of signs that is assumed to constitute a message. The transformed account of what is written in the ledger is naturally the only sign of the actual written content of the ledger. The description of Krapp-69's method of reading and the enunciated content (and questioning) of this reading appears to point towards a complete, non-fragmented work residing behind these deforming repetitions, but does not. This appearance of an indirect repetition creates the illusion of temporality and rewriting: an original affirmative discourse is disrupted through temporally secondary act of negation, thereby creating the appearance of a secondary work established on the ruins of an old, illusionary work.

If Krapp-69's reading of the ledger draws attention to how the recovery and repetition of the written word is a falling away from an original discourse predicated by notions such as affirmation, presence and recoverability, then the turn towards the tapes seems to imply a turn towards the presence implied by the ideas of voice and speech (a turn similar to that attributed by Robbe-Grillet to Beckett in his move from prose to drama (1965: 109)). This speech is, however, mediated through the presence of the tape-recorder. The spoken word is opened to the manipulation of technology. It is a representation, a repetition, not a direct oration or conversation. On the one hand this quality of the speech as a repetition, removed from the presence of the addressee allows for interruptions and comments by Krapp-69 that would not have been authorized in a standard speech-act situation where both the person who speaks and the person who is spoken to are present:

> And the aspirations! (*Brief laugh in which KRAPP joins*) And the resolutions! (*Brief laugh in which KRAPP joins*). To drink less, in particular. (*Brief laugh of KRAPP alone*) (1959: 13).

The status of these words as mechanical repetitions of speech rather than actual speech allows Krapp-69 to construct his own derisory interjection in the body of the discourse. Deriding one of the earlier Krapp's resolutions to drink less, Krapp-69 strips from the final sentence in this passage all the implied solemnity and seriousness that Krapp-39 attaches to it. From his vantage point, thirty years later, he is well aware of the comic failure of this resolution and gives form to this awareness in the spoken word.

Similarly, the technological mediation of the tape-recorder allows for the interruption and rendering absent of portions of Krapp-39's speech. Frequently Krapp-69's pausing of the tape interrupts the line of his words. More destabilizing, however, is the act of fast-forwarding the tape:

> [...] unshatterable association until my dissolution of storm and night with the light of the understanding and the fire - (*KRAPP curses louder, switches off, winds tape forward, switches on again*) - my face in her breast and my hand on her. We lay there without moving. But under us all moved, and moved us, gently, up and down, and from side to side (1959: 16).

Again turning against Krapp-39's account of his 'vision', Krapp-69 simply erases this representation from his reception of the word by fast-forwarding to the section of the tape

he is interested in - a passage concerned with love. Through ignoring what Krapp-39 feels is the most important part of the record - the narration of the 'vision' - and concentrating on the accounts lined to the earlier noticed words 'Farewell to [...] love', Krapp-69 is seemingly rewriting the record. Like the reading of the ledger, the act of listening and the actual material existence of the spoken word (in the form of tapes), allow for both the repetition and disruption of the original content of Krapp-39's report. The words are displaced from their original signifying context and grafted somewhere else, thereby undermining their continuity, legibility, completion and immediacy. The sign is simultaneously maintained, its continued existence affirmed, and becomes the locus of the negation of the word.

The time of Krapp-69 heralds the death of the word. Just like the signifier is stripped of all possible connotative meanings by Krapp-69, this familiar movement of repetition and negation opens into the time of blanks and gaps. The discourse that emerges is on the one hand a mere (illusionary) repetition of a former discourse, and, on the other, does not even fulfil the intention of this repetition to recover the past. The past is deformed and disfigured by the present, its reclamation impossible. Rather than being remembered, the past is repeated in a deformed and devalued manner. It does not return, except in a degraded and negated form.

Krapp-69 appears to be caught in a double bind. If the difference between him and his multiple past selves lies at the root of his attempts to recover his past through records of speech and writing, then these attempts only manage to increase and affirm the multiplicity of the self in time. At the heart of his difference from Krapp-39 lies his forgetting and rejection of the Proustian 'vision' experienced by the former. When he turns towards the tapes it is exactly this change that leads to his rewriting of them as faithful recordings of the past. These rewritings, however, put the representational value of the played portions of the tape as affirmative mnemonic signs into doubt. Instead of moving closer to his past, Krapp-69 drifts further away. Even his means of reclaiming the past are discredited. The rewritten figures of Proustian voluntary and involuntary memory - the tapes and the 'miracle' of Krapp-39 - are either put into doubt or, because of changes in the self, rejected as methods of memory. Krapp-69 cannot 'be again' in the manner that he was. He cannot, in the words of Paul A. Bové in *Destructive Poetics: Heidegger and Modern American Poetry* (1980), look 'authentically back to his past to find new possibilities for a new beginning' (1980: 90). All that he can do is seemingly to repeat - and, through repetition, distort - the past without effecting any recovery of what has passed. In this sense the fate of *Krapp's Last Tape* is similar to that ascribed by Beckett to Proust's novel: to remain incomplete, because it cannot complete the project that

motivates it. From this vantage *Krapp's Last Tape* fails. It fails by merely repeating the error and failure of Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*: its incapacity to effect the recovery of lost time, too, as has been shown, through the propositions that would appear to affirm this process remove its possibility even further.

If the project of the recovery of lost time is figured as a failure in *Krapp's Last Tape* then its corresponding discourse in Proust's work - the search for the essence of things - is opened to a similar negation in the narration of Krapp-69. Krapp-39, sitting in front of the fire, seems stimulated by a similar desire to that of Marcel to arrive at a stable truth:

> Sat before the fire with closed eyes, separating the grain from the husks. [...] The grain, now I wonder what I mean by that [...] I suppose I mean those things worth having when all the dust has - when all my dust has settled. I close my eyes and try to imagine them (1959: 12).

Beckett further explains the 'grain', the core of experience, as 'the essence of ourselves, the best of our many selves and their concretions that simplists call the world' (1970: 18-19). Krapp-69 appears to reject the possibility of such an 'essence'. He sees only, literally, crap. He no longer believes in the possibility of an essence linked to truth, experience and the self. As he remarks in his closing monologue: 'Everything there, everything on this old muckball, all the light and dark and famine and feasting of [...] the ages [...] Let that go! Jesus! Take his mind off his homework!' (1970:18).

In more literal terms, Krapp-69's affirmation as the origin or author of his discourse is also problematized. From the '[s]hadows of the opus...magnum' (1959: 13) that the Krapp quoted by Krapp-39 imagines to Krapp-69's comments regarding '[s]eventeen copies sold' (1959: 18) and this, the final disappearance of his voice, the possibility of literature and writing is consistently denied by Krapp-69 in 'Krapp's Last Tape". To pass from the early Krapp's aspirations to the derisory comments which conclude the play, is to figure a literary career as a failure. Unlike Marcel, Krapp cannot ground his salvation in literature, it is a failed possibility for him.

Despite this rejection of the search for truth and essence a longing for a specific form of affirmation remains. The thought of love which Beckett understands as 'our demand for a whole' (1970: 39) continues to attract Krapp-69, even though it has been dismissed by both Beckett as a 'desert of loneliness and recrimination' (1970: 38) and the old Marcel. Indeed, Krapp-39 refers to love as 'hopeless' (1970: 16). Still, Krapp-69 twice

replays the 'farewell to love'. It is in fact this recollection that follows the narrative of Krapp-39's 'vision' of recovered time:

> [M]y face in her breasts and my hand on her. We lay there without moving. But under us all moved, and moved us, gently, up and down, and from side to side [...] Past midnight. Never knew such silence. The earth might be uninhabited (1970: 16).

Here the lovers appear in a unity with the world and each other. Rather than the prior vision of Krapp-39, this unity is the lost object that Krapp-69's discourse attempts to uncover. Marcel, watching the sleeping Albertine, experiences a similar feeling of unity when he speaks of an '[...] Albertine who was the image precisely of what was mine and not the unknown' (III: 70). But the passing of time disrupts the unity experienced by both Marcel and Krapp. Krapp-69 can relive this past unity only through mechanical manipulation: '*KRAPP switches off, winds tape back, switches on again*' (1959: 16). This act of beginning again, or of replaying the tape, unveils this unity as a contingent figure. It is necessary to relive the mediated representation of this unity again and again to bring it to life again. It does not exist outside time and its ravages. Rather, it is a figure in time open to the affirmations and disfiguring of repetition - each playing of the tape starts and stops in a different place. Krapp-69 has abandoned the search for love except in the form of reliving past experiences. He might read *Effie Briest* with tears in his eyes (1959: 18) at the thought of happiness with a lover, but this desire for unity is doubled by the recognition of its absence - both in life and in his reactivated memories. Like Marcel's memories of his grandmother, these images of past and fictional lovers do not exist only as figures present to memory, but are also marked by the recognition of their absence. Like the retrievals effected in the linguistic signs of the play, Krapp's discourse also opens into negation. The various repetitions and desires in this discourse are neither affirmed nor realized: they open into a negativity constructed by failed affirmations and thwarted desires. *Krapp's Last Tape*, like *Remembrance of Things Past*, fails to complete its projected affirmation.

* * *

These failures leave Krapp-69 in the last moments of the play with '[n]othing to say, not a squeak' (1959: 18). The recovery of the past and its corresponding discourses of essences and love have opened into negativity. Similarly, the repetitions of the tape-recorder have

been shown to open onto unstable, rewritten representations rather than images corresponding with the past. The play - if its project is understood in the terms authorized by its intertextual links with Proust's novel - concludes with its own failure. 'Leave it at that' (1959: 19), says Krapp-69. The past remains beyond reach. This failure coincides in *Krapp's Last Tape* with the appearance on stage of Krapp-69 for the first time without the supplementary presence of another work - whether ledger or tape. He no longer has a prior primary work to depend on, to re-articulate or to rewrite. The temporal discourse of the play has exhausted its capacity to continue with incessant rewritings and negations. Nothing to rewrite and negate appears to be left. The sources and origins of the work appear to have been exhausted. If writing has taken place through the inherently destructive act of negation, then the negativity of unrepresentable speech ('nothing') would be the dividend. Whether read as rewriting the discourse of Krapp-39 or Proust's work, at this point in the narrative the play seems to posit an end. Its own discourse and the history of literature it is part of through its echoing of Proust's work ends in the negativity of a failure to generate further presentations. The work is a thing of the past, as, indirectly, is literature. Beckett's critical negations appear to bring nothing to the primary works it is dependent upon except the conclusion of these works, their dissipation in silence and unrepresentability.

Considered in these terms, this moment in the play would be the point where Beckett gives form to the unrepresentable through his negation of time. 'Nothing' is incorporated, and figured as the termination of the play's discourse, and, obversely, time is figured in terms of the negativity of an end or conclusion. Conversely, in Lyotard's terms, this scene would confirm the postmodernity of Beckett's discourse - it is the moment where the continuation of time is explicitly represented as the unrepresentable. If Beckett's discourse were to have concluded at this point, he could indeed have been interpreted as giving figure to a negativity that exists without a corresponding affirmation. His discourse would have ended in the denial of its continuing existence and possibility. Yet, this scene corresponds not with the literal conclusion of Beckett's play. More writing remains. What occurs in this writing? Is this negativity of the unspeakable and unrepresentable resolutely maintained, or does it lapse into an affirmation?

To say nothing, 'not a squeak', proves to be a relatively fertile ground for articulation in Beckett's work. Rather than bringing an end to the discourse in the play, Krapp-69 has to improvise his own speech without resorting to critical commentaries on present prior figures. He continues speaking, apparently on his own without the presence of a script. Krapp-69 cannot, however, escape repetition. He repeats the word 'spool' (1959: 18), a song, and memories of Christmas and Sunday mornings on Croghan (1959:

19). His own speech is entirely given over to the purposeless and fragmentary repetition of prior figures. These repetitions do not effect, however, either the retrieval of time or the establishment of unity. Instead they are signs of Krapp-69's turning over of his discourse to a ceaseless discourse of repetition. If the repetitions that construct the discourse of the play up to this point open into negativity, then the same situation appears to occur here. It is no longer the repeated figure that is negated, but the voice that effects this negation. Krapp-69 is, ultimately, no longer in control of the discourse. He, once the artist of negation, blankly repeats and allows for the repetition of prior figures unmarked by the critical act of rewriting. He is, in this sense, saying nothing, but this 'nothing' turns out to be not silence but the blank repetition of prior figures. Like the dummy of a ventriloquist Krapp-69 repeats these prior traces without effecting - whether through consciousness or accident - a change in them. Aptly the play ends with the turning over of the narration to the reactivated voice of Krapp-39 - which as has been shown is indistinguishable in this instance from either the voice of Proust, or the younger Beckett:

> Perhaps my best years are gone. When there was a chance of happiness. But I wouldn't want them back. Not with the fire in me now. No, I wouldn't want them back (1959: 20).

Krapp-69 is here no longer listening to himself or rather his earlier self. He is staring into the darkness as his earlier self continues and concludes the narration. These final lines of Krapp-39 resist being read as an affirmation. Already negated earlier in the play as a figural construct that the present cannot accommodate, it can only be figured here at the end as a purposeless echoing of the past, a repetition that does not even attract Krapp-69's attention. It is a representation of memory that cannot be relocated in the consciousness of a subject. It exists as pure repetition, affirming only the object it refers to. This repetition is speech negatively marked by its lack of foundation in either an affirmative present context or consciousness. Yet, devoid of this affirmation it continues, mechanically putting itself forth into presence.

Paradoxically, however, while this speech cannot be interpreted as an affirmation of the present discourse of the play, a specific form of affirmation takes place that cannot be understood as taking place in the 'decanted' consciousness of Krapp-69. In the first instance, an affirmation of the perpetual prolonging and perpetuation of language (in the form of the recording) occurs. Although separated from the consciousness of Krapp-69, the mechanical reproduction of language still occurs. The language of the discourse is affirmed as no longer depending on a human agent. From this perspective, Beckett's

discourse affirms, rather than negates, language as an impersonal and implicitly inhuman construct (an interpretation substantiated by the presence of the mechanical tape-recorder). What is more, the discourse proceeds through the affirmation of an origin that precedes it, and on which its direct repetitions are grounded. While this affirmation highlights the devalued nature of its own representations, such a devaluation cannot occur without the creation of the illusion of the affirmation of a prior figure - a reversal of Joyce's strategy against origins in *Ulysses*.

Through inscribing a partition between what is said and the origin and context of this enunciation, Beckett is extending the practice of not saying anything. Even though discourse continues, and continues to be repeated, the act of writing or, rather, speaking - identical in Beckett's play with the act of rewriting - has disappeared. What is vocalized is that which existed before this project of rewriting, and, rather than silence, returns after its demise. The end of writing occurs not through its conclusion in silence but in the mechanical procession of the primary work, the work on which is written. Rather than ending in silence, the work ends in its other beginning, the previously denied figures of the past that return to haunt the consciousness of the work. These figures are dispossessed by the work. Belonging to a past that is suppressed by the establishment of the secondary work, their duplication corresponds not to the act of literary production but to its end. Rewriting recedes when that which is rewritten returns. The negativity of Beckett's work resides in this denial of literary engendering through the figuring of the return of that which is negated in this process. Inherently, this is a return of that which has been unsaid, or negated. Beckett resists, however, the equation of this unsaid with literal nothingness or silence. The ironical parabasis that pertains to the writing of silence or an end remains. Even if Beckett's work ends in the 'decantation' of writing, it still signifies in 'dribs and drabs' - although this murmur can no longer be equated with writing, or, rather, rewriting. The purity of silence escapes the work and, by extension, literature. There is, paradoxically, at the end of writing and literature, more literature and writing left.

To read Beckett's discourse as simply coming to a conclusion in the offering of a pure negativity is to ignore these subsequent complications and affirmations. Beckett's work should rather be understood in terms of a negativity that is questioned by the continued presence of an affirmation. Like the discourses of Proust and Joyce, his presentations oscillate between these two possibilities, rather than offering either the one or the other as its true nature. A condition of ironical parabasis is maintained, in which the possibility of determining the work as either inherently affirmative, or in terms of negativity is foreclosed on. Implicitly, this also forecloses on the interpretation of Beckett's work in terms of a postmodernism that represents the unrepresentable without

an attendant affirmation. As a matter of fact, it appears as if such a representation is an impossibility. Negativity continuously lapses into affirmation (a reversal that occurs in the other direction as well). What appears to occur is rather a performance of negativity - as has been suggested in the introduction - that cannot be read as identical with either the reality pointed by the work (it, after all continues past this figuration of its own end); or with the discursive structures (marked by the interplay of negativity and affirmations) from which this performative arises. The writing of negativity in the work appears to be an inherently illusionary figure grounded in a more complex interplay of affirmations and negativity. Just like positing an ultimate affirmation that determines the work is a restitution of the coherency of its discourse, so the suggestion that a work is inherently identical with the offering of negativity effects a recuperation of the unity and determinacy of the work's figures, through denying this ambivalent play of negativity and affirmation.

* * *

The ironical parabasis that underlies Beckett's discourse in *Krapp's Last Tape* is responsible for a double negativity. On the one hand, Beckett proclaims an end to writing. Writing opens into its own absence - understood either as negated figures or the negation of writing. Literally, writing becomes that which is negated in the literary work; it is the unspeakable component of the discourse. On the other hand, Beckett is instrumental in the negation of an end itself. The negativity that marks the end of the script is itself negated by the presence of more significations and enunciations. While these figures do not exactly double previous writings, they exist as devalued copies of it - they are mechanical repetitions that continue the line of discourse in the work while putting into doubt the act of writing. The end both occurs and does not take place. This is the double-bind of Beckett's discourse - the understanding of writing as opening into its own end while not being able to come to a rest in this conclusion. Rather than just interrogating the possibility or impossibility of writing, Beckett also questions the status of his discourse's negativity. Negativity, for Beckett, leads not to the unproblematic presence of an absence, the figuring of the unrepresentable and its inclusion in discourse. In his terms, negativity is always open to a certain slippage and indeterminacy in its working. If it is, by definition, involved with discourses determined by notions such as absence, or nothing, or end; negativity does not come to a rest in these discourses. There is no certainty possible regarding negativity for Beckett. The possibility of a ruse is always present, a ruse that would veil in the figure of negativity the possibility and condition of more

writing, further rewritings. The lesson of Beckett's work is primarily, perhaps, that these antithetical terms cannot be kept completely separate. Negativity is always prone to lapse into the affirmation of more writing and rewriting, while writing is always marked by a negativity that conditions it.

Conclusion

Methods of Negation, Modes of Invention?

> Thought is originally erasure - that is to say a symbol
> -Emmanuel Levinas, "The Transcendence of Words" (1949).

> Negation then? A productive force whose prohibitory function embodied in the "Not" implodes into the virtual autonomy of discourses structured by negation
> -Daniel Fischlin, "Introduction: Negation, Critical Theory, and Postmodern Textuality" (1994).

It is particularly difficult to conclude a dissertation that, as part of its interpretative project, has attempted to highlight the contingencies and difficulties inherent in the writing of an end. For it is just as likely that what has been intended to be a conclusion, an end, turns out to be – as Beckett would have it - a continuation of writing. The last word might turn out to be not necessarily the last word, in any sense that matters, but the first word and beginning of an entirely different discourse. Such reservations notwithstanding, one way to conclude this dissertation would be to attempt to make sense of what my interpretations of the works of Proust, Joyce, and Beckett have succeeded in ascertaining regarding the element of literary discourse that has been considered here as negativity. Such a conclusion is necessarily assimilative in nature - it attempts to gather together the loose and divergent lines of thought provoked by the works of these authors into a coherent summary of these interpretations. But to repeat is not to conclude; it is to say again. Similarly, the other function of this conclusion - to situate the discourses of this dissertation in relation to other theoretical and modernist discourses - is not to write an end either. It is to suggest the possibility, and, indeed, the need for more writing. But, then, how does the writing of an end take place?

* * *

The line that runs from Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, through James Joyce's *Ulysses* to *Krapp's Last Tape* by Samuel Beckett is characterized by an apparent intensification of the discourse whereby the traditional tenents of literature are questioned. For Marcel Proust, as has been shown with regard to his discourse concerned with epistemological certainty and reading, literature is no longer capable of granting either the reader or its characters easy access to verifiable experience. The negativity of his work puts into doubt the possibility of an unmediated and unproblematic experience of the

world and the written word. The possibility of error remains. If the negativity of Proust's discourse is related to the occluding of a referential signified – whether located in language or in the world of experience - then James Joyce shifts the locus of the play of negativity in his work to the level of the signifier, the linguistic mark itself. His novel is characterized by an incessant interrogation and problematization of the readable linguistic signifier - an interrogation that cannot be separated from the novel's complex and varying treatment of the origins of these signs that are located both in and outside the confines of the work. Ultimately, Joyce puts the status of the word itself into question, concluding his novel with the dual possibility of a dead and devalued form of language, and the necessity of rejecting this discourse to start again with a language no longer problematized by this discourse. The implicit concern of this discourse with the possibility of the continuation of literature itself, and the conditions necessary for this continuation are given full form in Samuel Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape*. Concerned with an inherently temporal problem - the writing of an end to the enterprise of literature - Beckett's work posits both itself and its intertextual precursor (Proust's novel) as being marked by a syntagmatic negativity that questions the possibility of further writing. On the one hand, Beckett shows how writing continues through a negation of what has gone before - whether this before is occupied by the prior discourse of the play or the discourse of Proust's novel is less important to Beckett than the fact of the negation leading paradoxically to more writing. On the other hand, his discourse introduces a further syntagmatic negativity into the discourse produced by this negation, a negativity that questions the possibility of writing itself and that attempts to bring it to an end. Accordingly, Beckett's play ends with the suspension of further, new writing in favour of the mechanical repetition of that what has both gone before, and has already been obliterated by the play's negation of its precursors. Writing is both continued and discontinued in Beckett's discourse. His play posits, through its meditation on the possibility of an end, both the possibility and the impossibility of the discontinuation of literature.

The exploitation in these works of the four possible forms of negation outlined in the introduction to this dissertation - the paradigmatic negation of a signified, or signifier, or the syntagmatic negation of the temporal line of the discourse, or the negation of a historical precursor - seems to lead inevitably to the putting into doubt of elements of traditional literary discourse. Whether these elements are understood in terms of experience, writing or the continuation of literature, the works of these authors question and interrogate their appearance inside the discourse of their works. One aspect of literary negativity is highlighted by this questioning of literary discourse, namely its subversion of the signifying fixity of the work. Whether negativity functions in the ambit of the works of Proust, Joyce, and Beckett as a critical means of excluding those literary elements that in an affirmative literary discourse - such as that of realism - ensure the stability of that

which is read (usually through the grounding of the work in an agency located outside and prior to the work such as a referential signified), or introduces an interpretative instability into the work itself (such as encountered in Beckett's use of an ironical parabasis), its ultimate role appears to be to introduce a questioning of the propositions of the work into the work itself.

Considered in these terms, negativity can be understood as the origin of the ambivalence and uncertainty associated with the work. A discourse that is conditioned by the presence of negativity forecloses upon any unconditional affirmative statements regarding itself. Its reception is always governed by the understanding of this discourse as being examples of discourses which, as Paul Gordon puts it in his book *The Critical Double: Figurative Meaning in Aesthetic Discourse* (1995), 'assert and deny their own meaning, asserting their denials as well as denying their assertions' (1995: 12). For Gordon, this ambivalence is related to the idea of the sophist-rhetor Protagoras that '"on every question there are two opposing answers, including this one"' (Protagoras *in* Gordon, 1995: 12), which, as Gordon notes, is an exemplary instance of a discourse using its own structure to deny the meaning that this structure appears to invoke. Accordingly, negativity can be interpreted from this vantage point in terms of a discourse that utilizes its own representations to question its own status - a strategy fundamental to, for instance, Proust's questioning of the figures that Marcel constructs from inside the discursive logic of these figures; or to Joyce's negations of origins through their repetition, or, finally, to Beckett's problematization of the possibility of an end through it being given form in his discourse.
As the understanding of negativity in terms of undecidability and ambivalence indirectly indicates, however, what occurs in the works of Proust, Joyce and Beckett discussed in this dissertation is not simply the representation of negativity, or - as it has been understood in terms of representation - the unrepresentable, but the coming into existence of an interplay between modes of negativity and affirmation. As directly suggested in the reading of *Krapp's Last Tape*, negativity (or, obversely, affirmation) constantly lapses into its opposite. Not in any of the works analysed in this dissertation is either a solely affirmative moment or an instance to be understood purely in terms of negativity present. What occurs is rather an equivocal play between these two poles of the dicourses of these works - an ambivalent play that forecloses on the understanding of the handling of negativity in either dialectical terms (in which it would be figured as a transitory moment in the establishment of an affirmation), or in the terms used by Lyotard to describe postmodernism's treatment of negativity (as the reading of Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* indicates). This equivocity is then the defining characteristic of the representations that occur in these works. These representations are marked by the mutual subsistence of both moments of negativity and of affirmation that question the understanding of these works solely in terms of any one of these moments.

Is negativity then to be only interpreted in terms of this introduction of an ambivalent play and oscillation into the discourse of the work? While this might be, inherently, the effect of the introduction of negativity upon a discourse that contains affirmative propositions, this understanding gives very little indication of the nature of the negativity located in the ambit of these works. What are the characteristics of negativity when these are considered apart from their effects upon an affirmative discourse? In the first instance, this negativity should be distinguished from a literal representation of that which is unrepresentable or unsaid. Such a figure belongs to the silence that pre-dates the coming into existence of the work, and is recuperable only as a performative rather than constative figure. In other words, as has been suggested in both the introduction and in the analysis of Beckett's work, the identification of a moment of negativity in the work is an identification of a performative act that does not denotate the actual silence or unrepresentable it appears to signify. It rather brings this negativity into being. Negativity is an act performed in the work, rather than a description or repetition of a prior figure. Secondly, from this perspective, negativity, from a referential viewpoint, is also an illusionary figure that should be understood in figurative, rather than literal terms. Proust indirectly suggests as much when he makes the figurative dimension of his work the locus of his inscription of negativity. It appears as if the proper dimension for the articulation of negativity is the rhetorical, or figurative, dimension of the work. Even the negativity Beckett (whose work contains an explicit turn against the figurative potential of language) gives form to, exists as a deviation from the literal discourse of his play: this formation occurs through the attribution of a figural figure to time, and the presence of an ironical parabasis - both irony and parabasis being rhetorical figures - in the work.

While these qualifications specifically pertain to the status of the work's significations of negativity, a deepening of the understanding of negativity located in the modern work becomes possible when its structure and function - or, in speech act terms, its locutionary and illocutionary aspects - are analysed. As far as its function is concerned, negativity cannot be separated from its operations in the work: its negations. In these works, negativity appears primarily not as a figure of representation, but as an act upon representational figures. To put this in different terms: if negativity is represented through a performative rather than a constative act, then this fact does not preclude it from functioning as an act in the discourse of the work - an act that then produces exactly the performance of negativity that has been discussed earlier. Negation, or operational negativity, is, as has been suggested in the introduction, inherently an act on language in language - the minimal requirement for the existence of a performative as Mark C. Taylor - in his essay, "How to do Nothing with Words" (1990: 203-234) - would have it (1990: 209). The role of this act is to assert the non-existence of either an object, or of predicates pertaining to that object, a role which thereby situates negation as being positioned

antithetically towards affirmations, whose main function would be construction of statements regarding the existence or nature of an object.

Figured as an act, negation can be seen as mediating between two different representations or types of discourses. The minimal requirement for this act to have occurred is the presence of two discernably different modes of discourse: an affirmation and its negation. Without either of these poles, no negation can become visible in a discourse. Negation functions as a movement between these two poles - a passage effected by the negation of whichever figure is present first in the discourse. The structure of a negation would then appear to be identical with the joining together of an affirmation and its negation - with both these figures remaining present in the resultant representation. Whether this affirmation is actually present or only suggested by the negation itself, is less important than the temporal discourse that is created through this actual or virtual passage. A shift in the status of discourse appears to take place. What has previously been affirmed - the figure for which the term 'primary work has been coined - is negated, and is given representation to as a negated figure - a secondary work then. By its very nature, this movement appears as a temporal sequence in the discourse in which it is present. While this itself might be an illusion that is brought about by the need to posit two different representational states linked by a negation for the reading of a negation as an actual negation, this postulation of negation as a diachronic movement is suggestive as far as the nature and function of this act are concerned. Negation appears as a form of rewriting that modifies and conditions prior figures through, in Freud's terms, judgements regarding their existence or qualities. This function of negation has been shown to be operative in the works discussed earlier. Whether active as a negation of what is present or figured by the work itself (Proust's negation of the literal signified of his discourse being the exemplary instance of this), or, as in Joyce and Beckett's intertextual negations, as a negation of that which literally precedes the representations of the work, negation appears as a further form of writing that refigures a primary work. This rewriting takes place through the construction of different explicit or implicit statements regarding the non-existence of a prior object, or its predicates.

If negation, considered here as figure that mediates between a primary and secondary work, is instrumental in determining the transformation of one representation into another, then its presence in literary modernism is not just assured by its use in the three works that have been discussed in this dissertation. The prevalence of rewriting as a mode of representation in literary modernism seems to suggest both the possibility of analysing other modernist works in terms of their negations of a prior object, and of a general understanding of writing as including a necessary moment of rewriting. Whether this rewriting occurs between two different works of the same author - Joyce's rewriting of *Stephen Hero* (1914) as *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*, or Ezra Pound's

reconstruction of "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley (Life and Contacts)" (1920, 1983: 981-990) in "Mauberley/1920" (1920, 1983: 990-994) come to mind - or, between the works of two different authors (as for instance T.S. Eliot's intertextual allusions to Dante in "The Waste Land"), an understanding of writing that hinges on the concept of rewriting appears to be invoked. While these rewritings are obviously not only restricted to the movements between two different works - their conceptualization in modernism necessarily has to take into account instances such as the different repetitions of a single tale in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1898, 1992), and, perhaps, also the impact of the critical prefaces Henry James added to his novels on the discourse of these novels - it is here that their presence reaches optimal visibility.

Accordingly, Edward W. Said correctly remarks in his essay "On Originality" (1983: 126-139), that in modernism the 'writer thinks less of writing originally, and more of rewriting' (1983: 135). While these rewritings, if they took place through the use of a negation, might be understood in terms of a discursive turn against origins - such as encountered in Joyce's work - they also seem to suggest a shift in the understanding of what the act of writing entails. Not to be understood as either a mimetic duplication, or the purely original enunciations of an author, this writing proceeds through an indirect assertion of both its dependence upon a prior discourse, and its departure from this discourse. Writing becomes an act of translation and transformation that constructs the 'new' through the refiguration of that which has gone before. This, perhaps, is one reason for the presence of discursive negativity and negations in literary modernism. Negation, and the negativity that it performs, appears from the argument presented in this dissertation to be an inevitable component of the act of rewriting - even if obviously not the only one. Negation is inherently the act whereby the existence or qualities of a prior work are denied - an inevitable moment in a discourse determined by notions of rewriting that are not concerned with simply duplicating a prior discourse. Rewriting, it would appear, necessarily entails a moment of negation and negativity, if it is not to be understood as a direct repetition. While the act of rewriting would also contain a series of affirmative propositions that, at the very least, suggests the presence of an object that has been negated, the measure of its departure from a prior object or discourse would be determined by the nature and degree of the act of negation that is at work inside of it. Especially if modernism is concerned with arriving at that which is 'new' and 'original' from inside a context determined by notions of rewriting, allusions and repetitions, negation is an inescapable element of its discourse. It is the means through which the discourse departs from its origins to become something different from a direct repetition - Joyce's work again being an exemplary instance of this process.

It also appears as if negation contains an inherently critical dimension - understood in the sense given to the word by the discourse of modernity. It acts as an agency of

discrimination that defines the work against that which is different from it through the negation of these elements (although this defining is, as has been shown an inherently equivocal and unstable process). With the resultant figure to be understood in terms of its desire for an autonomy that would allow it to ground itself in its own structures, as occurs in the construction of Marcel's mental representations, negation appears, again, to function inherently as a denial of that which precedes the work.

This is perhaps the sense in which negation should be a ultimately understood: rather than, as its diachronic structure suggests, being complicit with the movements of time, it seeks to deny these movements. It seeks to deny time together with its attendant discourse of origins and affiliations and repetitions. Joyce and Beckett's affirmation of the autonomy of a discourse free from origins and negativity, fail in their works due to the temporal narrative that figures these affirmations as contingent and provisional representations. In both instances a discourse of direct repetition, already a discourse based on a temporal narrative, intrudes that casts doubt on these affirmations through the representation of a continuation of language and discourse that can no longer be grounded in the affirmative structures of the work, or the consciousnesses of its characters. Similarly, Proust's affirmation of time regained is undone by the temporal relation between this affirmation and a prior figure in the work (the visitation of the cobblestones, and the trip to Venice). Again, this interrogation of the work's affirmations occurs outside the consciousnesses of its characters. It is a fact of language and discourse, rather than thought and consciousness. As a matter of fact, all three works discussed in this dissertation appear to be determined by a conception of consciousness and the language and discourse of the work that would see this pair as antithetical opposites. The blindness of Marcel to the questioning of his affirmations by their allegorical nature is indirectly repeated in Joyce and Beckett's work where, in both instances, form is given to a language that, at the end of *Krapp's Last Tape* and in "Eumaeus" and "Ithaca", remains unmarked by human agency, a language that emerges from a point prior and anterior to the discourse of the work. Both time and language exist, then, in a precarious relationship to the critical negations of the work. These two elements are both the mediums of negation, and the structures that question the felicity of its critical project. Aptly, the understanding of negation appears to entail the recognition of how its own structures put it in question. While, perhaps, not too much can be made of this fact, it seems as if a discourse concerned with negation inevitably puts the status of negation itself into doubt. It, like the writing it is operative in, appears as an ambiguous and equivocal structure.

* * *

What remains suggestive in this account of negativity and negation, however, are the implications it has for the understanding of writing, or rather, rewriting. If, in modernism, a shift has taken place in the conception of writing - a shift which entails that, from this vantage point, writing is understood in terms of rewriting, rather than an original writing - then this shift appears to necessarily involve a reconsideration of negativity or negation as a component of the process of writing, rather than as a figure standing antithetical to it. Literary modernism might, however, not be the only place where the function of negativity has been interpreted in such a manner. Consider, for example, the picture of writing that emerges from the work of Martin Heidegger and Jacques Derrida. Heidegger's "The Origin of the Work of Art" (1950, 1964: 649-701) is, as its title suggests, directly concerned with the origination of the work of art, 'the source of its essence' (1964: 649) as Heidegger refers to this function. At the outset of this essay, Heidegger introduces the possibility that the work consists out of two irreconciable dimensions:

> The art-work is, to be sure, a thing that is made, but it says something other than the mere thing itself is [...]. The work makes public something other than itself, it reveals something other; it is an allegory. In the work of art something is brought together with the thing that is made (1964: 651-652).

In Heidegger's conception of the work, each of the work's significations is a split signification: it both affirmatively indicates that which 'the mere thing itself is' and 'something other' that would not merely be an affirmative representation of that which exists in the work. The rest of Heidegger's essay can be read as a meditation on, in the first instance, how this 'something else' is made present in the work; and, secondly, what the nature of this 'something other' would be. Perhaps unsurprisingly for a philosopher inherently concerned with the possibility of non-existence and nothingness, his argument opens into an analysis of rewriting and negation.

These ratios concerned with what 'is' and 'something other' given figure to as 'earth' and 'world' reappear in the following passage from the essay:

> In setting up a world and setting forth the earth, the work is an instigating of the struggle. But this does not happen in order that the work should settle and put an end to the strife in an insipid agreement, but in order that the strife should remain a strife. Setting up a world and setting forth the earth, the work accomplishes this struggle. The work-being of the work consists in the fighting of the battle between world and earth (1964: 675).

No better description of the work as marked by the discursive violence of negativity exists. Between that which 'is', or 'earth' and the 'world' given representation to, a struggle exists that refuses to be concluded in an agreement, or affirmation. Something else exists in the work that makes this affirmation possible. Heidegger's clearest indication of the nature of this 'strife' appears in the following passage:

> Concealment can be a refusal or merely a dissembling. We are never fully certain that it is the one or the other. Concealment conceals and dissembles itself. This means: the open place in the middle of what *is*, the clearing, is never a motionless stage with a continuously raised curtain on which the play of entities run its course. Rather, the clearing or lighting occurs only as this twofold concealment. Unconcealment of entities, this is never a state that is merely present at hand, but a happening. Unconcealment (truth) is neither an attribute of factual things in the sense of entities nor an attribute of propositions (1964: 679.).

Behind the complicated argument of Heidegger's discourse lies the by now familiar figure of a rewriting that takes place through negation. 'Does truth then arise out of Nothing', Heidegger asks, simply to answer that '[...] indeed if by Nothing is meant the mere Not of what *is* ' (1964: 693). Understood by Heidegger in terms of 'concealment', negation functions in this passage as both a denial, or 'refusal' of that which '*is*', and as a negation of the qualities of the existing object - 'a dissembling'. On the one hand, this is a temporal movement that negates that which has gone before. On the other hand, the function of this negation is not simply to assert 'nothing', but, like Marcel, to arrive at 'truth' through the negation of 'entities' or 'propositions'. 'Truth', as Heidegger remarks elsewhere, 'is composed or invented' (1964: 695), it is not identical to that which already exists, or, then, with a prior affirmation. If 'truth' is to be 'invented', it is constructed through the negation of that what already exists. Yet, as Heidegger's figuring of a 'strife' between that which '*is*' and the 'world' suggests, these 'entities' or 'propositions' remain part of the work. They are both present as affirmations, and negated in the process of arriving at the 'truth' they conceal. Ultimately, then, the affirmations that exist prior to the orgin of the work do not disappear inside its confirms. They are rather modified and conditioned by a negation, or 'concealment' that brings something 'other' into being.

What is striking is that Heidegger, in this account, indirectly rejects the models of writing that understand it, in the first instance, as a series of affirmations regarding the world, and, secondly, as either a direct repetition of the world or the original utterance of an author. His model of writing, which also then attempts to account for the invention and origin of the work of art, figures it inherently as an act of rewriting determined by the explicit presence of a negation. The work modifies that which '*is*', through the

'concealment' or negation of this figure. Thereby the work cannot, however, be interpreted as an inherently new figure. It exists, like Joyce's work, as an equivocal struggle between that which has been affirmed earlier and the new affirmation effected by a negation of exactly this prior figure. Too a large extent it is then this interpretation of writing (which understands it as form of rewriting that occurs through negation) that Derrida would continue in his work.

In his essay "The Double Session" (1972, 1981: 173-285), this model of writing that involves rewriting and negation becomes apparent. Concerned with a work by Mallarmé, "The Double Session" also contains a complex meditation on writing. For Derrida, one of the inherent contradictions of Mallarmé's work - or, rather, 'text' - is that 'writing that refers back only to itself carries us *at the same time*, indefinitely and systematically, to some other writing' (1981: 202.). There is, as Joyce discovered, no autonomous writing. Even if the work appears to foreclose upon such a possibility, a prior work is always involved in the act of writing. Even in Mallarmé's work that, as Derrida puts it, 'represents nothing, imitates nothing' (1981: 205), which is also that which Beckett attempts to do in his play, this sense of a prior work is present. If, on the one hand, Mallarmé's work 'produces mere "reality effects"' (1981: 206), it still, on the other hand, refers to a prior figure, even if this is a 'reference without a referent' (1981: 205). For Derrida, a text that insists radically on its own autonomy, as, he argues Mallarmé's does, still, like Joyce's work, needs to refer to a writing that took place before it came into being. Mallarmé's work exists then as a double structure, or 'fold' (1981: 220), that points affirmatively both backwards towards that which preceded it, and to its own discourse (which denies the existence of this prior figure).

While this is a contradiction in Mallarmé's work, it allows Derrida to conceptualize a model of writing that he gives figure to as an act that occurs through a series of additions to a discourse that exists before the work. As he remarks:

> According to the structure of supplementarity, what is added is thus always a blank or a fold: the fact of addition gives way to a kind of multiple division or subtraction that enriches itself with zeroes as it race breathlessly towards the infinite (1981: 262).

Writing appears again as a transformation of a prior figure through the use of negations ('blank') or affirmations ('fold'). For Derrida this appears to be the inherent nature of writing: it refigures that which has gone before in the creation of its own figures through the 'supplementary' addition of negations or affirmations. If this defines writing as an ambiguous discourse that 'enriches itself with zeroes', it is also understood as an act of rewriting that occurs through the partial involvement of a negation.

Although only cursorily indicated here, it appears as if the critical function attributed to negativity and negation in literary modernism is part of a larger and more general shift in the understanding of writing that seeks to define it, inherently, in terms of a form of rewriting in which negation plays an active and central role. Negativity and negation increasingly appear to be an *a*historical facet of literary language. Wolfgang Iser also implies as much in his recent study *The Fictive and Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology* (1993), when he describes negativity as an effect of the presence of the imaginary in the work (1993: 201). Inside the context of this general reconsideration of the status of negativity and negation, negativity would appear as a necessary inscription (through negation) of difference - whether pertaining to a transformed object, or to the work or discourse and that which it is not. It is in this sense in which negativity is active as a critical figure in the work. It determines the representations of the work, by excluding that which is not given representation to (the minimal definition of the critical act, as suggested in the introduction to this dissertation). If this is an activity which by its very nature requires a prior figure on which these negations can be performed, then it is also an operation that determines the nature of the relationship between these primary and secondary figures. Negation, from this vantage point, appears not only as an act that that transforms a prior figure, it is also as an act of selection that allows for both that which is represented and that which is occluded to be figured in the work.

* * *

A final irony inherent in negation becomes apparent in this critical function. Since it falls outside the confines of the immediate scope of this dissertation, it will be briefly suggested here, thereby perhaps running the risk of concluding this dissertation in a manner that is not a conclusion or end at all, but an indication of the possibility of more writing and interpretation. Negation seems to become, in one specific sense, indistinguishable from its apparent opposite: invention. Considered here in the sense given to the term inside rhetoric, invention - when used rigorously in its theoretical meaning - refers to the process whereby a speaker (or author) checks through the possible premises and arguments to be used in a particular discourse. These premises and arguments are the available figures to be used in the rhetorical situation. Throughout the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle conceives of invention as the act of selection that takes place in the construction of a discourse. As Derrida puts it in "Psyche: Invention of the Other" (1987, 1992: 310-344): '[I]nvention finds or discovers things' (1992: 313). Here Derrida however elaborates upon the concept of invention by situating it as both a performative and constative act:

> [T]he concept of invention distributes its two essential values between these two poles: the constative - discovering or unveiling, pointing out or saying what is - and the performative - producing, instituting, transforming (1992: 324).

If invention is an act that joins together the antithetical actions of affirmation ('saying what is') and performance - the production of that which cannot be figured as repetition, or the indication of a prior affirmation, then it is indistinguishable from the acts of rewriting that through the use of negations take place in the works that have been discussed. It selects a prior term to effect a transformation of this figure, until it can no longer be considered equal with its prior figuration, but needs to be understood in terms of that which is no longer a constative repetition. This is inherently the same process as the critical negation of a prior affirmation (understood here, like in Joyce, in terms of an origin) to establish a new work no longer identical with its primary representation.

This temporal sequence is then also indistinguishable from, on the one hand, an act of rewriting, and, on the other, the form and function of negation in the modernist work. From this perspective, negation appears as a mode of invention - a way of constructing, rather than simply negating, the representations of the work. While this process is qualified by the ambiguity and equivocity that the negativity, opened by the negation, introduces into the newly invented figure, this seems to point rather to the uncertain status of invention in the modernist work - its oscillation between offering that which is 'new' and pointing back to a prior affirmative discourse - than effecting a questioning of the understanding of negation as a form of invention.

It is then with this suggestion that this dissertation is concluded. Perhaps, the different forms of negativity that exist in the modernist work (forms which include the operational negativity of negation) should not be understood simply in terms of a refusal to give affirmative propositions regarding the world it describes. It appears possible to suggest that, rather than interpreting negativity in this manner, it might also be interpreted as a method of critical refiguration and transformation, or, then, rewriting and invention. As such, the central problematic of negativity is not the end or disappearance of writing, but rather the ways in which writing can be continued and new representations emerge. Even in Beckett's play, which is, as has been shown, committed to the figuring of an end, more writing appears after the apparent conclusion of the play's discourse. The use of negativity in modernism points to a desire for more writing, but then writing that can no longer be understood in terms of that which has gone before the work. It is the critical figure of the modernist work that determines for it the various possibilities and impossibilities of writing, and that is marked by the desire for further writing, and the writing of the new. To say 'nothing', to paraphrase T.S Eliot's Thames-daughter, appears as a remarkably inventive and productive act.

Bibliography

Note on the Bibilography

1 To simplify reference elsewhere, entries in the bibliography give the date of the edition used in this dissertation first, then the original publication date in parenthesis.

Primary Works

BECKETT, S. 1959. Krapp's Last Tape. (*In* Beckett, S. 1959. Krapp's Last Tape and Embers. London : Faber and Faber. p.9-20.)

JOYCE, J. 1993. (1922.). Ulysses (The 1922 Text). New York : Oxford University Press.

PROUST, M. 1982. (1913-1927.). Remembrance of Things Past (3 Vols.). Transl. by C. Scott Moncrieff, Terence Kilmartin & Andreas Mayor. New York : Vintage Books.

Secondary Works

ARISTOTLE. 1954. Rhetoric. Transl. by W. Rhys Roberts. New York : Modern Library.

AUSTIN, J.L. 1962. How to Do Things with Words. Oxford : Clarendon Press.

BAUDELAIRE, C. 1997. (1857.). Correspondences. Transl. by Allen Tate. (*In* Clark, C. & Sykes, R. (*eds.*). 1997. Baudelaire in English. London : Penguin Books. p.17.)

BAUDELAIRE, C. 1997. (1857.). Spleen II. Transl. by Roy Fuller. (*In* Clark, C. & Sykes, R. (*eds.*). 1997. Baudelaire in English. London : Penguin Books. p.89 -90.)

BAUDELAIRE, C. 1964. (1863.). The Painter of Modern Life. Transl. by J. Mayne. (*In*

Mayne, J. (*ed.*). 1964. The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays. London : Phaidon Press. p.1-41.)

BECKETT, S. 1965. (1949.). Three Dialogues. (*In* Esslin, M (*ed.*). 1965. Samuel Beckett. New Jersey : Prentice Hall. p.16-23.)

BECKETT, S. 1975. (1952.). The Unnnamable. London : Calder Boyers.

BECKETT, S. 1976. (1956.). Waiting for Godot. London : Faber and Faber.

BECKETT, S. 1970. (1957.). Proust. New York : Grove Press Inc.

BECKETT, S. 1983. Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment. Edited by Ruby Cohn. London : John Calder.

BEDIENT, C. 1992. Modernism and the End of Beauty. (*In* Dettmar, K.J.H. (*ed.*). 1992. Rereading the New: A Backward Glance at Modernism. Ann Arbor : Univeristy of Michigan Press. p.99-115.)

BENJAMIN, W. 1973. (1926.). The Image of Proust. Transl. by Harry Zohn. (*In* Arendt, H. (*ed.*). 1973. (1955.). Illuminations. London : Fontana. p.203-217.)

BENJAMIN, W. 1973. (1936.). The Storyteller. Transl. by Harry Zohn. (*In* Arendt, H. (*ed.*). 1973. (1955.). Illuminations. London : Fontana. p.83-110.)

BERGSON, H. 1912. (1907.). Creative Evolution. Transl. by Arthur Mitchell. London : Macmillan and Co. Ltd.

BERSANI, L. 1987. (1976.). Proust and the Art of Incompletion. (*In* Bloom, H. (*ed*). 1987. Marcel Proust: Modern Critical Views. New York : Chelsea House Publishers. p.165-185.)

BLANCHOT, M. 1988. (1941.). Thomas the Obscure. Transl. By Robert Lamberton. New York : Station Hill Press.

BLANCHOT, M. 1986. (1971.). The Writing of the Disaster. Transl. by Ann Smock. Lincoln : University of Nebraska Press.

BLANCHOT, M. 1997. (1971.). Idle Speech. Transl. by Elizabeth Rottenberg. (*In* Blanchot, M. 1997. (1971.). Friendship. Stanford : Stanford University Press. p.117-128.)

BLOOM, H. 1976. Poetry and Repression. New Haven : Yale University Press.

BLOOM, H. 1982. Transumption: Towards a Diachronic Rhetoric (Blanks, Leaves, Cries). (*In* Bloom, H. 1982. The Breaking of the Vessels. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p.72-107.)

BOVÉ, P.A. 1980. Destructive Poetics: Heidegger and Modern American Poetry. New York : Columbia University Press.

BRUNS, G.L. Eumaeus. (*In* Hart, C. & Hayman, D. (*eds.*). 1974. James Joyce's *Ulysses*: Critical Essays. Berkeley : University of California Press. p.363-383.)

BRUNS, G.L. 1974. Modern Poetry and the Idea of Langauage: A Critical and Historical Study. New Haven : Yale University Press.

BUDGEN, F. 1960. (1934.). James Joyce and the Making of *Ulysses*. Bloomington : Indiana University Press.

BUDICK, S. & ISER, W. 1989. Introduction (*In* Budick, S. & Iser, W. (*eds.*). 1989. Languages of the Unsayable: The Play of Negativity in Literature and Literary Theory. New York : Columbia University Press. p.xi-xxi.)

CAVELL, S. 1976. Must We Mean What We Say? Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.

CIXOUS, H. 1984. (1970.). Joyce: The (r)use of Writing. Transl. by Derek Attridge & Daniel Ferrer. (*In* Attridge, D. & Ferrer, D. (*eds*). 1984. Post-structuralist Joyce: Essays from the French. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press. p.15-30.)

COHEN, J. 1966. *Structure du Langage Poétique*. Paris : Flammarion.

CONRAD, J. 1992. (1898.). Heart of Darkness. London : Penguin.

CONNOR, S. 1988. Samuel Beckett: Repetition, Theory and Text. Oxford : Basil

Blackwell.

CRANE, H. 1983. (1926.). Voyages. (*In* Norton Anthology of Poetry 3rd Edition. New York : W.W. Norton & Company. p.1055-1058.)

CRANE, H. 1983. (1933.). Broken Tower. (*In* Norton Anthology of Poetry 3rd Edition. New York : W.W. Norton & Company. p.1060-1061.)

CULLER, J. 1983. (1981.). The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction. London : Routledge.

CULLER, J. 1989. On the Negativity of Modern Poetry. (*In* Budick, S. & Iser, W. (*eds.*). 1989. Languages of the Unsayable: The Play of Negativity in Literature and Literary Theory. New York : Columbia University Press. p.189-208.)

DELEUZE, G. 1987. (1972.). Sign and Thought. Transl. by Richard Howard. (*In* Bloom H. (*ed.*). 1987. Marcel Proust: Modern Critical Views. New York : Chelsea House Publishers. p.131-143.)

DELEUZE, G. & GUATTARI, F. 1991. (1975.). Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature. Transl. by Dana Polan. Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press.

DE MAN, P. 1971. Literary History and Literary Modernity. (*In* De Man, P. 1971. Blindness and Insight. New York : Oxford Univeristy Press. p.142-165.)

DE MAN, P. 1979. Semiology and Rhetoric. (*In* De Man, P. 1979. Allegories of Reading. New Haven. Yale University Press. p.3-19.)

DE MAN, P. 1979. Reading (Proust). (*In* De Man, P. 1979. Allegories of Reading. New Haven. Yale University Press. p.57-78.)

DE MAN, P. 1979. Allegory (*Julie*). (*In* De Man, P. 1979. Allegories of Reading. New Haven. Yale University Press. p.166-186.)

DE MAN, P. 1996. Pascal's Allegory of Persuasion (*In* De Man, P. 1996. Aesthetic Ideology. Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press. p.51-70.)

DE MAN, P. 1996. The Concept of Irony. (*In* De Man, P. 1996. Aesthetic Ideology. Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press. p163-184.)

DERRIDA, J. 1978. (1967.). Writing and Difference. Transl. by Alan Bass. London : Routledge.

DERRIDA, J. 1982. (1972.). White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy. Transl. by Alan Bass. (*In* Derrida, J. 1982. Margins of Philosophy. New York : University of Chicago Press. p.207-271.)

DERRIDA, J. 1988. (1972.). Signature Event Context. Transl. by Samuel Weber. (*In* Derrida, J. 1988. Limited Inc. Evanston Northwestern University Press. p.1-24.)

DERRIDA, J. 1982. (1972.). The Double Session. Transl. by Barbara Johnson. (*In* Derrida, J. 1982. (1972.). Disseminations. Chicago : University of Chicago Press. p.173-285.)

DERRIDA, J. 1984. (1982.). Two Words for Joyce. Transl. by Derek Attridge & Daniel Ferrer. (*In* Attridge, D. & Ferrer, D. (*eds.*). 1984. Post-structuralist Joyce: Essays from the French. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press. p.127-144.)

DERRIDA, J. 1992. (1987.). Psyche: Invention of the Other. Transl. by Catherine Porter. (*In* Derrida, J. 1992. Acts of Literature. London : Routledge. P.344-369.)

DERRIDA, J. 1989. (1987.). How to Avoid Speaking: Denials. (*In* Budick, S. & Iser, W. (*eds.*). 1989. Languages of the Unsayable: The Play of Negativity in Literature and Literary Theory. New York : Columbia University Press. p.3-70.)

DERRIDA, J. 1993. Aporias. Transl. by Tomas Dutoit. California : Stanford University Press.

ECO, U. 1979. The Role of the Reader. Bloomington : Indianan University Press.

ELIOT, T.S. 1992. (1922.). The Waste Land. (*In* Eliot, T.S. 1992. (1954.). Selected Poems. London : Faber and Faber. p.51-74.)

ELIOT, T.S. 1983. (1941.). The Dry Salvages. (*In* Norton Anthology of Poetry 3rd Edition. New York : W.W. Norton & Company. p.1013-1018.)

ELLMANN, R. 1972. *Ulysses* on the Liffey. New York : Oxford University Press.

FERRER, D. 1984. (1975.). Circe, regret and regression. Transl. by Derek Attridge & Daniel Ferrer. (*In* Attridge, D. & Ferrer, D. (*eds.*). 1984. Post-structuralist Joyce: Essays from the French. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press. p.127-144.)

FISCHLIN, D. 1994. Introduction (*In* Fischlin, D. (*ed.*). 1994. Negation, Critical Theory and Postmodern Textuality. Dordrecht : Kluwer Academic Publishers. p.1-40.)

FLAUBERT, G. 1981. (1926-1933.). The Letters of Gustave Flaubert 1830-1857. Transl. by Francis Steegmuller. London : Faber and Faber.

FREUD, S. 1948. The Interpretation of Dreams. London : George Allen & Unwin.

FREUD, S. 1953-66. Negation. (*In* Freud, S. 1953-66. The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. Vol.XIX. London : Hogarth Press. p.233-239.)

FREUD, S. 1953-66. Moses and Monotheism. (*In* Freud, S. 1953-1966. The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. Vol.XXIII. London : Hogarth Press.)

FRIEDRIECH, H. 1974. (1956.). The Structure of Modern Poetry. Transl. by Joachim Neugroschel. Evanston : Northwestern University Press.

GENETTE, G. 1982. (1966.). Figures. Transl. by Alan Sheridan. (*In* Genette, G. 1982. Figures of Literary Discourse. New York : Columbia University Press. p.45-61.)

GENETTE, G. 1982. (1966.). Proust Palimpsest. Transl. by Alan Sheridan. (*In* Genette, G. 1982. Figures of Literary Discourse. New York : Columbia University Press. p.203-228.)

GIFFORD, D. & SEIDMAN, R.J. 1988. *Ulysses* Annotated: Notes for James Joyce's *Ulysses*: Revised and Expanded Edition. Berkeley : University of California Press.

GORDON, P. 1995. The Critical Double: Figurative Meaning in Aesthetic Discourse. Tuscaloosa : University of Alabama Press.

GREENBERG, C. 1966. Modernist Painting. (*In* Battock, G. (*ed.*). 1966. The New Art: A Critical Anthology. New York : E. P Dutton. p.98-107.)

HARDING, J.H. 1993. Trying to Understand *Godot*: Adorno, Beckett, and the Senility of Historical Dialectic. *Clio.* 23(1) : 1-22.

HEATH, S. 1984. (1972.). Ambiviolence: Notes for reading Joyce. Transl. by Derek Attridge & Daniel Ferrer. (*In* Attridge, D. & Ferrer, D. (*eds.*). 1984. Post-structuralist Joyce: Essays from the French. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press. p.31-68.)

HEIDEGGER, M. 1964. (1950.). The Origin of the Work of Art. Transl. by Albert Hofstadert & Richard Kuhns. (*In* Hofstadert, A. & Kuhns, R. (*eds.*). 1964. Philosophies of Art and Beauty. New York : Modern Library. P.649-701.)

HENNING, S.B. 1988. Beckett's Critical Complicity: Carnival, Contestation and Tradition. Lexington : University Press of Kentucky.

HERTZ, N. 1985. The Notion of Blockage in the Literature of the Sublime. (*In* Hertz, N. 1985. The End of the Line: Essays on Psychoanalysis and the Sublime. New York : Columbia University Press. p.40-60.).

HORN, L. 1989. A Natural History of Negation. Chicago : University of Chicago Press.

HUGHES, E.J. 1999. Proustian Metmorphosis: The Art of Distortion in *A La Recherche Du Temps Perdu. The Modern Language Review*. 49(3) : 660-672, July.

ISER, W. 1974. (1972.). The Implied Reader: Patterns in Prose Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett. Baltimore : John Hopkins University Press.

ISER, W. 1978. (1976.). The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response. Baltimore : John Hopkins University Press.

ISER, W. 1993. (1991.). The Fictive and Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology. Baltimore : John Hopkins University Press. :

JAKOBSON, R. 1987. (1958.). Linguistics and Poetics. (*In* Pomorska, K. & Rudy, S.

(*eds.*). 1987. Language in Literature. Cambridge : Belknap Press. p.62-95.)

JAMESON, F. 1986. (1982.). *Ulysses* in History. (*In* Bloom, H. 1986. James Joyce: Modern Critical Views. New York : Chelsea House Publishers. p.173-189.)

JAMESON, F. 1990. Modernism and Imperialism. (*In* Eagleton, T., Jameson, F. & Said, E.W. 1990. Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. p.43-69.)

JOYCE, J. 1992. (1914.). A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. London : Penguin.

JOYCE, J. 1994. (1939.). Finnegans Wake. London : Penguin.

JOYCE, J. 1957, 1966. Letters of James Joyce (3 Vols). Edited by Stuart Gilbert (Vol.I) & Richard Ellman (Vol.II-III). New York : Viking Press.

JOYCE, J. 1975. Selected Letters of James Joyce. Edited by Richard Ellman. New York : Viking Press.

KANT, I. 1969. (1785.). The Foundation of the Metaphysics of Morals. New York : Harper & Row Publishers.

KENNER, H. 1978. Joyce's Voices. Berkeley : University of California Press.

KRISTEVA, J. 1984. (1974.). Revolution in Poetic Language. Transl. by Margaret Waller. New York : Columbia University Press.

KURRICK, M.J. 1979. Literature and Negation. New York: Columbia University Press.

LACOUE-LABARTHE, P. & NANCY, J. 1988. (1978.). The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism. Transl. by Philip Barnard & Cheryl Lester. Albany : State University of New York Press.

LAWRENCE, K. 1981. The Odyssey of Style in *Ulysses*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

LEVINAS, E. 1989. (1949.). The Transcendance of Words. Transl. by Seán Hand. (*In* Hand, S. (*ed.*). Emmanuel Levinas. Oxford : Basil Blackwell. P.144-149.)

LEVINE, J.S. 1986. (1979.). Originality and Repetition in Finnegans Wake and Ulysses. (*In* Bloom, H. 1986. James Joyce: Modern Critical Views. New York : Chelsea House Publishers. p.91-112.)

LUKÁCS, G. 1963. (1957.). The Meaning of Contemporary Realism. Transl. by John Mander. London : Merlin Press.

LYOTARD, J.F. 1989. (1974.). The Dream-Work does not Think. Transl. by Mary Lydon. (*In* Benjamin A. (*ed.*). 1989. The Lyotard Reader. Oxford : Basil Blackwell. p.19-55.)

LYOTARD, J.F. 1984. (1979.). The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge. Transl. by Geoff Bennington & Brian Massumi. Manchester : Manchester University Publishers.

LYOTARD, J.F. 1989. (1981.). Newman: The Instant. Transl. by David Macey. (*In* Benjamin A. (*ed.*). 1989. The Lyotard Reader. Oxford : Basil Blackwell. p.240 -249.)

MACHEREY, P. 1978. (1966.). A Theory of Literary Production. Transl. by Geoffrey Wall. London : Routledge.

MARKUS, G. 1994. A Sociey of Culture: The Constitution of Modernity. (*In* Robinson, G & Rundell, J. (*eds.*). 1994. Rethinking Imagination: Culture and Creativity. London : Routledge. p.15-29).

McHALE, B. 1991. Postmodern Fiction. London : Routledge.

MERLEAU-PONTY, M. 1968. (1964.). The Visible and the Invisible. Transl. by A. Lingis. Evanston : Northwestern University Press.

MILLER, J.H. 1982. Fiction and Repetition. Oxford : Basil Blackwell.

MILLER, J.H. 1991. Parable and Performative. (*In* Miller, J.H. 1991. Tropes, Parables, Performatives: Essays on Twentieth Century Literature. Durham : Duke University Press. p.135-150.)

MILLER, J.H. 1995. Foreword. (*In* Gordon, Paul. 1995. The Critical Double: Figurative Meaning in Aesthetic Discourse. Tuscaloosa : University of Alabama Press. p.ix -xvii.)

PIPPIN, R. B. 1991. Modernism as a Philosophical Problem: On the Dissatisfaction of European High Culture. London : Routledge.

POUND, E. 1983. (1920.). Hugh Selwyn Mauberley (Life and Contacts). (*In* Norton Anthology of Poetry 3rd Edition. New York : W.W. Norton & Company. p.981-990.).

POUND, E. 1983. (1920.). Mauberley 1920. (*In* Norton Anthology of Poetry 3rd Edition. New York : W.W. Norton & Company. p.990-994.)

RICOEUR, P. 1977. (1975.). The Rule of Metaphor. Transl. by Robert Czerny. London : Routledge.

RICOEUR, P. 1985. (1984.). Time and Narrative (Vol.2). Transl. by Kathleen Mclaughlin & David Pellauer. Chicago : University of Chicago Press.

RIFFATERRE, M. 1978. Semiotics of Poetry. Bloomington : Indiana University Press.

RIFFATERRE, M. 1983. (1979.). Text Production. Transl. by Terese Lyons. New York : California University Press.

ROBBE-GRILLET, A. 1965. (1963.). Samuel Beckett, or "Presence" in the Theatre. Transl. by Barbara Bray. (*In* Esslin, M. (*ed.*). 1965. Samuel Beckett. New Jersey : Prentice Hall. p.108-117.)

RUTHROF, H. 1995. Negation: From Frege to Freud and Beyond. *Philosophy Today,* 39: 219-244, Fall.

SAID, E. 1975. Beginnings: Intention and Method. New York : Basic Books.

SAID, E.W. 1983. On Repetition. (*In* Said, E.W. 1983. The World, the Text, and the Critic. Cambridge : Harvard University Press. p.111-125.)

SAID, E.W. 1983. On Originality. (*In* Said, E.W. 1983. The World, the Text, and the Critic. Cambridge : Harvard University Press. p.126-139.)

SMITH, S. 1994. The Origins of Modernism: Eliot, Pound, Yeats and the Rhetorics of Renewal. New York : Harvester.

STEVENS, W. 1955. (1923.) The Snow Man. (*In* Stevens, W. 1955 The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens. London : Faber and Faber. p.9)

STEVENS, W. 1955. (1935.). The Idea of Order at Key West. (*In* Stevens, W. 1955. The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens. London : Faber and Faber. p.449-450.)

STEVENS, W. 1955. (1942.). The Poems of Our Climate. (*In* Stevens, W. 1955. The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens. London : Faber and Faber. p.193.)

TAYLOR, M. 1990. How to do Nothing with Words. (*In* Taylor, M. 1990. Tears. New York : State University of New York Press. p.203-234.

TAYLOR, M.C. 1992. Disfiguring: Art, Architecture, Religion. Chicago : University of Chicago Press.

TOPIA, A. 1984. (1976.). The Matrix and the Echo: Intertextuality in *Ulysses*. Transl. By Derek Attridge & Daniel Ferrer. *(In* Attridge, D. & Ferrer, D. (*eds.*). 1984. Post-structuralist Joyce: Essays from the French. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press. p.103-126.)

TREZISE, T. 1990. Into the Breach: Samuel Beckett and the Ends of Literature. Princeton : Princeton University Press.

WEBER, S.W. 1972. The Madrepore. *MLN,* 87 : 915-61.

WITTGENSTEIN, L. 1961. (1918.). *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Transl. by D.F. Pears. London : Routledge.

WOLOSKY, S. 1989. Samuel Beckett's Figural Evasions. (*In* Budick, S. & Iser, W. (*eds.*). 1989. Languages of the Unsayable: The Play of Negativity in Literature and Literary theory. New York : Columbia University Press. p.165-186.)

YEATS, W.B. 1990. (1919.). The Second Coming (*In* Yeats, W.B. 1990. (1962.). Selected Poetry. London : Pan Books. p.99.)

YEATS, W.B. 1990. (1930.). Byzantium. (*In* Yeats, W.B. 1990. (1962.). Selected Poetry. London : Pan Books. p.153.)

ZURBRUGG, N. 1988. Beckett and Proust. New Jersey : Barnes and Noble Books.