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Siraganian, Lisa.

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Lisa Siraganian

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I Art Without Air

Near the beginning of the essay "Pictures" (one of the six lectures that make up her American speaking tour of 1934–5), Gertrude Stein describes the formative experience—at age eight—when she first sees a large painting of the battle of Waterloo:

> It was an oil painting a continuous oil painting, one was surrounded by an oil painting and I who lived continuously out of doors and felt air and sunshine and things to see felt that this was all different and very exciting. There it all was the things to see but there was no air it just was an oil painting. I remember standing on the little platform in the center and almost consciously knowing that there was no air. There was no air, there was no feeling of air, it just was an oil painting and it had a life of its own. . . .[1]

Dwarfed by this room-sized panorama, Stein compares her feelings inside the gallery to her other childhood experiences, "continuously out of doors." She loves fresh air, but the painting thrills her in a different way—as an art object with "a life of its own." The stimulating part of this experience, as she explains it, is not exactly the objects represented ("the things to see")—she already knew all about Napoleon—what excites her is the representation itself: "the thing that was exciting me was the oil painting" ("P," 226).

One way to read her interest in the painting, rather than the things painted, is as an example of what is usually thought of as the modernist critique of referentiality. According to this view,

Lisa Siraganian is the Andrew W. Mellon Post-Doctoral Humanities Fellow in English at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. This essay derives from her recently completed dissertation, *Breathing Freely: The Object of Art and the Subject of Politics in American Modernism* (Johns Hopkins University, 2003).

modern works of art and literature attempt to displace the nineteenth-century naturalistic emphasis on external reality by problematizing the relation between a representation and the thing represented. But Stein's focus on air—its absence in the painting versus its presence outdoors—suggests that her actual point is slightly different. It is not that she is concerned to characterize the relationship between the painting and the thing painted as non-referential; what she says instead is that "the relation between the oil painting and the thing painted was really nobody's business" ("P," 237). Thus she compares the panorama to her experience of an actual battlefield in Gettysburg not to assess its verisimilitude or lack thereof but to insist that the "oil painting" is "an entirely different thing." The point of insisting that there is no air in the oil painting will be to shift her focus from the relation between an object and its representation to the relation between an art object (a representation) and its beholder.

We can see that her primary interest is not referentiality from her characterization of paintings as individual faces. Becoming familiar with oil paintings, she writes, is like the process of becoming "more and more familiar with faces" ("P," 236). To understand an oil painting fully is to become intimate with a new person's face: "Faces gradually tell you something . . . as you grow more and more familiar with any and all faces and so it is with oil paintings. The result was that in a way I slowly knew what an oil painting is. . . . " ("P," 236). Whatever else you might feel about a new face—and Stein acknowledges that you may feel surprised or "even shocked" by a new face—you cannot dismiss a new face as a copy of another face you already know: "You cannot refuse a new face. You must accept a face as a face. And so with an oil painting" ("P," 237). The point here is that Stein is not interested in discovering resemblances between a painted portrait and an actual person (a representation and its referent), but in confronting and accepting a painting as a new person, entirely separate from the beholder. She comes to know "what an oil painting is," in other words, when she understands it as the face of an autonomous person with a "life in and for itself of an oil painting" ("P," 237). A painting for Stein is not simply another functional object in the gallery (like the platform), but a self-reliant subject with a place all its own.

Or consider the unusual, childhood perceptual games she devises in Italian museums, when she begins—literally—"to sleep and dream in front of oil paintings": "There were very few people in the galleries in Italy in the summers in those days and there were long benches and they were red and they were comfortable at least they were to me and the guardians were indifferent or amiable and I could really lie down and sleep in front of the pictures" ("P," 231). The activity Stein describes is when, upon waking, she can momentarily (albeit sleepily) identify with the paintings as faces "sleeping" in front of her. She perceives the paintings as "sleeping" because they are perpetually unaware of her.[2] The painting is never able to see the viewer, that is, to see Stein sleeping—and waking—on a red bench in an Italian museum. But the importance of this activity is that her sleep dramatizes the fictive irrelevance of the beholder to the work of art. By imagining paintings as faces—and, by extension, as persons with conscious states like her own (sometimes sleeping, sometimes waking)—Stein is also imagining paintings that are utterly independent of her own consciousness. In other

words, her deep reverie is so complete that she can imagine a painting as another conscious person, even when she herself is sleeping and not consciously beholding the painting.

Clarifying her point, Stein explains that this is not merely about playing an optical trick on yourself ('convincing' yourself you are in a pastoral landscape upon awaking): on the contrary, if the painting's status as representation is effaced the game will fail. Thus, unlike a Tintoretto or Giotto, a naturalistic Botticelli is a poor painting to sleep in front of because the illusion (the "thing painted") overpowers the representation (the "painting"): "I used to walk in the country and then I concluded that the Botticellis being really so like the flowers in the country they were not the pictures before which one could sleep, they were to my feeling, being that they looked so like the flowers in the country, they were artificial" ("P," 231). Stein is not interested in sleeping in front of a simulacrum of the flowers—this is the substance of her complaint about the "artificial" Botticelli flowers. Instead, she must sleep in front of a representation that has "a life of its own"—the Tintoretto flowers. Each experience underscores her understanding of painting as representation: "As I say in sleeping and waking in front of all these pictures I really began to realize that an oil painting is an oil painting. I was beginning after that to be able to look with pleasure at any oil painting" ("P," 232).

We can begin to see why sleeping in front of an oil painting is such a crucial model for Stein, and why I am arguing that Stein's interest is not in the work of art in relation to its referent, but in the work of art in relation to the beholder. When Stein realizes, in the midst of the panorama, that "there was no feeling of air, it just was an oil painting and it had a life of its own," she is claiming that the work of art inhabits a space that is different not only from the space inhabited by the things the painting represents, but is also different from the space inhabited by its beholder. Stein captures this idea by claiming that in the painting, there is no air. Her interest in the difference between the space of the painting and the space of the beholder explains what is otherwise very hard to explain; namely, her dramatization of the beholder in front of the painting as an insistence that the beholder is asleep. In other words, Stein illustrates a distinction between two spaces—the space of the painting versus the space of the beholder—as a distinction between two individuated consciousnesses: the awake person and the sleeping person.

As idiosyncratic as her preoccupation with air in paintings may seem, Stein is not the only major modernist to reflect upon the possibility or impossibility of breathing in painting. In *The Childermass* (1928), Wyndham Lewis imagines an art full of air by depicting a painting his protagonists can walk into. Resembling a chattier and busier version of a Samuel Beckett play, the novel portrays Pullman and his bumbling companion Satters as they wander around an otherworldly, yet vaguely familiar, landscape. In this modernized version of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, they are stuck "Outside Heaven" in a purgatory resembling England between the wars.

As these two ghosts study their new environment, they eventually notice a strange landscape where "nothing seems to be moving on its surface" and everything "is a little faded":[3]

> "What the devil's this?" Pullman's voice is as sober as before it was all on fire. Satters does not like to say what he sees . . .
> There is a wide view stretching as far as the eye can reach across flattish country. It is bounded by rain-clouds, they block the horizon. Thenthere is snow.
> "It's like a picture," Satters suggests, haltingly, afraid the word may not be right.
> "Exactly!" (*TC*, 104)

Pullman and Satters have inadvertently stumbled into a huge, nearly completed, landscape-painting that appears as "flattish country". In fact, Pullman identifies this painting as the same type that delights Stein at age eight: "Why we're in a panorama!" (*TC*, 123). Barely distinguishable from the broader environment, the painting is so large that Pullman advises Satters that they had better "go through it" because walking around it "would take hours" (*TC*, 106). While in it, they notice that the leaves on the bushes become progressively smaller, suggesting that they are walking "into" the illusion of depth: "Look at that hedge. Do you see its perspective? It's built in a diminishing perspective! I believe the whole place is meant to be looked at from behind there, where we have just come from" (*TC*, 123). This painting's canvas and frame are entirely invisible to them—it is only the paint and the painting that they perceive. Thus, Pullman can only surmise the appropriate spectator position ("from behind there, where we have just come from") after he has entered the painting, traversed its imperceptible frame, and examined the shrinking hedges.

Nonetheless, there are some palpable differences between their world and the painting's world. Consider, for example, the initial moment when they walk "into the picture": "After taking a few steps forward [Satters] encounters what by contrast is an icy surface of air. He stops, catches his breath. For a moment the hot wind beats behind him, then he steps into the temperature of the 'picture' or the 'hallucination.' It is moist and chilly but windless" (*TC*, 106). The air in this picture is startling: Satters "catches his breath," shocked by the difference in temperature between painting-air and purgatory-air. But despite being colder, thinner, and windless, the crucial issue here is that the painting-air is still encountered *as air*. Painting-air might be slightly different from purgatory-air, but the air is essentially the same type: breathable. Satters and Pullman can disregard the invisible frame of this painting, treating it as a window frame to step through (although not without some shock), placing them physically in the scene of representation. Lewis effectively equates the experience of walking into a place (through a window frame) with the experience of being *absorbed in* a representation (through a picture frame).

At this point, the contrast to Stein could not be more striking. Where Stein, in front of the painting of Waterloo, imagines that "there was no air, there was no feeling of air, it just was an oil painting and it had a life of its own . . . " ("P," 226–7), Lewis imagines a painting so full of air that his two characters not only describe it in detail, but feel it in their lungs. Whereas Stein divides the place of a painting and the place of the beholder, Lewis combines these two spaces into one. Instead of a painting separated from the spectator's physical world by its airlessness, the panorama Pullman and Satters encounter *is* their world, albeit a slightly different part of their world, where the air

"has a rarity of its own—it's really as though we were on the Matterhorn" (*TC*, 122). Most crucially, Stein invokes the example of painting to illustrate her commitment to the irrelevance of the spectator experience to the meaning of the art object. Lewis, in contrast, emphasizes that these purgatory-paintings need active spectators—the physical and mental involvement of Pullman and Satters is required for the painting to be complete.

It is not, however, as if Lewis creates this entire episode of Pullman and Satters strolling into a painting in order to advocate air-filled painting as a theory of art. In fact, it is exactly the reverse. He is satirizing those artists and critics who, if they did not exactly believe that art was full of air, did believe that art was something to be stepped into and completed by its beholders.[4] In Lewis's opinion, this belief was an integral part of a broader cultural trend (which he termed "time-philosophy") that had become all too common in modern, post-Impressionist art and literature. When Satters mumbles that their new landscape is not exactly a picture but "like a picture"—and Pullman immediately agrees ("Exactly!")—Lewis is taking aim at the vision of the work of art here embodied (*TC*, 104). In other words, this panorama resembles a painting without actually being one. Lewis satirizes art that needs its spectators' experience to be whole, because such art fails to differentiate between a painting of a panorama and one's experience of a view at the top of the Matterhorn.

What I am arguing here, that in Stein the phenomenological space of the beholder is different from the space of the art object, is completely contraindicated in the critical consensus on Stein (a consensus that begins with Lewis himself). Instead of producing an art that merges content and context—that is, a painting and its beholder's place, a poem and its reader's point of view—Stein wants to make everything about the beholder or reader irrelevant to her art. In the next section, I show how Stein accomplishes this aim with *Tender Buttons* (1914), her exceptional book of avant-garde poems, by removing punctuation. Although in discussing Lewis's dramatization of Pullman and Satters intruding into the painting I am describing exactly the opposite of Stein's theory of art, and although Lewis *himself* saw his position as completely opposed to Stein, Lewis was, in fact, also advocating an art that imagined the beholder as irrelevant. In the third section, I show how *The Childermass* is an articulate dramatization of time-philosophy in painting, and thus an excellent example of Lewis's aesthetic theory put into novelistic practice.[5]

2 Stein's Intrinsic Quotation Marks

Stein is primarily interesting to us as a writer, and only secondarily as an art theorist. What does her position on the ontology of art objects ("an oil painting is an oil painting") have to do with Stein as a writer? In part, Stein allies herself with painters throughout her career as a form of strategic self-advertisement: the popular success of *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (excerpted in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1933) was fueled by Stein's unabashed affiliation with this Parisian avant-garde of Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso.[6] But her motives are also strategic in a different sense. Stein aligns

her poetry with Picasso's painting to increase the value of her seemingly inaccessible writing as an art with meaning. Thus she explains that she "was expressing the same thing in literature" as Picasso was in painting.[7]

Most often, literary critics have interpreted this claim as Stein's support for "literary cubism"—a jumble of words juxtaposed for their overall sound or appearance instead of their meaning. Thus Michael Hoffman interprets Stein's *Tender Buttons* as "verbal collage," and Marjorie Perloff reads *Susie Asado* as matching, "the instability, indeterminacy, and acoherence of Cubism."[8] But I am arguing that Stein does not share Hoffman's and Perloff's view of Picasso's Cubist painting—and more pertinently—that her work is not "literary cubist" in their sense of an art of indeterminacy. For one thing, her 1912 portrait of Picasso—written in the middle of his Synthetic Cubist (i.e., collage) stage—focuses repeatedly on his ability to produce a definite art object with a precise meaning. Picasso creates "a heavy thing, a solid thing and a complete thing" which has "a solid meaning, a struggling meaning, a clear meaning" ("PI," 282). Furthermore, he entrances a coterie of beholders ("they were always following him," ["PI," 284]) with his complete meanings. Stein champions Picasso's Cubism because, like herself, he asserts the completeness of the work of art; that is, when the art object "is completely contained within itself . . . this gives it at once its complete solidity, its complete imagination, its complete existence."[9] She aims to produce a similarly complete, entrancing object—albeit a poetic object—one which could produce that feeling of "no air" at the Waterloo panorama, and that sensation of waking up in a gallery and realizing "that an oil painting is an oil painting" ("P," 232). She wants her poem to be so completely absorbing and meaningful that *where* the reader is does not matter: "On one level, she might simply mean that her writing is absorbing for the reader: It is nice that nobody writes as they talk and that the printed language is different from the spoken otherwise you could not lose yourself in books and of course you do, you completely do. I always do."[10]

If losing yourself in books sounds a lot like straying into a painting, Stein's interest in the reader's engrossment is nonetheless undercut by the logic of her main aesthetic point. It is not the process of completely losing yourself in books that she is focusing on, but rather the *irrelevance* of the response of the reader to the meaning of the text. In other words, she is describing something much closer to the fiction of the reader's *nonexistence*. A poem succeeds as "a complete thing" by ignoring the reader: "An Audience is pleasant if you have it, it is flattering and flattering is agreeable always, but if you have an audience the being an audience is their business, they are the audience you are the writer, let each attend to their own business."[11] To clarify, this is not merely an avant-garde indifference to success, although at times Stein does indeed display such an indifference.[12] Instead, Stein is committed to distinguishing the writer's "business" from the reader's (whose presence is merely "pleasant" and "flattering"). What the reader does is something she is indifferent to, or more properly, what the reader does is something that has no relevance to the meaning of the text. At best, you as a writer can hope that your "force" is felt, that somebody "will have to realise that you know what you mean and so they will agree that you mean what you know, what you

know you mean."[13] The author's intention to mean must be assumed as an act of faith on the part of the reader, but whether or not the reader offers such good-faith, Stein knows what she means when she writes.[14]

Recall once again her response to the panorama: "there was no feeling of air, it just was an oil painting and it had a life of its own." The Waterloo painting disregards the viewer's "feeling of air"—that is, it eliminates the relevance of the world outside the painting, the world of the European museum which the painting is literally part of. Stein attempts to produce poetry and prose with a similarly "complete existence" by eliminating punctuation, above all commas. The problem with commas is that they let "you stop and take a breath but if you want to take a breath you ought to know yourself that you want to take a breath."[15] Just as the air you inhale while looking at a painting has nothing to do with the picture on the wall (because the painting has "a life of its own" and "no feeling of air"), the air you inhale while reading has nothing to do with Stein's written texts: "Gertrude Stein said commas were unnecessary, the sense should be intrinsic and not have to be explained by commas and otherwise commas were only a sign that one should pause and take breath but one should know of oneself when one wanted to pause and take breath ("A," 793). She sees punctuation as an effort to dictate the literal experience of reading; to focus on the reader would be to sacrifice the autonomy of the text. In fact, Stein writes that "the longer, the more complicated the sentence . . . the more I felt the passionate need of [the words] taking care of themselves by themselves and not helping them" by adding punctuation ("PAG," 321). Stein extends this point beyond commas, claiming that *all* diacritical marks (question marks, exclamation marks, apostrophes, quotation marks, etc.) should be eliminated in order to confirm the irrelevance of the reader ("PAG," 316–21).[16] The only mark of punctuation she will finally accept is the period, and not because the period is of any use to the reader, but because it is inevitable that a writer sometimes needs to take a break: "physically one had to again and again stop sometime and if one had to again and again stop some time then periods had to exist" ("PAG," 318). The crucial point here is that Stein's use of periods is not a contradiction of her larger critique of diacritical marks, but rather an example of her thorough commitment to the writer's engrossment in her own writing and of the irrelevance of the reader's body to the meaning of the text. If periods are a necessary condition for the poet to write—and thus *must* be used—commas and other punctuation unnecessarily intrude upon the reader's own "business" and should be avoided.

Starting with "Objects," the first section of *Tender Buttons*, Stein intends some of her words to signify *as if* they were detached from the sentence by quotation marks—yet she leaves out the quotation marks that would help the reader understand her meaning. "A box" begins, "Out of kindness comes redness and out of rudeness comes rapid same question, out of an eye comes research, out of selection comes painful cattle" ("TB," 314). Such an apparently random list of words does not make sense until we recognize that Stein is abstracting the definition of "boxiness." A box is a container for particular objects: "boxiness," Stein suggests, embodies the relationship between a set and its examples. Thus to define "a box" she writes a sentence containing variations

on the formulaic phrase, "out of set-*x* comes *y*-example." Blushing ("redness") might indicate that a compliment has been paid (a "kindness"), hounding someone with a repetitive "same question" is an example of "rudeness," while "research" is anything produced by looking around (with "an eye"). In each case, Stein's words are potentially replaceable, marked by implied—but not printed—quotation marks. Each word is a possible defined value for either *x* or *y*. Set-*x* equals "kindness," "rudeness" or "an eye," while example-*y* equals "redness," "rapid same question" or "research". To understand her intended meaning, you must not only know what the words mean; you must also recognize the entire sentence's repetitive formula. You must understand, moreover, that implied quotation marks signal a word as one example of a set, even though these quotation marks are not literally present.[17]

Such grammar games continue throughout *Tender Buttons*, becoming more and more complicated by "Rooms."[18] But regardless of the complexity of her sentences, she always intends to mean with her texts, even when the words she chooses, "were not the words that had in them any quality of description."[19] A reader might make mistakes when attempting to punctuate, and understand, one of these sentences for himself. But that, as Stein would say, is the reader's "business," not hers. Her aim is to choose words so carefully, and to construct sentences so scrupulously, that punctuation marks are not required: the words and syntax are doing the work the punctuation marks used to do. Her meaning is there to be found, even if such sentences initially appear nonsensical. "I made innumerable efforts to make words write without sense," Stein wrote, "and found it impossible."[20]

From a purely literary historical standpoint, one purpose of my description is to rectify the mistaken lineage often provided for Stein by contemporary literary critics, where she most typically emerges as a poststructuralist poet *avant la lettre*. In Perloff's words, Stein intends to dramatize "the arbitrariness of discourse, the impossibility of arriving at 'the meaning' even as countless possible meanings present themselves to our attention" (*POI*, 76). In fact, as I have been stressing, Stein is completely indifferent to the reader's particular perspective. But for Perloff, because Stein's meaning "all depends on our angle of vision," Stein's writing parallels "the instability, indeterminacy, and acoherence of Cubism" (*POI*, 76–7). According to these views, Stein intends transgressive indeterminacy, and her most fascinating characteristic, according to Charles Altieri, is her "freedom of linguistic play."[21] For critics such as Perloff, Altieri, and Jayne Walker, *Tender Buttons* is valued for the dramatic effects of its grammar games, syntax disruption, and language obfuscation; it is "a text to play with."[22] But just as Stein does not care where or when the reader breathes, she also does not care how much fun the reader is having. She creates texts that mean what they mean regardless of her reader's desires to play with them.

Closely related to these poststructuralist interpretations are depictions of Stein as the harbinger of L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets such as Bruce Andrews, Charles Bernstein, Lyn Hejinian, and Susan Howe. These poets readily adopt Stein as the poetic matriarch of their "radical modernism"—a kind of incipient postmodernism suggested by the "nonuse value of language in Stein."[23] Accordingly, the December

1978 issue of the journal *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E* contains a special feature of seven poets interpreting *Tender Buttons*. But in contrast to my reading of Stein (namely, that for her the reader's experience is irrelevant to the meaning of the poem), these poets value *Tender Buttons* for precisely the opposite reason. Michael Davidson and Bruce Andrews believe the poem incorporates each reader's experience into the meaning of the text so that *Tender Buttons* increases the "possibilities for meaning" as it is read by more and more people, because "readers do the rewriting."[24] Extending this logic, Bernstein understands poetry's value as the "sum of all the specific conditions of the experience (place, time, order, light, mood, position, to infinity) made available by reading."[25] If Stein's point is that the Waterloo painting eliminates the relevance of the world outside the painting (the world of air, light and time), Bernstein's point—in contrast—is to underscore the total significance of "the specific conditions of the experience" that make up the reader's world. Not only do the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets value Stein for exactly the wrong reasons, these poets also contribute to the inaccurate—but canonical—view of Stein as the first modernist poet of indeterminacy and reader-derived meaning.

In addition to these literary historical aims, my point in discussing Stein's notion of painting and writing is to show that Stein understood the irrelevance of the beholder (of a painting) as related to the irrelevance of the reader. In both painting and writing the audience's "job" is distinct from the artist's. One might imagine that I am aiming to replace the contemporary description of Stein (as a proto-poststructuralist or an ancestral L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poet), with another, unlikely label: Stein as an expatriate New Critic in avant-garde clothing, promoting the autonomous poetic object. New Critics W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley, for example, argue that one's affective responses to a poem do not lead to satisfying critical inquiries: readers must avoid the "Affective Fallacy," that situation where the "poem itself, as an object of specifically critical judgment, tends to disappear" in the surge of the reader's emotional response.[26] It might appear, therefore, that Stein's theory of poetic meaning resembles the New Critical poetic "objects" and their relation to the reader—Stein, Wimsatt, and Beardsley all want more emphasis on the poem as object, and less on the reader's emotional response to the poem.

But there are crucial differences between Stein's account of the irrelevance of the reader and the New Critics' privileging of the poetic object over the reader's response. For Wimsatt and Beardsley, the danger of the Affective Fallacy is that a poem's meaning could—and does—"disappear" in the presence of readerly emotion. In response, Wimsatt and Beardsley aim to protect the poem (like museum guards around a Monet) from the audience members whose enthusiasm might besmirch the work. But for Stein, there is no need to protect the poem from the reader because this particular hazard does not exist. Or, to put it more precisely, this particular hazard *cannot* exist. A poem's meaning is never in danger of being effaced by the reader—however radical the reader's interpretation—because the reader's response, *by definition*, cannot alter the poem's meaning in any way. The meaning of a poem is entirely indifferent to the reader's emotion, or, for that matter, indifferent to any type of judgment the reader

could deliver. Thus, unlike Wimsatt and Beardsley, Stein is not prioritizing objective over subjective responses: each is just as inevitable—and irrelevant—to the meaning of the text.

Stein's decision to remove all forms of diacritical, readerly assistance (commas, quotation marks, etc.) is the logical extension of her theory of textual meaning. Your breath as a reader—and at the most basic level, everything particular to you as a person—is irrelevant to her meaning. Not only does Stein present a challenge to poststructuralist and postmodern theory—and particularly to those poststructuralist accounts of her own poetry, where meaning "all depends on our angle of vision" (*POI*, 76)—she also presents a challenge to the New Critical account of poetry as a cultural artifact endangered by the reader's misinterpretation. My literary historical argument about Stein, therefore, is also her theoretical argument about literary meaning.

3 Lewis's Texts Without Time

Considering Lewis's and Stein's shared commitment to avant-garde art and literature, and more relevantly, their common interest in the relation of art to the beholder, one might have suspected some mutual understanding between them. Stein was largely supportive of and amused by Lewis; Lewis, on the other hand, despised Stein and her work. In some respects, his repugnance is a predictable version of the received account of Lewis as a hostile, misogynous, anti-Semite. Most often, his antipathy appears as hysterical aversion: Stein is a phony member of the avant-garde—"a faux-naif" and "a sham"—because she produced fake art.[27] Lewis also implies that she attempts to emasculate young (white) male writers, such as Ernest Hemingway, by overpowering them with her monstrous, female (Jewish) persona.[28] But these deliberately offensive accusations are a type of rhetorical camouflage, masking a far greater anxiety. Stein threatened Lewis's description of himself as "The Enemy"—that is, the outspoken *artiste* in the liminal world of avant-garde modernism. "I defend my choice of her as an enemy at all times and in all places," he writes in "The Diabolical Principle and the Dithryambic Spectator," an essay first published in one of Lewis's critical organs, a periodical he in fact named *The Enemy*.[29] Even this indictment suggests a problem: if Stein is "The Enemy's" enemy in *The Enemy*, Lewis's singularity and novelty are precarious.

Although Lewis despises what he believes is Stein's "bad philosophy," that philosophy was far closer to Lewis's than he was in a position to admit. Like Stein, Lewis is repeatedly focusing not on the relation between a representation and the object represented, but on the relation between the space of the painting and the space of the beholder. Consider, once again, the scene of Pullman and Satters encountering the painting in *The Childermass*. "Milky" wall surfaces dissolve instantaneously, and the dusky shafts of sunlight are more dense than they appear:

> These solid luminous slices have the consistence of smoked glass: apparitions gradually take shape in their substance, hesitate or arrive with fixity, become delicately plastic,

> increase their size, burst out of the wall like an inky exploding crysalid. . . . Satters surreptitiously reaches out his hand to the cutting edge of the light. It is hard, it's more like marble. It is *not* sunlight or it is frozen beams. He hastilywithdraws his hand, looking to see if Pullman has noticed. (*TC*, 40)

Lewis, a professional painter as well as a novelist, depicts light filtering through air as a thick, viscous substance, perhaps the consistency of oil paint as it is applied to a canvas (initially gooey and finally solidifying). The image of enlarging apparitions which "burst out of the wall like an inky exploding crysalid" also suggests a painting in the process of its creation. But Pullman and Satters are able to see the paint and the painting—and *nothing* else: not the canvas, not the paintbrush, not anything surrounding the painting. The artist, who sometimes paints slowly and hesitantly, and sometimes creates forms boldly and quickly, is also invisible: "apparitions gradually take shape in their substance, hesitate or arrive with fixity." In other words, Satters and Pullman experience this painting-apparition not as a representation, but as part of the physical world in which they themselves exist, a world in which Satters can touch the solid sunlight.

By the final scene inside the purgatory-painting, it is clear that this painting—indistinguishable from the physical world—does not fulfill Lewis's notion of a representation. The incident begins when Satters becomes distraught by the hostile reception he receives from an eighteenth-century "ploughman" in the painting: "His face terrified me! I didn't tell you at the time—I felt he knew quite well you were looking at him! . . . I feel we ought not to be here. . . . I feel an intruder. . . . I feel I'm trespassing" (*TC*, 112–3). Satters senses that his gaze is acknowledged by the figures represented, leading him to experience anxiety and dislocation. In a sense, it is as if the painting—through the figural representations in it—*wants* to exclude him from the representation but cannot ("I feel we ought not to be here. . . . I feel an intruder"). In other words, the invisible frame they have stepped through has failed as a barrier to halt them in front of the painting. Satters becomes so disturbed by the hostile reception he receives that he picks a fight with the "ploughman," eventually mangling the representation "out of human recognition" (*TC*, 130). With this act of disfiguration, Satters and Pullman are violently expelled from the painting: "the light is extinguished in a black flash and they are flung upon their faces" (*TC*, 130). Not only are they expunged from the painting, but the panorama itself disappears. By interacting with painted representations, Satters brings about the destruction of the painting.

Thus halfway through the novel, Lewis reveals the true function of this painting: to provide a satire of the contemporary understanding of painting as a space the beholder can enter. The disappearance of the painting is the key to this long scene, for Satters and Pullman are the satiric "puppets" who (unwittingly) bring about the result Lewis felt was inevitable: art that a person can enter into will lead to the destruction of art. *The Childermass* is, in fact, one of the sharpest examples of Lewis's satire—a genre so significant to him that he considered it the modern art *par excellence*, encompassing both his fiction and his painting strategies.[30] He does not simply present us with a modern version of purgatory as situational comedy (although the novel often does that

too). Instead, Lewis imagines a visual illustration of "time-philosophy," the modern preoccupation with temporal experience that he spends 500 pages disparaging and discrediting in *Time and Western Man* (1927), the aethestic-poltical-philosophical treatise he published one year before *The Childermass*. Pullman—Lewis's surrogate—is unperturbed to enter a panorama that is "like a picture," because this panorama fails as a representation: "This is nothing. . . . It's hollow! It's only Time!" (*TWM*, 105–6). Pullman need not treat it like a painting (that is, by standing in front of it and looking at it), but can walk into it, as an atmospheric disturbance: "It's a time-hallucination—we don't get them often but I've seen several" (*TWM*, 105). It might be disruptive, but it is not art: the experience of air in time is only as interesting or uninteresting as the weather.

For Lewis, the crucial characteristic of art—such as his own abstract, Vorticist painting—is that it is a different order of experience from reality, or "life," chiefly because it is a form of life that does not rely upon time.[31] Thus he writes in *Blast I* (1914), his early Vorticist polemic, that art is "in no way directly dependent on 'Life.' It is no EQUIVALENT for Life, but ANOTHER life [what Stein calls "a life of its own"], as NECESSARY to existence as the former."[32] In contrast, the "time-hallucination" Pullman and Satters have walked into relies upon the viewer's experience in life to produce its meaning. Tarr (another Lewis surrogate) argues a similar point against time-painting: "*Life* is anything that could live and die. *Art* is peculiar; it is anything that lives and yet you cannot imagine as dying."[33] When Anastaysa, Tarr's intellectual partner, counters with a familiar rebuttal, "Why cannot art die? If you smash up a statue, it is as dead as a dead man," Tarr remains adamant: "No, it is not. That is the difference. It is the God, or soul, we say, of the man. It always has existed, if it is a true statue."[34] The reason the work of art cannot die is because to die is to stop breathing, and the work of art cannot stop breathing because the work of art never was breathing. In other words, Lewis argues, art is a form of life, but with crucial differences: it is a life without air, without the particularities of a certain place at a specific time, and without the possibility of death. For Lewis, all these characteristics of art can be redescribed as life without the experience of time. In contrast, the panorama Pullman and Satters encounter is *only* a time-experience: they could go around it, but even "that would take hours"; instead they choose to go through it, which also necessarily takes time, albeit "a few minutes" (*TC*, 106).

In *Blast I*, *Caliph's Design* and *Time and Western Man*, Lewis presents most of the major modern art movements (including Impressionism, Futurism and Surrealism), as manifestations of "the prevalent time-doctrine" (*TWM*, 451).[35] He argues that the Impressionist commitment to quick, *en plein air* painting is, in fact, a commitment to temporality. Just as Marcel Proust "embalms" his past in *A la recherche du temps perdu*, so does Claude Monet embalm his experience of a moment of morning light (and, in other paintings, afternoon light, noon light, and dusky light) on the Rouen Cathedral. Futurism fares little better (dismissed as Impressionism with cars, or "automobilism"), while Surrealism aims to make art "super-real" by mummifying reality.[36]

Oswald Spengler's theory of art, according to Lewis, is one of the clearest articulations of time-philosophy's aesthetic philosophy: because Spengler conceives of art as a "full, coloured, breathing materiality . . . it not only dies *for ever*, but everything about it dies *for ever*. There is nothing 'universal' left in it" (*TWM*, 267). When Spengler conceives of art as alive in time—with a "breathing materiality"—he describes an art *with air*. Such art is flooded by experiences of time, by the particularities and contingencies of its temporal existence. Lewis presses his point further. The contemporary audience of time-philosophy art is not satisfied with "a picture, a representation." Instead, "we exact *real* blood and tears. We want, in short, *reality*" (*TWM*, 271). By opposing reality ("*real* blood and tears") to a representation ("a picture"), Lewis underscores the opposition between time-art and a representation. By breaking down the distinction between art and life, a time-philosophy object—whether it is a painting by Salvador Dalí or the painting Pullman and Satters walk through—is a social phenomenon as opposed to an aesthetic one.[37] As Lewis puts it, time-art "no longer stands for itself" (*TWM*, 274).

Lewis, who is rarely credited with a coherent theory of representation, is actually consistently—satirically—expressing one. Most importantly, what initially appears to be the characteristic of his divergence from Stein—the air in the painting—turns out to be an endorsement of her theory (although Lewis would never imagine himself aligned with Stein). Just as Stein removes commas from her poetry to exclude the audience's breath from the meaning of her text, Lewis scorns time-art for its "breathing materiality" (*TWM*, 267). In fact, Lewis's condemnation of *The Childermass* painting as a "time-hallucination" takes Stein's theory and expands on it. By rejecting time from art, Lewis is not just ignoring the physical existence of the audience via his or her breath. He is attempting to withhold from art that which any living creature needs to sustain itself: regular, repeated intakes of air, over a sustained period of *time*. His repudiation of time-philosophy is, in essence, a sweeping rejection of the experience of the viewer or reader to the meaning of the work of art. However fleeting a human experience might be, it must have duration.

I am suggesting that Lewis and Stein—one hostile to the other and neither of them aligned by critics—actually hold a similar theory of the art object, and from their understanding of the relation between painting and the beholder we can deduce a whole set of other issues. Consider, first of all, the literary historical claims: my reading goes against the accepted view of both Stein and Lewis. In section two, I argued that Stein is not trying to produce indeterminate meaning, and thus she cannot be satisfactorily categorized as a poststructuralist or a postmodernist (as is often attempted). While the critical consensus on Lewis is less unified (in part because many studies of his work do not tackle his complicated aesthetic theory), the style of his satirical writing has led critics to interpret it as incipiently postmodern.[38] David Peters Corbett, for example, interprets Lewis's work as, " . . . radically ambiguous—at once essential to all human experience and claustrophobically private."[39] Jessica Burstein provides a provocative account of Lewis's "cold modernism" (characterized by prosthetic devices and beetle shells), also taking its implicit cue from postmodernism.[40] Fredric Jameson most ex-

plicitly claims Lewis's modernism as postmodernism by noting, "the striking similarities between Lewis' undertaking and the contemporary poststructuralist aesthetic, which signals the dissolution of the modernist paradigm . . . and foretells the emergence of some new, properly postmodernist or schizophrenic conception of the cultural artifact. . . . "[41] Jameson characterizes Lewis's narrative as an unconscious, postmodern critique of political ideology; a Lewis novel "frees its ideological content to demonstrate its own contradictions" (*FOA*, 22–3). According to Jameson, Lewis's "protofascism" is, in fact, a sophisticated, life-long opposition to traditional Marxism, and thus such "protofascism," has more in common with Althusserian theory than with Hitler's policies. But my point here is that Lewis is not producing a postmodern "cultural artifact," and thus his "protofascism" cannot be rationalized as a postmodern ideological critique.[42] Instead, Lewis aims—quite explicitly—to produce a satire of the most egregious cultural phenomenon (in his view)—the "Time Cult." The other effects generated (i.e., narrative discontinuity and prosthetic persons) are not indications of his postmodernism, but side-effects of his comprehensive satirical goal. Moreover, by rejecting the idea that the spectator's experience is part of the meaning of the work, Lewis is also rejecting any theory—poststructuralist, postmodernist, reader-response or some other variation—that values the spectator's contribution to the work of art.

In other words, Lewis is producing not the first example of postmodernism, but the first critique of it. The "time-hallucination" painting in *The Childermass* (which has been wholly neglected by critics), does not raise issues in the realist tradition, such as how a painting depicting real life relates to the subject matter it represents. Instead, time-painting foregrounds the issue of whether an art work even has an impenetrable frame that stops you, physically, at the surface of the painting. Lewis is, in fact, anticipating a version of Michael Fried's central theory of twentieth-century modern painting, articulated decades later in "Art and Objecthood" (1967). As in Stein's essays and Lewis's novel, in Fried's essay the focus is on the relationship between the art object and its beholder. Noting the escalating dominance of the physical object to one's experience of art, Fried argues that the central struggle in modernist painting is to "undo or neutralize objecthood in one way or another," by opposing all manner of literality (*AAO*, 41). In contrast, the Minimalist art of the 1960s, represented by Tony Smith, Robert Morris and Donald Judd (among others), "offered their audience a kind of heightened perceptual experience" of the object in its installation space (*AAO*, 40). Instead of defeating objecthood, Minimalist art relished in objecthood by establishing the spectator's experience as an essential part of a work's meaning.

Temporality, as Fried notes, is crucially connected to the notion of objecthood. Unlike the modern painting and sculpture of Frank Stella and Anthony Caro, Minimalist art "was preoccupied with experiences that persist in time; the 'presentment' of duration, of 'time itself as though it were some sort of literalist object (*AAO*, 44)."'[43] Fried and Lewis both believe that temporality is part of the destruction of art; for Fried, temporality is another version of objecthood, while for Lewis, temporality is the crucial aspect of experience and thus the chief threat to art. Moreover, one crucial aspect of Fried's theory is that art cannot simply disregard literality (or temporality); it must

defeat the theatrical presence of the literal object. When Pullmann and Satters are unable to perceive the physical conditions of painting as distinct from representation—that is, they cannot see the canvas but can perceive the oil painting emerging as "an inky exploding crysalid" (*TC*, 40)—the novel is depicting time-painting simply ignoring its physical conditions, instead of acknowledging and overcoming those physical conditions. In a sense, Lewis is ridiculing time-painting's status as *only* an object in the world, and thus an experience of time. But the essential point here—that the experience of temporality in art is anathema to art—is identical in both Fried and Lewis.[44] The writers and artists Lewis denounces venerate time as a literal object (in his view) instead of aiming to defeat objecthood.

The time-art Lewis warns against persists in other postmodern movements, such as Conceptual, Earthworks, Happenings, and Performance art. Earthworks artist Dennis Oppenheim notes that, "sculptors have never been as dynamically involved in time as they are now."[45] The decision by these artists to make art in and of the landscape foregrounds the spectator's involvement in durational art.[46] Most recently, the summer 2002 "Tempo" exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (in Queens), "focuses on distinct perceptions of time—phenomenological, empirical, political, and fictional," by including works which require the spectator's physical involvement. Erwin Wurm's *One Minute Sculpture* is a performance series that instructs each museum-goer to complete a 60-second action ("Hold your breath and think of Spinoza").[47] Such a work illustrates Lewis's point: time-art involves "the *merging of art in life*" in order to produce a social experience in life—"not an aesthetic phenomenon" (*DPDS*, 68–9).

But besides these literary historical and art historical arguments (that it does not work to see either Stein, or Lewis, as postmodern), Stein's and Lewis's view that everything outside the "frame" of their work is irrelevant to meaning is one version of a major, twentieth-century theoretical debate. By focusing on the ontology of the art object, Stein and Lewis are in fact calling attention to a more general set of beliefs concerning the relation between a thing and its place. Their view is that an object and its place are entirely separate conceptions, and that the artist should aim to maintain that separation. Thus a poem is distinct from its reception in the world, a painting is distinct from its frame. In the subsequent chapters of the dissertation, I show how this notion of an object's connection to place has reemerged in recent literary theory in the guise of a radically different topic: diaspora. But if the problem of the diasporic differs from Stein and Lewis's interests in the ontology of the work of art, the basic structure of the debate is the same. Specifically, recent theories of diaspora replace the thing with a person, and the place with a nation. Instead of the question, How does an object relate to where it is in the world, the question is now, In what sense is a people related to the place they are from?

Notes

1. Gertrude Stein, "Pictures," (1935) in *Writings, 1932–1946, vol. 2* (New York: Library of America, 1998), 226–7. "Pictures" will henceforth be abbreviated as "P," Stein's *Writings, 1932–1946, vol. 2* will henceforth be abbreviated as *V2*. See also Volume One of Stein's *Writings, 1903–1932, vol. 1* (New York: Library of America, 1998), henceforth abbreviated as *V1*.

2. Stein is introducing a sophisticated rendering of her relationship to painting here, one which is remarkably akin to Michael Fried's revolutionary claims decades later. In a series of essays and books, Fried argues, "that for Diderot and the French anti-theatrical tradition generally, the painter's task was crucially to negate or neutralize what I have called the primordial convention that paintings are made to be beheld. This was to be done, in the first place, by depicting figures so engrossed or . . . *absorbed* in what they were doing, thinking, and feeling that they appeared oblivious of everything else, including, crucially, the beholder standing before the painting;" Michael Fried, *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 47–8, henceforth abbreviated as *AAO*. A successful rendering of absorption could lead to a painter's "ultimate purpose—bringing actual viewers to halt in front of the painting and holding them there in a virtual trance of imaginative involvement;" *AAO*, 48. It is precisely this "virtual trance" that Stein describes repeatedly in her essays, stemming from painting's ability to "give me pleasure and hold my attention" (Stein, "P", 225).

3. Wyndham Lewis, *The Childermass* (London: Methuen, 1956). Henceforth abbreviated as *TC*.

4. Of course, this is complicated by the fact that Satters and Pullman are already dead, and their experience in the afterlife is as close to life as they can get. But instead of problematizing my argument, this point is in fact a support of it. Lewis is suggesting that air-filled painting is nearly indistinguishable—not just from real-life—but from an attenuated after-life in purgatory.

5. My larger project concerns the ontology of the work of art, not only in Stein and Lewis, but also in William Carlos Williams, Charles Olson, Marcel Duchamp, and more contemporary writers and artists including Amiri Baraka, Robert Smithson and Leslie Marmon Silko. Each is interested in the nature of the object and hence the position of the subject (both reader and writer) in relation to the object. In taking up an aesthetic problem at the heart of modernism—and postmodernism—I also explore related political projects. In fact, I argue that writers with political positions as different as Stein's suffragism, Lewis's anti-Communist comopolitanism (and, as I suggest in subsequent chapters, Williams's diasporic nativism, Olson's New Deal liberalism and Baraka's Black Nationalism) are all committed to deriving their politics from their vision of the work of art, a vision articulated by each in terms of air.

6. Gertrude Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1933). Other members of this avant-garde group included Juan Gris and Francis Picabia, both of whom Stein befriended and promoted.

7. Gertrude Stein, "Picasso," (1912) in *V2*, 508; henceforth abbreviated as "PI."

8. Gertrude Stein, *Tender Buttons* (1914) in *V1*, 313–55, henceforth abbreviated as "TB"; and "Susie Asado," V1, 362. Michael Hoffman, *Development of Abstractionism in the Writings of Gertrude Stein* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 1965), 162; Marjorie Perloff, *Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 76–7, henceforth abbreviated as *POI*.

9. Gertrude Stein, "What is English Literature," (1935) In *V2*, 198. Henceforth abbreviated as "WIEL."

10. Gertrude Stein, *Gertrude Stein: A Primer for the Gradual Understanding of Gertrude Stein*, ed. Robert Bartlett Haas (Los Angeles: Black Sparrow Press, 1971), 113.

11. From Gertrude Stein, *How Writing is Written: Volume Two of the Previously Uncollected Writings of Gertrude Stein*, ed. Robert Bartlett Haas (Los Angeles: Black Sparrow Press, 1974), quoted in Bruce Keller (ed.), *A Gertrude Stein Companion: content with the example* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 305.

12. Stein's relationship to success was complicated. On the one hand, she reported being hurt by people's failure to understand her meaning. She compares the public rejection of her poetry to the initial rejection of Matisse's painting: "she could not understand why it infuriated everybody . . . it bothered her and angered her . . . just as later she did not understand why since the writing was all so clear and natural they mocked at and were enraged by her work" (Stein, "Autobiography", *V1*, 693, henceforth abbreviated as "A"). But on the other hand, she takes this initial confusion and rejection to be a validation of her poetic genius and her poetry's semi-conscious staying power: "They always say . . . that my writing is appalling but they always quote it and what is more, they quote it correctly. . . . My sentences do get under their skin, only they do not know that they do" ("A," 730).

13. Gertrude Stein, "Henry James," (1932–33), in *V2*, 158.

14. At first glance, it might seem easier to justify the reader's "business" of absorption than the writer's absorption in her own words. Stein, while interested in both, is aesthetically committed to the writer's to a greater extent. In her essay, "What is English Literature", she characterizes this pleasure of concentration with the text not in terms of the reader's engrossment, but the writer's "choice between serving god and mammon . . . [which] has nothing to do with religion, it has nothing to with success. It has to do with completion" ("WIEL," 202). The reference here is to the *New Testament* ("No one can serve two masters. . . . You cannot serve God and wealth", Matt 6:24—"mammon" is Greek for "wealth"). If a writer uses words "indirectly" then he or she is serving mammon, and by extension, the reader. Thus in choosing to write to a particular audience, the writer is choosing particularity and materialism (hence "mammon") over God, and losing her "direct" relationship to words.

15. Gertrude Stein, "Poetry and Grammar," (1935) in *V2*, 230–1, henceforth abbreviated as "PAG."

16. Stein considers and rejects various forms of punctuation for several pages. Questions and exclamations are implied in a sentence's form, "and so why add to it the question mark . . . exclamation marks have the same difficulty" ("PAG," 317). Other marks are rejected because they resemble commas: colons and semi-colons "are definitely more commas than period . . . they really have within them deeply within them fundamentally within them the comma nature" ("PAG," 319).

17. One of the most suggestive and illuminating readings of "A BOX" is William Gass's, "Gertrude Stein and the Geography of the Sentence," in *The World within the Word* (New York: Knopf, 1978), 63–123. He suggests that Stein's "manifest text" is actually a "*coded commentary* on the covert texts" (*The World within the Word*, 92). Gass, however, does not consider how Stein's removal of punctuation marks alters the typical interpretation of these poems, nor does he consider Stein's reasons for their removal as part of her larger aesthetic.

18. Consider the following example in which Stein presents a series of noun modifiers which are sorted out as the sentence continues: "Blind and weak and organised and worried and betrothed and resumed and never startled and not at all bloated, this which is no rarer than frequently is not so astonishing when hair brushing is added," ("TB," 347). As with "A BOX," this sentence is baffling until one recognizes the categorization of words by part of speech. "Blind," "weak," "organized," "worried" and so on are examples of adjectives, while "startled" is "never" in this set because it is a verb ("startling" is the correct adjective). "Not at all bloated" might appear problematic—"bloated" is an adjective—until we realize that the entire phrase, "not at all bloated" is an adjectival phrase (as in, "the not at all bloated sponge"). Thus Stein includes "not at all bloated" because it suggests the difficulty of categorization when certain words have several possible syntactical functions. "This," for example, can be either a pronoun or a demonstrative adjective: hence the "astonishing" situation of "this" functioning as both a pronoun (as in the phrase, "this which is no rarer than . . . ") and as a demonstrative adjective (as in the *second* "this" of "This is this dress, aider," *V1,* 326). The sentence concludes with an adverb ("frequently") and verb participle ("hair brushing") because both have syntactically dual roles.

19. Gertrude Stein, "Portraits and Repetitions," (1935) in *V2*, 303.

20. Haas (ed.), *Gertrude Stein: A Primer for the Gradual Understanding of Gertrude Stein*, 18.

21. Charles Altieri, *Painterly Abstraction in Modernist American Poetry: The Contemporaneity of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 248.

22. Jayne L. Walker, *The Making of a Modernist: Gertrude Stein from Three Lives to Tender Buttons* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), 148.

23. Charles Bernstein, *A Poetics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).

24. Michael Davidson, "On Reading Stein," 197; Bruce Andrews, "Text and Context," 37, reprinted in Bruce Andrews and Charles Bernstein (eds.), *The L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E Book* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984). For another account of the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets' interpretation of Stein, see George Hartley, *Textual Politics and the Language Poets* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989): 4–7.

25. Charles Bernstein, "The Dollar Value of Poetry," 139, reprinted in Andrews and Bernstein (eds.), *The L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E Book*.

26. W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley, *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (New York: Noonday Press, 1954), 21.

27. Wyndham Lewis, *Time and Western Man*, ed. Paul Edwards (Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1987), 26. Henceforth abbreviated as *TWM*.

28. Wyndham Lewis, *Men Without Art*, ed. Seamus Cooney (Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1987), 26. Henceforth abbreviated as *MWA*.

29. Wyndham Lewis, *The Diabolical Principle and the Dithyrambic Spectator* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1931), vi. Henceforth abbreviated as *DPDS*.

30. Satire for Lewis "is nothing else but the truth", but "it is the 'truth' of the intellect" instead of the "'truth' of the average romantic sensualism'" (Lewis, *MWA*, 99–100). Lewis emphasizes the intellect in contrast to "romantic sensualism" in order to distinguish his work from escapist fiction, which denies the reality of the modern world. While the "plain-reader" might suppose that "the author . . . is mainly occupied with the problem of taking us out of ourselves . . . making us live for a few hours a more exciting life than our own" (*MWA*, 11), the satirist aims for a *permanent* art that is altogether different and more substantial because it requires "the entire human capacity—for sensation, reflection, imagination, and will" (*MWA*, 12). Satire is also like Lewis's Vorticist painting because both aim to criticize modern culture, without merely attempting to escape from it: "Vorticism accepted the machine-world: that is the point to stress. . . . This, of course, serves to define Vorticism as the opposite of an 'escapist' doctrine." From *Wyndham Lewis on Art: Collected Writings 1913–1956*, ed. Walter Michel and C. J. Fox (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1969), 340.

31. Vorticism essentially emerged from Lewis's Vorticist "Manifesto" in *Blast 1*, the magazine he edited in 1914. The various artists and writers associated with the magazine included Ezra Pound, Rebecca West, Ford Maddox Ford, Gaudier-Brzeska, Edward Wadsworth, and Jacob Epstein (among others). In Charles Harrison's words, Vorticism was "determinedly anti-Victorian and anti-picturesque"; "The mechanical and the geometric were upheld against the organic and the naturalistic, energy against sensibility, will against morality." Charles Harrison, *English Art and Modernism: 1900–1939* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 111. Vorticism has been compared to (and is at least related to), Cubism, Futurism, and Expressionism.

32. Wyndham Lewis (ed.), *Blast 1* (Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1992), 130.

33. Wyndham Lewis, *Tarr: the 1918 Version*, ed. Paul O'Keeffe (Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1990), 298.

34. Lewis, *Tarr*, 298–9.

35. The one major art movement Lewis is ambivalent towards is Cubism. Although he sometimes dismissed Cubist still-life paintings with the punning label, "Nature Mortism", he was also admittedly indebted to the Cubism he sometimes "blasted." His training at the Slade might have left him fairly hostile to new, continental European art movements, but by 1911 his painting showed the influence of Picasso's and Braque's developing Analytical Cubist style. See "Chapter 4: Cubism, Futurism, Vorticism," in Harrison, *English Art and Modernism*, 75–113; and "Chapter 3: Matter and Creation: Painting, 1911–1912," in Paul Edwards, *Wyndham Lewis: Painter and Writer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 53–94.

36. Lewis's term "Automobilism" comes from *Blast*: "Futurism, as preached by Marinetti, is largely Impressionism up=to=date. To this is added his Automobilism and Nietzsche stunt," (Lewis, *Blast I*, 143). Lewis complains that the Futurists' relationship to machinery is more like worship. They are too emotional and not thoughtful enough: "not a deliberate and reasoned enthusiasm for the possibilities that lie in this new spectacle of machinery; of the *use* it can be put to in art." Wyndham Lewis, *Caliph's Design: Architects! Where is your Vortex?*, ed. Paul Edwards (Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press, 1986), 57. But the larger complaint against Futurism was that it stemmed from Impressionism, without advancing on what the Impressionists attempted: "The Futurists, and their French followers, have as the basis of their aesthetic the Impressionists generally. They are simply a rather abstruse and complex form of the 1880 French Impressionists" (*Caliph's Design*, 104).

37. His specific argument against Surrealism works as follows: The surrealists "pass over into the living material of all art, its ground and what it contemplates, and . . . tamper directly with the cezannesque apples, for instance, before the painter has started his picture" (*DPDS*, 67). In other

words, when the surrealists transform an apple before painting it, they effectively aim to alter life, instead of art. Since Surrealism is "the *merging of art in life*" (*DPDS*, 69), it is therefore, "not an aesthetic phenomenon" at all, but a *social* phenomenon (*DPDS*, 68). As Lewis describes in a later essay, the spectator of art should "not be required to participate in any way in the real", for art is "something outside 'the real'—outside the temporal order—altogether" (Lewis, "Super-Nature versus Super-Real," in *Wyndham Lewis on Art*, 331–2). Lewis is fundamentally opposed to art which requires the spectator to experience reality as presence; that is, an art which insists upon the spectator's experience of the object in real-time.

38. Other critics who propose significant, theoretical interconnections between Lewis's art and writing—as do Paul Peppis, Tom Normand, and Reed Way Dasenbrock—tend to focus on the early Vorticist manifestos in relation to Lewis's politics, philosophy and painting, instead of *The Childermass*. See Paul Peppis, *Literature, Politics, and the English Avant-Garde: Nation and Empire, 1901–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Tom Normand, *Wyndham Lewis the Artist: Holding the Mirror up to Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Reed Way Dasenbrock, *The Literary Vorticism of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis: Towards the Condition of Painting* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985). More generally, literary critics have neglected *The Childermass* in favor of *Tarr*, *The Revenge for Love* and other Lewis works, which also means that critics have ignored the extent to which this lengthy scene of Pullman and Satters walking into a painting is a powerful narrative example for many of Lewis's aesthetic and philosophical writings. Exceptions include Hugh Kenner, Peter Caracciolo and Daniel Schenker, who provide valuable insights into the novel, but nonetheless neglect the scene of the painting: Hugh Kenner, *Wyndham Lewis* (Norfolk, CT: New Directions, 1954); Peter L. Caracciolo, "'Carnivals of Mass-Murder': The Frazerian Origins of Wyndham Lewis's *The Childermass*," in Robert Fraser (ed.), *Sir James Frazer and the Literary Imagination* (London: Macmillan, 1990), 207–31; Daniel Schenker, *Wyndham Lewis: Religion and Modernism* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1992).

39. David Peters Corbett, "History, Art and Theory in *Time and Western Man*," in Paul Edwards (ed.), *Volcanic Heaven: Essays on Wyndham Lewis's Painting & Writing* (Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1996), 120.

40. Jessica Burstein, "Waspish Segments: Lewis, Prosthesis, Fascism," *Modernism/Modernity* 4.2 (1997), 139-64.

41. Fredric Jameson, *Fables of Aggression: Wyndham Lewis, the Modernist as Fascist* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 19–20, henceforth abbreviated as *FOA*. Jameson, of course, was also trying to argue that despite Lewis's poststructuralist maneuvers ("stressing discontinuity, allegory, the mechanical, the gap between signifier and signified, the lapse in meaning," *FOA*, 20), Lewis "cannot be fully assimilated to the contemporary textual aesthetic without anachronism: we will indeed want to insist on the ways in which these tendencies are over and over again strategically recontained in his work" (*FOA*, 20).

42. In the dissertation, I consider this issue of Lewis's "protofascism" at more length. Lewis's disturbing flirtation with fascism is undeniably problematic, but Jameson's account of Lewis's "protofascism" as a form of postmodern ideological critique does not solve the problem. In fact, in *The Childermass*, the figure Pullman and Satters nearly kill is none other than Thomas Paine himself, the father of modern representational democracy. Thus Lewis is suggesting that stepping inside a painting full of air—an instantiation of time-philosophy—threatens the very possibility of representation. His point is that the frameless art of time-philosophy not only corrupts representation in *art*; time-philosophy also undermines *political* representation by creating a world in which persons and representations appear to be equal. The "loutish" Satters destroys the figure of Paine because he feels that this figure is a threat to himself. It is time-philosophy's corruption of representation—*both* aesthetic and political—that Lewis is focusing on here: *aesthetic* because Paine is a figural representation in the painting, and *political* because Paine is a historical symbol of political representation. Therefore, Lewis is not *theoretically* opposed to a liberal politics, nor is he postmodern: instead, he contemplates the ultimate fate of the modern democratic state when the very notion of representation is under enormous strain by people as thoughtless as Satters. In an effort to avoid the destruction of representation, Lewis produces his own version of an art without time: intricate, semi-abstract self-portraits of himself as a beetle on covers of his magazine, *The Enemy* (1926–27).

43. In Minimalism, literality manifests itself as framelessness, instantiated for Fried in Tony Smith's sublime car trip on the unfinished New Jersey Turnpike. Smith describes the moment at which painting ends, when he realizes that his experience of this ride cannot be represented pictorially: "there is no way you can frame it, you just have to experience it" (quoted in *AAO*, 158). In other words, Tony Smith, according to Fried, eliminates the frame of a painting by first reconceptualizing it as a frame of window that can be physically traversed in time—precisely like Pullman and Satters' journey into the panorama in *The Childermass*. These are both versions of the ruptured frame between art and life. By turning the picture frame into a window frame, both Smith and the time-philosophers negate the frame and thus espouse literality.

44. Part of the confusion here is that Lewis's term of attack—"Modernist"—is the same term Fried uses to defend art. Of course, Lewis could not have known the Minimalist art of the 1960s that Fried was responding to, nor did Lewis ever formulate his theory in Fried's condensed terms. Moreover, the Minimalist "new esthetic" Fried discredits was, for Lewis, already rearing its head in early twentieth-century modernism, while the particular objects of Lewis's polemic do not concern Fried.

45. Patricia Novell, interview with Dennis Oppenheim, 29 March 1969 in her *Recording Conceptual Art, Early Interviews with Barry, Huebler, Kaltenbach, LeWitt, Morris, Oppenheim, Siegelaub, Weiner* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 29.

46. Robert Smithson, another major artist of the period, writes that, "art not only communicates through space, but also through time." *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 342. His glue-pours (vats of bright orange glue poured down a slope) and mirror displacements (mirrors cantilevered in the dirt), focus precisely on the issue of art's duration.

47. Roxana Marcoci, *Tempo* Brochure (29 June–9 September 2002, MOMA/QNS). Available as a pdf file on the web at *www.moma.org/exhibitions/2002/tempo/flash_content/Tempo.pdf.* According to Marcoci, "Each of [Wurm's] time-based sculptures consists of an instruction that can take the form of a drawing – often with a list of the items involved, or with a written proposition, such as 'Hold your breath and think of Spinoza' . . . the artist creates experimental situations in which unorthodox action and the structure of time form the work" (Marcoci, *Tempo*, 7). See also Erwin Wurm, *One Minute Sculptures, 1988–1998: Index of Works* (Bregenz: Kunsthaus Bregenz, 1999), 139.