

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: THE MAKINGS OF DIGITAL MODERNISM:
REREADING GERTRUDE STEIN'S *THE
MAKING OF AMERICANS* AND POETRY BY
ELSA VON FREYTAG-LORINGHOVEN

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In this dissertation, I argue that digital methodologies offer new kinds of evidence and uncover new opportunities for changing how we do research and what we value as objects for literary study. In particular, I show how text mining, visualizations, digital editing, and social networks can be applied to make new readings of texts that have historically been undervalued within academic research. For example, I read Gertrude Stein's *The Making of Americans* at a distance by analyzing large sets of data mined from the text and visualized within various applications. I also perform close readings of the poetry of Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven differently by engaging online social networks in which textual performance, an ever-changing interpretive presentation of text, is enacted. By facilitating readings that allow submerged textual and social patterns to emerge, this research resituates digital methodologies and these modernist works within literary studies.

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STEIN'S *THE MAKING OF AMERICANS* AND POETRY BY ELSA VON
FREYTAG-LORINGHOVEN

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for John Barton
thank you

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Introduction

Scholars have long argued that literature produces new knowledge and thus new ways of being. Modernist literature, in particular, requires us to reflect on *how* we use written language as a technology or tool for understanding what it means to be. As Richard Poirier writes, “All literature is to some extent aware of itself as a technology. But literary modernism thrusts this awareness upon us and to an unprecedented degree” (113). Computer scientists argue that digital technologies also produce new knowledge about what it means to be human by facilitating fundamental changes in our ways of life. So too, computing scholars argue, digital tools obligate us to consider closely this relationship between computational representation and being. For instance, computing scientists Terry Winograd and Fernando Flores write that “The use of technology . . . leads to fundamental changes in what we do, and ultimately what it is to be human. We encounter deep questions of design when we recognize that in designing tools we are designing ways of being” (xi). That the philosophies expressed by modernists and computing humanists are similar is not surprising: much like avant-garde modernists of the early twentieth-century who experimented with language and representation in the age of print,¹ humanists of the twenty-first century are also attempting the unprecedented: designing computing languages and representations to aid literary scholarship and facilitate our understanding of the technology of language in the digital age.

Consequently, in an attempt to bring these technologies—modernist texts and digital tools—to reflect on each other, this dissertation demonstrates how literary scholars can use digital tools to read modernist texts in ways formerly inhibited within a primarily

¹ For example, see Bornstein (2001) and Bornstein, ed. (1991) among other texts.

print culture. In particular, this study uses digital methodologies to create a new perspective on texts that are not widely read within more traditional studies—namely, *The Making of Americans* (Paris, 1925)² by Gertrude Stein and poetry written between 1924 and 1927 by the Dada artist Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven. Ultimately, I am using this writing as a reflective tool as well. By using digital tools to offer new kinds of evidence and uncover new opportunities for resituating these works in modernist studies, I am arguing for a resituation and therefore a reevaluation of digital methods of analysis within literary studies in general.

The first chapter, “The Makings of Digital Modernism” serves the larger work by introducing the many conversations in which this research participates. As such, this introductory chapter identifies those aspects of humanities scholarship that digital humanists have been roundly accused of avoiding such as the subjective practices and the historicized perspectives that are so vital to the wider conversation within literary study. To this end, this first chapter situates the work engaged in the remaining chapters by establishing three primary perspectives on the literary analyses presented. First, this chapter reveals the background behind how this research and these practices in particular came to be part of this study. This chapter’s discussion includes why *The Making of Americans* and the poetry of Freytag-Loringhoven are its focus and what issues were raised in terms of accessing both the digital versions of these texts and the range of skill sets needed to engage them in a productive digital environment. Second, this first chapter defines and situates the questions this research seeks to answer within the context of the methodologies for research with which they will be engaged—namely, text mining,

² *The Making of Americans* by Gertrude Stein, first published in America by Albert and Charles Boni in 1926.

digital scholarly editions, and the visualizations that both of these methodologies necessarily incorporate. Third and in conclusion, I propose in the first chapter that the research in this study may be valued, in part, by the extent to which the technologies (both digital and non-digital) employed engage subjective *and* objective practices. I pursue this argument from the perspective that digital methodologies allow for multifaceted means for evaluating multiple and alternative modes of signification. In other words, digital methodologies incorporate “value critical research”³ and can be used from a perspective that assumes that notions of *value* mediate every step of the research process from selecting objects of study and methods of analysis to formulating and validating the knowledge produced. As such, the analysis engaged in this study attempts to allow for the humanist propensity to evaluate from a subjective perspective that ultimately accounts for “the plausible” instead of “the truth.”

In chapter two, “‘A thing not beginning and not ending’: Using Digital Tools to Distant-Read Gertrude Stein’s *The Making of Americans*,” I enable new readings of Stein’s *The Making of Americans* by using text mining and visualization tools to illustrate that Stein’s extensive patterns of repetition form an intricately structured text instead of an inchoate work-in-progress. Some critics have concluded that the text goes unread because it is the early work of an inexperienced author; as such, the argument goes, the text’s constant repetition represents a style of writing that is chaotic, unsystematic, and virtually impossible to read.⁴ Even so, an appreciation of the text does surface among postmodernist critics who argue that the text represents a postmodern exercise in

³ In *Feminist Inquiry*, M.E. Hawkesworth defines “value critical research” as inquiry seeking “new questions for research” as a recognition “that values play a formative role in research and that these formative values must be made explicit and subjected to critical scrutiny” (7).

⁴ In particular, see Katz’s dissertation “The first making of *The Making of Americans*,” Bridgman, and Dydo.

incomprehensibility that poses a comment on the modernist desire for truth.⁵ Though *The Making of Americans* does confront readers directly with the failings of representation and the creative possibilities of alternative uses of language, I argue that incomprehension is not the text's only reading. My study explores how we read data exposed by linguistic analysis procedures with a range of visualization techniques including sorted lists and graphs. By visualizing certain patterns in this manner and looking at the text "from a distance" through textual analytics and visualizations, I read the novel in ways formerly impossible. Accordingly, I argue that my analysis on *Making* yields evidence that suggests that the repetition is intricately structured and purposefully placed. As a result of this digital analysis, a question arises that has not been adequately addressed: is the confusion the repetition engenders a byproduct of reading meant to deconstruct processes of identity construction by making meaning through methods that ultimately elude meaning-making? In contrast, I argue that the confusion the repetition engenders is the result of a *misreading* and simply a byproduct of our inability to read the text. As such, I propose that the structure of *The Making of Americans* works in contrast to the supposition that the text is only meaningful to the extent that it defeats technologies for making meaning.

In chapter three, "The Story of 'One': the rhetoric of narrative and composition in Gertrude Stein's *The Making of Americans*" I use this new perspective on *The Making of Americans* to provide a reading based on the relationship between the text's narrative and compositional structures. The most common critiques of *The Making of Americans* contend that the text deconstructs the role narrative plays in determining identity by using

⁵ Some examples include Ruddick's *Reading Gertrude Stein: Body, Text, Gnosis*, Watten, Berman's chapter "Steinian Topographies: The Making of America" (pp. 157-177), and Wald's chapter "A 'Losing-Self Sense': *The Making of Americans* and the Anxiety of Identity" (pp. 237-298).

indeterminacy to challenge readerly subjectivity. Indeed, whether on issues of race, gender and sex, class, or the very complexity with which all these factors combine in constructing identity, most critical readings focus on the repetition Stein uses as a means for deconstructing narrative and confusing the reader's experience. To be sure, as the narratives from the first half of the text unweave into seemingly chaotic, meaningless rounds of repetitive words and phrases in the second half, the text can be read as a deconstruction of narrative and the role it plays in determining identity. Yet, a new perspective on the relationship between the non-narrative and narrative passages of the text dissolves these tensions that are the result of instabilities in the perceived discourse. This new perspective, based on the highly structured nature of the text, suggests that these instabilities can be resolved by the same seemingly nonsensical, non-narrative structures. For instance, one method for reading the composition of the text without relying on what becomes a non-existent framework based on plot is to view the progression of words according to a different framework, a framework that relies on comparative associations based on word usage. For example, I use analytic and visualization environments such as *WordHoard*,⁶ *Wordle*,⁷ and *PosViz*,⁸ to identify the manner in which word usage changes in correlation to the presence and absence of narrative both in comparison to other novels and within the text itself. These comparisons enable a new perspective on the meaning-making processes of the text's composition by allowing me to isolate the behavior of the word *one*. Ultimately, I re-read *The Making of Americans* as a comment on the manner in which the combination of narrative and structure evokes shifting identities that, though not necessarily determined, are not

⁶ Please see <http://wordhoard.northwestern.edu/userman/>.

⁷ Please see <http://wordle.net/>.

⁸ Currently, *PosViz* does not have a web presence.

indeterminate. In other words, seeing the manner in which the second half of the text is constructed to make meaning *in conversation with* the devolving narrative passages alleviates the instabilities and frustrated expectations that reading the narrative alone encourages. Instead of a reading in which the narrative discourse in *The Making of Americans* entails a postmodern exercise in deconstructing identity formation, the text may be re-read as an experiment in which narrative and grammar work together to represent identity in complex formation.

The fourth chapter, “Textual performance and the poetry of Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven” serves to re-evaluate the context in which scholars read and appreciate Freytag-Loringhoven’s poetry in order to locate her disregarded texts within current literary discussions of modernist poetry. Essentially, what denudes her poetry of its meaning-making possibilities is a failure to interrogate the textual conditions in which she created her experimental works. In response to this lack, I redefine the textual event of a Freytag-Loringhoven poem as a *textual performance* in order to reincorporate what’s missing—the collaborative audience upon which she depended. This chapter begins by providing a glimpse into how current readings of Freytag-Loringhoven’s work have been centered in her dual roles as artistic muse and Dada queen—both designations that have produced much writing on her within cultural studies but have not served to facilitate much interest in her poetry. This failure is a consequence of what is unique about Freytag-Loringhoven, what makes her poetry texts difficult to access through traditional (and new) practices of literary analysis and presentation: the collaborative audience embodied in her particular social network as an element of performance. Like performance, the collaborative audience required for Dadaist art and provided by the little

magazine culture was an essential signifying element in the meaning making process. “The document of a performance,” Peggy Phelan writes in *Unmarked*, “is only a spur to memory, an encouragement of memory to become present” (146). As such, analyzing how an audience engaged with Freytag-Loringhoven’s poetry in the little magazine culture functions, in this chapter, as “a spur to memory” upon which I define a theory of *textual performance*.

As a result of defining the textual event of a Freytag-Loringhoven poem as a *textual performance*—a non-reproducible, real-time performance that includes live textual bodies and embodied texts—I also seek to define an environment which would engage this social aspect of her poetic event. For instance, the idea of “transition” is a central theme that guides the creation of a scholarly edition of poems by Freytag-Loringhoven. Poems Freytag-Loringhoven created between 1923 and 1927 reflect her movement between cultures, from New York to Berlin and finally to Paris, but the edition also serves to represent a moment of transition in the culture of little magazines and the technologies of conversation during this time period. This period witnesses a change in the little magazine culture from one that engages more avant-garde textual performances and conversations about literature and art—such as the one represented by the inclusion of content in *The Little Review*—to another which begins to address an audience more attuned to and engaged with literature and poetry as a high art—such as that posed by what the editors of *transition* chose to include. Much of the scholarly work I do in preparing an edition of Freytag-Loringhoven’s poetry involves editing and annotating the digital surrogates within the context of these conversations. Thus, I conclude this chapter by suggesting that a digital scholarly edition made in response to Freytag-Loringhoven’s

life must facilitate the collaborative experience needed to bring these conversations and thus the texts into play. As a result, the edition represents *textual performance* in practice.

Chapter five comprises this electronic edition of selected poems by Freytag-Loringhoven under the title *In Transition: Selected poems by The Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven*. The piece included in the body of this dissertation typescript, “Knowledge Representation within the Digital Edition *In Transition: Selected poems by The Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven: an introduction*” serves as the introduction to the electronic edition, which includes multiple, annotated versions of twelve poems by Freytag-Loringhoven, and at the time of this writing, can be found at <http://www.lib.umd.edu/dcr/projects/baroness/>.⁹ In particular, this introduction seeks to define the goals of the edition by taking into account not only the guidelines set forth in the *Guidelines for editors of Scholarly Editions* established by the Modern Language Association (MLA)¹⁰ but also the terms of knowledge representation in computation (*domain, ontology, and logic*) set forth by John F. Sowa in *Knowledge Representation*. Sowa writes in his seminal book on computational foundations that theories of knowledge representation are particularly useful “for anyone whose job is to analyze knowledge about the real world and map it to a computable form” (*Knowledge Representation* xi). Thus, the central argument engaged by *In Transition* is set within the discussion of computable knowledge presentation by drawing parallels between the edition’s content and its *ontology*; its form and its *logic*; and its theory of text with its *domain*. I draw these comparisons to suggest that increasing access to and supporting

⁹ At the time of this publication, the site is password protected. In addition, the work at present is incompatible with *Internet Explorer* 7.0 and higher. It is best viewed in the *Mozilla Firefox* browser. Please contact the author for more information.

¹⁰ Please see http://www.mla.org/cse_guidelines.

new readings of poetry by Freytag-Loringhoven relies on a particularly *digital* engagement with the texts. Thus, the accompanying discussion details how the *In Transition* environment could facilitate a “real-time” (though virtual) textual experience immersed in a social network (such as *MySpace*). Afforded by digital tools in an online social network, *In Transition* could engage an experience of poetry—a *textual performance*—much like the little magazine culture in which interest in Freytag-Loringhoven’s poetry began.

The relationship between early twentieth-century avant-garde literary texts and current trends in theory and practice within digital humanities is not tenuous. It has been argued that theories of modeling and knowledge representation and digital practices such as data storage and retrieval and visualization may be linked to cultural traditions that were cutting-edge in the early 1900s. In the early twentieth century, new systems of information storage and transmission developed for technologies that recorded sound, images, and text (such as the gramophone, film, and typewriter) were developed within the same culture as avant-garde representations in art, film, and typography.¹¹ At the same time, the creative work of literary modernists was meant to provoke thought about these new technologies for information transmission and production by heightening the

¹¹ New Media theorist Lev Manovich argues that avant-garde strategies for visualization developed “to awaken audiences from a dream-existence of bourgeois society” eventually became “materialized in the computer” in “Avant-garde as Software.” In *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (1999), Friedrich Kittler maintains that early twentieth-century storage and transmission processes developed with film, phonograph, and typewriter made it necessary to re-examine the written text as the prominent archive for cultural data. Further examples include Johanna Drucker’s book *The Visible Word* (1994) which links Saussure’s structural linguistics and theories of textual materiality to avant-garde typography used by early twentieth century Dadaists and Futurists, and Katherine Hayles *How We Became Posthuman* (1999), which discusses the relationship between Lacanian psycholinguistics and the computer screen’s “flickering signifier.”

culture's awareness of language as a technology for understanding the nature of expressing ways of being.

Modernist texts engage procedures for considering knowledge production and representation that should have some bearing on how we build and use digital tools in the humanities. As Richard Poirier writes, "one of [literary modernism's] primary purposes is to expose the factitiousness of its own local procedures" (113). In other words, much of humanities scholarship is concerned with its own procedures, not with an end product or an end-result. Mindfully factitious or purposefully fallible, the avant-garde texts chosen for this study engage procedures for knowing with uncertainty that may have some bearing on how we might learn to value computer-assisted literary analysis differently. To say that digital technologies somehow embody early-twentieth century avant-garde concepts is to say that knowledge production in applied digital humanities projects is important and vital for the study of literature in the same way that the creative avant-garde literary work of the early twentieth century was important theoretical and interpretive work, not merely pre-interpretive activity. "Modernist texts," Poirier writes, "teach us to face the failure of technology in that version of it which we call literary technique—the failure significantly to account for all that we think technology should account for . . . a discovery of great spiritual as well as cultural importance" (114). Indeed, applied work in digital methodologies—the work of developing digital surrogates, digital tools, and digital environments for disseminating these objects and engaging with these tools—represents a similar tension between referentiality and reflexivity that was the preoccupation of avant-garde work in music, painting, and literature at the beginning of the twentieth century. Thus, studying the ways in which

modernist texts both design ways of being and make transparent the fundamental, self-made failings they engage as technologies yields a perspective that is useful for assessing the value of digital tools used in literary study.

Chapter 1: The Makings of Digital Modernism

In the critical literature on Gertrude Stein, there are exactly two instances in which the computer is used as a tool for reading and interpreting her work. The most recent mention occurs in William Glass's foreword to the 1995 Dalkey edition of Stein's *The Making of Americans*:

The computer on which I am writing these words has a function which allows me to examine the layout of the page I am readying for the printer. Since this look at my text is so wide-eyed I cannot read a line, only view the lineup, a magnifying glass which I can draw down out of its shy place in the corner is provided to enlarge and make comprehensible some chosen bit . . . (Glass vii)

The earlier mention occurs in Carolynn Van Dyke's 1993 article on the Stein novel *Lucy Church Amicably* entitled "'Bits of Information and Tender Feeling': Gertrude Stein and Computer-Generated Prose":

Computer-generated texts similar to Stein's work may help to illuminate her writing not only because they furnish a novel basis for comparison but also, more particularly, because their principles of composition can be described with some certainty. (Van Dyke 169-170)

Glass employs his computational tool to "examine the layout of the page" while Van Dyke uses one to generate Stein-like text. What is significant about these two uses is not their differences, however, but their similarities. Glass is using his tool to magnify one sentence of Stein's text because he believes that it will augment his ability to examine the rest of the novel. Doing so "is convenient" and generalizable: "almost any sentence would yield the same results" (Glass vii). Van Dyke's goal is also to make generalizations, to produce syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic anomalies and to compare these to the style in Stein's novel; she seeks "to explore both the nature of Stein's art and certain wider questions about linguistic and literary meaning" (Van Dyke 170).

Essentially, Glass and Van Dyke use the computer much as one would use a magnifying glass, as a tool that helps get a better look at a small part of the text in order to make a general argument about its whole.

Glass and Van Dyke see their digital tools in the same vein as Vannevar Bush, as tools for augmenting human powers of observation. These days, however, we expect computers and digital tools to offer opportunities for being superhuman—that is, less biased, more “objective,” and therefore more *truthful*, even when we are using computers to analyze literary texts that are created, more often than not, to illuminate humanity’s flaws. In reality, in both of the above cases, two “failures” for the tool are possible: (1) the tool does not meet the scholar’s needs for helping him or her prove or disprove the hypothesis, either by its inability to measure what needs to be measured or its inability to represent those measurements in a comprehensible manner; or (2) the tool’s results are disproved by subsequent critical work that proves a contradictory theory. In these instances it is clear that incoherence, fallibility, and uncertainty play a role in the tool’s ability to represent knowledge about the text, because in each instance, incoherence, fallibility, and uncertainty are a product of the human who designs and guides the tool’s use. Consequently, no matter how complex or how simple they are, the computational tools are fallible because researchers are fallible. Gertrude Stein makes the same observation about art: “The only thing that is different from one time to another is what is seen and what is seen depends upon how everybody is doing everything” (“Composition as Explanation” 408).

In this discussion, I am making transparent that though inquiry is enabled by digital methodologies or modes of research, dissemination, design, preservation, and

communication that rely on algorithms, software, and or the internet network for processing data, the user and the reader is still fallible. As such, I consider John Unsworth's definition that Digital Humanities is "a way of reasoning and a set of ontological commitments . . . shaped by the need for efficient computation on the one hand, and for human communication on the other" ("What is Humanities Computing and what is not?"), but I also seek to explore this definition, which is centered on "a practice of representation, a form of modeling" in order to create an understanding of this mode of research that is permeable. Ultimately, I seek to situate digital methodologies squarely within the conversation of current literary study.

At the same time, I have set this statement aside as a declaration of a first step. Worthwhile research must reflect questions that are critically productive to the academic community at hand, in part, because their value is contingent on the manner in which they reflect and expand ongoing conversations. Yet, there is still a pervasive tendency when using digital methodologies to claim a separation from the cultural, social, and political contexts that are essential to literary inquiry. For example, Willard McCarty writes in *Humanities Computing* (2005), "I deliberately steer clear of political and professional questions, preferring to put the intellectual case first, and leave necessary attention to the social conditions for enacting it to others . . . I argue from the primacy of desire — or, if you prefer, the imagination" (19). Though McCarty is not necessarily unconcerned with these contexts, he is very clear that these matters are not of primary interest in his proposed agenda about the future of digital humanities. Similarly, Julia Flanders calls it a fault that "(t)he rhetoric of digital changes exists, for the academy, as a way of producing a new narrative of progress which generates research, and a rhetoric of

transformation that can carry the self-critique that is built into academic life” (Flanders 125-126). On the other hand, the rhetoric of self-critique that is apparent in feminist practices that require “probing silences, absences, and distortions in dominant paradigms” within all fields of study (Hawkesworth 8) bears a close resemblance to John Unsworth’s view regarding “the importance of failure” within digital methods and Willard McCarty’s notion of a ‘*via negativa*’ or a “negative way” to knowledge in which we probe these “failures” through an iterative, trial-and-error process (Unsworth “The Importance of Failure;” McCarty, *Humanities Computing* 5, 39-41).¹² Thus, these notions of “transformation” and “self-critique,” are not insignificant—they have been at the center of fields of inquiry in which literary scholars have been engaged for decades and which form an undercurrent in the work of Digital Humanists who have been trained in academies that have been influenced by this work.

The work in this study attempts to pick up where McCarty has left off by declaring that a historicized, embodied perspective of heuristic devices is required to illuminate areas of inquiry facilitated by digital methodologies. In this work, I establish a new perspective on *The Making of Americans* by Gertrude Stein, which has been regarded as a postmodern exercise in chaos, and on poetry written by the Dada artist Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, which has been widely disregarded. However, when the value of digital methodologies is measured by their potential to produce “new” products that engage (and validate) pre-existing theoretical suppositions and not new processes meant to question these regimes of theory, an opportunity for critical work is foreshortened. Therefore, this chapter serves the larger work by introducing the many conversations in

¹² McCarty’s discussion of this concept makes reference to McGann’s discussion of failure, but should also include a reference to Unsworth’s seminal essay on the same subject “The Importance of Failure” (1997).

which this research participates in order to apply a magnifying glass to those aspects of humanities scholarship that those who use digital methodologies have been roundly accused of avoiding. These aspects of study include the subjective practices, the historicized perspectives, and notions of “truth” and “objectivity” that are so vital to literary inquiry. To this end, this chapter reveals the background behind how this research and these practices in particular came to be part of this study. This discussion includes why modernist texts such as *The Making of Americans* and the poetry of Freytag-Loringhoven are its focus and what issues were raised in terms of accessing both the digital versions of these texts and the range of skill sets needed to engage them in a productive digital environment. In addition, this chapter will define and situate the questions this research seeks to answer within the context of the methodologies for research with which they will be engaged—namely, text mining, digital scholarly editions, and the visualizations that both of these methodologies necessarily incorporate.¹³ If, in other words, we are able to articulate what we observe and the perspective from which we observe it, we are better able to determine how (not *if*) our methods influence our results.

Third and in conclusion, I propose that the research in this study may be valued, in part, by the extent to which the technologies (both digital and non-digital) employed within it engage competing perspectives and analyses. W.J.T. Mitchell reminds us that “differentiation and discrimination” is “*the task of criticism,*” and Louis Menand

¹³ McCarty’s analysis does offer a space in which we can wedge a situated perspective. He asserts that central questions for the practitioner are “*how one becomes observant in the ways required by the practice*” and “*what one does and where one goes when that odd, out-of-place anomalous or missing something is observed in the course of the work*” (*Humanities Computing* 155). The contextual contingencies in this statement (“the ways required by the practice” and “that odd, out-of-place anomalous . . . missing something”) point us toward the places in which a *politicized* perspective influences how one becomes observant and what one engages by acknowledging these influences.

completes his decree that “the role of the humanities cannot be that of problematizing this and calling into question that” by declaring that “(h)umanities professors need to construct alternative paradigms” with the knowledge that criticism affords (325-326; 14). Digital tools and a digital environment facilitate the alternate space within which I establish a new perspective on *The Making of Americans* and poetry written by Freytag-Loringhoven because these digital methodologies facilitate, engage, and further a humanist, not a computational, perspective on the texts. Essentially, eliding the presence of biases and using digital methodologies to support and further entrench existing scholarly paradigms of analysis and representation based on traditional notions of objectivity and “truth” is one—albeit, short—path this discussion could take; learning to reveal and unravel these entrenched mindsets with self-awareness and from multiple perspectives is another and well-travelled first step in literary inquiry; but pushing thinking into an alternate space in which new elements of self-awareness is produced within literary study with digital tools is another step and represents the goal of this research.

I. Project background

A. Choosing modernist texts

One may not “steer clear of political and professional questions”¹⁴ without rendering mute essential aspects of these experimental works by Stein and Freytag-Loringhoven. Experimental literature by women is political by nature in that it is defined as such in its contradiction to perceived conventions of elements of language, of thematic

¹⁴ In contrast, Stanley Fish implies that the politicization of theory is part of the current “crisis” in the humanities (“Theory’s Hope” 378).

concern, or of material. Marianne Dekoven (among others) links the political nature of experimental literature with progressive acts of critical theory that include cultural studies and literary feminism:

Just as experimental writing asks whether it is possible to liberate in language what has been repressed by the cultures of extreme rationalization, the experiments of critical theory, cultural studies, and literary feminism ask whether it is possible to liberate in thought what has been repressed by disallowing the political dimension of cultural production and the aesthetic dimension of political life. (“*Jouissance*, Cyborgs, and Companion Species” 1694)

Indeed, while contemporary critics either praised Stein and Freytag-Loringhoven for making the experience of language new or denigrated them for making reading unnecessarily difficult (in Stein’s case) or vulgar (in the case of Freytag-Loringhoven), most recent critics argue that the difficulty the repetition engenders in *The Making of Americans* and the authenticity manifested in Freytag-Loringhoven’s poetry challenge notions of readerly subjectivity by deconstructing the role cultural productions play in determining notions of identity. Work with digital methodologies that emphasizes the depoliticized, disembodied perspective of “the intellectual case” (McCarty, *Humanities Computing* 19) reflects a stance that would disengage important aspects of these literary works. On the other hand, Mary Hawkesworth suggests that “a particular politics embedded in the research process improves the quality of analysis, heightens objectivity, and enhances the sophistication of research findings” (6). Such is the case when the politicized nature of this work by Stein and Freytag-Loringhoven requires scholars to triangulate the concerns of literary and digital humanists with a perspective provided by feminist inquiry. Each view pulls the other viewpoints towards a situated approach.

Accordingly, these texts—Stein’s *The Making of Americans* and the poetry of Freytag-Loringhoven—were chosen for this study for two primary and interdependent

reasons: the experimental and politicized nature of their work and the fact that this nature is in part what has left them little-read in academic study. For example, literary critics have long emphasized the responsibility *The Making of Americans* places on the reader to “make sense” of it. Jayne Walker associates *Making*’s use of excessive repetition with Barthes’s “writerly” or blissful text, which provides *jouissance* by allowing the reader to break out of his/her subject position (Walker 194). While Marjorie Perloff argues that Stein evokes an indeterminacy of meaning through syntax that “enacts the gradually changing present of human consciousness” (Perloff, *Poetics of Indeterminacy* 98-99). These critics use the reader’s drive “to make sense” of *Making* as a significant tool for deconstructing habits of identity formation that are based on cultural assumptions about nationality and class, gender and sexuality, and race.¹⁵ Likewise, Freytag-Loringhoven scholars argue that she performed her poetic experiments across all established boundaries—of gender, class, nationality, sexuality, and medium. She performed “irrational effects . . . the seedy and seamy underside of modernism that discourses of high art and architecture have labored to contain through their “dominant models of rational practice” (Jones 10). Indeed, while scholars have noted that Gertrude Stein’s unusual grammatical structures represent social commentary (“all great art is anarchy”),¹⁶ they have also observed that Freytag-Loringhoven’s influence—or “Lifeart” as she calls it—is as much a product of her live, gendered body as it is about stanzas, lines, and poetic feet.

The Making of Americans and Freytag-Loringhoven’s poetry represent modernist

¹⁵ Discussions about these issues abound in studies of *Making*: nationality and class (Wald; Watten), gender and sexuality (Abraham; Berman; DeKoven *A Different Language*; Ruddick *Reading Gertrude Stein*; and Taylor), and race (Doyle; Peterson).

¹⁶As quoted in Dekoven, *A Different Language* 17 and “*Jouisissance*, Cyborgs, and Companion Species” 1692.

experimental texts that are situated in—and duly reflect—the political and cultural contexts of the times. Stein was very aware of the social and political realities of being an experimental writer who needed a market and therefore an audience. Though she famously writes in *Making* that “I am writing for myself and strangers” (§1067),¹⁷ when asked in an interview why she published manuscripts that were written “for herself,” Stein remarks that “There is the eternal vanity of the mind. One wants to see one’s children in the world . . . Anything you create you want to exist, and its means of existence is in being printed” (“A Transatlantic Interview 1946” 516). Stein began her search for a publisher months before her book was finished in 1911. Fourteen years later, when the book was finally published in Paris with Contact Editions in 1925,¹⁸ she had approached and been rejected by two English publishers and more than seven American agents and publishers.¹⁹ While most of the respondents saw the worth of Stein’s experimental endeavor, they were simultaneously unconvinced the book would sell. Mrs. Westmore Wilcox with Macmillan sums up the general response in a letter dated March 1912:

I may be all wrong, but I do not believe that your medium will pass muster. I realize, of course, that you have something to say, but have you said it in any form that anyone else can grasp.

I am sure no American publisher will be able to cope with your book. It is too expensive a venture for too uncertain returns . . . Remember that here [in America] we have the timidity of a new and young people. (qtd. in Gallup 178-179)

¹⁷ Stein subsequently contradicts that statement, calling it “a literary formalism” and by denying it, establishes her novel as a “Masterpiece” according to her own definition—“They [masterpieces] are knowing that there is no identity and producing while identity is not,” she writes (“Masterpieces” 497).

¹⁸ Varying sources place the book’s dates of composition between 1903 and 1911 including breaks, interruptions, other works (such as *Three Lives*, “A Long Gay Book,” “Two,” “Many, Many, Women” and various “portraits”) and miscalculations, including the title page of its first edition in Paris, 1925, which proclaims it was written between 1906-1908.

¹⁹ These rejections included Mrs. Westmore Wilcox with MacMillan, Carl Van Vechten’s publisher Knopf, Ernest Hemingway and Ford Madox Ford with *The Transatlantic*, T.S. Eliot at *The Criterion*, and Charles and Boni, and Liveright (Gallup, “The Making of *The Making of Americans*”).

Mrs. Wilcox's comments highlight the fact that while sections of *Ulysses* and other experimental writings were being published in little magazines such as *The Little Review* and *transition* in the late teens the precedent that would be established by James Joyce and Marcel Proust had yet to be set. Like Stein, Freytag-Loringhoven was often perceived as too provocative and too avant-garde for her community. Much of this reaction to her work was the result of a proliferation of traditional bourgeois values for the roles of men and women, even among experimental writers.²⁰ These were attitudes that Freytag-Loringhoven often criticized in William Carlos Williams' poetry with sexual innuendo: "Put woman into book because cannot put her with good conscience—grace—right touch—any/more into bed!" ("Thee I call Hamlet: Part II" 168). It was because of this overtly sexualized language that she ultimately offended "high art" modernists like Ezra Pound and Ford Madox Ford who had shown interest in her early work. Others seemed confused by their responses to her and her work. After her death, Williams calls her "a carnivorous beast, timid as a rabbit," admitting in the same paragraph that, "I admire her still and couldn't go near her. It's a loss to have her gone, a loss I'm damn glad of. What the hell, she had a rare gift" (UWM).²¹ In particular, it was what Pound called their "principle of non-acquiescence" that "laid a burden" on how Stein and

²⁰ In *Women in Dada: Essays on Sex, Gender, and Identity*, which features two essays about the Baroness, Naomi Sawelson-Gorse introduces the book by considering the misogynist mission of the journal *New York Dada*. Gender played a significant role in the disapprobation that the avant-garde Dadaists showed the Baroness. Dadaists represented primarily male artists who emphasized the importance of technology and science. For instance, Sawelson-Gorse argues that the journal *New York Dada* edited by Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray and appearing once in April 1921 "proposed that the female—unless catholicized, sacredly and mysteriously unsoiled as the Holy Virgin herself—was to be ridiculed on the one hand and, on the other, usurped by appropriation," because "female concerns are superficial, bound in commodifications of bodily vanity (such as skin cream and nail polish) in direct opposition to those of the male in the intellectual sphere, particularly the innovative" (Sawelson-Gorse xi).

²¹ This letter is in the *Little Review* Papers in the Golda Meir Archives at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Subsequent references to this archive are noted as UWM.

Freytag-Loringhoven's work was perceived.²²

Much modernist and avant-garde writing exposes these political and cultural contexts by working to heighten our experience of the techniques and styles that structure our perceptions of language in literature. For this reason, Poirier argues that "Modernist texts are important less for any commentary they offer on contemporary life than for the degree that they empower us, by the strenuous demands they make upon our capacities for attention, to make our own commentaries" ("The Difficulties of Modernism" 114). At the same time, Poirier complicates this assertion by politicizing the work that modernist texts do. He proposes that modernist works reflect the "inadequacy of forms or structures or styles to the life they propose to explain or include," a revelation that "is meant in itself to be a matter of historical importance, regardless of whether the material is historically accredited" (114). In other words, the fact that these texts complicate the transmission of information is part of the meaning they are making. For this reason, Lisa Ruddick foresaw "more capacious vocabularies" in the 1990s for reading Gertrude Stein's work by "critics who are committed to political criticism yet also see literature as having multiple kinds of value, not all precisely coextensive with its ideological value" ("Stein and Cultural Criticism" 657).²³ Reading practices that incorporate the political nature of structure and style are also useful for reading Freytag-Loringhoven's poetry. Her performance was in multimedia: it was language, but it was language that called upon her "lived" expressions, manifested in her dress, her body, and her actions. For this

²² Ezra Pound uses these words to refer to Freytag-Loringhoven in *Canto XCV*: ". . . Well, of course, there was a certain strain/on the gal in them days in Manhattan/the principle of non-acquiescence/laid a burden" (Pound 666).

²³ Ruddick agrees that for literary critics "the problem, throughout these decades, is certainly not that criticism has become 'politicized' . . . The real problem is that puritanism, or let us call it 'sacrificing something important to something more important,' is part of the logic of professions, as of other elites" ("Stein and Cultural Criticism" 657).

reason, Freytag-Loringhoven's biographer Irene Gammel argues that she was "America's first performance artist" while Heap called her "the first American dada," because "she is the only one living anywhere who dresses dada, loves dada, lives dada" (Gammel, *Baroness Elsa* 6; Heap 46). As a Dadaist, Freytag-Loringhoven created poems such as "King Adam" (which makes reference to a real censor) and "Holy Skirts" (which refers to an installment of *Ulysses* published in the same issue) that pushed against the standards for what was considered obscene, a standard by which James Joyce (and the magazine) would eventually be censored and sued. As a result of Freytag-Loringhoven's provocative style, Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap, editors of *The Little Review* in the late teens and 1920s, made "a gender political point, claiming sexual pleasure and agency for American women" by publishing Freytag-Loringhoven's poetry and her photographs in the same issues as controversial excerpts of James Joyce's *Ulysses* (Gammel "German Extravagance" 65). As a consequence of this environment, Freytag-Loringhoven recognized the tenuous nature of the little magazine context in which gaining a readership as a *provocateuse* had consequences. "I had fame that kept me admired, jeered at, feared, and poor," she wrote to Djuna Barnes after leaving the states to return to Germany ("Selections" 26). In other words, her street performances, her painting and sculptures affected the relationships she maintained with her editors and other artists. Ultimately, the context in which these texts were produced reflects the fact that the process of using any technology in cultural productions is historicized, situated, and thus, politicized. Ultimately, both *The Making of Americans* and Freytag-Loringhoven's poetry exemplify the manner in which experimental literary work by women exposes the political dimensions of knowledge production in the modernist era.

B. Choosing digital methodologies

The same case could be made to some degree for most fields of study or research, but it is certainly the case for digital projects that the personal and individual circumstances around which a research project comes to fruition bear greatly on the perspective from which research methodologies are implemented and data is created. Computer-assisted literary analysis is not useful for all texts, in response to all literary questions, or with all computational tools, and developing a useful hypothesis on which to base a computational analysis is always contingent on formulating a worthwhile question that one has the resources to engage. Consequently, this research into works by Stein and Freytag-Loringhoven was greatly facilitated by the level of access I had to certain documents in certain forms, to the computing technologies needed to analyze these objects, to a community of scholars and computing scientists with whom I was able to collaborate, and to sources of funding specifically geared toward work in digital methodologies.

The central documents that shaped the course of this research are a digital version of *The Making of Americans* and digitized transcripts and images representing the manuscript papers of the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven. The digital edition of *The Making of Americans* that I produced to use in the first study came to me from the publisher of the Dalkey Archive Press 1995 edition as a PDF document. My using *Making* for this study was interesting to Dalkey Archive Press²⁴ because it is a nonprofit literary publishing venture committed to keeping books by “the writers who [are] being excluded” from current literary criticism “in print in perpetuity” in order “to continue to

²⁴ Please see <http://www.dalkeyarchive.com/>.

develop audiences for them” (“An Interview with John O'Brien”). Receiving the PDF version was an essential first step for using *Making* for this study because keying the entire book into a text file would have been prohibitive in terms of time and/or cost. At the same time, the PDF file was not in a form that was useful for the text analysis processes I wanted to perform so I transformed the file into a plain-text document (using *Adobe Acrobat* licensed through the University of Maryland, College Park). I then proofread the file, which contained errors, against the printed Dalkey text—a process that could not be automated in part because the Dalkey Archive edition is based on the text Stein published in Paris in 1925, which she and Alice Toklas proofed themselves and published with that a computer program would not be able to differentiate from errors made by subsequent publishers. After proofing the electronic text against the Dalkey Archive edition, I encoded the text in a basic Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) P5 XML (Extensible Markup Language) format, structuring the document into sections and paragraphs that could then be labeled and numbered. Having this file structured in this manner enabled my ability to readily access and refer to specific sections of the text that I could later compare with digital analysis. Essentially, the digital *The Making of Americans* used for this project is an artifact that was typed, printed, digitized for reprinting, and finally reformatted digitally for text analysis.

I encountered other types of access issues in digitizing the extant manuscripts of poetry by the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven. The Papers of Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven are housed in Special Collections at the University of Maryland, Libraries in College Park. While the papers are publically available, the literary curator, Beth Alvarez, granted me special permission to scan and make digital images of each of the

manuscripts needed for this project. In addition, I transcribed and encoded the poems into digital files, again using the TEI P5 XML schema, which in turn allowed me to transform the files with the *Versioning Machine*²⁵ application into browser-readable texts that could be accessed and manipulated by other readers. I came to these projects with a necessary skill set—experience in encoding in TEI XML and in editing—afforded by work I did at a commercial electronic publishing company, as a Graduate Assistant at the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities (MITH)²⁶ and as the Project Manager of the *Dickinson Electronic Archives*.²⁷ In addition, a semester fellowship at MITH was pivotal in allowing me the time to prepare the edition. Finally, free public access to the edition—a condition of access which is essential to the theoretical concept of the “networked text” which I am proposing—has been made possible with the permission of the University of Maryland Libraries and the support and server space provided by the University of Maryland’s Office of Digital Collections and Research (DCR).²⁸ In terms of both *The Making of Americans* and Freytag-Loringhoven’s poetry, access issues were surmountable due to the particular circumstances for dissemination. However, the objects of study that are chosen for digital projects in general come from a pool that is always limited by similar constraints concerning digital access, copyright, funding, and experience. These restraints often preclude research that depends on digital methodologies.

Much of the analysis I performed on these texts was the result of collaborative,

²⁵ Please see <http://v-machine.org>.

²⁶ Please see <http://www.mith.umd.edu/>.

²⁷ Please see <http://www.emilydickinson.org/>.

²⁸ Please see <http://www.lib.umd.edu/dcr/>. In addition, I am hoping to continue editing *The Making of Americans* in order to facilitate ready access to other researchers interested in engaging with the text in this manner.

interdisciplinary work. The concept of interdisciplinary work emerges often in discussions concerning new directions for research within the humanities. This metaphor of assembly, which in many cases is considered basic to accomplishing digital work, is touted as the key to an ontological crisis within the humanities. Cathy N. Davidson and David Theo Goldberg maintain that it is essential that the humanities remain at the forefront of academic inquiry because “the interdisciplinary modes of the humanities . . . concern basic constitutive features of the social sciences, sciences, technology and the professions” (57). Similarly, Latour posits that the critic’s job should be to “assemble” these interdisciplinary features instead of “debunk” them and to be the one who offers “the participants arenas in which to gather” (“Why Has Critique Run out of Steam?” 246).

At the same time, a misperception about *intrinsic* interdisciplinarity within digital methodologies inspires some grandiose preconceptions about the nature of digital work.²⁹ A misperception about the nature of digital methodologies certainly leads to unfulfilled expectations. First, assuming that digital work necessarily comprises collaboration should not preclude asking questions about how this collaboration will be accomplished. Often, collaborative work represents an answer to a very practical need since most humanist scholars are not practiced in the managerial, technical, and academic skills needed to design, create, implement, or support a small or large-scale digital project. However, the infrastructure needed to accomplish what may at first seem like minor goals can be costly

²⁹ For instance, Elizabeth Abel fantasizes about “a distributed cognitive community” that would be the result of “the web dissemination of computer-generated multimedia graphics with interactive properties positioning ‘readers’ as components in nonverbal feedback loops” (339); Jerome McGann implies that productive work or “mastery” in Digital Humanities projects is by necessity “collaborative interdisciplinary work” (“Culture and Technology” 71). Marjorie Perloff posits that the internet is a place that naturally invigorates literary study by virtue of its “social nature” (*Differentials* 14).

both in terms of time and other resources—these resources affect and effect research. Consequently, assuming that an infrastructure and the sources that fund such digital work are somehow already in place within all academic communities would be short sighted and could forestall good work by a scholar with limited digital skills.³⁰ In terms of the research represented in this study, the collaborative community comprising the MONK (Metadata Offer New Knowledge) Project³¹ and the MITH and DCR communities was essential for its progression. The work afforded by these relationships relies on the opportunities these institutions (which are well-funded by universities and national and local grants) facilitated. At the same time, I came to these institutions with a skill set that made me self-sufficient and offset what were at times limited sources. For instance, my work studying frequent patterns within *Making* served as one of three case studies in the MONK project. Project development within MONK, a Mellon-funded collaborative including computing, design, library science, and English departments at multiple universities, was based on the fact that these studies represented current literary scholarship in which text mining and visualization applications were needed to analyze large-scale text collections.³² Since the particular reading difficulties engendered by the complicated patterns of repetition in *Making* mirror those a reader might face attempting to analyze a large collection of texts at once, my use case was integral in our understanding the difficulties a user would face in her attempt to understand the vast amounts of processed data that result from mining the texts that might comprise a large

³⁰ While there are many more grant opportunities, agencies, and academic institutions that support digital work in existence than ever before, there are never enough resources to support the wide range of digital projects that scholars would like to pursue.

³¹ Please see <http://www.monkproject.org/> .

³² These large-scale collections included Early American Fiction Collection (<http://etext.virginia.edu/eaf/>), Documenting the American South (<http://docsouth.unc.edu/>), Nineteenth Century Fiction (<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/efts/NCF/>), and Wright American Fiction (<http://www.letrs.indiana.edu/web/w/wright2/>) among others.

collection. Because of the nature of the text, we were able to parse and visualize *Making*'s many and complicated speech patterns without having to rely on a system for handling multiple texts from multiple collections that represent different encoding standards.

At the same time, the difficulties I faced attempting to analyze the large body of results that these computational analytics generated led to new discoveries as well. In our initial analyses of *Making* using a frequent pattern analysis algorithm³³ in the Data to Knowledge (D2K)³⁴ application environment, we generated thousands of co-occurring patterns. Executing the algorithm on the text generated thousands of patterns since each slight variation in a repetition generated a new pattern. As such, the results were presented as incomprehensible lists that were long and divorced from the text.³⁵ I was able to discover two large 495-word-spans of almost exact duplication by searching the text results in a browser window, which piqued my interest about other patterns in the text, but the result set was so large and unorganized that it was extremely difficult to uncover other patterns. In the D2K analysis, establishing these patterns was a function of moving a window over trigrams³⁶ (a 3-word series), one word at a time, until each of *Making*'s 3000 paragraphs had been analyzed for co-occurring trigrams. In order to further parse the results, I helped to develop *FeatureLens* in collaboration with a team of

³³ See Pei, *et al.*

³⁴ Developed by the Automated Learning Group (ALG) at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA), <http://alg.ncsa.uiuc.edu> .

³⁵ Examples of frequent co-occurring patterns from the text may be found at <ftp://ftp.ncsa.uiuc.edu/alg/tanya/withstem> (any file on this list opens in a browser to reveal thousands of patterns).

³⁶ N-grams may be thought of as a sequence of items of “n” length, usually used as a basis for analysis in natural language processing and genetic sequence analysis.

researchers at the Human Computer Interaction Lab (HCIL).³⁷ Ultimately, D2K's clustering analysis allowed me to use statistical methods to chart repetition across thousands of paragraphs, but the *FeatureLens* interface facilitated my ability to read the results by allowing me to sort those results in different ways and view them within the context of the text. In addition, the data that I used to visualize the patterns of repetition as they occur across that text as a whole was created in coordination with Martin Mueller (a MONK collaborator in the English and Classics departments at Northwestern University) who helped to develop the algorithm used to parse out repetition in the text. This algorithm was developed in coordination with Craig Berry who wrote the software in order to study repetitive patterns in *The Iliad* and *Odyssey* as well as those in the poems of Hesiod and the Homeric Hymns.³⁸ These milestones in my research would have been inaccessible without the MONK team just as my contribution to the project as a user with a research need was necessary to determine what reading capabilities were needed to understand the results. The opportunity to pursue these particular methodologies entailed a complicated network of support, but it also required that I supplement my own skill set in order to facilitate the collaboration. Like collaborative work in literary scholarship, collaborative digital methodologies are always political in nature—collaborative work shaped my methods and therefore shaped my research and results.

The second essential problem with contriving the computing humanist as inherently interdisciplinary within any given research project is the accompanying perspective that

³⁷ The list of participants and more about the project is at <http://www.cs.umd.edu/hcil/textvis/featurelens/>. A working demo of *The Making of Americans* within *FeaturLens* is at <http://monk.lis.uiuc.edu:6060/openlaszlo-3.3.3-servlet/my-apps/featurelens-moa/src/featurelens.lzx>. Start the application by selecting the “load” button and choosing *The Making of Americans* under “collection.”

³⁸ At the time, Berry was working with Northwestern University's Academic Technologies—a unit within the Northwestern University Library. They ultimately created the “Chicago Homer,” which produces the same kind of data from the repetitive patterns in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as well as for the poems of Hesiod and the Homeric Hymns. Please see <http://www.library.northwestern.edu/homer/>.

this humanist has in some sense “mastered” all correlative domains. Interdisciplinarity itself is not necessarily a cross to bear but the corresponding notion that the digital humanist is somehow outside of the field of a given field of inquiry and therefore able to see what a scholar deep within that discipline cannot is a notion that appears to correlate with these claims. For instance, while McCarty notes that covering a wide knowledge base is assumed to be “collaborative” and based on “genuine conversation,” he imagines the computing humanist as a “metadisciplinary” practitioner within a “Methodological Commons of humanities computing”³⁹ that comprises twenty-two “disciplinary kinships” that cover the wide range of disciplines from which computing application and research draws such as cognitive science, law, performance studies, linguistics, musicology, etc. (*Humanities Computing* 131). From McCarty’s perspective, this practitioner needs to be able to see “with an outsider’s objectivity” and to have the “migratory,” “itinerant,” and “performative ability to move in and out of disciplines, back and forth between duck and rabbit . . . while carrying its own intellectual load on its back” (136). As a consequence of this perspective, McCarty argues, the Digital Humanities practitioner⁴⁰ is an interdisciplinarian best positioned to affect “a sea change” (116) within fields of knowledge production:

That fact is that given the current dispensation, our paradigmatic conversation between practitioner and scholar, despite abundant goodwill and intelligence on both sides, is likely to happen in a conversational space strongly delimited by the scholar’s particular specialism. The interdisciplinary ability to step outside that space, so as to connect the problem in question with a method, vocabulary or way of thinking uncommon to that scholar’s discipline, must, then, be the practitioner’s responsibility. (McCarty, *Humanities Computing* 134)

³⁹ Please see the visualization of this commons in *Humanities Computing*, pg. 119

⁴⁰ McCarty explains that “practitioner” and “scholar” are terms meant to differentiate roles, not to imply that a “practitioner” is any “less concerned with erudition” or a scholar with “intelligent and effective method” *Humanities Computing* 117.

Without this perspective from without (or above), this argument contends, the scholar (whom this digital practitioner is helping) is not “liberate[d] from the censure of difficulty and so allow[ed]. . . to go in heretofore forbidding directions” (128). In practice, however, the digital practitioner who assumes that a breadth of skills is more productive in terms of critical research than a depth of knowledge about even a portion of McCarty’s “Methodological Commons” is working counter to true interdisciplinary work since this kind of *mastery* precludes access to many modes of knowledge production.

A desire for mastery is not unusual within research that depends on digital methodologies. For instance, in bemoaning the general “degree of ignorance about information technology and its critical relevance to humanities education and scholarship” that exists within humanist studies Jerome McGann insists, “I’ve spent almost twenty years,” he writes, “studying this subject in the only way that gives one a chance of mastering it. That is, by hands-on collaborative interdisciplinary work;” McGann continues, “You don’t learn a language by talking about it or reading books. You learn it by speaking it and writing it. There’s no other way. Anything less is just, well, theoretical” (“Culture and Technology” 71). It may be true that designing and building tools gives one a knowledge of its processes that is indispensable, but what does “mastery” (or “wisdom”) mean in any given scenario? What does mastery mean in regards to using computers? John F. Sowa writes that “to be useful, a computer program must represent information about things in the world,” much of which can be interpreted in wildly different ways since “computerized information passes through many levels of representations of representations of representations” (Sowa 186). Just as any visualization has an inherent limitation of space (such as the computer screen) that results

in “occlusion of data, disorientation, and misinterpretation” (Shneiderman “Inventing Discovery Tools”) so do “central and important terms” in computer science have “slightly different meanings in different applications” due to the “vagueness, uncertainty, randomness, and ignorance” that makes up the “habits, vague intuitions, and ‘gut feelings’” or “knowledge soup” in peoples’ minds (Sowa 352). Indeed, the layering of representations becomes even more complex as we use digital tools to look at literary texts. Consider, for example, this description of typical data mining procedures for developers who usually “have only a superficial understanding” of what is usually numerical data:

They accept what they are given by the domain experts and do not have a deep understanding of the measurements or their relationship with each other. Results are analyzed primarily by empirical analysis. When something goes awry, we may have difficulty in attributing this to problems with the collection process or the specification of the features. (Weiss *et al.* 51)

The authors maintain, however, that text mining procedures are easier for developers than more quantitative data mining. “For text mining,” they write, “we are much closer to understanding the data, and *we all have some expertise*. The document is text. We can read and comprehend it, and we analyze a result by going directly to the documents of interest” (emphasis added; Weiss *et al.* 51-52). But what if the text is *The Making of Americans* or *Finnegans Wake* or, for that matter, any text that emphasizes the multiple, meaning-making properties of a literary text? How often are developers experts in literary study? And if they were, how often is there a common, agree-upon meaning of the words in a literary text? How then can we *master* much less comprehend the results that come from text mining procedures performed on it?

The desire for mastery is not new to humanist research since the development of

digital tools, and the desire to counter the need for mastery is not new within literary study. Indeed, Richard Poirier insists that modernist texts were created precisely to inspire us to let go of this desire for mastery in all our technologies for producing knowledge. “All literature is to some extent aware of itself as a technology,” he writes, “But literary modernism thrusts this awareness upon us and to an unprecedented degree asks us to experience the enormous difficulties of mastering a technology” (113). In particular, Megan Simpson argues that Stein’s “writing challenges not only normative reading habits but the literary ‘values’ such habits depend on: clarity, unproblematized reference, linearity, decodable meaning” and that “those who find Stein’s work to be quite readable not in spite of, but *because of* the absence of these qualities seem to feel liberated from the imperative toward mastery implicit in the traditional model of literary interpretation” (46). Likewise, we cannot access the alternative interpretations that digital tools can facilitate unless we let go of the given precept that interdisciplinary work is *natural* in any field and that mastering a mode of analysis is necessary, possible, or even desirable when using digital tools to analyze literary texts.⁴¹ It is for these reasons that modernist texts were chosen for this study—for the extent to which engaging them with digital tools teaches us that digital tools can’t do what humanists can’t do either. That is, digital analysis and digital environments are not necessarily any more helpful than non-digital technologies in closing the many inquiries scholars open when reading literary texts, but digital tools may help us ask new questions.

⁴¹ According to Mary Hawkesworth, “if one starts from the assumption that the sole test for the validity of a proposition lies in its measurement against the empirically ‘given’” then in “the absence of the ‘given,’ no rational judgments can be made concerning the validity of particular claims” (48).

II. Methodologies for research

By facilitating readings that allow submerged textual and social patterns to emerge, I use digital tools to offer new kinds of evidence and uncover new opportunities for resituating works such as *The Making of Americans* and poetry by Freytag-Loringhoven within modernist studies. At the same time, I avoid stimulating overblown hopes about the resolutions that digital tools may offer. While literary theory of the 20th and 21st century has emphasized the perspective that literary texts are worthwhile to the extent that they resist simple evaluative resolutions, literary scholars have sometimes misperceived digital methodologies as practices geared toward simplification and solution. In contrast, in my analysis of *The Making of Americans* and poetry by Freytag-Loringhoven, I explore questions with which I seek to illuminate how digital tools can help expose the complicated technologies that comprise these texts. Thus, the research questions and methodologies I incorporate in analyzing *The Making of Americans* and Freytag-Loringhoven's poetry are not only contingent on the experimental and politicized nature of these texts, the access I had to digital versions, and the opportunity I had to collaborate with so many other practitioners and scholars. In addition, I formulated questions that engaged these methodologies based on what I perceived were the reasons these texts were undervalued in literary study. That is, I hypothesized that digital analysis could provide new reading practices that would alleviate some of the reading difficulties that were particular to these experimental texts within current literary research. Consequently, digital analysis might also expose new ways in which these rich texts complicate our current understandings about modes of signification.

A. Analyzing *The Making of Americans* by Gertrude Stein

In part, I chose *The Making of Americans* for this study because of Stein's use of experimental linguistic techniques. Indeed, "making language new" through composition was a primary goal for Stein who believed that "everybody talks as the newspapers and movies and radios tell them to talk the spoken language is no longer interesting and so gradually the written language says something and says it differently than the spoken language" (*Everybody's Autobiography* 13). David Hoover, however, writes that the kind of quantitative analysis needed to expose techniques like Stein's "has not had much impact on traditional literary studies" for two reasons: (1) "quantitative studies fail to address problems of real literary significance, ignore the subject-specific background, or concentrate too heavily on technology or software," and (2) because literary critics have "turn(ed) their attention away from the text and toward its social, cultural, economic, and political contexts, and distrust any approach that suggests a scientific or 'objective' methodology" ("Quantitative Analysis and Literary Studies" 532). Yet, Stein scholars have been ever mindful of *Making's* more formalist properties—the nature of its experimentation demands it. Marianne DeKoven calls Stein's writing "experimental" instead of modernist, postmodernist or avant-garde to "emphasize that it violates and reshapes not just the conventions of literature, as modern, postmodern, and avant-garde works have done, but, in addition, the conventions of language itself" (*A Different Language* xiv).⁴² The modes of reading that a text such as *The Making of Americans*

⁴² Even contemporaries noticed the importance of structure in the text. Carl Van Vechten, who had read *The Making of Americans* manuscript in 1922, called the work a "noble shrine" in which "not a single word is formed in an imitative or echoing manner" ("Medals for Miss Stein" 23-24). Katherine Anne Porter wrote that *The Making of Americans* is a living text: "Her efforts to get at the roots of existing life, to create fresh life of them, give her words a stark liquid flowingness, like the murmur of the blood" ("Everybody is a Real One" 36). Of course, reviews about the "difficult" nature of *The Making of Americans* are not all

disrupts are what Marianne DeKoven has called “patriarchal” or modes that are “linear, orderly, closed, hierarchical, sensible, coherent, referential, and heavily focused on the signified” (*A Different Language* xiii). Stein replaces these with what DeKoven describes as “anti-patriarchal” modes that are “incoherent, open-ended, anarchic, irreducibly multiple, and focused on what Barthes calls ‘the magic of the signifier’” (*A Different Language* xiii). That grammatical structures such as the repetition engage scholars with the text’s ideological underpinnings is extremely important for this study because it means that my research is already situated in the ongoing ideological conversation concerning the work the structure of the text does in relation to its cultural context. At the same time, because of the extensive nature of the repetition, digital tools facilitated my further analysis into the structure of the text in ways that would have been prohibitive with just pencil and paper.

Various digital tools facilitated my initial exploration into the role repetition plays in the text. For instance, looking at word frequencies in *Making* compared to word frequencies of other texts of comparable size or those of the same time period⁴³ encouraged me to ask questions about how repetition is working within the text. These results appear in Figure 1. In the chart, it is clear that *Making* has the largest number of words or tokens (row two), the least number of unique words or types (row three), and also the largest average word frequency (row five). The reason this text has the largest

positive. Malcolm Cowley, for example, called the novel “one of the hardest books to read from beginning to end that has ever been published,” because Stein employed “experiments in grammar that interfered with her other scientific purpose by drawing a veil of incomprehension or plain boredom between herself and the reader” (“Gertrude Stein, Writer or Word Scientist” 148).

⁴³ The texts considered for this study were limited by availability. All of the texts seen here were freely available from Project Gutenberg (http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main_Page) and were chosen because they are seminal texts of varied lengths from the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

standard deviation (row six) is that each repeated word is repeated more times than is expected in a statistical bell curve based on the numbers in the previous three rows.

Text Source	Moby-Dick	Uncle Tom's Cabin	Bleak House	Swann's Way	Ulysses	Finnegans Wake	The Making of Americans
Average word length	4.36	4.06	4.13	4.30	4.40	4.66	4.18
Total words (tokens)	218284	187810	362027	198760	268180	221702	517,207
Unique words (types)	17001	11513	14954	12586	28947	57829	5329
Highest word frequency	14441	7749	14969	9875	14926	12048	20,628
Average word frequency (Token/Type)	12.84	16.31	24.21	15.79	9.26	3.83	97.06
Standard Deviation of word frequencies	161.50	154.31	268.11	169.30	139.23	82.22	773.89

Figure 1: Table of word frequencies from texts comparable in size and/or composition date to *The Making of Americans*⁴⁴

For the most part, the number of unique words in each novel appears to be comparable to the number of times the most frequent word occurs except in the case of *The Making of Americans*. In fact, by comparing the standard deviations with the average word frequency one can readily see that there are large deviations from the mean for all the values in the *Making* data set.⁴⁵ In other words, though *The Making of Americans* is highly repetitive, it does not repeat all words with equal frequency. Consequently,

⁴⁴ In

Figure 1, the novels are arranged in the order that they were published.

⁴⁵The standard deviation is calculated by calculated by calculating the difference between a word's frequency and the mean of the data, then squaring this value. Next, all values for each word are added together and the average is calculated by dividing the total by the number of values. This is known as the variance. The square root of the variance is the standard deviation.

because of the nature of the word frequencies, a new question is raised: which words are these and why and how are they used?

For instance, digital analysis can quickly show us that *Making* does not use “new words” in the same fashion as at least two of these other texts. Data in the next visualizations was created with an analysis and visualization tool called the Vocabulary-Management Profile, version 2.2 (VMP2.2).⁴⁶ This tool’s analytic procedure entails “plot[ting] the average ratios (between 0.0 and 1.0) for each word in a preset moving interval of thirty-five words” (“How to Generate VMP2.2s”).⁴⁷ This ratio is based on the type ratio divided by the token ratio for each word where type equals the single occurrence of each distinct word (or form of lexeme) and tokens are the total number of words.⁴⁸ In comparing the VMP2.2 data generated for *The Making of Americans* to *Ulysses* or *Swann’s Way*, it is easy to see that these texts differ greatly in terms of when and how new words are introduced. It appears that *Making* has much higher peaks and greater valleys⁴⁹ than those apparent from measuring both *Swann’s Way* and *Ulysses* though there are moments in *Ulysses* where aberrations seem to occur. Using digital analysis and visualizations to see how different sets of data from *The Making of*

⁴⁶ Created by Gilbert Youmans and Nathan Pauley at <http://web.missouri.edu/~youmansc/vmp/>.

⁴⁷ Gilbert Youmans found a strong correlation between paragraph boundaries and valleys on VMP1s that were constructed with 35-word moving intervals (Youmans “A New Tool for Discourse Analysis: the Vocabulary-Management Profile”). In contrast, Youmans used a 55-word interval to investigate the correlation between VMP1 and the boundaries between numbered sections in two short stories by William Faulkner (Youmans “The Vocabulary-Management-Profile: Two Stories by William Faulkner”).

⁴⁸ In explanation, the creators write that the formula for computing VMP2.2 counts new vocabulary as = 1.0 and repeated words as a ratio > 0.0 based on how recently the word occurred in the text. “Recently” is determined by “(Number of Current Word - Number of Previous Occurrence - 1)/(Total tokens in the Text - 1).” Further, The creators maintain that this is procedure mimics a “second reading” approach because the first thirty-five word window begins with the seventeenth word from the end of a text and wraps through to the eighteenth word of the beginning of the text. The next ratio is computed for the sixteenth word from the end of the text through to the nineteenth word of the beginning of the text and so on throughout the text, thereby creating a moving window that generates an average of ratios for each word.

⁴⁹ This is due to the fact that *The Making of Americans* has a comparatively lower average mean and standard deviation (0.02; 0.03) than the other texts (0.07;0.05 and 0.11;0.08 respectively).

Americans are represented shows that the text's structure works in stark contrast to these other texts. Yet, the new questions remain: *how* is Stein's text different and *why*? What are the particulars of new-word usage in *Making* that make it differ so greatly in form than these other novels and to what end?

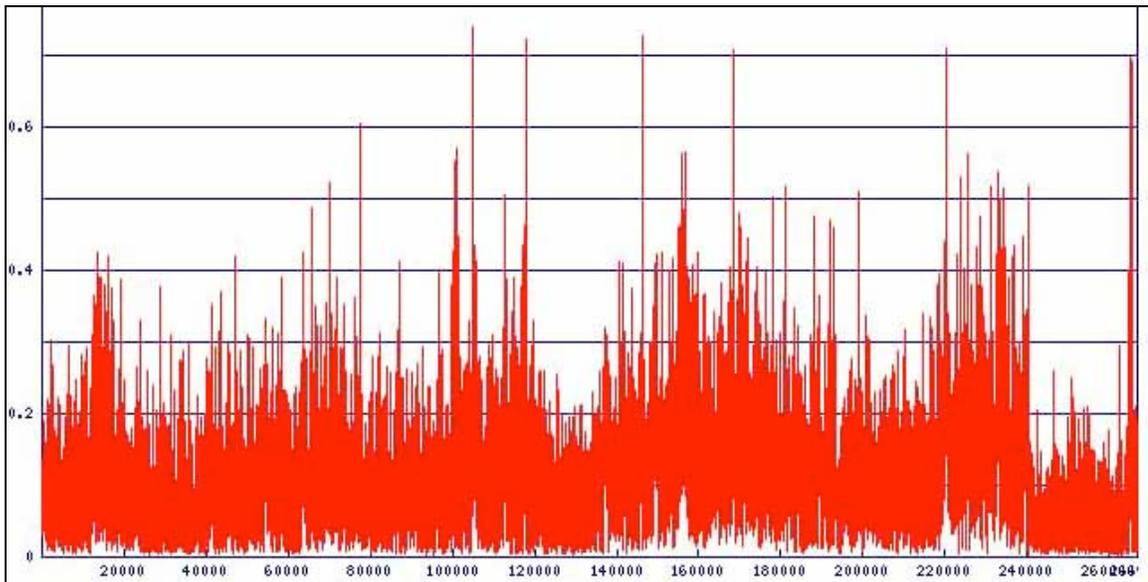


Figure 2: Narrative versus description in *The Making of Americans*, VMP2.2

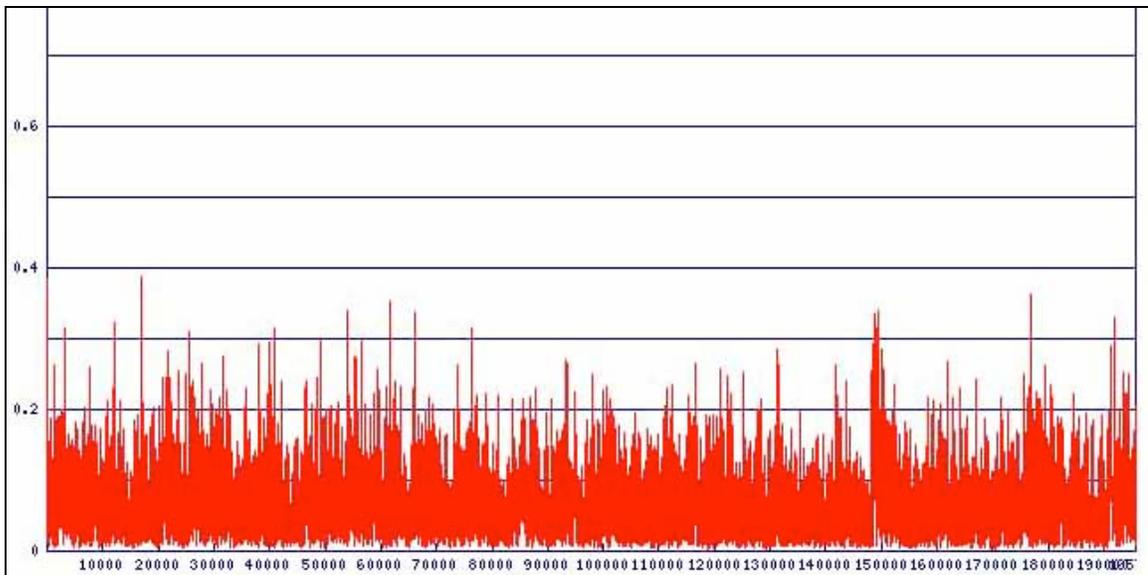


Figure 3: Narrative versus description in *Swann's Way*, VMP2.2

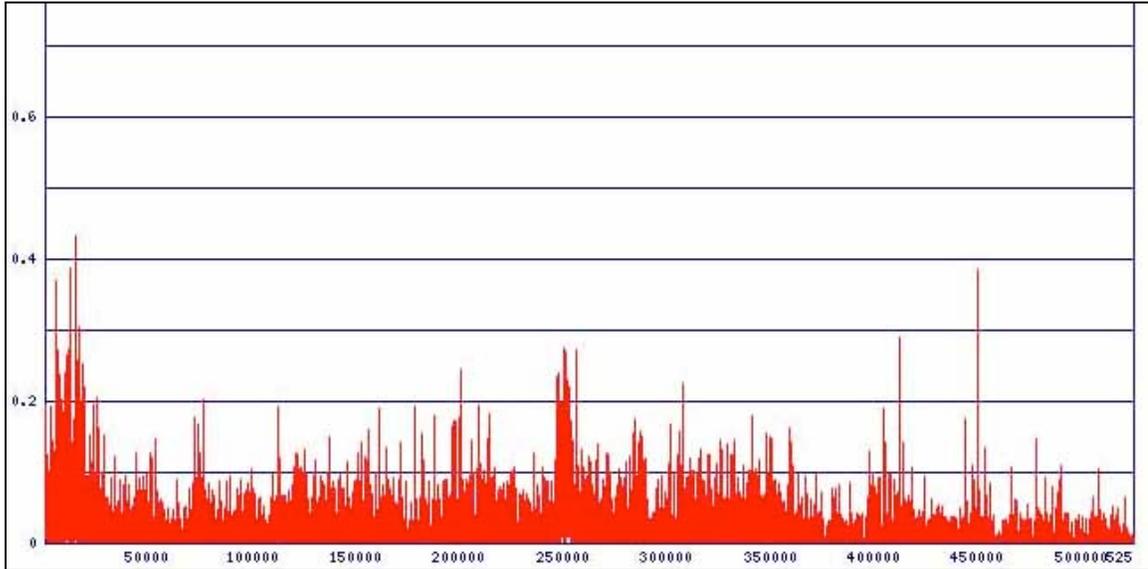


Figure 4: Narrative versus description in *Ulysses*, VMP2.2

In addition to generating new research questions, these explorations demonstrate that mapping and comparing the occurrence of word usage patterns such as word frequencies yields interesting insight into a literary text.⁵⁰ Because of these initial explorations into word frequencies, I sought digital methodologies such as linguistic analysis and visualizations to explore questions about how and why *Making* is structured in this manner. Using linguistic analysis to chart subtle linguistic variations has some precedence in literary studies. In John Burrow’s classic 1987 text *Computation into Criticism*, for instance, his goal is an attempt “to prevent broad resemblances from obscuring subtle differences” by exploring how counting what had previously been considered “insignificant” (words such as “of” and “the” and “in”) can point to “larger”

⁵⁰ Of course, with some texts this kind of analysis is misleading. That is, while numbers often signify discrete values, a word may be defined differently by different people or, in this case, by different analytical machinations. For example, one reason that *Finnegan’s Wake* registers with such a high frequency of “unique” words or tokens is because it creates its own “words” by creating sounds such as “tauftauf thuartpeatrick” and “bababadalgharaghtakamminarronnkonnbronnntonnerronnntuonnthunntrovarrhounawnskwntooohooordenen thurnuk!” or linking words together such as “upturnpikepointandplace” and “devlinsfirst.”

arguments about style within Jane Austen's oeuvre (179-180). That is, Burrows argues, "From no other evidence than statistical analysis of the relative frequencies of the very common words, it is possible to differentiate sharply and appropriately among the idiolects of Jane Austen's characters and even to trace the ways in which an idiolect can develop in the course of a novel" (Burrows 4). The multivariate statistical techniques that Burrows used (such as principal component analysis which is used to reduce a data set to its most "useful" dimensions of variance and probability distribution tests such as Student's *t*-test and the Mann-Whitney test) are still cited as standard protocol in a study performed almost twenty years later by C.W.F. McKenna and A. Antonia. McKenna and Antonia examine Joyce's 'Nausicaa' episode from *Ulysses* by focusing on two modals: "could" and "would;" two causal conjunctives: "so" and "because;" and prepositional phrases beginning with "like." When mapped and plotted against characters in other episodes, the authors argue, these words reflect the extent to which the character Gerty MacDowell does not understand her social world or have any power in it. Likewise, Stephen Ramsay has used a tool called *StageGraph* to cluster Shakespearean plays based solely on "low-level" structural elements such as the length of acts, scene changes, and character movements. The clusterings map remarkably well to genre classifications previously discussed by critics, which allows Ramsay to explore the idea that abstract genres such as "tragedy" or "history" have a direct correlation to these "low hanging" structural elements ("In Praise of Pattern"). By identifying quantifiable pieces of a text (based on word frequencies and locations), these scholars have sought ways in which the structure of a text corresponds to what has been gradually known about a text on an abstract level.

For this study, text mining procedures proved to be productive in initially illuminating the structural patterns that *The Making of Americans* engages. The objective of an analysis like predictive text mining may be understood as threefold: [a] to examine a large collection of documents (such as *Making's* 3000 paragraphs), [b] to learn decision criteria for classification (such as clustering repetitive phrases or patterns of parts-of-speech), and [c] to apply these criteria to new documents (to let the algorithm map similar relationships in other paragraphs) (Weiss *et al.* 85-86). Yet, the rest of my process for reading *The Making of Americans* concerns text mining to the extent that the study became an exploration into determining which features of the text and which visualizations of those features were most productive for my research. As such, even though I began by pursuing text mining as an approach, my further discussion of the text in chapters two and three corresponds to how I discovered which textual features (n-grams, parts-of-speech, and log-likelihood ratios) and which visualizations (*FeatureLens*, *Spotfire*, *Wordle*, and *PosViz*) would facilitate my ability to engage the features of the text in what I saw as productive analysis. Returning to text mining, especially to the extent that such practices could engage comparisons across a wide range of texts, must remain a future goal.⁵¹

B. Analyzing the poetic event of a Freytag-Loringhoven poem

In Freytag-Loringhoven studies, understanding the presence and lack of the body has become an important aspect of understanding her art and performances. For instance, her biographer Irene Gammel places much emphasis on the poet's ability to put herself "in control" by "putting her spectators at a distance;" Freytag-Loringhoven accomplishes

⁵¹ Currently, though there are many projects with text mining goals, processes are not in place for furthering this kind of research within the academy.

this control, Gammel argues, by the manner in which she “deflates the potential eroticism” of her nude performances “through humorous costuming: vegetables adorn her body; stamps decorate her painted face; her hair is shaved and head lacquered in a striking color” (*Baroness Elsa* 52). While this kind of attention to her street performances situates the poet in cultural and performance studies, however, it does not provide a place for Freytag-Loringhoven in the literary discussion of modernism. Critical work done to explore the formation of the modernist canon suggested to me that access to two essential aspects of Freytag-Loringhoven’s avant-garde work (her experimentation with language and her social network) would not only yield productive questions about the nature of her exclusion from current study in literary modernism, but would also provide for a digital engagement with her work.

Much work has been done in modernist studies in which scholars reconsider the formation of the modernist canon. For example, in discovering and including “missed” modernist narratives, Raymond Williams and Bonnie Kime Scott have attempted to expand definitions of modernism by including neglected “others” or “outsiders.” This work, however, still excludes Freytag-Loringhoven. Williams makes a plea to the academic community to “search out and counterpose an alternative tradition taken from the neglected works left in the wide margin of the century” (*The Politics of Modernism* 35). He suggests that the metropolis affords four main categories of influence on the universalities attributed to modernism and that these influences exclude fringe writers. These categories of influence include (1) “exceptional liberties of expression” (44); (2) opportunities from non-traditional patronage (45); (3) language which is “more evident as a medium—a medium that could be shaped and reshaped—than as a social custom” (46);

and (4) “no formed and settled society to which the new kinds of work could be related” making “the medium as that which, in an unprecedented way, defined art” (46). In establishing specifically metropolitan universals that must be debunked in order to broaden the spectrum that is modernism, however, Williams creates new binaries that actually work toward continuing Freytag-Loringhoven’s exclusion. For example, on one level, Freytag-Loringhoven fits neatly into Williams’s assumption that language in modernist writing is “more evident as a medium—a medium that could be shaped and reshaped—than as a social custom” (46). As an immigrant and bilingual speaker, however, Freytag-Loringhoven’s focus on language conventions within her experimental project is *also* the result of her social customs. In a letter written to Djuna Barnes after her return to Germany in 1923, Freytag-Loringhoven re-examines her relationship to both American and German cultures as it relates to the manifestation of English and German in her writing:

I know why I beg! I ask for my soul’s honour, mental activity. I only move in English sounds. I am homesick for English language, my ear declines, my taste nauseated by German sound—and yet I lose my facility in English, words come not easy, sometimes meaning is doubtful, new expressions do not present themselves. As much as I read English, it is not alive—living, because I am not, hence no fluctuation, instigation—creation . . . must again dream in English . . . I am left drifting old wreck—no I cannot—I cannot—I cannot, I am too proud!

I cannot stand the Germans, I cannot stand their language. I am traitor here! (“Selections” 20)

In this piece, the Baroness’s physical state is a manifestation of her language. When her English is dead, she is physically stilted. When she speaks German, she is physically sick. She laments her loss of English as if she were a painter who had lost use of her fingers or a dancer unable to walk. In contrast to Williams’s assertion that modernists who interacted with—or in some cases were—immigrants, perceived language not “in the old

sense, customary and naturalized but in many ways arbitrary and conventional” (Williams, *The Politics of Modernism* 45-46), the Baroness experienced language as a synaesthete might—she “move[d] in English sound,” her “taste nauseated by German sound.” While Freytag-Loringhoven saw within language conventions a significant element of what she considered her naturalized identity, she also used linguistic codes as experimental tools for play and, as such, an essential aspect of provocation within her Dadaist project. Because Freytag-Loringhoven and her work complicate each of Raymond Williams’s universals, she poses an excellent example of the ways in which the pursuit to include “fringe” artists reinscribes traditional perspectives within the academy.

Like Raymond Williams, Scott argues for a new literary scope and expanded definitions of community that would include, among other literary influences and themes, colonial, nonexperimental, non-English, and Harlem Renaissance texts. Unlike Williams, whose search for the “margins” keeps the center (i.e., the canon) centered, Scott proposes a constellation of texts and contexts that encourages research questions exploring the significance of social networks like Freytag-Loringhoven’s. Scott calls for a web-like mapping that constellates all centers by requiring the inclusion of multiple and equally important centers. Accordingly, she considers modernist texts and authors in a web of associations around three primary modernist authors”—Virginia Woolf, Rebecca West, and Djuna Barnes—“where typically a cluster of male figures have stood (*Refiguring Modernism* xvi). The web metaphor allows Scott to identify an array of elements that “had not previously been figured as important to modernism” including dates and associated events, figurative patterns, and “workable domestic and professional arrangements” (xvi). Consequently, Scott’s paradigm—which is based partially on

artistic and social relations—creates the possibility for including Freytag-Loringhoven’s unique context. The web metaphor provides a theoretical structure that allows for new anchors without disrupting those that have already been established by allowing tradition and development to begin from a de-centered center. As such, Scott is able to incorporate the fringe of metropolitan life in which a woman who is poor, provincial, and foreign-born is also an influential poet in the metropolis. The model that Scott uses in her re-evaluation of modernism establishes a model of inquiry that is productive in locating Freytag-Loringhoven since it focuses on establishing new networks of associations.

As part of this conversation about opening the modernist canon, I provide access to a reevaluation of Freytag-Loringhoven’s poetry by providing a new perspective on the element of language play that Williams identifies and the social contexts that Scott emphasizes. In particular, my methodology for achieving this goal is to redefine the poetic event of a Freytag-Loringhoven poem by providing an expanded view of the “valid” object of study. What are our objects of study? What is a text? What is a poem? What is literary? Within McCarty’s “Methodological Commons,” objects of study are text, images, sound, numbers, analytical tools and data structures. For a humanist scholar such as Geoffrey Harpham a “text” may mean “any material artifact—a cityscape, a carved bone, an earthwork” (23).⁵² For literary scholars such as Perloff and McCarty the term “poetic”⁵³ refers to the interplay of material, linguistic, and bibliographic codes.⁵⁴

Representing and analyzing a Freytag-Loringhoven poem in a digital environment

⁵² Harpham goes on to say “that the humanities have the text as their object, humanity as their subject, and self-understanding as their purpose” (23).

⁵³ Perloff distinguishes here between the “imprecise” 18th century term “literature” and “poetics,” which she claims has a “much more ancient and cross-cultural lineage” (*Differentials* 6). McCarty also uses the term “poetic” referring to the language of literary texts (*Humanities Computing* 5).

⁵⁴ Bibliographic and linguistic codes are terms that McGann employs in *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*.

requires definitions of text that incorporate many of the aspects of textuality that Harpham, Perloff, McCarty, and a host of social text theorists (such as Jerome McGann and D.F. McKenzie) and genetic text theorists (such as Jed Deppman, Daniel Ferrer, and Michael Groden) proffer *plus* those that performance scholars such as Judith Butler and Peggy Phelan consider. Essentially, what is unique about Freytag-Loringhoven, what makes her poetry texts difficult to access through traditional (and new) practices of literary analysis and presentation pertains to an element of textual performance that was so essential to her poetic performances during her time: her particular social network. By introducing a theory of textual performance in chapter four, I am arguing that new modes of social interaction with texts may incorporate some aspects of audience collaboration that are similar to those which engaged the modernist, little magazine community. This goal is put into practice by the work in chapter five, which comprises a digital scholarly edition that I have encoded using TEI parallel segmentation, and presented in an online environment (the *Versioning Machine*). Eventually, in order to incorporate audience collaboration, this environment will be immersed within an online social network such as *MySpace* or *Facebook*.⁵⁵ Ultimately, by reconsidering what constitutes the textual event of a literary text, we identify new principles for literary inquiry and lift restrictions on the activities acceptable as literary study—such as those comprising work in digital studies.⁵⁶ The first step in illuminating the manner in which language conventions and social networks influence meaning-making in Freytag-Loringhoven’s work is to define the textuality of her poetry as a textual performance.

⁵⁵ Please see the *MySpace* site created for Freytag-Loringhoven at <http://www.myspace.com/dadaqueen>. On *Facebook*, there is currently only an appreciation group.

⁵⁶ This list is adapted from Hawkesworth who describes the feminist activity of “circumscribing the subject matter appropriate to ‘science.’” (53).

In order to explore how Freytag-Loringhoven's textual performances may be situated in academic study, I have engaged a method of representation that has value based on much critical and practical tradition in the humanities: the digital scholarly edition. Plainly, the digital environment is not the only appropriate venue for displaying a multifarious textual event of a William Blake, Emily Dickinson, or Walt Whitman poem or, for that matter, a poem by Freytag-Loringhoven, but as a medium with different restrictions and different possibilities than the print environment, it does encourage editors to reevaluate their editorial expectations about the method by which they put into practice their editorial theories and how that method may change prevailing concepts of textuality. Jerome McGann once argued that "we no longer have to use books to analyze and study other books or texts," claiming that "electronic tools in literary studies don't simply provide a new point of view on the materials, they lift one's general level of attention to a higher order" ("Rationale of Hypertext"). As a result of theories like McGann's, enthusiasm for the digital über-edition peaked and was codified into recommendations for practice in the 1990s. Indeed, the attempt (in many cases) to implement some of the specifications set forth in guidelines such as Peter Shillingsburg's essay "Principles for Electronic Archives, Scholarly Editions, and Tutorials" (originally published in 1993)⁵⁷ and Charles Faulhaber's "Guidelines for Electronic Scholarly Editions" (Modern Language Association 1998)⁵⁸ encouraged impractical goals and lofty

⁵⁷ These guidelines were originally distributed at the Modern Language Association conference in Toronto in December 1993 and became the basis for Charles Faulhaber's MLA "Guidelines for Electronic Scholarly Editions" (1998).

⁵⁸ The academic community used these 1998 guidelines until the latest revision in 2005, which now incorporates guidelines for both print and electronic editions in the combined "Guidelines for Editors of Scholarly Editions." For a full account of how the MLA Committee for Scholarly Editions produced the current guidelines, please read the "Report from an Editors' Review" at <http://www.iath.virginia.edu/~jmu2m/cse/Editors.rpt.htm> and the presentation to the Society for Textual Scholarship, in 2001 at <http://www3.isrl.uiuc.edu/~unsworth/sts2001.html>. More information on this study

hopes for digital, editorial miracles. At the same time, frustrated editors produced some surprising results such as *Dickinson Electronic Archives*, the *William Blake Archive*, and *The Walt Whitman Archive* that helped to situate the digital scholarly edition as a venue for an expanded notion of what comprises a textual event. Certainly, “new” computing and “traditional” print-based processes of producing knowledge are deeply symbiotic. While this is not in itself a revolutionary statement, new ways for considering how we create and use both print and digital processes gives promise to new theories about textuality such as textual performance.

To this end, the fifth chapter of this dissertation comprises a practical engagement in textual performance in the form of *In Transition: Selected poems by The Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven*, an electronic edition.⁵⁹ Transcribing and encoding the multiple versions of Freytag-Loringhoven’s poetry that are extant both in manuscript and print and annotating these textual surrogates with the various notes and letters and comments of her contemporaries is an essential part of the methodology I employ in developing this edition. I make “explicit an interpretation of a text”⁶⁰ by creating digital documents that comprise transcriptions encoded with meta-text that adheres to the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) standard for encoding. The example in the following excerpt shows a stanza or “line group” <lg> and the lines <l> within it “marked-up” or “tagged.” This markup makes explicit both the structure and the semantics of Freytag-Loringhoven’s poem “Ancestry”:

and its relationship to the creation and implementation of the Dickinson Electronic Archives can be found in my essay “A Digital Regiving: Editing the Sweetest Messages in the Dickinson Electronic Archive” (Blackwell 2008).

⁵⁹ Please see <http://www.lib.umd.edu/dcr/projects/baroness/>. The work at present is incompatible with *Internet Explorer* 7.0 and higher. It is best viewed in the *Mozilla Firefox* browser. Please contact the author for more information.

⁶⁰ Please see <http://www.tei-c.org/P4X/SG.html>.

```
<head>ANCESTRY</head>
<lg>
<l>MY DAD WAS ACORKSCREW —</l>
<l>BOTTLE FAIR MA ————— </l>
<l>CRIED SHE:</l>
<l>"GEE!</l>
</lg>
```

In general, humanities scholars have considered XML (Extensible Markup Language) and SGML (Standard Generalized Markup Language) encoding guidelines designed and evaluated by the TEI to be the gold standard for creating extendable, multi-platform documents that are “maximally expressive and minimally obsolescent” and “represent all kinds of literary and linguistic texts for online research and teaching.”⁶¹ Nevertheless, editors have debated over TEI’s level of “expressivity,” because while the capabilities of XML/TEI are extendable, its practical uses can seem limiting at times. Notwithstanding its virtues, encoding with a standard such as the TEI can be extremely frustrating for editors attempting to understand and articulate editorial theories with practices in new media that are not necessarily akin to traditional printing practices. As McGann points out, the TEI has adopted “a markup practice—a linguistic and paper-based approach—that is at odds with the theoretical opportunities that have been opened up by electronic textuality, where the limits of the codex are surpassed;” this frustration, he and others complain, results from the TEI standard’s incorporation of hierarchies that “misimagine the relation of electronic to paper-based textuality” (“Rosetti Archive” 183). For better or worse, however, these hierarchies represent the artifacts of working with computational models.

On the other hand, the limitations of encoding have inspired others to seek opportunities for new knowledge. For example, Julia Flanders considers subjectivity

⁶¹ Please see <http://www.tei-c.org>.

(“our own readerly motivations”) one aspect of humanist inquiry that standardized encoding practices tend to disregard due to precedents set by institutional-level (libraries and commercial industry) projects (Flanders 58). Incorporating subjectivity into seemingly objective practices means imagining alternative uses for the TEI that are not dismantled by the fact that systems of representation, whether digital or not, always fall short of a perceived reality. Flanders maintains, however, that “[b]y shifting our view we can understand XML as a way of expressing perspectival understandings of the text: not as a way of capturing what is timeless and essential, but as a way of inscribing our own changeable will on the text” and “the shifting vantage points from which the text appears to us, the shifting relationships that constrain our understanding of it, the adaptability and strategic positioning of our own readerly motivations” (Flanders 58). It is in this mode—of “shifting vantage points” which elucidate “shifting relationships”—that I am attempting to use the TEI and the *Versioning Machine* to incorporate the kind of dynamic social environment in which the event of a Freytag-Loringhoven poem takes place. Ultimately, the encoding facilitates textual play in an environment such as *The Versioning Machine*⁶² and thus, access to her poetic work within new social networks. Access to this kind of textual event is key to creating an edition that reflects textual performance and real-time audience participation.

⁶² Please see <http://v-machine.org/>.

III. Conclusion: valuing digital critical research within literary study

Digital research methods must engage objective practices that are inherently subjective and politicized.⁶³ This need is reflected in the new millennium in the firestorm of conferences, talks, presentations, articles, chapters and special journal issues in which scholars sought to define not only what humanists *do*, but also to define the epistemological “superstructure” (McGann “Culture and Technology”) that asks: Is this knowledge *valuable*? Geoffrey Harpham sums up “traditional rationales for humanistic study” as “[t]he scholarly study of documents and artifacts produced by human beings in the past [which] enables us to see the world from different points of view so that we may better understand ourselves” (23). Similarly, computing humanists have turned toward models of process that encourage “self-aware” practices such as conceptual modeling, which emphasizes the scholar’s search for “genuineness” as measured by her interpretive standpoint (McCarty, *Humanities Computing* 198). Willard McCarty and others believe that modeling processes is not only adequate but the preferred method of analysis as it encourages an engagement with the process of knowledge production as opposed to its product. “Computational models,” McCarty writes, are “temporary states in a process of coming to know rather than fixed structures of knowledge” (*Humanities Computing* 26-27). Yet, the full value of digital research methods is not reflected in the creation of a more fully developed model that better represents reality or that “support(s) analysis into the better development of insights into the model” (Bradley 191)—although these are and will remain worthy pursuits. Measuring a research method’s value by how well a model lends to questioning one’s own interpretations is only the first step in also identifying

⁶³ Stefan Sinclair maintains that Digital Humanities remains an arena employed in “play” as “an entirely subjective mode of literary criticism based wholly on whimsical and playful musings of each individual” (Sinclair 181).

one's preconceptions and biases. In other words, it isn't just, as McCarty argues, that "all meaningful uses of computing are heuristic, and therefore that mere 'delivery' is dangerously misleading," (*Humanities Computing* 6) but it is also the case that all meaningful uses of computing reflect pre-existing heuristics about *truth* and *objectivity*.

Simple self-awareness or the notion of "see[ing] the world from different points of view so that we may better understand ourselves" is a vague definition for determining the distinct value of humanist study. Geoffrey Harpham himself calls it "banal" (Harpham 23). Identifying the "double discipline" (Harpham 32) of objective and subjective practices within modes of digital analysis is the work needed to establish the worth of digital methodologies within humanist scholarly practice. Simply said, it isn't just that computing processes are complex and a scholar should understand the multinomial naive Bayes and linear-kernel SVM algorithms used to determine feature ranking in a data mining experiment before she can use that tool. She must also "understand" what she is reading and this is situated, subjective knowledge. It isn't just that the computing humanist should move away from "objective" and back to "subjective" analysis, move away from the computer as number-cruncher and toward what Steve Ramsay calls an "algorithmic criticism" ("Reconceiving Text Analysis" 167); she must also be transparent about her own rules for verification and this is situated, subjective knowledge. As Harpham writes, "'the facts' must be grasped mind-to-mind as well as mind-to-object . . . exercis[ing] both the intellect and the imagination. True humanistic scholarship insists on this double discipline, which untrained readers find easy to avoid" (Harpham 32). The work remains to rediscover this "double discipline" of subjective and objective practices in the digital work that humanists do.

A useful term for identifying this double disciplinary work is “differential reading.” Marjorie Perloff’s call for practice that engages “differential reading”⁶⁴ is specifically geared toward reinvigorating or reconceptualizing the practice of literary study within the double discipline of subjective objectivity. As such, she identifies the following four approaches to literature:

- (1) As rhetoric or *practical criticism*: “the examination of diction and syntax, rhythm and repetition, and the various figures of speech;” (*Differentials* 6)
- (2) As philosophy or the “potential expression of truth and knowledge”⁶⁵ (7)
- (3) As art or a unique aesthetic construct—a form of discourse inherently *other* of which the objective is the “pleasure of representation” and the “pleasure of recognition,” which is the pleasure “of taking in impersonations, fictions, and language creations of others and recognizing their *justice*” (17).
- (4) As “cultural production”—“for its political role, its exposure of the state of a given society” (9).

In sum, Perloff argues that each of the classifications above must be adopted in conversation with the others, which means notions of *justice* and *truth* become contingent not only on the historicity of text—on its political role and its exposure of the state of *this* society situated in *this* situated moment—but on its rhetorical practices—the argument embodied in its structure and themes—and ultimately on its *potential* for expression and for giving pleasure in terms of representation and recognition. Perloff’s emphasis on a dialectic of knowledge (*connaissance*) comprising the “pleasure of representation” and

⁶⁴ For more discussion see Perloff, *Differentials* xxv-xxxiv.

⁶⁵ For example, Perloff writes, “if theories of poetry-as-rhetoric regard James Joyce and Ezra Pound as key modernists, the theory of poetry-as-philosophy would (and has) put Samuel Beckett or Paul Cezanne at that center” (*Differentials* 7).

the “pleasure of recognition” (reconnaissance) (17) is echoed by Stanley Fish who calls theoretical work “the pleasure of making visible the work of so many hitherto invisible hands” (“Theory’s Hope” 377) and Harpham who argues that the “the truth of the past exists largely in textual traces” that “can always be reassembled from a different point of view, with different emphases, presumptions, and priorities” (24). This process of assembly, Harpham continues, is not only pleasurable, it “is accompanied, especially for the scholar, by a distinct sense of power” (24). A state of recognition is pleasurable because it is powerful. Empowerment in this regard stems from what Perloff and Robert Pippin describe as the discernment of subtle differences within similarities such as the ability to determine the difference between a postmodernist and a modernist evaluation of art—“How long can art be about the end of art? Why did modernist art turn to itself as its subject?” (Pippin 427-428) As Perloff phrases the same idea, she writes, “the wider one’s reading in a specified area, the greater the pleasure of a given text and the greater the ability to make connections between texts” and notes that this power of recognition is ultimately the answer to the “crisis” in the university (*Differentials* 16). Empowered—indeed, *pleasured*—students will want to—and will therefore proceed to—learn more about their cultural texts and therefore their culture.

From this empowered and situated perspective, a notion of *plausibility* rather than a notion of *justice* better describes the grounds upon which alternative modes of signification afforded by digital analysis achieve merit in literary studies. Mary Hawkesworth describes this notion of plausibility in science as the result of disbanding “‘the myth of the given’”:

Once the ‘myth of the given’ (Sellars 1963, 164) has been abandoned and once the belief that the absence of one invariant empirical test for the truth of a theory

implies the absence of all criteria for evaluative judgment has been repudiated, then it is possible to recognize the rational grounds for assessing the merits of alternative theoretical interpretations . . . the stimuli that trigger interpretation *limit the class of plausible characterizations* without dictating one absolute description (Hawkesworth 48-49).

Accordingly, the objectivity required to validate or value Perloff's sense of *justice* or *pleasure* and McCarty's "mismatch" between the real and the imagined (or created) can be valued to the extent that it offers a means by which plausible readings are limited. For instance, Perloff's discussion of the four ways in which the discipline of poetics has been discussed demonstrates how the practice of analyzing literature can incorporate the humanist propensity to evaluate for an objective sense of *justice* from a subjective perspective that ultimately accounts for the *plausible*. In other words, objectivity can be redefined *as the scholar conceives it* since differential reading allows for a multifaceted means for evaluating multiple, alternative modes of signification that incorporate both close reading and a look at textual structures while also allowing for "value critical research"⁶⁶ that takes into consideration "cultural production" and the "state" of a society in the present and in the past. These practices are based on the assumption that notions of *value* mediate every step of the research process from selecting objects of study and methods of analysis to formulating and validating knowledge produced. This approach to objectivity wherein plausible interpretations are identified based on subjective practices provides for new perspectives that go beyond "the myth of the given" or a constructed reality.

Finally, a knowledge based on differential reading practices does not signify knowledge in which multiple—and thus no—truths are valued so much as the

⁶⁶ Hawkesworth defines "value critical research" as inquiry seeking "new questions for research" as a recognition "that values play a formative role in research and that these formative values must be made explicit and subjected to critical scrutiny" (7).

acknowledgement that *truth* is ultimately unattainable—and ultimately undesirable if so errantly attained. Harpham makes this distinction when he notes that “Humanists aspire to speak the truth, but none would wish to have the very last word, for such a triumphant conclusion would bring an end not just to the conversation but to the discipline itself”(30). Frederic Jameson similarly reminds humanists that “all truths are at best momentary, situational, and marked by a history in the process of change and transformation” (403). As such and in contrast to McCarty’s argument that we avoid “endless projects to ontologize whatever portion of reality concerns us” in order to remain “outside them, watching the interplay of theory and the theorized, paying attention to what doesn't fit,” (*Humanities Computing* 145) a subjective perspective encourages us to embrace that portion of reality that concerns us with the realization that (a) we *cannot* step outside of our perspective, and (b) in the attempt to do so, we step outside the mode of intellectual rigor needed to influence our position as subject and agent. At the same time, ideas of *situatedness* and *history* are important factors so long as they inspire critical differentiation. Perloff notes that the opposite has been true in literary studies, that critical differentiation based on ideas of historicity have foreshortened critical analysis because “the contemporary fear of the pleasures of representation and recognition—the pleasures of the *fictive*, the *what might happen*” have been “subordinat[ed] to the *what has happened*—the *historical/cultural*,” the result of which has been the “trivialized the status of literary study in the contemporary academy” (*Differentials* 18).⁶⁷

⁶⁷ She goes on to conclude that “[l]anguage is, after all, the *material* of literature as well as the means to its fictiveness--will be the central object of study, a study that involves all four of the paradigms above. Such study, I believe, will come back into favor for the simple reason that, try as one may, one cannot eliminate the sheer jouissance or pleasure of the text (*Differentials* 17).

As a result, the following chapters in this dissertation seek to prove that digital research methods comprise important humanist research methods that facilitate differential reading in that they may provide new perspectives on literary texts with a double discipline that is both politicized (of the intellect) and pleasurable (of the imagination). Sometimes these vantage points, as is the case with the study of *The Making of Americans* and the poetry of Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, are remarkably different than that which has been afforded within print culture. At other times, the view facilitated by digital tools generates the same data human(ist)s could generate by hand, but more quickly—an important advantage when the work of so many literary texts goes unread and thus, undervalued. While computers can not necessarily do what humanists also can't do—such as solve literary conundrums with immutable truths—computational practices do allow scholars to experiment with texts in ways that were formerly prohibitive in print culture. Arguably, differently situated eyes panning multiple directions (or realities) are better than one beamed in one. This perspective might be like “Eye Vision” which involves shooting a dynamic event, such as a soccer game, from multiple cameras placed at different angles. A computer combines the video streams from these cameras and the resulting images duplicate a multidimensional viewpoint. That we are aware it is a virtual reality keeps us mindful of the processes we use to produce it, but the experience of this encompassing vantage point allows for a feeling of justice that is based on what seems plausible. Certainly, different modes of analysis generate different research questions, different research methods, and different research. As a result, we perceive the digital tool as more than simply a magnifying glass.

Chapter 2: ‘A thing not beginning and not ending’: Using Digital Tools to Distant-Read Gertrude Stein's *The Making of Americans*⁶⁸

I always say that you cannot tell what a picture really is or what an object really is until you dust it every day and you cannot tell what a book is until you type it or proof-read it. It then does something to you that only reading never can do." *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, 113

The particular reading difficulties engendered by the complicated patterns of repetition in Gertrude Stein's *The Making of Americans* (1925) mirror those a reader might face attempting to read a large collection of like texts all at once without getting lost; likewise, it is almost impossible to read this text in a traditional, linear manner as any page (most are startlingly similar) will show. However, by visualizing certain patterns in this text and looking at the text “from a distance” through textual analytics and visualizations, one can read the novel in ways formerly impossible. Franco Moretti has argued that the solution to truly incorporating a more global perspective in our critical literary practices is not to read more of the vast amounts of literature available to us, but to read it differently by employing “distant reading.” “We know how to read texts,” he writes, “now let's learn how *not* to read them” (57). Alternatively, learning to read texts “at a distance” that we have historically not read, we learn to read differently and we value different readings.

I. Not reading The Making of Americans, a tradition

The Making of Americans begins conventionally enough as the story of both the literal and figurative “progress” of two families, the Herslands and the Dehnings, both

⁶⁸ Much of this chapter has been published under the title “‘A thing not beginning or ending’: Using Digital Tools to Distant-Read Gertrude Stein's *The Making of Americans*” in *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 23.3 (2008): 361-382.

immigrant families of European descent who have settled in the United States to increase their financial means. Both families produce children in America, two of whom—Alfred Hersland and Julia Dehning—get married. The marriage takes place within the first two hundred paragraphs of the text. From this point, the text abandons its straightforward narrative. Stein writes in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* that while “it was to be the history of a family,” she discovered in writing *Making* that “it was getting to be a history of all human beings, all who ever were or are or could be living” (56). This goal will necessarily be accomplished, the narrator argues, because even though there are many kinds of men and women—“millions of every kind of being”—and even though those kinds each contain more millions, each with “their individual existing, their own history in them, their own living in them,” (§845)⁶⁹ their living and being depends on the element of repetition that is inherent both to inheritance and habit.

Although lauded by a handful of critics who thought Stein accomplished what Ezra Pound demanded of all modernist writers (to make art, literature, and language “new”), *The Making of Americans* was criticized by many of its early twentieth century readers who claimed the text was unreadable, that its author wrote “a disaster” by creating “tireless and inert repetitiveness which becomes as stupefying as it is unintelligible,” and that it “amounts in the end to linguistic murder” (Aiken 39). In the twenty-first century, critics still bemoan the novel as “monumentally tedious,” with one critic arguing that *Making* proves Stein “is really a terrible novelist with not the vaguest sense of what constitutes a novel” (Levitt 505). Some critics have concluded that the text goes unread

⁶⁹ The version of this text cited here is an electronic, XML-encoded document derived from a PDF that was based on the Dalkey Archive Press 1995 edition of *The Making of Americans*, which is a copy of the version Stein published in Paris with Contact Editions in 1925. Throughout this article, references to the text refer to paragraph numbers in the electronic edition and are indicated using the paragraph (§) symbol. At this time, the electronic version is not publicly available.

because it is inchoate—the early work of an inexperienced author—and as such its constant repetition represents a style of writing that is chaotic, unsystematic, and virtually impossible to read.⁷⁰ Even so, an appreciation of the text does surface among postmodernist critics who argue that the text represents a postmodern exercise in incomprehensibility that poses a comment on the modernist desire for truth.⁷¹

To be sure, reading *The Making of Americans* is difficult work. Even the text's narrator warns the reader that this tome "is not just an ordinary kind of novel with a plot and conversations to amuse you" (§162). Stein clarifies these assertions by comparing *The Making of Americans* to James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* to the extent that these novels also foreground the process of meaning-making rather than meaning itself. Indeed, the style of *The Making of Americans* does generate meaning. Repetition plays a profound role in the structure of the text (there are 517,207 total words and only 5329 unique words); more abstract and indeterminate verbs such as forms of "to be" predominate ("he was" occurs 4219 times and "to be" 3830 times); and personal pronouns proliferate in an inordinate degree over proper names—all of which serves to disambiguate human categorization more than it serves to categorize, ontologize, diagram or type it. As such, *The Making of Americans* does confront readers directly with the failings of representation and the creative possibilities of alternative uses of language. On the other hand, it may be argued that incomprehension was not the goal of the text. "Repeating is the whole of living," the narrator writes in the first chapter, "and by repeating comes understanding, and understanding is to some the most important part of living" (§846). As such, a question arises that has not been adequately addressed:

⁷⁰ In particular, see Katz "The first making of *The Making of Americans*," Bridgman, and Dydo.

⁷¹ Some examples include Ruddick's *Reading Gertrude Stein*, Watten, Berman's chapter "Stein Topographies: The Making of America," and Wald.

is the confusion the repetition engenders a byproduct of reading meant to deconstruct processes of identity construction by making meaning through methods that ultimately elude meaning-making? Or, alternatively, is the confusion the repetition engenders the result of a *misreading* and simply a byproduct of our inability to read the text?

Small errors result from reading *Making* in a traditional manner, and these small errors weaken larger arguments. In a chapter entitled “Shame and the Fathers” G.E. Mitrano wrongly attributes a quote about power and religion to David Hersland’s father, though it is a description belonging to David’s grandfather, Mr. Hissen (36). This small error is understandable when working with Stein who tends to use non-descript pronouns more frequently than proper names. In the paragraph quoted, “the father” is interchanged with “he” without a clear reference, but a simple search in a digital version of the text shows that the closest mention of Mr. Hersland by name is two hundred paragraphs previous to the quote, while “the Hissen family” (David’s mother’s family) is mentioned as the subject of the general discussion just two paragraphs before the section Mitrano references. Mitrano is not alone in misreading the characters as they are developed. Jennifer Ashton also constructs an argument about *Making* based on the wrong evidence. Ashton claims that as the text nears its end, “the projected history of everyone finally becomes a projected list of kinds of persons” in chapter 9 (38). This evolution is the crux to Ashton’s supposition that Stein is successful in creating her complete history. Yet, a keyword-in-context (KWIC) listing quickly shows that “list” and “lists” also appears in chapter 5. This other appearance is significant in contradicting Ashton’s argument since it is here that the idea of the list is complicated as an *incomplete* history. Stein writes in chapter 5:

It would be a very complete thing in my feeling to be having complete lists of every body ever living and to be realising each one and to be making diagrams of them and lists of them and explaining the being in each one . . . Not many find it interesting this way I am realising every one . . . (§2072)

This point in chapter 5 is significant because it is here that Stein begins to realize that her method of diagramming “being” is problematic when one begins to consider not only how the diagram, chart, or list is formed but how it is received and valued. That is, Stein becomes in chapter 5 concerned about whether her descriptions are considered “interesting” or true to the reader. It is clear from this reading that the narrator sees lists as ultimately useless for describing “being” and, as a result, not suited to her goal.

Another result of misreading is Lisa Ruddick’s claim that the tension between Stein’s “clean” omniscient narrator (“absent from the plot, guided by decorum”) and her “dirty” (self-indulgent and autoerotic) first-person narrator speaker escalates as the text progresses (*Reading Gertrude Stein* 57). This results in a misreading of the first-person, narrator character. To the contrary, if we look at the presence of “I” in the text by plotting the occurrence of the word on a line graph, we can see that, in fact, “I” begins to diminish long before the end of the novel. Its use declines in the David Hersland section in chapter 7. In Figure 5, it is clear that Stein’s first-person voice evolves into an abstraction, an abstraction with which the omniscient narrator joins her identity with that of her first-person narrator (and ultimately her audience) by using the term “one.” Raising questions does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that critics such as Mitrano, Ashton, and Ruddick are reading the text incorrectly as much as it points to the contention that reading *Making* in a traditional manner is difficult work. Misreadings and the fact that most scholars shape readings around the text’s ability to confuse the reader are a consequence of this difficulty.

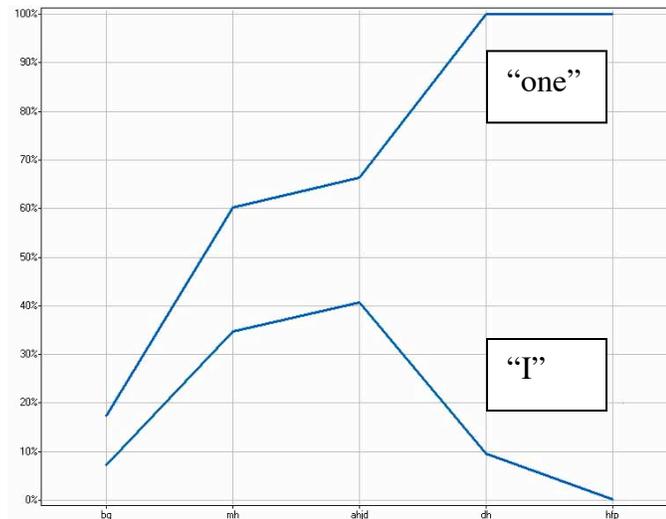


Figure 5: the frequency of "I" and "one" across the five sections in *Making, Spotfire*

Misreadings also result from the critical stance that Stein’s biographical context (including her psychological studies and her personal and professional development) serves as the genesis for the text’s confusing structure. Richard Bridgman notes that Stein’s “chronicle of typical families yielded to a theory of universal character types which then turned into a covert analysis of her own life and present situation” (90). Similarly, George Moore cites *The Making of Americans* as “the key text in understanding Stein’s development, and in realizing the central importance of her ideas on psychology as the basis for her early experiments in repetition” (22). He contends that where Stein shifts from first person singular (“I”) to first person plural (“we”) to third person singular (“one”) to second person (“you”), the narrator is the author breaking down in confidence: “Yet the voice here also sounds of a need for acceptance by an audience that will read her fiction as psychological fact” (35). Yet, biographical context can also preclude some interesting readings. Katz discounts the form and style almost entirely as a meaning-making aspect of the text because he claims that “[n]owhere in the notebooks is there any discussion of form or style;” accordingly, he concludes that these

structures are “the inadvertent consequence of trying to describe relations and events synoptically without losing traditional narrative’s feel for the thick flow of time” (“Introduction” xix). Though he seeks with this argument to prove otherwise, there is evidence that Stein did not feel her style was inadvertent. In an interview she talks at some length about how she “took individual words and thought about them until [she] got their weight and volume complete and put them next to another word;” in this way she discovered that “there is no such thing as putting them together without sense” (“A Transatlantic Interview 1946” 504). The evidence that Stein paid close attention to the

	of them	4418			men and women	1100
	he was	4219			one is	1088
	in them	4035			a little	1082
	to be	3830			was a	1076
	in her	2603			it was	1073
	being in	2146			she had	1051
	of the	2027			being one	1035
	kind of	1985			there are	1014
	this one	1776			is a	1011
	being living	1769			them and	1003
	was not	1655			was saying	996
	in him	1654			as i was	970
	each one	1648			i was saying	961
	She was	1630			this is	960
	they are	1551			was one	953
	in the	1474			as i was saying	951
	i am	1422			such a	936
	men and	1390			one of	919
	that one	1360			be a	900
	as i	1240			of being	887
	it is	1221			way of	872
	this thing	1189			some are	867
	i was	1139			and then	858
	in living	1120			some of	835
	and women	1112			History of	826

Table 1: Most frequent diagrams and trigrams in *The Making of Americans*

structured details of the text is ingrained in the text itself. Table 1 includes the most frequent fifty phrases that Stein chose to put together in order to “make sense” of every

kind of being with words. The sheer frequency of these phrases points to the “weight” that Stein afforded these words. Most of the two-word repeated phrases listed in the top ten show Stein’s interest in classifying “Being.” Beyond the verb “to be” evinced in terms such as “he was,” “to be,” and “being living,” the terms “of them,” “of the,” and “kind of” demonstrate a method of description by comparison. In these cases the terms are used to describe a piece or individual in comparison to a larger or whole group in longer phrases such as “all of them,” “some of them,” “any of them,” “of the love affairs,” “of the family about her,” “that kind of thing,” “the kind of a way,” “any other kind of meaning,” etc. In addition, “he was,” “she was,” “they are,” “I am,” “it is,” and “I was” all appear in the top twenty phrases providing some evidence that she fluctuates between verb tenses frequently, a style that many critics have argued gives the reader a feeling of time or a “continuous” sense of the present. Moreover, the phrase “as I was saying” has further encouraged the argument about “the continuous present”—the fact that this phrase is the most oft repeated four-word string (951 times in the course of the novel) and that so many phrases of various lengths are repeated so often in different contexts with slight variations has been used as evidence to demonstrate her desire to begin again and again—not to state things differently or to expound upon her thoughts, but to repeat the sameness and by repeating it introduce the slight differences that she argues evoke “Being.” In short, stylistic details were very much part of Stein’s project for the meaning-making aspects of the text.

In addition, while noting these trends is helpful in determining the overall style of the text, it remains a manner of analysis akin to close reading for it quickly becomes evident that attempting to read the vast repeatings results in misreadings regarding the

more tectonic changes in narrative style. This point is illustrated with an analysis and visualization tool called the *Vocabulary-Management Profile*, version 2.2 (*VMP2.2*).⁷² In employing this tool we can chart the points that most scholars claim represent the essential shifts in style in *Making*. This tool was developed to serve as a measuring stick for marking changes among diegetic, mimetic, and exegetic passages or between points when an author describes, tells, or analyzes the story. The method of analysis is based on the assumption that new episodes, new settings, and new characters are signaled by an increase in new vocabulary while the description or analysis of these activities usually involves more repetition. Consequently, measuring the occurrence of new vocabulary words introduced over successive intervals of text generates a chart of “peaks and valleys” that correlates closely with the narrative style changes. By this reasoning, upward trends signal new episodes, settings, or characters, and downward trends “signal a continuation of the episode, description, or characterization” (Youmans “The Vocabulary-Management-Profile”).

In brief, this tool’s analytic procedure entails “plot[ting] the average ratios (between 0.0 and 1.0) for each word in a preset moving interval of thirty-five words” (“How to Generate VMP2.2s”).⁷³ This ratio is based on the type ratio divided by the token ratio for each word where type equals the single occurrence of each distinct word (or form of lexeme) and tokens are the total number of words.⁷⁴ If we chart the *VMP2.2* data from each of the five sections on a line chart, we are presented with a pattern of peaks and valleys that behave differently in certain sections, indicating that in terms of

⁷² Created by Gilbert Youmans and Nathan Pauley at <http://web.missouri.edu/~youmansc/vmp/>.

⁷³ Please see footnote 47.

⁷⁴ Please see footnote 48.

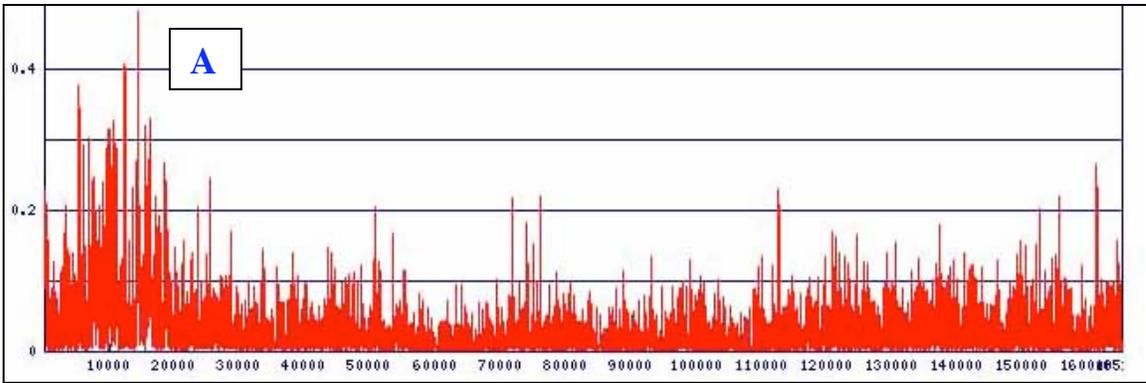


Figure 6: Untitled, *VMP2.2* data in line chart (x-axis = location, y-axis = type/token)

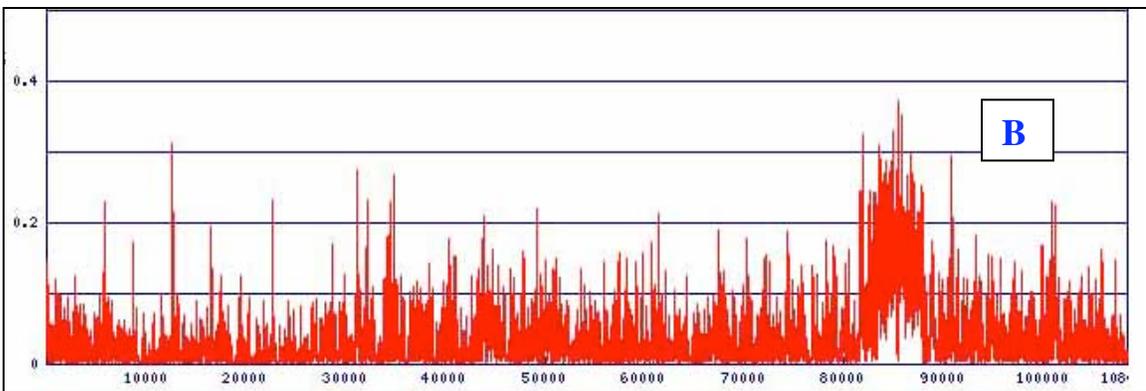


Figure 7: "Martha Hersland," *VMP2.2* data in line chart (x-axis = location, y-axis = type/token)

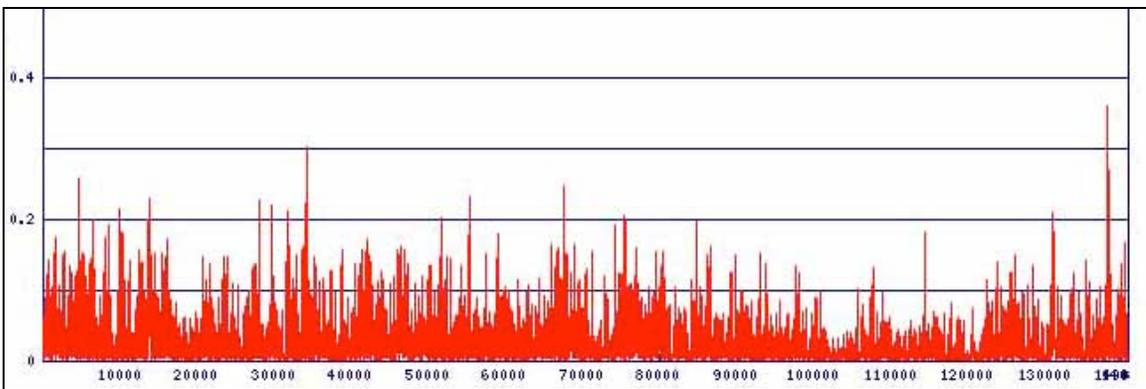


Figure 8: "Alfred Dehning and Julia Hersland," *VMP2.2* data in line chart (x-axis = location, y-axis = type/token)

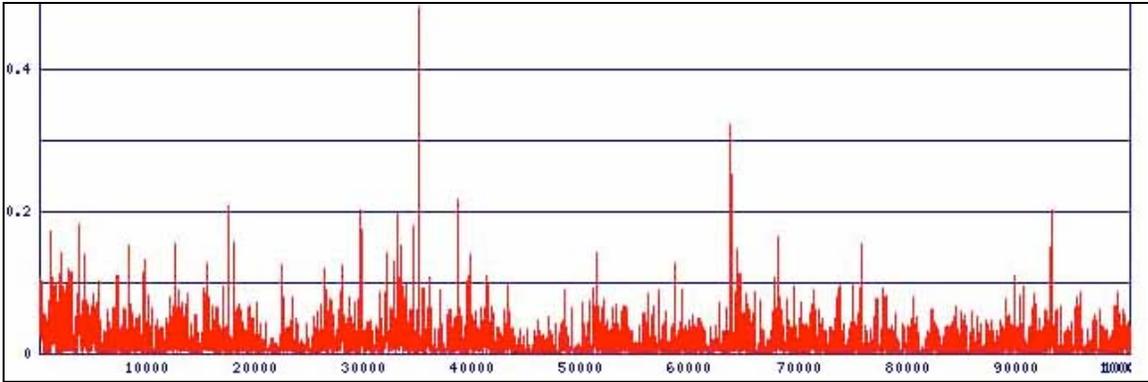


Figure 9: “David Hersland,” VMP2.2 data in line chart (x-axis = location, y-axis = type/token)

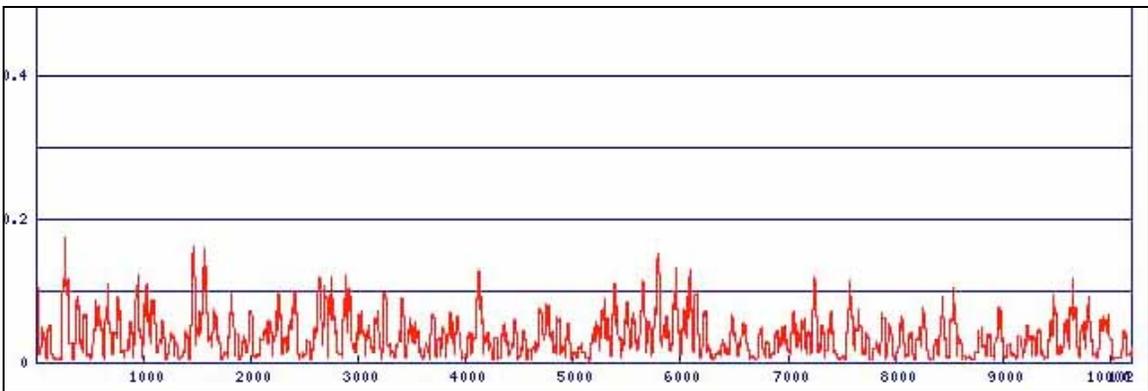


Figure 10: “History of a Family's Progress,” VMP2.2 data in line chart (x-axis = location, y-axis = type/token)

how she is using new vocabulary, the style changes in each section. These patterns are illustrated in the five figures below (Figure 6, Figure 7, Figure 8, Figure 9, and Figure 10) in which a scatter plot representation of the *VMP2.2* data corresponds to each of five main sections of the text (Untitled; “Martha Hersland;” “Alfred Hersland and Julia Dehning;” “David Hersland;” and “History of a Family’s Progress). The y-axis represents the ratio of types over tokens while the x-axis represents the location of each token. In essence, these visualizations show points in the text at which the most dynamic changes in style occur. As a result of this view, we see that the points of greatest deviation in the data correspond to those sections that critics have already named as significant shifts in

narrative style: namely, the first part of the untitled first section (see “A” in Figure 6), and what critics call the “Hodder episode” in the “Martha Hersland” section (see “B” in Figure 7). It is these shifts into Stein’s more repetitive, experimental narrative style that scholars such as Watten and Wald (and others) use to buttress their readings that the text is a postmodern comment on the nature of identity. Yet, it also appears from what these visualizations evince that these readings are based on an essential misreading of the nature of these tectonic shifts.

For instance, another example described in the next visualization using the *VMP2.2* data (Figure 11) illustrates that the narrative style changes before the narrative itself has moved to the next topic. Figure 11 includes the “Hodder Episode” from the second chapter of the “Martha Hersland” section. The “Hodder Episode” is so-named and considered significant because this short narrative mirrors an incident in Stein’s circle between Mary Gwinn and Alfred Hodder, an incident which Stein also fictionalizes in *Q.E.D.*, a novel that Stein was unable to publish in her life time, because, most critics contend, it portrays a lesbian affair.⁷⁵ The episode as it is written in *Making* is significant in terms of Stein’s biography since it too features an affair between two women though this story ends with one woman (Cora Dounor) having an affair with Martha Hersland’s husband Phillip Redfern (Alfred Hodder’s supposed fictional counterpart). This biographical component added with the contention that this story marks “the longest sustained narrative in the plot,” makes this episode “a key for the overall project” (Wald 286) for many critics. The *VMP2.2* data “hump” (shown in Figure 11) and the story about

⁷⁵ Leon Katz first forwards this argument in “The first making of *The Making of Americans*.” Alfred Hodder is the name of a professor who is well known in Stein’s circle for a similar love triangle involving a female university Dean.

Martha Hersland’s husband Phillip Redfern’s affair coincide, showing that the episode does indeed incorporate a change in style from the surrounding text. The words that mark the downtrend on the graph correspond with the paragraph that appears toward the conclusion of the Hodder episode after Martha Hersland has discovered that her husband has had an affair by reading a letter from his desk. The paragraph (and thus the episode)

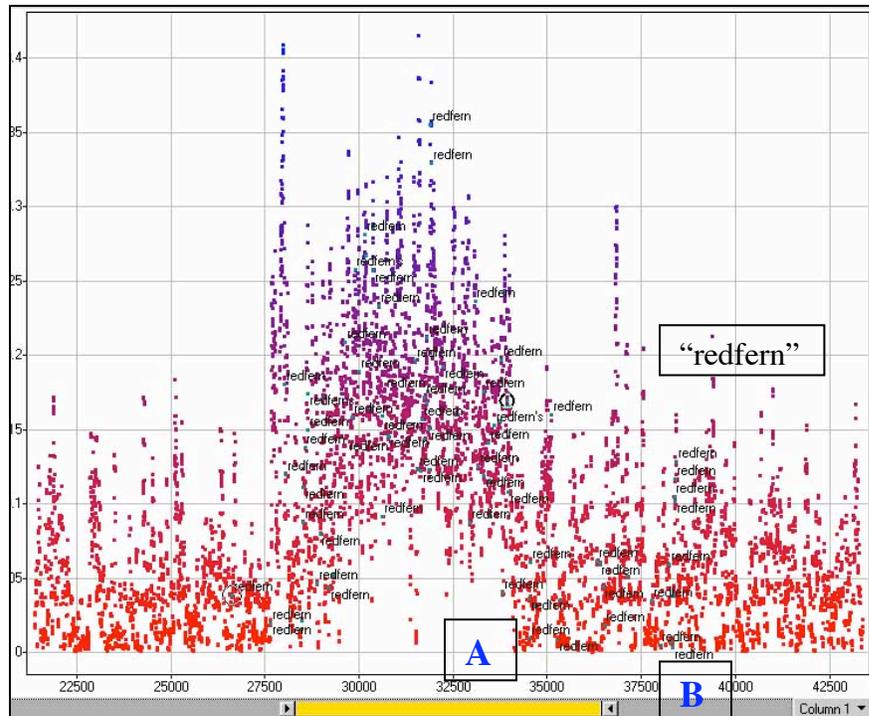


Figure 11: Hodder Episode in Scatter Plot, *Spotfire*

concludes with “. . .She read it to the end, she had her evidence.” This sentence ends at point “A” in Figure 11. Yet, the discussion of Redfern has not been concluded. Though the story of Redfern’s infidelity ends at point “A”, the next paragraph begins with the narrator’s ruminations about the subjective meanings of categories about words (“the meaning of the words they are using . . . later have not any meaning”), and ultimately about this rewriting of what was once the Hodder episode or “an old piece of writing”:

. . . and some then have a little shame in them when they are copying an old piece of writing where they were using words that sometime had real meaning for them

and now have not any real meaning in them . . . now I commence again with words that have meaning, a little perhaps I had forgotten when it came to copying the meaning in some of the words I have just been writing. Now to begin again with what I know of the being in Phillip Redfern, now to begin again a description of Phillip Redfern and always now I will be using words having in my feeling, thinking, imagining very real meaning . . . (§1717)

The post-episode mentions of Redfern (as seen in Figure 11) map to the narrator's attempt to describe Redfern in a different manner, in terms of the diagrammatic typing or repetition with variation that the narrator is calling the "real meaning" or definite meaning of her words at this point in the text. Similar to the first example, it is well after the style change that a subsequent change in subject occurs (at point "B" in Figure 11 where the name "redfern" disappears)—the two changes are not concurrent. As such, it is not certain that these shifts in narrative style mark the clumsy insertion of earlier drafts (as Katz contends⁷⁶) nor is it certain that the more repetitive sections of the text (which usually coincide with exegetic narratives) serve as "keys" to reading the more traditional (diegetic) narratives within the text (as Wald contends). What is clear is that a pattern is emerging as a result of these changes from exegesis to diegesis and back, a pattern that is created by the very process of change itself. What remains to be seen is how (and if) the repetitive style functions in respect to these shifts as part of the meaning-making process of the text.

⁷⁶ Katz argues that page 78 marks the end of the novel's "best writing in conventional idiom" with its "stunningly effective incantatory prose rhythms that lend color and great weight to the quality of her observation"—a style that Katz argues stems from Stein's work in *Three Lives* ("The First Making" 224). The third draft of *The Making of Americans* marks, however, what Katz argues would eventually become the experimental writing that emerges as Stein's "aesthetic ideal" after *Three Lives*, an ideal that seeks "absolute consistency" between "overt subject matter and form" and is ultimately faulty (224). Most critics date the composition of *The Making of Americans* (published by Contact in Paris in 1925) to have begun between 1901 (Katz) or 1903 (Wald) and concluded in 1911; during this time, Stein was also working on *Q.E.D.* (1903) and *Fernhurst* (1904-1905) and the three character sketches published as *Three Lives* (1906).

Initial analysis on *The Making of Americans* within the MONK project⁷⁷ has yielded evidence that suggests that the repetition is intricately structured and purposefully placed. For example, using the Data to Knowledge (D2K) application environment for data mining⁷⁸ data was generated that reflects co-occurring frequent patterns based on paragraphs made up of n-grams.⁷⁹ In the D2K analysis, establishing co-occurring patterns in *The Making of Americans* is a function of moving a window over trigrams (a three-word series), one word at a time, until each paragraph has been analyzed. Figure 12 shows how this analysis works on one sentence. Here, the first two trigram sequences (A and B) are shown with the last trigram (C) and the resulting set of trigrams for the whole sentence:

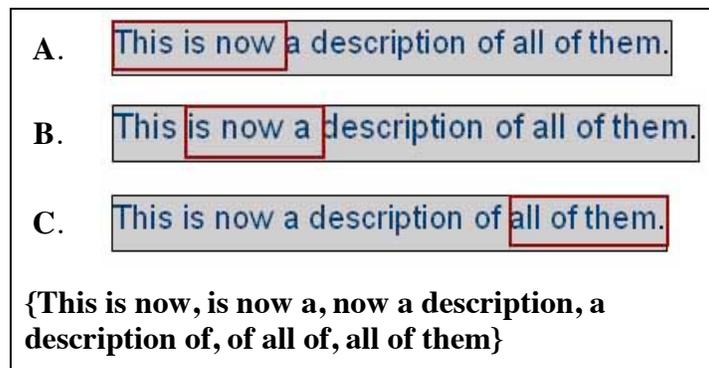


Figure 12: Example of trigrams from D2K analysis of *The Making of Americans*

Looking at n-grams in particular allows for an element of “fuzzy matching” that is quite productive when looking at repetition with variation because it facilitates searching for like patterns that are not exact duplicates. For example, executing the frequent pattern

⁷⁷ The MONK (Metadata Offer New Knowledge) project (<http://www.monkproject.org/>) is a Mellon-funded collaborative including computing, design, library science, and English departments at multiple universities which is developing text mining and visualization software in order to “explor[e] significant patterns across large collections of full-text humanities resources” (“Project Description”).

⁷⁸ Data 2 Knowledge (D2K) was developed by Michael Welge’s team in the Automated Learning Group (ALG) at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA) at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) <http://www.alg.ncsa.uiuc.edu>.

⁷⁹ N-grams may be thought of as a sequence of items of “n” length, usually used as a basis for analysis in natural language processing and genetic sequence analysis.

analysis algorithm (Pei, *et al.*) on trigrams from *The Making of Americans* resulted in a subset of four trigrams (trigrams “a description of,” “now a description,” “this is now,” and “is now a”) that co-occur in three different paragraphs (1076, 1080, and 1081). These four trigrams appear in the following three sentences in those paragraphs:

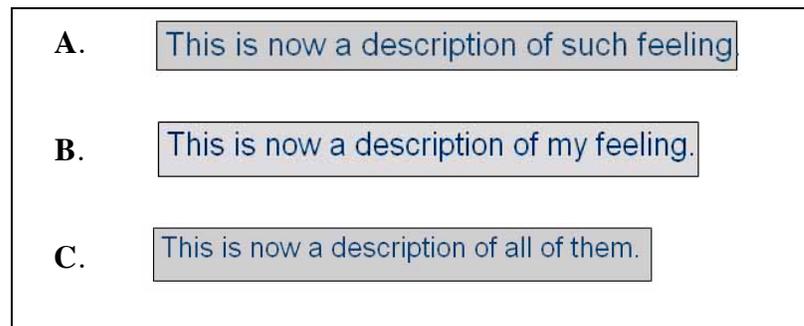


Figure 13: Finding three similar sentences in *Making* with the D2K frequent pattern analysis algorithm

Executing the frequent pattern analysis algorithm on longer n-grams also produced matches of greater length. For instance, an analysis executed on 36-grams produced a subset of co-occurring patterns that enabled the discovery of two, multi-paragraph sections of approximately 500 words. This discovery presents an unusual pattern in the text since these sections share—verbatim—the same 495 words (§1726-27 and §1823-24). The same discovery would have been difficult with a string search since to search for these sections would depend on pre-knowledge that they exist—a non-trivial feat in the midst of the more pervasive and shorter repetitions that make up each section. Making a side-by-side comparison in a text editor shows that the distinction between the two sections (one of which appears in chapter 4, the other in chapter 5) is limited to five words and a comma. A portion of the text, shown in the text editor window in Figure 14, includes the lines at which the text diverges marked in yellow and the exact points marked in red. The loss and the subsequent discovery of these paragraphs, however,

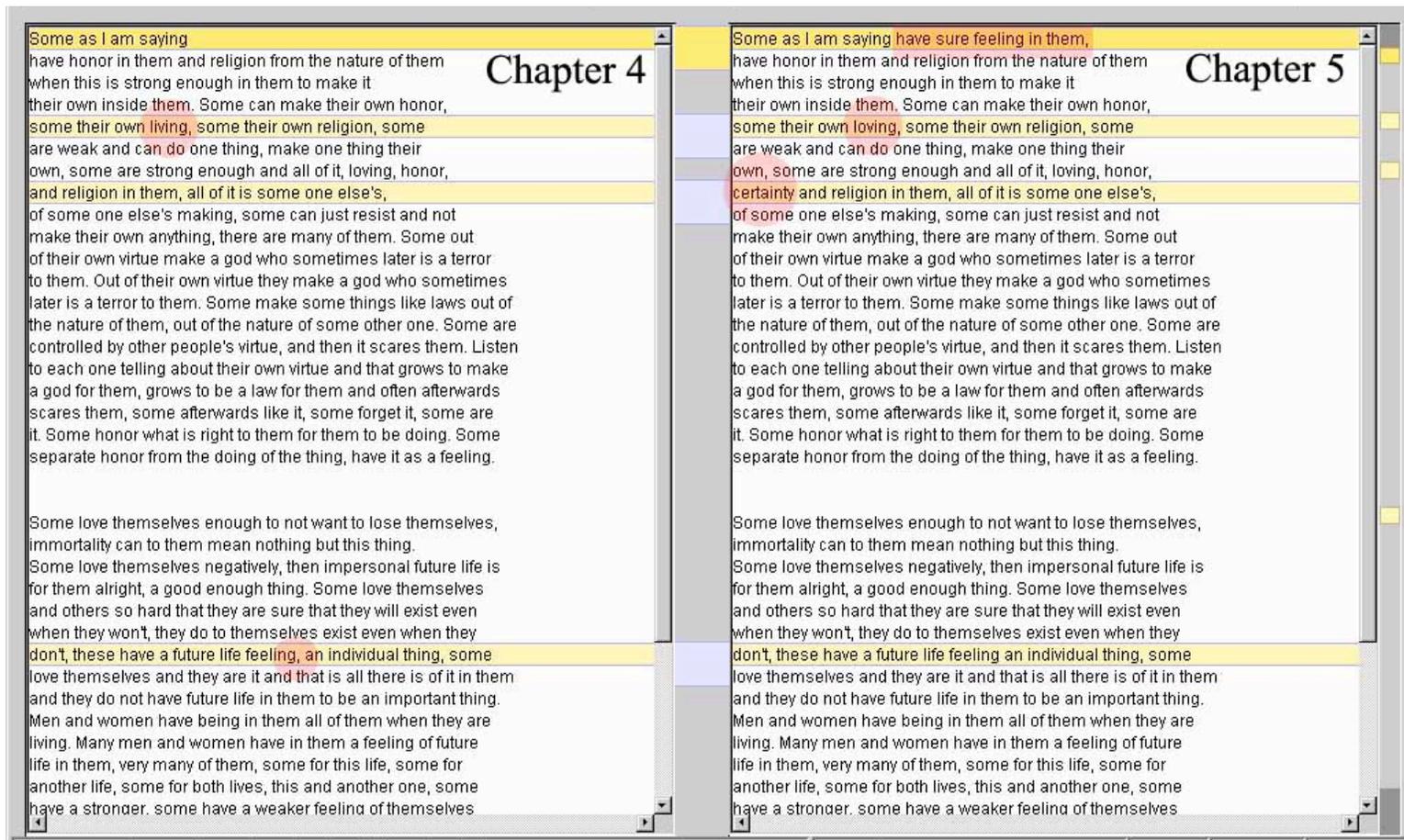


Figure 14: Matching paragraphs (§1726-27 and §1823-24) from chapter 4 and chapter 5 discovered through frequent pattern analysis of 36-grams, *Oxygen*

serves to pique interest not only in the presence of larger patterns of repetition that move across—rather than within or between—the more frequent and shorter repetitions but also across the shifts in narrative style. One such “missed” pattern is discoverable through a tool called *FeatureLens*, which we designed within the MONK project to visualize the text patterns provided by the D2K application.⁸⁰ *FeatureLens* lists the text patterns provided by D2K according to their length and frequency (see Figure 15, area “A”) and provides a visualization of the text’s nine chapters at the chapter level and at the paragraph level (Figure 15, “C”).⁸¹ These two levels of granularity allow the user to identify meaningful trends within patterns across the text. It also enables the analysis of the different contexts in which those patterns occur (Figure 15, “D”). For instance, if we visualize ten of the top twenty most frequently co-occurring patterns in the text⁸² such as “living,” “feeling,” “beginning,” “as I wasI was saying,” “men and women,” “children,” “history,” “one of them,” “kind of them,” and “being in them,” (Figure 15, “B”) we are presented with a seemingly chaotic pattern of repeated phrases that appear very frequently across the text (Figure 15, “C”). This “muddle” of data pictured across the nine chapters in area “C” is unsurprising considering that the narrator’s goal is to describe the complete history of the three Hersland children (David, Alfred, and Martha) by describing their kind of being, including their living and feeling, how they repeat each other’s behaviors and actions, and how they repeat the actions and behaviors of those around them. On closer inspection, however, we begin to see a larger structural pattern

⁸⁰ For more information on *FeatureLens*, please see Don, A. *et al.* The complete list of participants and more about this project is at <http://www.cs.umd.edu/hcil/textvis/featurelens/>.

⁸¹ Each line in Area C represents five paragraphs in order that the user may see the whole text at once.

⁸² This data actually represents the compilation of two lists of frequent patterns. One comprises the most frequent singular words across the text. The other is a list of the most frequently co-occurring three-grams across the text based on a dataset with a minimum support of ten; thus, a three-gram must occur in at least ten paragraphs for it to be included in the dataset.

within the first chapter that is repeated throughout the first half of the novel. Namely, gaps appear within the most frequently occurring patterns (see A, B, and C in Figure 16). The gap marked “C” in Figure 16 would be familiar to most critics: the context proves it is the “Hodder” or Redfern episode in chapter 4, which we have already seen is a different style than the surrounding text. Yet, by generating a list of peak data points we see that there are other changes in narrative style as well. For example, sorting the list by trends such as co-occurring patterns that “spike” or increase in frequency suddenly across a shorter distribution of data points⁸³ yields 7000 results that comprise words and phrases—such as “repeating,” “a whole one,” and “a history of”—which the narrator uses intermittently to remark on the process of creating her history. Clustered within the top twenty-five results of this new sorting, however, another pattern appears. Proper names such as “Mabel,” “Madeleine,” “Wyman,” and “Linker” appear alongside “Redfern” (the character who appears most often in the Hodder Episode gap). It is not surprising that the names appear as trends that peak within the text since the text is spotted with short narratives starring these characters, but it is illuminating that visualizing these trends makes clear the extent to which the Hodder episode, though long, is otherwise unexceptional. To illustrate this trend, the following visualization plots these character names against the pervasive “children” pattern identified previously (see the yellow column in Figure 15 and Figure 16). In Figure 18 and Figure 19, “children” is represented in the left-most column in red.⁸⁴ The pattern of intermittent, short narratives

⁸³ Spikes in the distribution are measured as follows: Let $F = f_1, f_2, \dots, f_n$ be one frequency values per section for n sections for one word. Let M be the mean value of $f_1 \dots f_n$. Let S be the value of the standard deviation of $f_1 \dots f_n$. If one value of $f_1 \dots f_n$ is above $M + S$ then it is considered a spike. These distributions are then ordered according to the value of the spike minus the mean, from the biggest to the lowest.

⁸⁴ In its current state, *FeatureLens* does not allow the user to picture all of the patterns at once. Nonetheless, the “children” pattern is a useful measurement for showing the narrative alternations in chapters 1 through 5.



Figure 15: chapters 1-9, *FeatureLens*

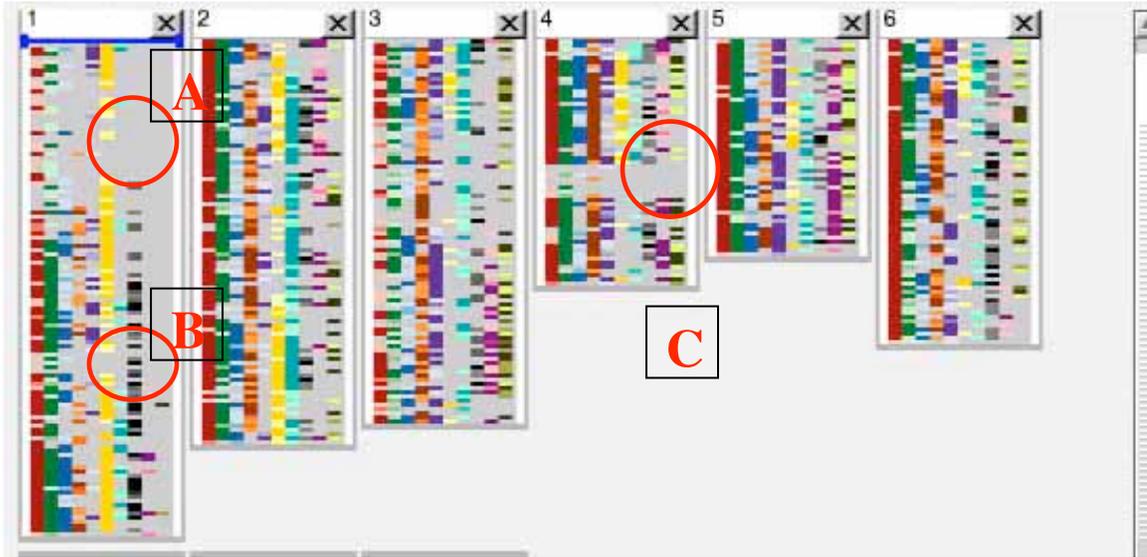


Figure 16: Narrative gaps, chapters 1-6, *FeatureLens*

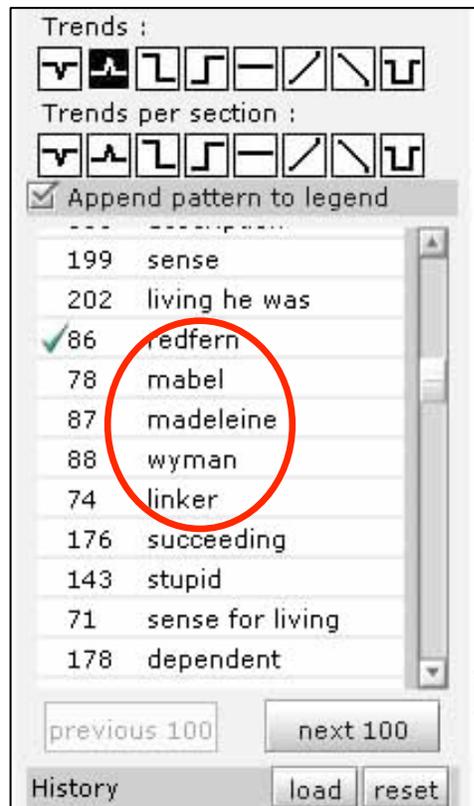


Figure 17: Data spikes in co-occurring frequent pattern analysis results, *FeatureLens*

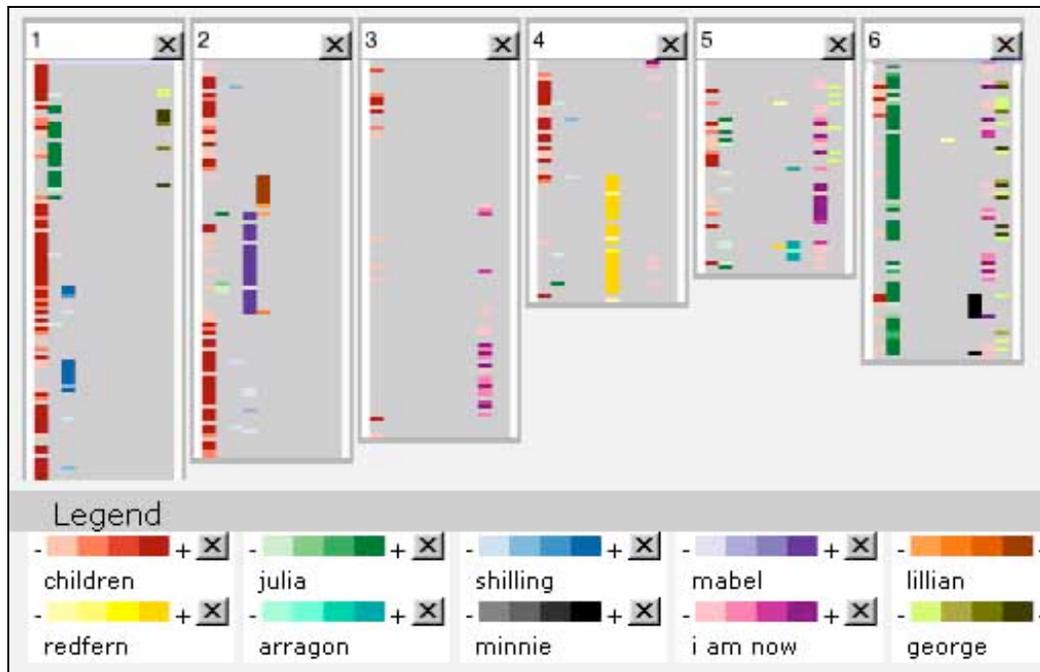


Figure 18: Narrative gaps filled, chapters 1-6, *FeatureLens*

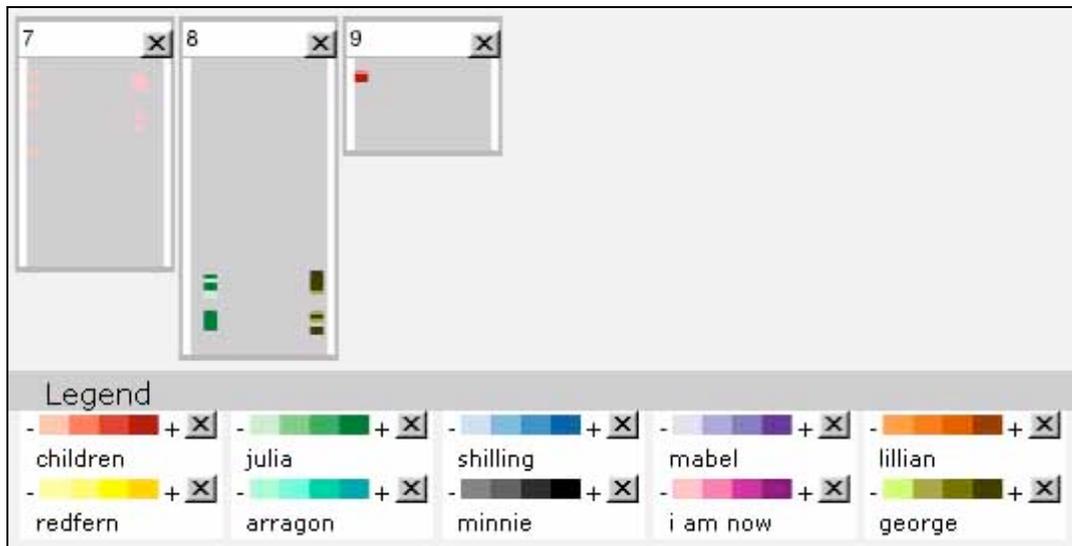


Figure 19: Narrative gaps filled, chapters 7-9, *FeatureLens*

that feature central characters becomes clear when it is seen as gaps within the pervasive “children” pattern: in chapter 1: “julia” and “shilling” appear; in chapter 2: “mabel” and “lillian”; in chapter 3: “I” [the narrator]; in chapter 4: “redfern”; and in chapter 5:

“arragon”. A coherent pattern emerges in which the repetitive, abstract and generalized discussions of the “Three Hersland Children” alternate between narratives about related characters. What is also clear is that one narrative (the Hodder episode) is not a key that will open the text’s meaning as if meaning resided in a buried treasure chest or behind a locked door. Truly, a lock “key” is an ill-used metaphor that has led to misreading this text since no one point of entry appears to serve how the text may be read as a whole.

Perhaps a more useful metaphor for reading *The Making of Americans* is one that connotes a guideline for reading the direction, distance, and topography of a geographical location—a *map key*. The performative effect of the text emphasizes our inability to synthesize features that function in deep conversation with the text’s surface discussion of “being” and “living,” its use of the progressive present tense, and its shifts in narrative style, but a different reading of the text results from reading the novel as it is structured as a whole. Accordingly, a map key or legend allows the reader to understand what is being represented and the scale by which these items correspond to each other as they progress across the geography of the entire text.

II. Distant-reading *The Making of Americans* with digital tools

Steven Meyer is one of two scholars who have attempted to visualize the structure of *The Making of Americans* by using traditional sentence diagramming to mark patterns of intonation and rhythm within one paragraph about repeating (305-307). In the only other visualization of the text, William Glass creates a spindle diagram to illustrate similar patterns in *Making*’s first paragraph (“Foreword” viii-ix). Each diagrammed paragraph takes the space of two printed pages in a published book. Ultimately, both attempts at diagramming a paragraph from *Making* are limited by the text’s extensive use

of repetitive patterns and the space needed to show these patterns and can only serve as small windows into its complex structure. Alternatively, a map key that functions as a guideline for reading a map of the direction, distance, and topography of a geographical location is a more useful metaphor for reading *The Making of Americans* since it facilitates reading a wider geography from a distance with a visualization that is meant to express an illustrative perspective on a whole body or location. The following analysis seeks to accomplish this goal.

The Making of Americans is divided into five main sections that comprise nine chapters.⁸⁵ The chapters are untitled but Stein (with Alice B. Toklas) proofread the typescript (Gallup 214) and inserted title pages between groupings of chapters creating one untitled and four titled sections. The first section is untitled (chapters 1 and 2) and the second is titled “Martha Hersland” (chapters 3 and 4); the third is “Alfred Hersland and Julia Dehning” (chapters 5 and 6); finally, “David Hersland” (chapters 7 and 8) and “History of a Family’s Progress” (chapter 9) comprise the fourth and fifth sections.⁸⁶ The scatter plot in Figure 20 serves as a map of the repetitions across the text according to their length and location where location is the starting point of the repetition as it is expressed in a running count starting with number 1000016.⁸⁷ The x-axis plots these locations across all nine chapters and the y-axis plots the length of each repeated string (including both words and punctuation) from 3 to 197 tokens. Each colored column of plotted dots represents one of the nine chapters. The black horizontal lines connecting the

⁸⁵ This evaluation is based on the 1995 Dalkey edition.

⁸⁶ The first and second chapters remained untitled until Stein published an abridged version of *The Making of Americans* in 1934 with Harcourt, Brace. With the abridged version, she titled the first chapter “The Dehnings and the Herslands” and the second chapter “Mrs. Hersland and the Hersland Children.”

⁸⁷ This number refers to the sixteenth word (including the title *The Making of Americans*) in the text (“through”) which begins the first repeated string “through his own.”

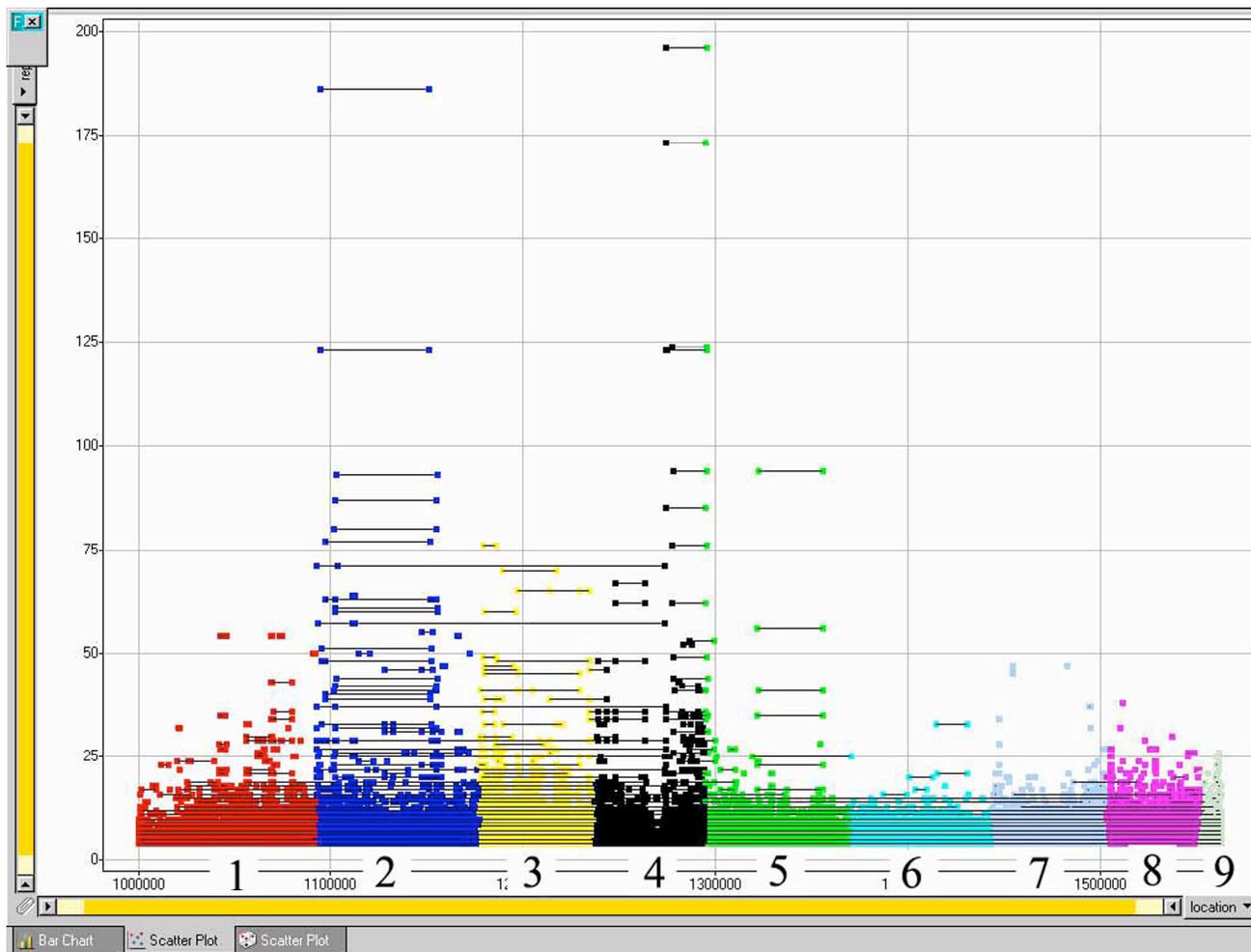


Figure 20: Repetitions (x-axis = location, y-axis = length), *Spotfire*

dots on the plot are lines indicating matching patterns. The visualization that appears in Figure 20 shows a trend for longer repetitions in the first half of the text with the longest repetition happening exactly in the center of the text, straddling chapters 4 (in black) and 5 (in green). The long repeated section co-occurs in the Dalkey Archive Press 1995 edition on pages 443 and 480 respectively, making the midpoint between them page 462, which is also the exact center of this 924-page book. Reading from the left, the repetitions rise in length in chapters 2, 4 and 5, and descend again in the later chapters 6, 7, and 8 until the longer repetitions are indiscernible on this scale by chapter 9. What is clear from this map of repeated patterns is that Stein has marked the center of the book and that there is a change in the form between the two halves of the text. What is not yet clear is what that change is and why it occurs.

In order to use this visualization to understand this transformation, what is being measured in the visualization must be clarified. The scatter plot featured in Figure 20 has been created from a database of repeated phrases derived from the text.⁸⁸ Each item in the database is an independently recurring string within the text (including characters and punctuation) that occurs at a specific location.⁸⁹ For example, if the four-token string “abcd” occurs twice in the text (once in chapter 1 and once in chapter 9) it appears twice in the database with two different locations but the same ID. The count of occurrence is based on a closed set so subsets of these two instances of “abcd” are not included in the

⁸⁸ In coordination with Martin Mueller (a MONK collaborator in the English and Classics departments at Northwestern University) who was interested in the repetition in Homer, Craig Berry wrote the software that was used to derive this data from the text. At the time, Berry was working with Northwestern University’s Academic Technologies—a unit within the Northwestern University Library. They ultimately created the “Chicago Homer” <http://www.library.northwestern.edu/homer/>, which produces the same kind of data for the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as well as for the poems of Hesiod and the Homeric Hymns.

⁸⁹ The data has been limited to strings that are three tokens (excluding strings that contain function words or punctuation) and greater (including strings that contain function words and punctuation).

database; however, if one of the substrings occurs independently in another location within the text (e.g., “ab” also occurs one other time in chapter 4) the database includes the two instances of “abcd” and the three instances of “ab” with a new ID. Table 2 represents an excerpt from the database of repetitions which has been sorted to show repeated strings that appear in chapter 9 such that the string “one coming to be almost an old one. Any one” occurs twice in the text, both times in chapter 9. The subset string “to

Chapter	Location	ID	Length	Count	Repetition
9	1552187	137374	11	2	one coming to be almost an old one . Any one
9	1552345	137374	11	2	one coming to be almost an old one . Any one
9	1552189	137343	6	36	to be almost an old one
9	1552023	137343	6	36	to be almost an old one
9	1552347	137343	6	36	to be almost an old one

Table 2: Excerpted data from the repeated phrases database

be almost an old one” occurs three times in chapter 9 and thirty-six times in the text. The three paragraphs shown in Figure 21 illustrate the complexity with which these overlapping repetitions occur.⁹⁰ Figure 22 illustrates the same data plotted on a scatter plot. The top repetition with ID 137374 (marked “A” in Figure 22) is “one coming to be almost an old one. Any one”. It occurs twice here, and as the longest string in this block of paragraphs, it is positioned highest on the y-axis. A line connects the two matches. The shorter string, (ID 137343, marked “B” in Figure 22) is “to be almost an old one” and it is

⁹⁰ Structures such as sentence and paragraph boundaries are not “counted” in this data—that is, the entire text is treated as one long paragraph so that repetitions that cross these boundaries are treated as matching pairs.

... Some have come to be almost an old one and have come to be a dead one. Some have not come to be a dead one, they are being living. Some have come to be a dead one.

Some are not believing that any other one can really be only doing the thing that other one is doing. ... Any one is one being a dead one. Any one is one being such a one. Any one is one coming to be almost an old one.

Any one is one only not needing to be understanding everything. Any one is one who might have been doing the things that one is doing. Any one is one who might do that thing, the thing that one is doing. ... Any one might be one and some might be believing that that one has been doing what that one has been doing.

Any one might be one coming to be almost an old one. Any one might be one coming to be an old one. Any one might be one coming to be a dead one

Figure 21: Paragraphs 3067 through 3070



Figure 22: Patterns in Chapter 9, zoomed (x-axis = location, y-axis = length), *Spotfire*

positioned below the previous match where it occurs three times; the line that links it to its match runs through other matches of the same length (10 tokens), making that line indistinguishable.

Decidedly, it is difficult to visualize the relationship between the shorter, more frequent repetitions and the longer, less frequent repetitions since their multiple

connections are lost in the mass of dots and lines pictured at the bottom of the visualizations in Figure 20 and Figure 22. Simply changing the y-axis parameter to plot the frequency of each repetition (instead of its length as we have done in Figure 20 and Figure 22) across the text shows that highly frequent repetitive patterns form part of an underlying pattern across the entire text, but (as shown in Figure 23) little else is

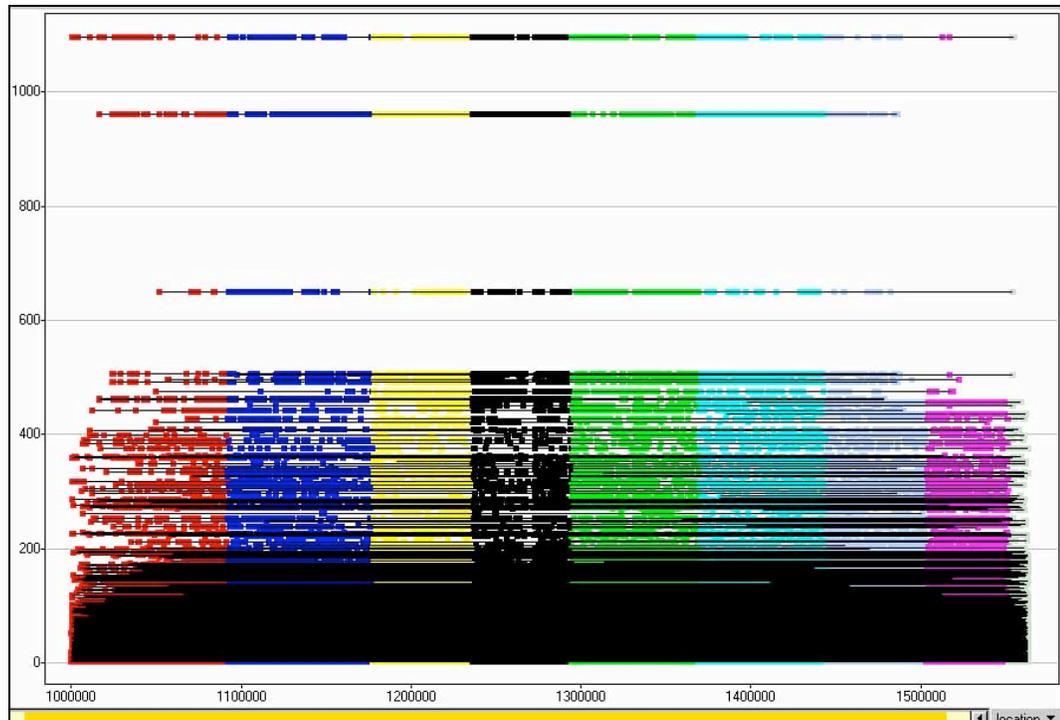


Figure 23: Repetitions (x-axis = location, y-axis = count), *Spotfire*

discernible. There are three outliers at the top of this visualization (Figure 23) that correspond to three repetitions (“men and women,” “I was saying,” and “kind of them”) with very high counts (1096, 961, and 649). It is clear that two of these three patterns (“men and women” and “kind of them”) run across the text, appearing in each chapter in a regular rhythm while “I was saying” is regular until chapter 7 in which the narrator voice drops from the text completely. Just as the underlying patterns are indiscernible in the previous visualizations, so here underneath these outlying patterns occurs the rest in

an impenetrable mass of plots and lines. It is not just that words are repeated (which is a pattern we have been able to detect in typical frequency counts), but also the length of the repetitions and the frequency with which they occur. As such, the combination of longer, less frequent repeated patterns and shorter, more frequent repeated patterns creates a visual affect that mimics the experience of reading the complex patterning of the text as a whole: confusing. What is also clear from these visualizations is that a majority of the shorter, more frequent repetitions create a patterned weave underneath, and entwined between, the feet of the longer repeated sequences, but again, it is difficult to isolate the behaviors of the underlying patterns. Trends that include outliers or absences easier to analyze in a visualization than trends that are regular or flat, because outliers and absences, as we have seen in Figure 15, Figure 20, and Figure 22 appear as peaks and gaps. Flat and regular trends are often common or frequent and become a visual, impenetrable block, as seen in Figure 23. It is for this reason that the underlying trend of shorter, more frequent repetitions is difficult to discern, because if this trend (unlike the peaking trend we see with longer, less frequent repetitions) is pervasive throughout the text, it is difficult to differentiate behaviors within it.

Once we begin to recognize this distinction between shorter, more frequent repetitions, and longer, less frequent repetitions, reorienting the data to visualize these patterns is possible. For instance, the repetition ID, as a one-to-many representative, has associated with it all the information for each instance of each repetition, including how frequently that repetition occurs, its length, and where the repetition appears first and last. As such, the ID may function as the combinatory form of the repetition. Accordingly, this ID may also be used to discern each repetition's behavior across the text. Plotting the

behavior of a repetition as one object (rather than as each repeated occurrence within that group) decreases the data plotted on the graph and, therefore also decreases the “noise;” this provides for a clearer mapping of the textual patterns. In order to illustrate this point, the following table includes the database information pertaining to repetition ID 9872 (“any such a thing”):

ID	Length	Count	Repetition	Location	Chapter
9872	4	10	any such a thing	1016602	1
9872	4	10	any such a thing	1100331	2
9872	4	10	any such a thing	1310177	5
9872	4	10	any such a thing	1310391	5
9872	4	10	any such a thing	1414671	6
9872	4	10	any such a thing	1445344	7
9872	4	10	any such a thing	1463523	7
9872	4	10	any such a thing	1506677	8
9872	4	10	any such a thing	1507294	8
9872	4	10	any such a thing	1519323	8

Table 3: Excerpted data from the repeated phrases database

According to Table 3, repetition ID 9872 occurs 10 times across the text, first in chapter 1 (location 1016602) and then in chapters 2, 5, 6, 7, and finally in chapter 8 (location 1519323). Because the sequence IDs in this database are numbered to represent the order of the first occurrence of each repeated sequence as it occurs in the text, plotting the repeated patterns by this ID means that we may plot each sequence by its first appearance in the text. At the same time, because the color of the marker indicates the location of each ID’s final occurrence in the text, the end point for each sequence is also visualized.

In addition, treating each repetitive pattern as a single object makes it possible to visualize and compare the three dimensions upon which each repetition co-occurs—by length, frequency, and location. In this way, we are able to distinguish where each pattern begins, ends, how often it occurs, and its length in a single view. In Figure 24, Figure 25, and Figure 26 the y-axis represents a sequence's length, the z-axis represents its count (frequency), and the x-axis illustrates where each pattern begins in the order in which it first appears in the text. The color of a pattern shows where it last appears. In Figure 24, ID 9872 is plotted where it first appears, in a location on the far left side of the x-axis (i.e., in the general location of chapter 1) but the lavender color, which represents chapter 8, indicates that ID 9872 appears last in chapter 8. Accordingly, Figure 25 and Figure 26 illustrate the behavior of each unique combinatory repetitive object is represented.

Since the color and the position of each object corresponds to each repetitive object's movement across the text, the distinct structural difference between the first and second halves of the text is well illustrated. At first glance, it appears that many of the repetitions remain “local” since plotting the IDs in this manner corresponds to a sequential chapter mapping from left to right much like the one that appears in Figure 20. This first impression is the result of the fact that many of the longer repetitive objects are local—they appear first and last in the same chapter. Consequently, many of the combinatory objects maintain both the color and the relative sequential position in accordance with the discrete mappings in Figure 20. On closer inspection, however, another pattern emerges. Figure 26 is actually skewed in comparison to Figure 20. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 take up considerably less space in this view because the longer repetitive objects, which, for the most part, are local to the first five chapters, “bleed” into

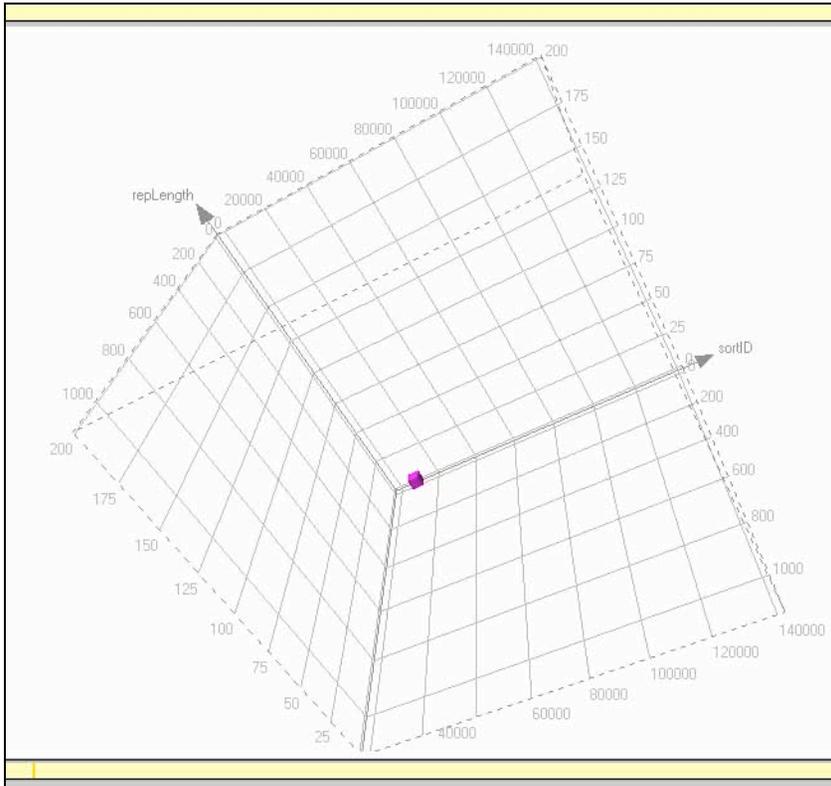


Figure 24: ID 9872 plotted on 3D scatter plot (x-axis=location, y-axis=length, z-axis=frequency), *Spotfire*

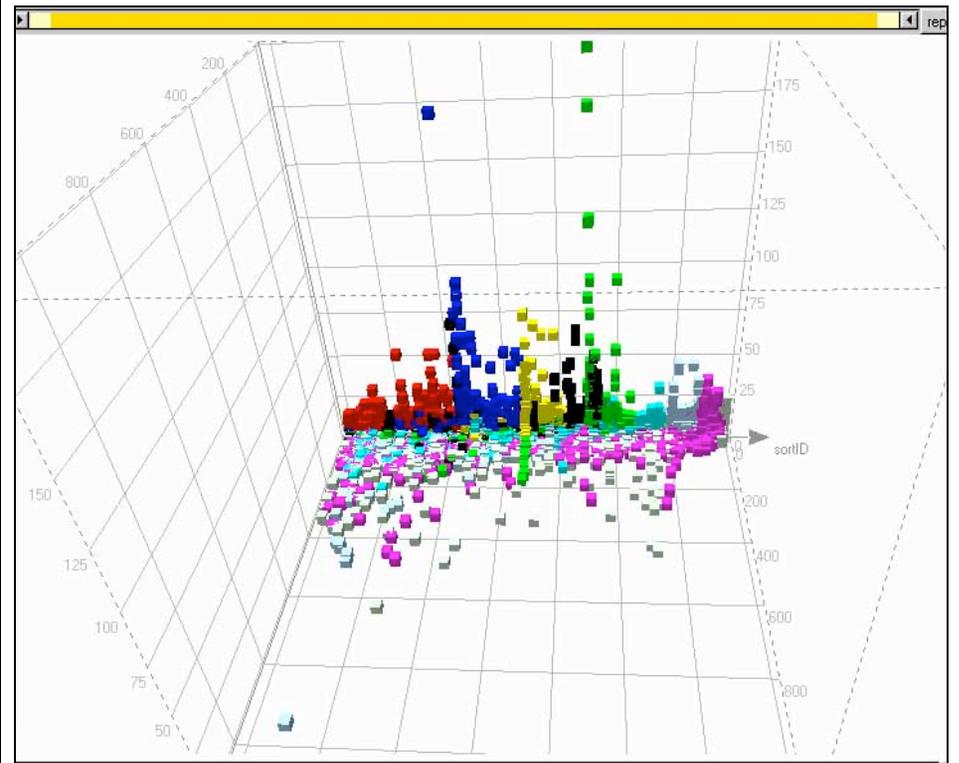


Figure 25: Repetition ID plotted on 3D scatter plot (x-axis=location, y-axis=length, z-axis=frequency), *Spotfire*

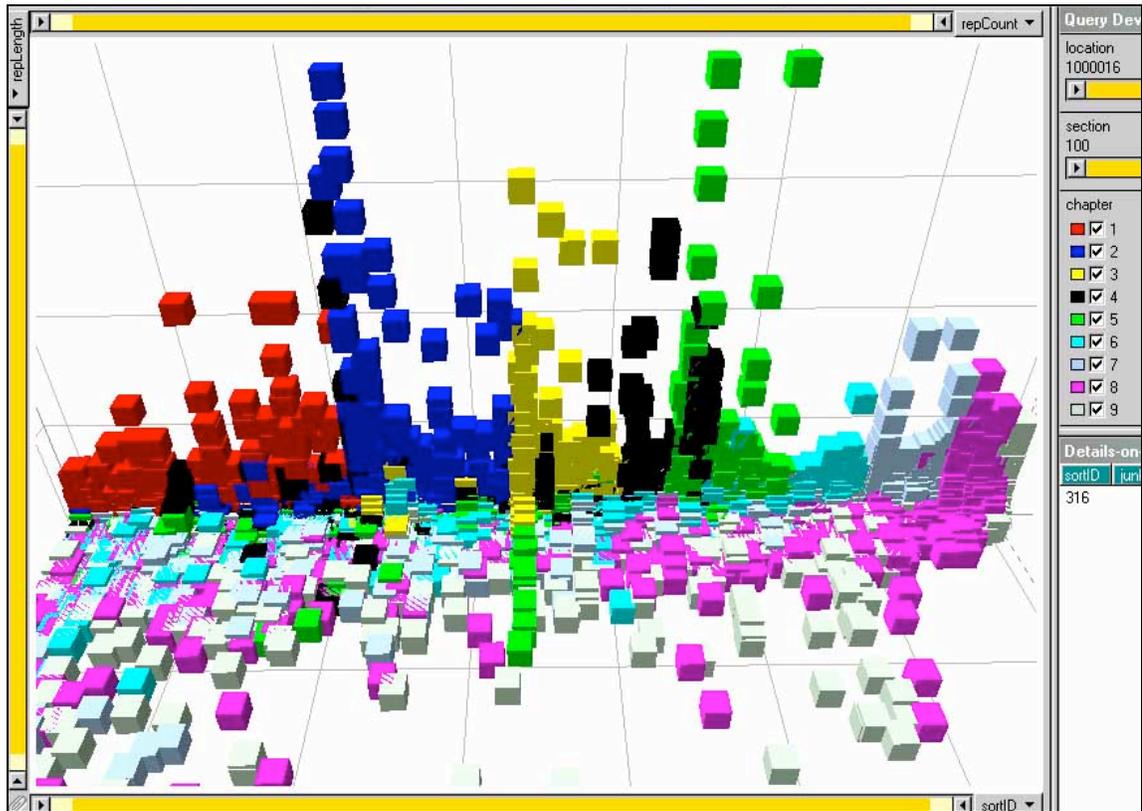


Figure 26: Repetition plotted on 3D scatter plot
 (x-axis=location, y-axis=length, z-axis=frequency), *Spotfire*

chapter 6. In comparison, the shorter repetitive objects that occur on the z-axis in Figure 25 and Figure 26 (primarily colored in the pastel shades that represent the chapters of the *latter* half of the text) are erratic; they are scattered without apparent order across the lower wall. As a result, we can discern from this visualization, which appears “skewed” in comparison to Figure 20, an overall pattern for the text that has been previously undiscovered: the longer and less frequent repetitions are usually local to the first half of the text while the shorter, more frequent repetitions run across the text as a whole.

But what does this mapping mean in terms of analyzing the text for meaning? How does this map—this reading at a distance—facilitate an alternative direction or

perspective for reading the text?

To this end, chapter 9 provides the map legend: it is a measurement of relative scale by which we can read the greater map. Understanding how chapter 9 is structured aids how we can understand the larger text. Stein refers to chapter 9 as a “rhapsody” (“How Writing is Written” 503) perhaps alluding to one definition of the term that denotes an unstructured, often passionate, instrumental composition. However, it is equally reasonable to assume that she thought of the word’s other definition: “an epic poem or part of one, e.g. a book of the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, suitable for recitation at one time” (*Oxford English Dictionary*) and conceived of chapter 9 as such a compositional object—part of the larger text but complete in and of itself. As such, its structure warrants a closer look. Chapter 9 comprises 18 ½ pages (the exact distance from each set of long repetitions in chapters 4 and 5 to the center of the text) and its title mirrors the text’s title (“History of a Family’s Progress”) minus what perambulates the larger text—the narrator’s discussion of the “making” of that history. By chapter 9, the narrator has dropped out, the characters no longer appear, and a general family history (not the particular Hersland family history) is told. Furthermore, mapping repetitions limited to chapter 9 on a scatter plot (see Figure 27), illustrates a pattern very similar to the first half of the larger text (Figure 20) in that shorter, more frequent repetitions are nested between longer, less frequent repetitions that usually occur in pairs (e.g., the match marked “A”).⁹¹ At the same time, chapter 9 is much very part of the second half of the text in which repeated strings are shorter and not so varied in length.

⁹¹ Each of the seventeen base sentences in chapter 9 occurs twice except for two that are repeated three times and two that are repeated outside that chapter in chapter 8.

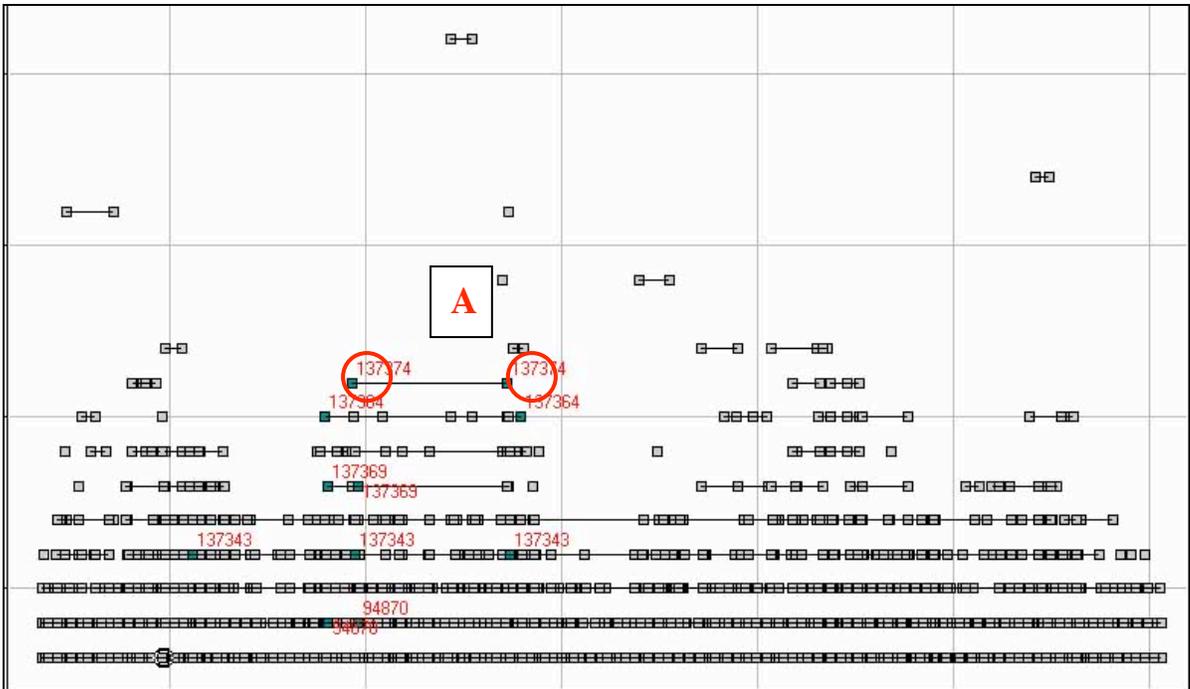


Figure 27: Chapter 9, *Spotfire*

That a mapping of chapter 9 reflects characteristics from both halves of the text does not present a contradiction so much as indicate a relative scale for reading the formally complex patterns that result from combining those two halves together. Chapter 9 comprises 557 sentences with only 238 unique words. Within it, there are seventeen simple yet abstract declarative sentences that are repeated verbatim. The significance of this base of seventeen sentences is emphasized by the fact that they are the only sentences repeated exactly in a chapter that is otherwise a cacophony of minute variations. The other sentences correspond to the base sentences as either a change or a compound of the base sentence's subject, subject phrase, verb, or verb phrase. Consequently, the sentences that precede and follow a base sentence usually draw on the theme of the base sentence and then radiate or expand its meaning. For example, the first paragraph of chapter 9 follows:

Any one has come to be a dead one. Any one has not come to be such a one to be a

dead one. Many who are living have not come yet to be a dead one. Many who were living have come to be a dead one. Any one has come not to be a dead one. *Any one has come to be a dead one.* (emphasis added; ¶3064)

In the paragraph above, the variation sentences are nested between two instances of the sentence “Any one has come to be a dead one” and may be read as variations used to make this “book-end” sentence more distinct. Correspondingly, the meaning of the base sentence is understood to be a function of the truth of the other statements. For instance, the second instance of “Any one has come to be a dead one” is predicated by the fact that any one is living or “has not come to be such a one to be a dead one”—and the first sentence is then changed by this remediation as well. Another example appears towards the end of the chapter. The sentence “Old ones come to be dead” (sentence *A*) is repeated three times. After its first appearance, another repeated sentence—“Any one coming to be an old enough one comes then to be a dead one” (sentence *B*)—occurs. *A* and *B* are followed by simple variations such as “Old ones come to be dead ones” and then more complex variations such as “Any one not coming to be a dead one before coming to be an old one comes to be an old one and comes then to be a dead one as any old one comes to be a dead one” (¶3166). More variations follow, but repetitions *A* and *B* remain interspersed making an *ABAAB* pattern. As such, we see what happens when combinations are formed: the meaning of declaration *A* (“Old ones come to be dead”) is coupled with declaration *B* (“Any one coming to be an old enough one comes then to be a dead one”) in such a way that the term “old ones” becomes forever trapped in a circular ontological stance. Pulled out by a centrifugal force of indeterminacy (“any one coming to be an old enough one” = old one) and the centripetal force of utter determinacy (dead = old one), there is an epistemological vortex present here (“I won’t know if I’m an old

enough one until I'm dead and then I may not know anything anyway") encapsulated in the juxtaposition of two simple (albeit abstract) declarations. The resulting combination of utterances forms the composition of a complete thought as it is expressed over time—one that wraps in on itself by changing previous utterances and impacting the meaning of new ones. Correspondingly, the two halves of the larger text function in much the same way: just as the variations on the “base” sentences in chapter 9 are complicated by the rearrangements introduced by subsequent sentences, the function of the second half of the text is to develop complexities and contradictions that complicate the knowledge produced in the first half of the text by using the same words and sequences introduced there, but using them in variation.

These new mappings of the text are important when considering *The Making of Americans* as a modernist text since from this new perspective (afforded by the digital analysis of the larger text) it can be argued that indeterminacy is not privileged as an essential reading.

III. Close reading *The Making of Americans*, differently

The fact that reading the text yields confusion is undeniable. “Each part is as important as the whole,” Stein writes about *The Making of Americans* and as such, “it was not solely the realism of the characters but the realism of the composition which was the important thing, the realism of the composition of my thoughts” (“A Transatlantic Interview 1946” 502). As such, the text itself is the real time reckoning of the human tendency to balance determinate and indeterminate knowledge and its expression. Correspondingly, the relationships established between the parts of the text, whether it be the combination of words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, whole sections or themes, is

not a means to this end so much as the end itself.

During the writing of *Making*, Stein was very interested in the notion of art as the composed or constructed object, especially as she saw it codified and practiced in the creative work of Cézanne and Picasso, each of whom she viewed as a “master of the realisation of the object itself” (qtd. in Walker 19). Accordingly, *Making* is not merely “about” American identity but an object of 20th Century Americanness that necessarily entails an element of indeterminacy as a compositional part. Stein believed that there was a symbiotic relationship between the composition’s structure and what it expressed: “the twentieth century was the century not of sentences as was the eighteenth not of phrases as was the nineteenth but of paragraphs,” she says, and “The Making of Americans really carried it as far as it could be carried so I think the making a whole paragraph a whole thing” (“The Gradual Making of The Making of Americans” 285). As such, Stein’s mode of radical nominalism results in a concept of “the thing” as a “discrete” object and has the advantage of facilitating modularity and the capacity to “begin again” and have a “different” thing—the underlying reason for having repetition with variation. In other words, Stein saw each iteration of a word or phrase (even if it was the same word or phrase) as a different word or phrase. It is for this reason that Stein’s “complete history” must evolve from “having complete lists of every body ever living” in chapter 5 (§2072) to being dependent on the reader’s ability to not see (and not know) a combination of interrelated lists all at once in chapter 6:

A thing not beginning and not ending is certainly continuing, one completely feeling something is one not having begun to feel anything because to have a beginning means that there will be accumulation and then gradually dying away as ending and this cannot be where a thing is a complete thing (§2395).

In this way, the form of the text justifies the feeling that there is no discernible starting or

ending point with each set of repetitions since each set has one or more partners that participate in its meaning scattered across the text at any one time. Accordingly, without beginning or ending and without linear or hierarchical “accumulation and dying away,” it is arguably the case that structure of the text is the one form that can accommodate these progressions: a circle.

The Making of Americans draws on many traditions that have incorporated circular condition. It is not circular in the sense that James Joyce’s *Finnegan’s Wake* is circular—the ending does not “link” to the beginning—nor is it circular in the same way that *Ulysses*—in which the movement progresses around the clock—is circular. In some ways, the text circumambulates in similar modes and for similar reasons as one finds in contemporary feminist literature tradition.⁹² For instance, *Making* does play with what many have considered “patriarchal” notions of linear time, linear thinking, and linear writing. Accordingly, it may be considered to be of the “‘female form’ in Western literary representations,” (Greene 15) but it also harkens to an older storytelling tradition that other scholars have identified as “ring composition.” In Mary Douglas’ book *Thinking in Circles: An Essay on Ring Composition* (2007) she outlines the history of a long-used literary form that has fallen into disuse in contemporary society, so much so that the first sure sign of a possible ring form, she contends, is the confused reader. Indeed, Douglas maintains that the repetitious nature of confusing texts like the psalms in the bible, *The Iliad*, or *Tristram Shandy* are indicators of a ring composition structure (22).⁹³ To be sure,

⁹² In Gayle Green’s text *Changing the Story*, she includes a synopsis of books with a “structure of circular return” (14-17).

⁹³ Though many scholars argue that the *Iliad* is structured in this fashion (see Stanley 307-8); Gaisser; and Thalmann among others), scholars such as Stephen A. Nimis assert that “the symmetry does not serve to focus attention on a central element, but is a secondary effect of the way the flow of the discourse is

the combinatory aspects of parallelism have a long tradition in canonical literature. In his study *Shakespeare's Perjured Eye* (1986), for example, Joel Fineman identifies the combinatory nature of the "chiasmic fracture" as a significant element in what he calls Shakespeare's "genuinely new poetic subjectivity," a subjectivity that disrupts the "normative nature of poetic persona and poetic person" that was established in more traditional Renaissance literature (1). In the case of the sonnets, Fineman argues, Shakespeare is constantly problematizing the subjectivity of the narrator (who calls himself "Will") by reiterating mirror images that split identification and create the ambiguity that remains when a "truth" in the form of "abc" is put in conversation with its reverse form "cba" in a parallel sonnet. Likewise, the combinatory effect of chiasmus results in a more complex characterization of King David in his psalm called "David's Thanksgiving" from 2 Samuel 22. Here, James W. Watts argues, the chiasmic structure of the psalm (in which David praises Yahweh) mirrors the chiasmic structure of 2 Samuel 21-24 as a whole and accordingly serves to emphasize David's devotion to God and deepen the impression that his piety is the main reason for his success even as this interlude occurs in the midst of his military and political exploits on God's other children.⁹⁴ Robert Alter cites the same "victory psalm" as a good example of such parallelism because it includes "quasi-narrative elements and discrete segments with formally marked transitions" that demonstrate the importance of variation (in stresses, themes, and syntax) within the repetition (613). In each of these cases, as is the case in *Making*, thematic and

interrupted by the decision to restate or reemphasise something" (70). Thus, Nimis argues that the structure is the result of the process of composition.

⁹⁴ In particular, see Watt, pgs. 114-117.

syntactic variations contribute to developing complexities of meaning.⁹⁵

In particular, ring composition produces meaning in *The Making of Americans* for three reasons. First, it calls upon a literary tradition of creating family histories. Ring compositions have figured heavily in classical oral traditions used in both Western and ancient Chinese celebrations for reciting origin myths and for recalling the history of a race, a nation, or—one could say—a family’s progress (Douglas 27). That Stein had a mythic structure in mind is perhaps also indicated by the fact that she began writing the novel by writing its opening parable derived from Aristotle’s *Nichomachean Ethics*.⁹⁶ In addition, the tradition evinces a structure that has primarily oral beginnings⁹⁷ and was customarily the structure of creation myths used “at the beginning of a new political period to affirm the relations between different shrines of the community” (Douglas 103). In view of this oral tradition, *Making* is not only about the progress of an immigrant family in a new land (the United States), but it is about the process of creating that history in and of itself, since, as oral traditions faded, the ring composition—its complexity requiring a well-trained command of language—became a stamp of literary authority (Douglas 30). Second, ring compositions emphasize the shifting nature of language by evoking the indeterminacy that results from multiple iterations of the same word used differently and the constrained meanings that patterned cross-referencing provides by

⁹⁵ Needless to say, much study on the bible has been done regarding its parallel structures. In his essay Alter writes extensively of the many studies completed on this topic in biblical study. See too Welch and McKinlay’s *Chiasmus Bibliography*, which covers studies in chiasmus across many literary genres and time periods.

⁹⁶ This attribution is quoted in many places. See Wald, pg. 255 and Mitrano, pg. 33.

⁹⁷ In terms of Stein who admits “I don’t hear a language, I hear tones of voices and rhythms,” (*Autobiography* 70), it is equally unsurprising that so many have attempted to “hear” this text in so many different manners, including an operatic score written by Leon Katz with composer Al Carmines (published in 1973 by Something Else Press) and an annual non-stop 24-hour New Year’s Day reading of the text by prominent authors and poets in a New York gallery. These readings were initiated in the seventies at the Paula Cooper Gallery (<http://www.artnet.com/paulacooper.html>). According to a posting on the Poetics Archive (<http://listserv.buffalo.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A0=POETICS>), Dec 1997, was the eighteenth such reading and would probably take 50 hours to complete.

ultimately limiting the multiple meanings of words, phrases, and passages to the couplings indicated in the text—providing for that simultaneous experience in language that is at once chaotic and restrictive. Gayle Greene calls the phenomenon of “circular return . . . a brilliant response” for what otherwise could be considered “inaccessible and esoteric” in feminist texts “since it leaves intact the linear sequence of language and narrative, retaining its coherence and comprehensibility while also critiquing its limitations and suggesting alternatives” (15). The third reason that ring composition produces meaning is that the compositional structure incorporates Stein’s language experiments with repetition into the greater goal of the text. That is, the material, formal complexity of a ring composition engages her assertion that it is a complete history of every one (or each one). Thus, the structure serves Stein’s purpose to concretize the text as an object (in this case, a circle) that becomes, as it continues to turn in on itself with a centrifugal force, a whole history without beginning or ending.

Learning to read *Making* as a ring composition is tantamount to understanding the method for making meaning that the text itself lays out for the reader. There are seven conventions Douglas has commonly observed in ring compositions.⁹⁸ One indicator of a potential ring composition is a prologue or exposition that states the theme and introduces the characters; it usually introduces the text’s problem or challenge, but because it ultimately serves as a pointer to the mid-turn and the end or “latch” chapter, readers often considered it enigmatic. Accordingly, in *Making* the first untitled chapter introduces the

⁹⁸ Of the two formal criteria I surveyed pertaining to chiasmic literary structures, I have chosen Douglas’s seven conventions over Welch and McKinlay’s fifteen criteria from their study *Chiasmus Bibliography*. Of significance to this study, Douglas maintains that her criteria were chosen as necessary conventions that serve to mitigate the primary technical problem of the ring composition (completing the revolution) whereas Welch and McKinlay are interested in chiasmic and parallel structures in general. Since I maintain that the successful construction of a ring is a formal requirement that allows Stein to accomplish her goals, Douglas’s criteria serve as evidence of this attempt.

characters and introduces the basic structure of the first half of the text. There are many examples that would serve to explicate the function of the first chapter as an introduction but one in particular exemplifies some of the structures we have already seen. The first narrative gap (illustrated in Figure 16) pertains to Julia Dehning's attempt to persuade her father to let her marry Alfred Hersland. Mr. Dehning believes that "Facts can never tell anything truly about another man" and so Julia tries to persuade him "by always repeating" her argument (§127). This description could well serve as a key to reading the first half of *Making* in which alternations between telling (diegesis) and explanation (exegesis) expose the tension between facts and our experience of them at different points in time. The second large gap pictured in Figure 16 (marked "B") is the story of Mrs. Shilling and her daughters Sophie and Pauline. This story represents the first narrative in the text about the less affluent people with whom the Herslands live including the families of their governesses, seamstresses, and servants in the surrounding Gossols (a fictional Oakland, CA). Eventually, these "others" have a greater impact on David Hersland than his own parents, such that a description of him is the description of many: "The youngest of the three Hersland children David Hersland was so entirely of them," the narrator writes, "was so entirely of the being of all these children that in the description of the being in him there will be very much description of the being in many of them" (§1579). Therefore, while the first gap (marking Julia's argument with her father) introduces the ontology with which Stein struggles (whether facts are simply just repeated experience), the narrative presented at the second gap becomes significant in terms of the larger text because it engages the epistemological questions with which Stein deals primarily in the second half of the text—namely, how do we know if our

knowledge is whole or true? In addition, this structure—intermittent narratives—adheres to the fourth convention of ring composition in which alternations such as narrative and non-narrative prose (e.g., the alternation between narrative and law in the bible’s “Book of Numbers” or nights and days in *The Iliad*) serve as indicators to mark internal refrains.

The second and the third conventions of ring composition require that the text comprise two-halves of inverted order, which parallel each other around the mid-turn; these matching sections contain “surprises,” which help to take the text to deeper levels of analogy because the reader is required to ask what these have in common. We have seen that the patterns of repetition halve the text. Explicating an example of this parallelism in terms of the “surprises” or textual revelations they signify also illustrates how reading the text as a combinatory structure facilitates new readings of the text. For example, in *The Making of Americans* both chapter 4 and chapter 6 refer to Martha Hersland as “a whole one” simply because Martha is physically discrete from other human beings by the nature of having a skin that makes her such. That is to say, Martha has no internal definition based on a sense of self; she is, quite simply, just not in some one else’s skin. In chapter 4, the *key cluster*⁹⁹ that describes Martha is “a mushy mass of independent dependent being with a skin holding it together from flowing away” (§1533). In chapter 6, the key cluster that describes Martha is “one [who] by her skin cutting her off from any other one . . . had attacking being that never did more than just wobble in her” (§2157). This very physical description of Martha’s character (her individual nature is based on the simple fact that it and not another “wobbles” inside her skin) is abrupt in the context of the much more abstract character descriptions that refer to Redfern, Julia,

⁹⁹ I use this term to denote key words or phrases which occur infrequently in the text and serve to tie together moments in the narrative that are otherwise seemingly unrelated.

and Alfred. However, reading this description in conversation with a similar key cluster in the first chapter illuminates its portent. In the first chapter, women who have heads that “look loose and wobbly on them” give the narrator a “queer” or “uncertain feeling” (§369). In particular, in the Shilling episode (gap “B”, Figure 18) the narrator explains that the Shilling women are three “queer” women whose “possible queerness” might really be the result of a physical “hole.” The narrator writes:

. . . they had lost something out of them that should have been inside in them, that something had dropped out of each one of them and they had been indolent or stupid or staring each one of them then and they had not noticed such a dropping out of them. Each one of them had perhaps a hole then somewhere inside in them and this may have been that which gave to each one of them the queerness that it was never certain was ever really there in any one of them. (§369)

One can easily draw a comparison between this “hole” and the gaps in repetition that appear across the first half of the text to conclude that the narrator is alluding here to the fact that definition or ontological knowledge may always be defined by a “lack”—that is, a generalized reckoning of a person or thing will always be indeterminate or missing some aspect. It is also worth considering that “hole” also calls upon the concept of “whole” knowledge or truth and the epistemological questions to which Stein turns her attention in the second half of the text. Thus, Martha, who represents the successful skin, is ultimately “a whole one” and “not any more, at all, interesting to the one knowing [her]”—as such, she drops out of the narrative. Similarly, the Shilling daughter who represents “the hole one” is finally “self-defensive” with “no power” and, likewise, “had no appeal to anyone who came near her because they never could really come close to her, she could not let them touch her lest they should push a hole into her” (§394)—she too is never mentioned again. Thus, neither the “whole” knowledge nor the “hole” knowledge is privileged. In addition, drawing a comparison between the process of

physical creation (the birth of a child or “such a dropping out of them”) and knowledge formation which are both necessarily dependent on the holes, gaps, fissures, and ruptures upon which these creations depend, leads the reader to consider that the formation of knowledge is a cycle dependent on the ongoing creation that results from this push and pull, from the centrifugal force of the center (the “hole” in knowledge through which one’s perceived sense of truth must drop out) and the centripetal force of its outer edge (the “whole” knowledge or the skin that struggles to keep that idea of truth in).

The fifth convention of ring composition may be illustrated in terms of the first convention by exploring the relationship that the first chapter shares with the midpoint chapter (chapter 5) and the end chapter, chapter 9. Primarily this fifth convention dictates that there is a “loading” of meaning-bearing markers between the mid-turn section and the beginning and the mid-turn and the ending; often these are signaled with key word and phrase clusters that match across the text. For instance, the first part of chapter 1 comprises two paragraphs on the first page including the parable and the epigraph. These two paragraphs gesture toward chapter 5 (the midpoint) and the circular structure of the text.¹⁰⁰ One example of a keyword cluster that ties the parable to the turning point of the text is the image of the orchard in the parable that opens the book:

Once an angry man dragged his father along the ground through his own orchard. 'Stop!' cried the groaning old man at last, 'Stop! I did not drag my father beyond this tree.' (¶ 1)

Seemingly expressed as a symbolic gesture, the orchard reappears in chapter 1 as a real place on the Hersland property. It is not mentioned again until chapter 5 where it becomes the place where Alfred and Martha play late into the evening with neighborhood friends. That the orchard only appears in these two chapters can be read as significant

¹⁰⁰ These two paragraphs are discussed at length by Bridgman, pgs. 66-67, and in Will, pgs. 48-51.

because parables figure heavily in chapter 5 where the story of a young girl and a paragraph about a young boy (§1847-1848) –both of whom become disillusioned with their fathers—takes center stage. Just as the opening parable has served to confuse readers,¹⁰¹ the boy and the girl appear to have no relationship with the text’s central characters. At the same time, the two paragraphs that comprise their stories have a relationship with both the cyclical patterns of repetitions in cycle two (see “C” in Figure 28) and the parable that begins the book. In light of these two relationships, the stories begin to make sense as comments on the turning point of the text. In the first paragraph, a father writes many letters to his daughter Edith telling her “that she should not do anything that was a disgraceful thing for her to be doing;” eventually, the daughter rebukes him by writing back that “he had not any right to write moral things in letters to her” for “he had commenced in her the doing the things that would disgrace her” (§1847). The father throws the letter into the fire before the mother (or the reader) can unveil its message, yet the message seems to imply an incestuous relationship. In the next paragraph, a boy wants to collect beetles and butterflies. The father has a long discussion with the child about the cruelty behind the practice. The boy goes to bed and the father “when he got up in the early morning saw a wonderfully beautiful moth in the room and he caught him and he killed him and he pinned him,” ultimately confusing the boy who on waking was immediately “all mixed up inside him” (§1848). Edith’s parable ends as follows: “what, is she disgracing us said the mother, no said the father, she is killing me and that was all he said then of the matter and he never wrote another letter” (§1847). With her propriety in tact (at least in the social context represented by her mother), Edith “kills” her father. Similarly, the boy wakes up confused but “then he said he would go on

¹⁰¹ See a discussion surrounding this confusion in Wald, pg. 253.

with his collecting and that was all there was then of discussing” (¶1848). Like the son in the opening parable who has dragged his father further than the father did his father before him, Edith and the boy have also broken with the father, and in all three cases, their divergence from the father and their inheritance indicates two comments on the nature of repetition. First, whether it is the replication that could result from the incestuous coupling of father and daughter or the result of the desire to capture or replicate the living beauty of a live thing, replication or the desire to purely “copy” necessarily involves a degree of error. On the other hand, a self-conscious variation from pure replication marks self-knowledge. Summarily, the word “orchard” functions on two levels as a key word that ties the parable in chapter 1 to chapter 5 and signifies the role replication and repetition plays in self-knowledge and as an allusion to the biblical genesis of man’s morality—to the apple and the fall of Adam and Eve—and to the beginning of their story.

Chapter 5 is the turning point in the text meant to pose the contradictions and complexities that ultimately require one to read the first and second half of the text in conversation. It is not the answer repository for every question—a structure that would serve to halt self-conscious knowledge production. For instance, that such a long section of the text is repeated nearly verbatim in chapter 5 (pictured in Figure 14) creates the desire to reread the slight variations with more consideration for the significance those changes carry. Limited to five words and a comma, the difference is not extensive. In the excerpt below, portions that are highlighted in blue only occur in chapter 4. Portions highlighted in yellow only occur in chapter 5:

Some as I am saying **have sure feeling in them**, have honor in them and religion from the nature of them when this is strong enough in them to make it their own

inside them. Some can make their own honor, some their own **living loving**, some their own religion, some are weak and can do one thing, make one thing their own, some are strong enough and all of it, loving, honor, **certainty** and religion in them. . . (¶1726, ¶1823)

. . . Some love themselves and others so hard that they are sure that they will exist even when they won't, they do to themselves exist even when they don't, these have a future life feeling, an individual thing, some love themselves and they are it and that is all there is of it in them and they do not have future life in them to be an important thing . . . (¶1724, ¶1824)

The difference in appearance between these two paragraphs pertains to the shift in focus from the first half of the text (i.e., repetition in one's daily living and the outward perception of one's character) to the second half of the text (or the look inward that more intimate loving entails). Accordingly, with this more intimate look at oneself, notions of "certainty" and "sure feeling" come into play and ultimately provoke questions. Further, the comma that is inserted in chapter 4 may be read as the difference between *having* "a future life feeling, which is an individual thing" (that is, it is one's prerogative to feel that way), and as living a "future life *is* feeling an individual thing" (chapter 5). The comma is a small difference, but the shift from having the perception or the "feeling" of a future (in chapter 4) is different from the notion (in chapter 5) that having a future is based on the very fact of that feeling and the process of perceiving it. Likewise, the complexities and contradictions—the holes, the mistakes, and the failures—introduced in chapter 5 are not meant to represent indeterminacy or the "feeling" of indeterminacy. On the contrary, the text is structured as an object meant to be a complete fusion, progressing with its two distinct halves (ontological knowledge versus epistemological knowledge) as interdependent forces. As such, having a determinate or whole perception of truth is based on the very fact of that feeling and the process of perceiving it.

The sixth convention of ring composition is apparent in the fact that on every level

of the text there exist smaller rings within rings that are often structured as chiasmus or inverted word orders that point to the larger text. Figure 28 visualizes rings within the larger ring of the text in chapters 2, 4, and 5. The lines represent some of the pairings that exist between repeated phrases including the duplications in paragraphs 1726-27 and

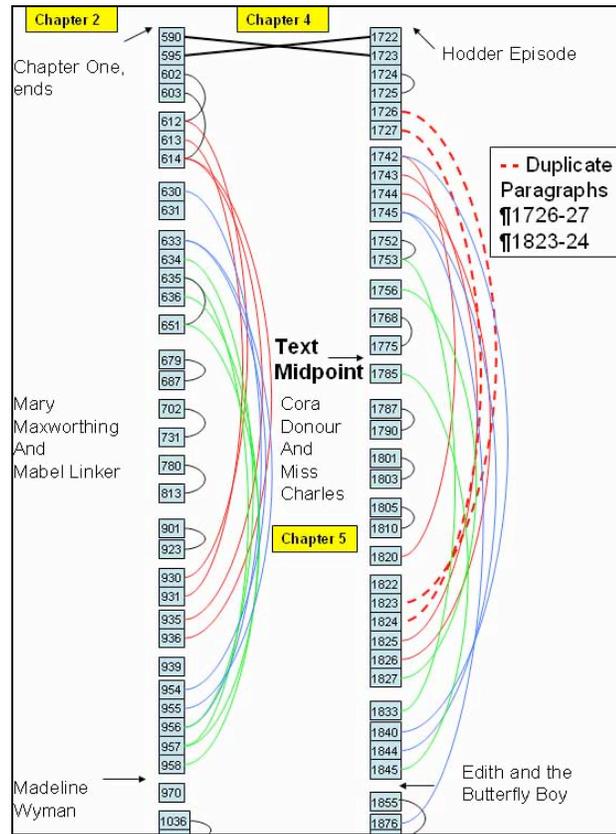


Figure 28: Flow chart of two cycles of repetitive patterns, *PowerPoint*

1823-24. This pattern, as we have seen, exists in the first half of the text in which the narratives tell the progression of this family and its history in a more traditional, nineteenth-century, realist mode while the repetitive sentences and paragraphs experiment with the process of telling. The repeated phrases that form these rings not only serve as the more mimetic reminder of the impossibility of exact replication (and thus the necessity of repetition with variation) but also point to some of the major narratives in the first half of the text that correspond to the thematic goal of the text. The

narratives involving Mary Maxworth and Mabel Linker in chapter 2, Redfern's lover Cora Donour in chapter 4, and the parabolic stories about the girl named Edith and the boy who collected butterflies in chapter 5. These examples point to the fact that composition was not a means to an end for Stein so much as a goal and the formal complexity of that composition (the combination of words, of phrases, of sentences, and of paragraphs) were not so much a part as *the function* of the larger composition. What further complicates this complex machine of cogs and wheels is Stein's notion that each repetition is an individual object as well such that repetitions are not to be considered in terms of their sameness, but in terms of the differences that are inevitable with multiple utterances of any repeated word, phrase, or paragraph. In other words, though repeating is about variation and combination for Stein, all the repeating words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs, and all the variations on them—essentially, all the “detailed repeating” in the parts in *Making* are meant to combine to form a whole and complete thing, an object for the sake of itself. Textual rings within rings heighten this effect.

The seventh and final convention requires that there exist “a double closure” in which the beginning anticipates the end and the end has been anticipated by the beginning. For example, *The Iliad* begins with Paris's judgment and the start of the Trojan War; it ends with Hektor's death, a result of the war and Hera and Athena's revenge on Paris. This kind of closure is quite often accomplished not only thematically but also with the help of key word repetitions such that a “latch” ending completes or corresponds to the problem or situation set forth in the introductory chapter (102). For instance, while the stories of Edith and of the butterfly boy in chapter 5 draw on seeking self-knowledge by breaking the cycle of inheritance and replication that is represented in

¹⁰² This list has been paraphrased from Douglas's list on pages 36-38.

the opening parable, the epigraph that follows the parable focuses on the notion that self-knowledge is the result of continuous struggle and the end of knowledge—the death of it—is the result of a self-perspective that one considers whole or complete:

It is hard living down the tempers we are born with. We all begin well, for in our youth there is nothing we are more intolerant of than our own sins writ large in others and we fight them fiercely in ourselves; but we grow old and we see that these our sins are of all sins the really harmless ones to own, nay that they give a charm to any character, and so our struggle with them dies away. (§2)

Beginning with birth, growing by way of struggle, character and characterization solidifies into one's "charm." This "charm" is what Stein will later refer to in the text as a person's singularity, her "bottom nature" or her entity, all of which refer to the unique characteristic of any person (their essential nature) with which they are born and by which they eventually fully realize or know themselves and by which others know them as discrete or unique. In this way, the epigraph gestures towards the last line of the text: "Any family living can be one being existing and some can remember something of some such thing" (§3174). Here, the epigraph is simplified: a family (a grouping of individuals) is identified by two coincident criteria: a physical person of that line remains and some one (possibly that person herself) "knows" (remembers or recognizes) that existence in the family grouping. That is, in both the epigraph and the last line, uniqueness, singularity, and thus, "charm" exist *if recognized*. At the same time, when this endeavor to ascertain one's entity either for the characters or for the reader in regard to these characters ends, their characterization is complete, "our struggle with them dies away," and the story is over just as, at the end of chapter 9, the story—in the sense of the material text—is over. Chapter 9 also serves another function in regards to the stated goals of the first chapter. Conceiving of chapter 9 as a classical rhapsody—a

compositional object that is part of the larger text but complete in and of itself—in which the variation on repeated words and phrases provokes a circular ontological stance and an epistemological vortex, the resulting combination of utterances forms the composition of a complete expression of existence or being as it is expressed over time. Thus, the function of chapter 9 is to inform the reader how the text as a whole answers the goal expressed by the narrator in the first paragraph of the text proper: “We need only realise our parents, remember our grandparents and know ourselves and our history is complete” (§3). Indeed, if the realization is based on the premise that to “know” ourselves is to know that self-knowledge comprises the struggle to express that knowledge then the text, revolving in on itself again and again, manifests that struggle. Again, chapter 9 provides the key for learning to read this process for making self meaning or, in other words, for creating a process for understanding and recognizing the unique significance of self—the goal established at the beginning of the text.

As we have seen, the formal properties of *The Making of Americans* can be described on three levels: the word as object, the combination of words in phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and sections as object, and the entire text as an object made up of these words and combinations to form a complete, whole circle. By alternating the narrative and the repetitive sections, the circular nature of the Hersland family identity (in terms of its physical, familial inheritance) and its history (in terms of its telling) is emphasized in the first half of the text. Likewise, the impending “whole understanding” that is implied by the end or “death” of the text in the second half generates the impetus to return to these narratives. After all, the narratives, though “hole-ridden” have the effect of seeming understandable, of supplying a “whole” understanding. At the same time, in

returning to the narratives, the cycle begins again. In addition, the bicameral structure of this ring composition serves to signal relationships between the themes that correspond across the two halves of the text, making that repetition necessary for the reader's understanding. According to this perspective, Stein's "whole history" is established by combining an ontological consideration for what makes a history whole or generalizable (by assigning categories, words, and narratives to express what is indeterminate) in the

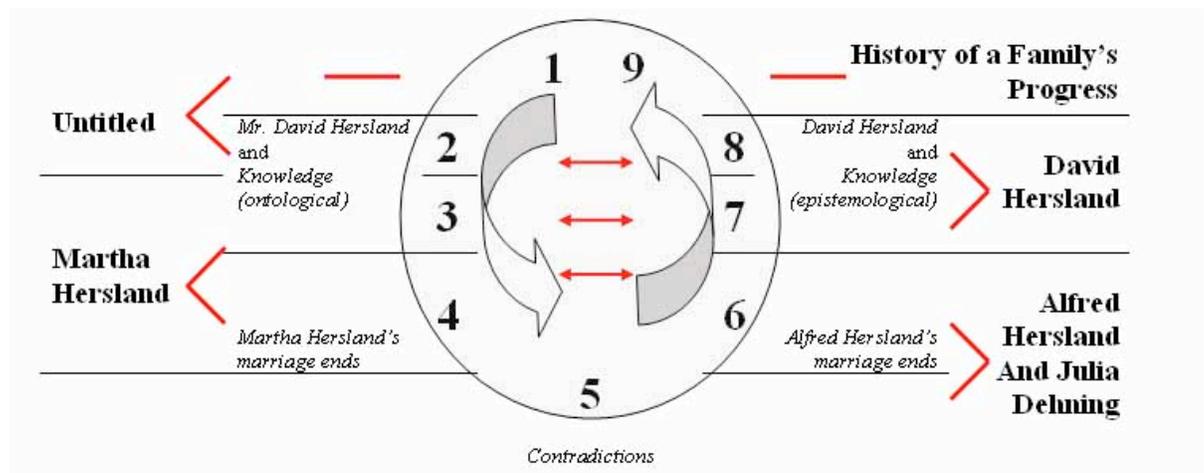


Figure 29: The circular nature of *The Making of Americans*¹⁰³

first half of the text and, in the second half of the text, an epistemological consideration for how we know it to be whole (by the act of questioning those very assignments).

IV. Conclusion

If a whole history is established by an ontological consideration for what makes it whole and an epistemological consideration for how we know it to be whole, chapter 9, like the variable in a math equation, is the key structure intended to serve this function. Thus, what makes the equation this chapter represents complete or mathematically "true" is the *Making* to which it refers. Jennifer Ashton (among others) has argued that Stein's work

¹⁰³ Using ring composition as a model, chapters 1, 5, and 9 have been positioned, respectively, as the introduction, the turning point, and the latch according to the criteria set forth in Mary Douglas' book *Thinking in Circles: An Essay on Ring Composition* (2007).

does not evoke indeterminacy but, rather, a determinate sense of what it is and is not truth, what is and is not “complete.” Ashton writes that for Stein, “the grammatical question of what counts as a completed sentence is as central to her effort to define wholeness as the mathematical question of what it means to count” and she quotes Stein as having written “I wanted as far as possible to make it exact, as exact as mathematics; that is to say, for example, if one and one make two, I wanted to get words to have as much exactness as that” (32). Yet, Ashton’s argument misses a central point that is reiterated again and again in *Making* and in her own assertion that Stein’s philosophical basis is mathematical in nature: that is, to the extent that an abstraction signifies nothing, it means nothing, it counts for—and as—nothing. It is no thing rather than a complete thing. The “x” variable in mathematics only “counts”—in terms of measures *and* what matters—if it represents something. That something—this history of “pairings” (§846)—adheres to Stein’s modernist ideal for creating a “complete” thing in that it consistently points back in on itself: “[O]rdinarily novels of the Nineteenth Century live by association;” she writes “they are wont to call up other pictures than the one they present to you . . . While I was writing [*The Making of Americans*] I didn’t want, when I used one word, to make it carry with it too many associations” (“How Writing is Written” 493).

Accordingly, distant reading has shown us a guide to those relationships that facilitate how to do a closer, combinatory reading. Reading *The Making of Americans* in a more traditional manner appears to have yielded limited material for scholarly work, but reading the text differently, as an object of pairings or as parts of combinations, ultimately works in contrast to the supposition that the text is only meaningful to the extent that it defeats making meaning. Finally, a distant view of the text’s structure

allows us to read and better understand its repeating, to read the text as an object that becomes, as it continues to turn in on itself with a centrifugal force, a whole history without beginning or ending— an alternative reading indeed.

Chapter 3: The story of ‘one’: the rhetoric of narrative and composition in *The Making of Americans* by Gertrude Stein

The most common critiques of *The Making of Americans* contend that the text deconstructs the role narrative plays in determining identity by using indeterminacy to challenge readerly subjectivity. Whether on issues of race, gender and sex, class, or the very complexity with which all these factors combine in constructing identity, these critical readings focus on the repetition Stein uses as a means for deconstructing narrative and confusing the reader’s experience. For instance, reflecting Judith Butler’s theories on repetition, Melanie Taylor identifies agency “figured as an effect of grammar” under “the sheer weight of Stein’s monotonous repeatings” which renders “nonsensical and inadequate” the “binary categories of gender” (Taylor 27). Laura Anne Doyle argues that Stein incorporates ragtime rhythms¹⁰⁴ in *Making*, which reiterate “the tropes of sentiment, virtue, race, and reproduction that infuse . . . racial myths and nurture subjectivity in the West” (Doyle 250). Priscilla Wald uses a film metaphor to explore what happens when the “frame” (the phrase or sentence) is slowed to the point at which one is forced to see the truly discrete nature—the subtle variation—of each repeated element. Emphasizing the extent to which *The Making of Americans* is an “immigrant tale,” Wald contends that this disorientation has the affect of frustrating narrative by “deforming the group story” (by which she means the “assimilated” melting pot ideal); this disorientation also represents Stein’s “continuous present” since the intellect “works like movies, breaking an experienced totality into successive static images” (Wald 295). This “continuous

¹⁰⁴ Carla Peterson similarly identifies syncopated rhythms based on repetitive phrasal patterns in *Three Lives*, which was written about the same time that Stein began *The Making of Americans* (Peterson 1996).

present” becomes for Wald the most provocative element for destabilizing narrative since it represents “an interminable moment of unsated desire in which readers confront their longing for the sentence, for completion and comprehension, and ideally see their complicity as desiring subjects in constructing plots” (297). It is clear from these remarks that interpreting *The Making of Americans* in terms of its discussion of identity and subjectivity has in part been a function of assessing the novel’s philosophical trajectory (its drive to deconstruct identity formation) as the result of the grammatical structures it uses to engage this dialectic.

Some critical readings that discuss the confusion the text engenders focus on the manner in which Stein disrupts narrative. Barrett Watten identifies narrative units that are “horizon shifts” and claims they serve as markers for Stein’s method of “beginning again” and “the continuous present” and therefore mark her strategy for invoking what many critics see as the text’s inherently subjective process of making meaning (“An Epic of Subjectivation” 458). Similarly, Jessica Berman claims that *Making* entails a “radical narrative” that “develop[s] a topographical notion of identity, one that not only reconstructs the subject as nomadic and polyvocal, but ultimately challenges the dichotomy between community and cosmopolitanism,” a challenge, Berman maintains, that “ties a feminist cosmopolitanism based on ‘dislocation, translation, and resituation,’ to a new narrative version of community, one which gestures toward a geographical politics of the personal” (Berman 158, 160). Invoking spatial (“topographical” and “geographical”) metaphors, these readings again focus on the confusion the text engenders in the reading experience by discussing its experiments in storytelling. Thus, whether its repetitive structures function on a micro level much like frames in a movie

reel in which “each picture is just infinitesimally different from the one before” (Wald 295) or on the macro level where dizzying narrative shifts invoke a kind of tilting-windmill effect, critics agree that the reader’s usual processes of making meaning through narrative are rendered useless. As a result, the reader’s frustrated sense of agency in the meaning making process becomes an important aspect of the text’s overall project for deconstructing identity formation.

Seeing this complicated text as highly constructed, however, enables a new reading on identity formation that may be based on the *stabilizing* relationship between structure and narrative. The current perception of *Making* as a postmodern text relies on the notion that there is a tension created by frustrated expectations that results from the text’s progressive disbandment of *fabula* (story) and *syuzhet* (the order of events in the text).¹⁰⁵ In these critiques, this tension is the result of a destabilization of expectation and knowledge in the discourse upon which the narrative’s progression (and thus the history of the characters) relies. For instance, in the first half of *Making*, the text progresses as alternations of narrative and non-narrative passages that comprise diegetic, mimetic, and exegetic passages. The *fabula* and the *syuzhet* develop between non-narrative passages. As a result, these non-narrative passages appear to describe or analyze the characters and events that are part of that narrative. As the text progresses, however, and the non-narrative passages predominate, the nature or function of these passages in relation to the

¹⁰⁵ In James Phelan’s definition, narrative progression is “given shape and direction by the way in which an author introduces, complicates, and resolves (or fails to resolve) certain instabilities which are the developing focus of the authorial audience’s interest in the narrative” (*Reading People, Reading Plots* 15). Instabilities are usually of two types, Phelan argues, of story (which are called “instabilities”) and of discourse (which are called “tensions”). Those created by the discourse are instabilities “of value, belief, opinion, knowledge, expectation—between authors and/or narrators on the one hand, and the authorial audience on the other;” Phelan maintains that a narrative can proceed by means of either line or progress along both, but that these elements are always working in tandem toward “developing wholes” (*Reading People, Reading Plots* 15).

narrative becomes more obscure. The second half of the text uses many of the same syntactic patterns (the same words and phrases) that are used in the non-narrative passages in the first half of the text, except these same patterns appear in variation—sometimes with multiple, adjacent variations—without the immediate context of the narrative. As a result, as the narratives from the first half of the text unweave into seemingly chaotic, meaningless rounds of repetitive words and phrases in the second half, the non-narrative passages are read as deconstructive in nature. Yet, a new perspective on the relationship between the non-narrative and narrative passages of the text dissolves these tensions that are the result of instabilities in the perceived discourse. This new perspective, based on the highly structured nature of the text, suggests that these instabilities can be resolved by the same seemingly nonsensical, non-narrative structures. In other words, seeing the manner in which the second half of the text is constructed to make meaning *in conversation with* these narrative passages alleviates the instabilities and frustrated expectations that reading the narrative alone encourages. Accordingly, the text can be re-read as a comment on the manner in which the combination of narrative and structure evokes shifting identities that, though not necessarily determined, are not indeterminate. Essentially, instead of a reading in which the narrative discourse in *The Making of Americans* entails a postmodern exercise in deconstructing identity formation, the text may be re-read as an experiment in which narrative and grammar work together to represent identity in complex formation.

I. Analyzing narrative as rhetoric

An approach that incorporates *Making's* discourse—the value-laden relationships that form between text and reader—is applied here by analyzing narrative as rhetoric.

James Phelan's approach to narrative as rhetoric¹⁰⁶ is useful here because it considers the fault lines that deconstructionist approaches to narrative lay bare in terms of narrative rhetoric. In particular, he discusses a short story by Katherine Anne Porter called "Magic" with which he demonstrates that a closer look at the story proves that readings based on a sense of indeterminacy and a reader's agency can be misleading. Even though there are "multiple facts and multiple ways of construing them" and these facts are "always seen from within the confines of a given perspective," he argues, "the perspective does not change the facts" of the narrative (18). That is, the "fact" that certain events are told (instead of others) in a chosen manner (as opposed to another) "is important to (though not necessarily determinative of) whatever response it evokes in you" (18). Phelan's perspective is important for this discussion because it brings into relief two notions about narratology that can be interrogated while reading *Making* with digital tools. First is one that Phelan discusses: Paul De Man's assertion in "Semiotics and Rhetoric"¹⁰⁷ that the rhetoric and grammar of a text often contradict each other, which results in divergent interpretations than the narrative alone might suggest (Phelan *Narrative as Rhetoric* 9). The second contention this discussion brings into relief is the assertion that Narratology is a "neutral approach to explicating textuality rather than a prescriptive or value-laden one" (Cobbley 681). In contrast to these perspectives, Phelan's goal is to respond to "the complex, multilayered process of writing and reading, processes that call upon our cognition, emotions, desires, hopes, values, and beliefs;" in so doing, Phelan seeks to unveil narrative as rhetoric that incorporates the "recursive relationships among authorial agency, textual phenomena, and reader response" (Phelan,

¹⁰⁶ Phelan defines the role narrative plays in rhetoric as "telling a particular story to a particular audience in a particular situation for, presumably, a particular purpose" (Phelan *Narrative as Rhetoric* 4).

¹⁰⁷ See De Man, pgs. 3-19.

Narrative as Rhetoric 19). This same approach, one that seeks to incorporate a consideration for these recursive relationships that form between text and reader, is applied here by analyzing the *Making*'s narrative rhetoric with digital tools.

Before beginning with an analysis of the text, I would like to clarify how pursuing narrative as rhetoric in *Making* engages “authorial agency, textual phenomena, and reader response.” Authorial agency in this study is treated less as an element of authorial intention than as an element of *Making*'s textual condition that facilitates a study of the text's relationship between structure and story. For instance, Stein believed that language in composition was the perfect tool for describing her knowledge of a person's composite being or self. Stein credited Paul Cezanne as the first artist to conceive that “in composition one thing was as important as another . . . the landscape has the same values, a blade of grass has the same value as a tree” (“A Transatlantic Interview 1946” 502). In literature, Stein contended, this theory could extend to the notion that “one human being is as important as another human being” (503). To this end, she “made endless diagrams of every human being, watching people from windows and so on until I could put down every type of human being that could be on the earth. I wanted each one to have the same value,” she writes (503). While she concedes that Henry James was “in some sense” a forerunner for using this idea of composition in literature, she also asserts that she was the first to “ma[k]e it stay on the page quite composed” (503). Language in composition makes it possible to write a history of every one, Stein contended, even though the project would need to entail the admittedly difficult, back-and-forth process of moving from her “whole” sense of a person to the repeating pieces she believed comprised her understanding. Ultimately, this repetitive movement mirrors how Stein has described “the

way I do my learning” and serves to reflect how she believed others might also perceive a being:

Sometimes I know and hear and feel and see all the repeating in someone, all the repeating that is the whole of someone but it always comes as pieces to me . . . then one loses the whole one repeating of them and they are pieces then of repeating and always it is changing back to pieces of repeating from the little time of loving that a little time makes of them a whole one. (¶1224)

This movement from “pieces” to “wholes” to “pieces” again is reflected in Stein’s philosophy that language also comprises pieces and wholes: “Now in the beginning of the twentieth century a whole thing, being what was assembled from its parts was a whole thing and so it was a paragraph;” she continues, asserting that “in *The Making of Americans* [*sic*] I did this thing. . . *The Making of Americans* really carried it as far as it could be carried so that I think the making a whole paragraph a whole thing” (“*The Gradual Making of the Making of Americans*” 285). As a result of this perspective, Stein contended that Henry James’s work reflects Cezanne’s theory of composition “sort of like an atmosphere,” while in her two early works (*Three Lives* and *Making*), “it was not solely the realism of the characters but the realism of the composition of my thoughts” (“*A Transatlantic Interview 1946*” 502). In other words, relying solely on narrative to represent the complexities of identity would have been inadequate to Stein’s purpose since she conceived of the composition as the “object itself.” Thus, it can be argued that Stein’s rhetorical goal was to implement a composite view of identity embodied in a text that makes meaning through both story and composition. Learning to read the textual phenomena with which *Making* is concerned engages authorial agency to the extent that such engagement encourages readers to reconsider Stein’s compositional theories, especially those that challenge the notion that grammar and narrative serve divergent

interpretations.

In addition, I discuss “reader response” in this study to the extent that these digital tools facilitate increased access to alternative readings and comparisons that are the result of inherently subjective analyses. Richard Poirier suggests that modernist texts have a “performative nature” because “in reading what they are writing [modernist writers] find only the provocation to alternatives;” consequently, “the texts are mimetic” and “[t]he meaning resides in the performance of writing and reading, of reading in the act of writing (113). This mimetic element of “provocation to alternatives” brings us to an element of Stein’s experimental project that seems most illuminating for practices in provocation and hypothesis generation in digital humanities—the extreme subjectivity that is encouraged by the fact that the narrator exposes the constructed nature of the narrative. That is, the narrator brings awareness to language, representation, and, ultimately, the “making” of a self as a technology of devices.

Indeed, the novel’s narrator is a participant in the narrative from the beginning and, in introducing herself, she simultaneously also draws the reader into the narrative. “It is hard,” she writes, “living down the tempers we are born with. We all begin well . . .” This short paragraph implicates the reader as a responsible party in the construction of the present narrative. For instance, even as the narrator asserts her agency as the story teller in the third paragraph, she allows the reader her own reading; “this is the story *I* mean to tell,” the narrator says. “It has always *seemed to me* a rare privilege, this, of being an American . . .” (emphasis added). Here, the narrator invokes a personal element of “truth” by calling her statement an opinion, and by implication, she requires that the reader have her own. In other words, the narrator is identifying a conditional sense of

“truth,” one that is productive in *this* telling but is not to be considered an objective rule.¹⁰⁸ As such, the narrator establishes that the condition of the telling itself exonerates the reader from incorporating a predetermined sense of her relationship to the rules of the text:

Bear it in your mind my reader, but truly I never feel it that there ever can be for me any such a creature, no it is this scribbled and dirty and lined paper that is really to be to me always my receiver,—but anyhow reader, bear it in your mind—will there be for me ever any such a creature,—what I have said always before to you, that this that I write down a little each day here on my scraps of paper for you is not just an ordinary kind of novel with a plot and conversations to amuse you, but a record of a decent family progress respectably lived by us . . . (¶162)

This text is not, the narrator tells the “non-existent” reader to be amusing (though it is), legible (though it is typed), or intelligible (though it contains some plot). Since in actuality Stein cannot deny the existence of the person reading the text (or any of these other “conditions” for reading), she is emphasizing instead that the condition of the reading is not in her control because, ultimately, the reader’s part of the writing process always provides a variable element. In explanation, consider Stein’s argument that “[t]he only thing that is different from one time to another is what is seen and what is seen depends upon how everybody is doing everything . . . this makes what those who describe it make of it, it makes a composition, it confuses, it shows, it is, it looks . . .” (“Composition as Explanation” 407). In other words, when a composition “confuses” and “shows,” the reader is made aware of her own process of making sense, of her level of extreme subjectivism, and ultimately of her power to change what she sees by changing

¹⁰⁸ George Moore calls this move a “natural” response to “com[ing] into conflict with the double nature of poetic language” for Stein “continuously approaches definitions of character only to qualify those definitions by subdividing possible interpretive functions into internal and external awarenesses” and “to eventually find herself drawn to qualify these descriptions by intuitive knowledge” (32).

how she sees it. As such, “reader response” is an essential aspect of all the technologies—digital or otherwise—engaged in reading the text.

As the readers’ perspective on the structure of the text changes so does the nature of the text’s rhetoric change to one that counters perceptions of indeterminacy. In order to engage this perspective, I employ two different strategies for reading *Making*: the first is to read character development in the more traditional manner—that is, as character development corresponds to the progression of the narrative present in the first half of the text. The second strategy is an attempt to continue and to resituate the first discussion by considering how characters are developed without consideration for plot and incident—that is, by using digital tools to read the text’s structure. Essentially, combining these strategies seeks to prove that by rereading *The Making of Americans* with digital tools, we can challenge the perceived role that narrative plays as rhetoric in the text by changing the nature of the discourse to one that incorporates non-narrative elements such as accumulated, repetitive, grammatical structures as essential aspects of signification in the text’s representation of identity construction.

II. Character development and narrative in the first half of *The Making of Americans*

A. Methodology for reading

Though Stein says that the characters within *The Making of Americans*¹⁰⁹ are insignificant, the text engages the discourse of identity formation in part by its pursuit of

¹⁰⁹ In the twentieth century, Stein argues, “the novel as a form has not been successful,” because “[y]ou take the average novel that is written in America today. No character sticks out, and no women’s club gets all het up and excited about the character in the latest novel they read . . . they get excited about the book but not about the character” (“A Transatlantic Interview 1946” 507).

“making” Americans through character development. The four main parts¹¹⁰ of the first chapter serve to introduce the relationships between the structure of the text (repetitive and iterative narration), its rhetorical goal (the history of a family’s formation), and, quite significantly, the characters and their functions within the narrative. In Phelan’s estimate, a character is a literary element composed of three components that are mimetic, thematic, and synthetic. Each component has “dimension” (“any attribute a character may be said to possess in isolation of the work”) and possibly a “function” (“a particular application of that attribute made by the text through its developing structure”) (Phelan 9).¹¹¹ For example, Julia Dehning’s thematic dimensions are illustrated in her being a complex, composite being that simple description (“storybook” description) would shortchange:

. . . truly she may work out as the story books would have her or we may find all different kinds of things for her, and so reader, please remember, the future is not yet certain for her, and be you well warned reader, from the vain-glory of being sudden in your judgment of her. (§63; emphasis added)

Julia’s thematic function as a complicated identity that is very difficult to define continues to develop as a result of the manner by which she persuades her father to let her marry Alfred Hersland: Mr. Dehning believes that “Facts can never tell anything truly about another man” and so Julia tries to persuade him “by always repeating” her argument (§127). The process by which Julia persuades her father to allow her to marry Alfred—through repetition—contributes to her main thematic function of exposing the tension between our perceived knowledge of people and our experience of them at

¹¹⁰ The first chapter is the only chapter in the text with additional divisions (marked by blocks of white space on the page). While the first part remained untitled, Stein herself titled the other three parts in the abridged version of the novel published in 1933 as “The Dehnings and the Herslands,” “The Hersland Parents,” and “Mrs. Hersland and the Hersland Children.”

¹¹¹ I say “possibly function” because under James Phelan’s definition, “dimensions are converted into functions by the *progression* of the work. Thus, every function depends upon a dimension but not every dimension will necessarily correspond to a function” (*Reading People, Reading Plots* 9).

different points in time, even when those points are repetitions. Julia Dehning and David Hersland serve as complicated figures in the text that the narrator has a difficult time defining and representing for her audience in traditional, “storybook” narrative. Further, these characters are created in opposition to Alfred and Martha Hersland who are described as “whole” and “complete.” Consequently, the narrator describes Alfred and Martha as unproductive story elements since Martha is “not interesting enough to be successful in quarrelling or in loving” (§1625) and Alfred is “not interested in anything or any one he was not just then really needing” (§1928). Determining the thematic functions of all these characters within the narratives of the first half of the text facilitates our ability to understand how the structure of the second half of the text continues and expands upon these developing identities.

B. Reading narrative in the first half of the text

The first part of chapter 1 (untitled) comprises two paragraphs on the first page including the parable and the epigraph. These two paragraphs gesture toward the role the act of writing plays in relationship with how the characters are developing a sense of self.¹¹² These themes are tied to the introduction of two types of characters that are outside the narrative proper. One character type introduced here (and described in the previous chapter) is the parable character:

Once an angry man dragged his father along the ground through his own orchard. 'Stop!' cried the groaning old man at last, 'Stop! I did not drag my father beyond this tree.' (§1)

As previously described, this parable corresponds to the parables of Edith and of the butterfly boy in chapter 5, who are parable characters who also seek self-knowledge by

¹¹² These two paragraphs are discussed at length by Bridgman (pgs 66-67) and Will (pgs. 48-51).

breaking the cycle of inheritance and replication. The second character introduced here is the narrator character, introduced as *we* in the epigraph that follows the parable:

It is hard living down the tempers we are born with. We all begin well, for in our youth there is nothing we are more intolerant of than our own sins writ large in others and we fight them fiercely in ourselves; but we grow old and we see that these our sins are of all sins the really harmless ones to own, nay that they give a charm to any character, and so our struggle with them dies away. (¶2)

The thematic dimensions of the *we* introduced here are tied to a representation of self that is multiple, that is reflected in and knows itself by an observation of others. Further, the introduction of the *we* in the epigraph ties the narrator character's thematic dimensions to the themes upon which the epigraph focuses such as the theme that self-knowledge is the result of continuous struggle and that the end of knowledge—the death of it—is the result of a self-perspective that one considers whole or complete. By establishing a collective consciousness for the *we* narrator character, Stein complicates her¹¹³ dimensions in the same manner that she complicates Julia and David's characters; that is, "complete" understanding is waylaid by the fact that understanding the narrator's identity requires a composite picture of more than one consciousness.¹¹⁴

In the text, this struggle with self-knowledge is constantly marked by a character's relationship with language and the act of writing. Their struggle is pre-figured in the paragraphs that open the text and in the parables of the first and fifth chapters where the moment of self-knowledge is marked by a character's use of language. For instance, the father in the opening parable realizes a notion of similarity and difference (repetition and variation) with his utterance: "Stop! I did not drag my father beyond this tree." Similarly,

¹¹³ I use female pronouns when speaking of the narrator because of the narrator associates herself with the writer and author of the text, Gertrude Stein.

¹¹⁴ The ambiguous nature of "the precise identity of the 'we'," Brian Richardson contends, makes the *we* narrator "an excellent vehicle for expressing collective consciousness" (56).

in the later parable in the fifth chapter, the boy's will to diverge from his father is introduced as an end to speech: "that was all there was then of discussing." In particular, this human will to change or alter reality is realized in written language. In chapter 5, it is exemplified both in Edith's father's attempt to "be moral" in his letter (though his actions have been immoral).¹¹⁵ This trope, that written language changes experience, is repeated several times throughout the text, but the stem of its many branches is rooted in the epigraph in which, beginning with birth and growing by way of struggle, one discovers one's "charm." This "charm" is linked to what Stein will later refer to in the text as a person's singularity, her "bottom nature" or her entity, all of which refer to the unique characteristic of any person (their essential nature) with which they are born, by which others know them as discrete or unique, and by which they eventually fully realize or know themselves. In the parable, however, the realization of this "charm" given to "any character" not only denotes the end of the struggle to know oneself, but also seems to point to the process of knowing characters with uncomplicated identities and with whom "our" struggle is brief. The narrator ascribes to writing (the "metallic clicking like the type-writing that is our only way of thinking" [¶237]) the potential for making a world in

¹¹⁵ It is also possible that this trope is reflected in Stein's own decision to knowingly re-copy a long, two-paragraph passage from chapter 5 into the previous chapter. This practice of copying is one the narrator introduces herself when she writes some paragraphs before that "some then have a little shame in them when they are copying an old piece of writing where they were using words that sometime had real meaning for them and now have not any real meaning in them" (¶1717). Though in his dissertation "The first making of *The Making of Americans*" Leon Katz asserts that this comment refers to Stein's insertion of the Hodder episode, it could also refer to any number of repeated passages including the matching paragraphs described in the previous chapter. Her manuscripts indicate that this passage, which has approximately the same 495 words as an earlier passage actually originated in chapter 5 and then was reinserted in chapter 4. The passage does not appear in chapter 4 in the holograph, though a marker that says "left out" marks where it would be inserted, and beside this passage where it does appear in the fifth chapter, Stein notes, "repeat with different [unclear]" (first holograph copy of *The Making of Americans* currently held at Yale University's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library). Further, the version of the passage Stein first includes in chapter 5 is the version of the passage that eventually finds its home in chapter 4 (For the minute differences between the passages in chapters 4 and 5, please see Figure 14 in chapter two of this dissertation.)—all of which seems to indicate that the passage was copied from chapter 5 to "reappear" in chapter 4.

which the struggle for self-knowledge has been simplified and the desire to be known by that singularity or “charm” is numbed: “No brother singulars,” the narrator says, “it is sad here for us, there is no place in an adolescent world for anything eccentric like us, machine making does not turn out queer things like us, they can never make a world to let as [sic] be free each one inside us” (§237). Thus, the epigraph and the parable serve to introduce the complex role that the making-of-narrative and the-making-of composition will play in developing these characters.

While the parable and the epigraph point to the larger effort for self-knowledge as it is figured in the nature of writing and naming, the next part of chapter 1 (“The Dehnings and the Herslands”) begins the narrative proper and refers more specifically to the first half of the text in which the characters’ thematic dimensions are developed predominately through narrative. Here, the narrator introduces herself again as a first-person participant. “It has always seemed to me a rare privilege, this, of being an American . . .” she says as she relates her goal to generate a record or history by which one “knows” oneself: “We need only realise our parents, remember our grandparents and know ourselves,” she says, “and our history is complete” (§3). In this way, the text begins with the simple assertion that identity is based in part on determining a place in the family’s narrative or history.¹¹⁶ Consequently, in this first part, the characters exist to meet this goal. The grandmothers are quickly “remembered” as those who gave birth and reared the fathers who “we must realise so that we can tell our story really” (§5). At the same time, with these characters this section introduces the two patterns of narration

¹¹⁶ Wald discusses the dynamic of “family” identification the results from narrative extensively; see pages 247-248.

(repetitive and iterative)¹¹⁷ that are employed in building these characters. In this way, Stein introduces the relationship between the development of characters and the composition of the text. For instance, the grandmothers are described in four brief paragraphs—one sentence each—in almost exactly the same manner, with just enough variation to indicate their being different individuals, to indicate that they are “ones” who are part of a larger history of “strong ones”: “One was very strong to bear them;” “One was strong to bear them;” “One, a little gentle weary woman was strong to bear many children;” “one sweet good woman, strong just to bear many children” (§8-§11). The composition of these narrative passages is iterative—the same words are used to describe different women, one after the other. The narrative effect, however, is repetitive: by using the same words, Stein creates the impression that the same incident is being retold several times in slightly different ways. In her lectures, she describes this notion of repetition with variation as the result of “resemblance”:

I wanted to find out if you could make a history of the whole world, if you could know the whole life history of everyone in the world, their slight resemblances and lack of resemblances. I made enormous charts, and I tried to carry these charts out. You start in and you take everyone that you know, and then when you see anybody who has a certain expression or turn of the face that reminds you of some one, you find out where he agrees or disagrees with the character, until you build up the whole scheme (“How Writing is Written” 492).

Respectively, “The Dehnings and the Herslands” section corresponds to the beginning of the novel, during which character development evolves into a description of every type of man and woman, “a complete history of everyone” through a description of the types of “ways” in everyone, “their own way of living, of eating, of drinking, of beginning and

¹¹⁷ In chapter 3 of *Narrative discourse: an essay in method*, Gerard Genette discusses repetition as an element of narrative temporality expressed in two manners as *iterative narrative* (in which the number of event occurrences exceeds the number of times an event is told) and *repetitive narrative* (in which the number of times an event is told exceeds the number of event occurrences).

ending, remembering and forgetting, of going on and stopping . . . their own way of responding to things, to anyone that touches them, to everything in living” (§943). As such, the thematic function of the Hersland and Dehning ancestors is revealed as they become part of an iterative narrative that dissolves their differences into generalized lists of happenings. Dead, these characters are simple to define, but in their simplicity they are also uninteresting and so their story is quickly over. At the same time, these ancestors must be “realized” since they produce the characters who occupy the narrative of this particular telling; in addition, they embody the underlying, meaning-making structure by which the family narrative and the composition progresses: repetition.

As the generations of ancestors come closer to the generation that is the focus of *Making*, characterizations become more complex. In the third part of chapter one (“The Hersland Parents”), the narrator becomes concerned with the manner in which this history is told. Again introduced by the *we* narrator, this section begins with a discussion on the complexities that time introduces into the process of describing character type: “. . . we think of ourselves and our friends,” says the narrator, “all our lives as young grown men and women,” making it “hard for us to feel even when we talk it long, that we are old like old men and women or little as a baby or as children” (§16). Here, the narrator is introducing two notions of time that will continue to affect character development throughout the text. First, is the notion that character develops over time. Second is the notion that telling about character development takes time. “It was not enough,” Stein says, “to satisfy myself with a whole thing as a paragraph as a whole thing . . . at the same time is the question of time” (“The Gradual Making of The Making of Americans” 285). This is to say that Stein saw time—especially as it functions in linear narratives—

acting as a hierarchical force rendering the combinatory form of identity irrelevant since the iteration of type over linear time privileges the “latest update” and makes previous iterations inherently unequal. Consequently, Stein wished to embattle the inevitable line that time draws in traditional narrative in order to show that each human utterance of character is an equally important signifier of type regardless of the moment in life (in one’s story) in which it is uttered: “as soon as a child is conscious of itself,” she says, “then it has to me an existence and has a stake in what happens. Everybody who has that stake has that quality of interest” (“A Transatlantic Interview 1946” 503). In reality, the child who is conscious of himself anticipates the man he will become just as the man recalls the child he once was—consequently, the combinatory form exists in each phase and shapes the “endless surprises” of human nature. To be “present” to oneself is to realize oneself always as a product of what has come before but also what will come next. It is for this same reason that the narrator warns the narratee in this section that the “storybook” or narrative medium may not serve to represent the complicated self of a character like Julia:

And so those who read much in story books surely now can tell what to expect of her, and yet, please reader, remember that this is perhaps not the whole of our story either, neither her father for her, nor the living down her mother who is in her, for *I am not ready yet to take away the character from our Julia*, for truly she may work out as the story books would have her or we may find all different kinds of things for her, and so reader, please remember, the future is not yet certain for her, and be you well warned reader, from the vain-glory of being sudden in your judgment of her. (§63; emphasis added)

This passage sets Julia up as complex, composite being that simple description (“storybook” description) would shortchange in part, the narrator reminds us, because beginning the story implies that there will be an end to Julia’s story and therefore the end of the narrator’s treatment of her character’s development, and thus the end of Julia’s self

(her character “taken away”). Accordingly, narrative is represented as an inadequate medium for identity formation because it is dependent on the narrator’s telling a tale, the end of which ultimately imposes a teleology on identity formation. It is for this reason that the narrator finds that words are prone to the same subjective, time-and-situation dependent nature as people. “It is queer that words that meant something in our thinking and our feeling can later come to have in them in us not at all any meaning,” the narrator writes, and at the end of the same paragraph, she begins to confuse this thought about words with a similar thought about people:

. . . there is in each case so complete a changing of experiencing in feeling and thinking, or in time or in something, that something, someone once alive to someone is then completely a stranger to that one, the meaning in a word to that one the meaning in a way of feeling and thinking that is a category to someone, someone whom someone was knowing, these then come to be all lost to that one sometime later in the living of that one. (§1722)

In addition, the point mentioned in the first sentence of this paragraph (“Categories that once to some one had real meaning can later to that same one be all empty”) is the same point mentioned in the last sentence in the section quoted above, but the “experience” of the paragraph in between has the reader “lost” about how to read that similar set of words. That is, not only has time passed but an experience has occurred in that time that builds on or replaces, modifies, reverses, or irreversibly changes that reader’s knowledge of the same words. Ultimately, the experience of words is being described in the same terms the narrator has used to describe being in people—as an experience of knowing over time.

As a result of these perceived inadequacies in narrative construction, this section of the introduction (“The Hersland Parents”) introduces the role pairing plays in complicating character development. For instance, in this part of the first chapter, Julia’s

mimetic and thematic functions in the text continue to unfold. Here, she marries Alfred Hersland, a fact which pushes the narrative forward through plot: “For us now,” says the narrator, “the important matter in the history of the Dehning family is the marrying of Julia” (§79). This event also forwards Julia’s thematic dimension for being complicated and defying storybook description. At the last minute, Julia has doubts, “a kind of a doubting somewhere in her” (§154), but goes ahead with the wedding anyway. Against storybook tradition, she neither rebels against the marriage nor lives happily ever after. In addition, this marriage introduces what becomes a theme throughout the text in which close relationships and marriages represent the “pairing of friends and pairing in loving” and a method for better characterizing her characters. Pairing, the narrator argues, represents a composite picture of a person or persons that is telling: “Always then one sees another pair of them and sometimes it is almost dizzying,” the narrator explains, “. . . and then it comes again that one understands then that repeating is the whole of living” (§845). That is, the ways in which a person’s actions resemble another’s actions points to a kind of distilled character type that represents an “insistence” or a “truth” about living and being. At the same time, pairing represents a composite or dual device in the text, working both in terms of the narrative and the composition of the text. Much like describing individual people, Stein attempts to objectify and make measurable single words. In an interview she talks at some length about how she “took individual words and thought about them until [she] got their weight and volume complete and put them next to another word;” in this way she discovered that “there is no such thing as putting them together without sense . . . I made innumerable efforts to make words write without sense and found it impossible. Any human putting down words had to make sense out of them”

(“A Transatlantic Interview” 504). She discovers that the practice of dividing language into discrete objects that are measurable and make meaning is inconclusive without the sister practice of making sense of them in relation to other words. Like pairs of people, words are recognized or perceived in relation to another word by *not* being that other word, but by also signaling meaning *in relation to* that other word. That is, Stein is arguing that the nature of a word is better perceived when it is in context, or paired, with another word.

In the fourth and final part of chapter 1 (“Mrs. Hersland and the Hersland Children”), the narrator character reflects this theme concerning pairing within the text’s narrative and compositional progression. In this section, the narrator identifies herself as the teller of the tale and the writer of the words, a subject position that develops through her identification with the character called “reader” or “you.” That is, without a reader, there is not writer. Though, the narrator declares that there is no “such creature” as the reader, this utterance is based on the existence and perception of a reader that the narrator then references in the same paragraph: “anyhow, reader, bear it in your mind . . . ,” she writes (§162). In this manner, the narratee, who is both listener to the narrative and “reader” of the composition, is paired with the narrator since neither exists without the other. Ultimately, the narratee’s thematic function is to serve as the text’s “ideal” object of representation. After all, for whom but the reader is the narrator attempting to present an “understanding” of being in the text? “I say vital singularity is as yet an unknown product with us,” the narrator writes to the reader, “we who in our habits . . . all always the same way of doing, all the way down as far as there is any way down inside to us. We all are the same all through us . . .” (§237). Thus, in a like manner, this section also

includes all the people with whom the Hersland children associated in their youth (“the people living in small houses near them”), including their governesses, seamstresses, servants, and others in Gossols (a fictional Oakland, California) since, the narrator declares, completing this family history that pertains to an understanding “of us” also depends on knowing all the people the family members knew (§440). As a result of the fact that the pairing between the narrator and the narratee and the pairings of the family history are intertwined in this section, it is implied that the reader’s notions about his own identity are contingent on the progression of the text’s central narrative: this history of a family’s progress.

The pairing or “insistence” that results from repetition—both in terms of the narrative and in terms of the compositional structure—is not simply the reproduction of an essential sameness but the temporal and spatial characterization of that which is repeated. Consequently, it is through the process of repeating that an understanding of a history of that repeating occurs: “Repeating is the whole of living,” the narrator writes, “and by repeating comes understanding, and understanding is to some the most important part of living” (§848). At the same time, as the narratives begin to focus on the pairings and thus the complication of these developing characters, the structure of the text becomes more complicated as well. For instance, the following flow chart visualizes an interspersion of pairings between people and pairings between paragraphs just before and across the center of the text. The paragraphs marked *A* contain duplicate phrases that begin these cycles in chapter 2 and chapter 4, and the dashed red lines indicate the longest match in the text (almost 500 words) that occurs between paragraphs 1726, 1727, 1823 and 1824. The duplicate paragraphs in Figure 30 marked *A* (paragraphs 590, 595,

1722, and 1723) represent pairings that exist between these two main cycles of repetitions. The repeated sections that begin each pattern of repetitive cycles includes the following sentence: “Nothing of all the things all men have in them in their daily living

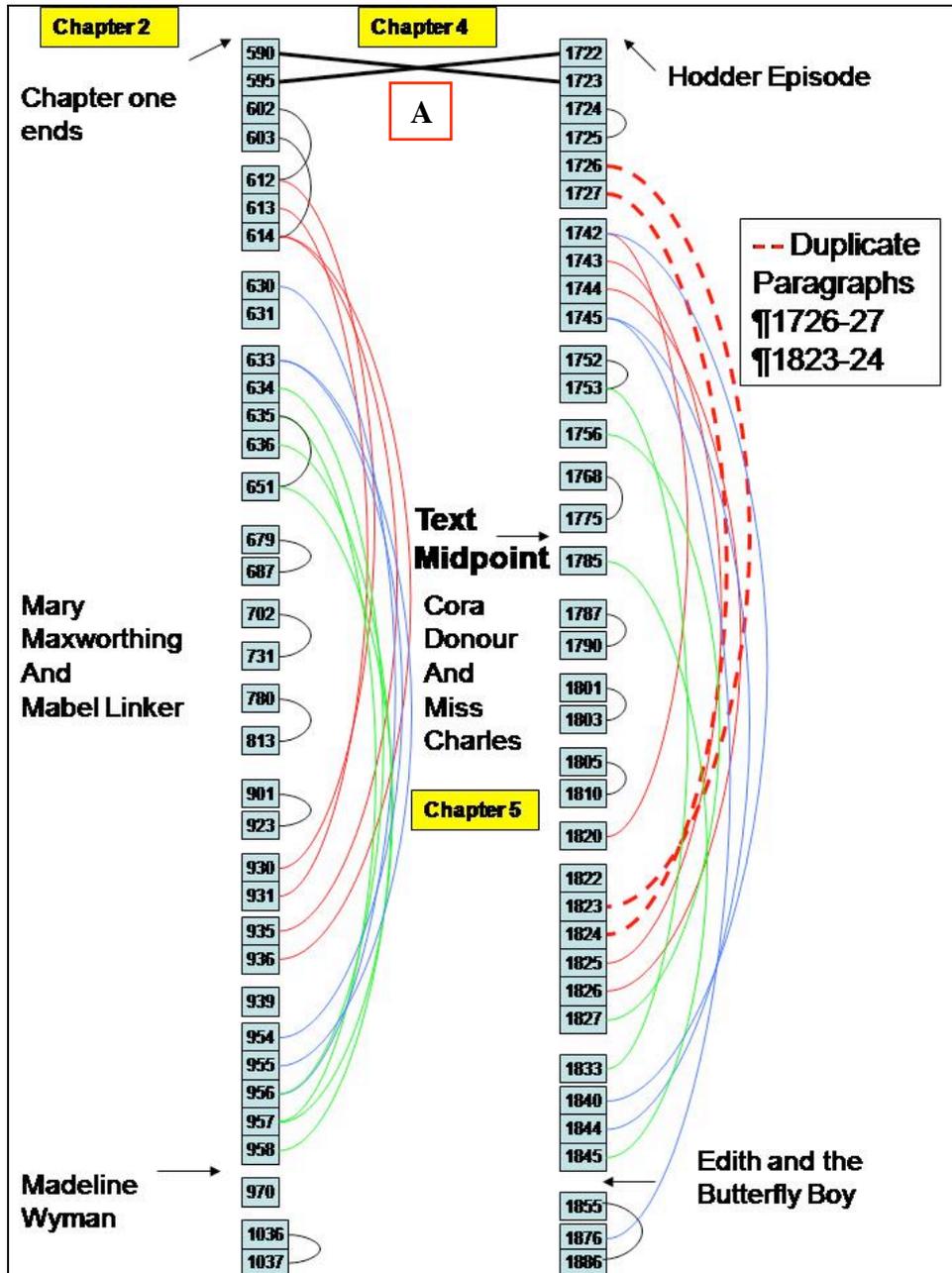


Figure 30: Flow chart of two cycles of repetitive patterns, *PowerPoint*

comes in all men from the bottom nature of them” (¶595, ¶1722). Both cycles one and two serve as the narrative and textual progressions that complicate “the bottom nature” of

“all men.” In terms of the narrative, the character’s thematic dimensions are complicated by the pairings; in terms of the structure, the syntax used to describe these pairings becomes more complex. For instance, in cycle one, the primary discussion centers on how the pairing or combination of types (such as “independent dependent” vs. “dependent independent”) creates a person’s nature: “There was in him a mixture in him but with him it made a whole of him” (§599). In cycle two, the discussion involves a person’s contradictory drive for a singular self-perception: “his own way of feeling himself important inside” (§1723). As a reflection of this evolution, the pauses in the patterns coincide with intermittent narratives that include the pairing and separation of characters. For instance, Mary Maxworth and Mabel Linker end their relationship in the center of the first cycle. Cora Dounor and Miss Charles end their relationship in the middle of the second. The large break between patterns (from §1037 to §1722) corresponds to Martha Hersland’s break-up with her husband Redfern. With these repeated structures, the text’s composition mirrors the evolution of the development of the characters. As such, these repeated pairs become the prevailing rhetorical device for the middle of the text—that is, until the stories begin to break down as a result of the narrator’s realization that this method of repeating pairings also depends on a simplistic teleology in the stories. Thus, the cessation of “detailed repeating” that results from broken pairings marks the end of both a couple’s physical replication (and thus their participation in the physical progression of the family line), but also—without the nuances that repetition with variation or pairing affords—they are no longer integral to the history *about* the family line. In other words, the break in the pairing between Alfred and Martha and their spouses becomes the end of their personal growth, the end of their

“struggle” for self-knowledge and thus, the end of their narratives. After the second cycle pictured in Figure 28, the narrator describes her method for telling about the break-up of Alfred and Julia as always “alternating between them and always a little preparing understanding one and a little preparing understanding the other one and so sometime perhaps everything will come to be showing something and that will be then a happy ending of all this beginning” (§1892). The thematic function that Alfred and Martha’s developing characterizations serves to convey is the notion that the end of the struggle toward self-knowledge is the end of repeating, then the end of the narrative, and thus the end of the history by which one’s self is known.

By the conclusion of chapter 6, the narratives involving Martha, Alfred, and Julia have dissolved while the narrative comprising the narrator-character’s struggle for self-knowledge has become a struggle with language. In chapter 7, the term “I mean” becomes deeply problematic for the narrator-character, who, with these final words, ends her overt, first-person account:

I mean, I mean and that is not what I mean, I mean that not any one is saying what they are meaning, I mean that I am feeling something, I mean that I mean something and I mean that not any one is thinking, is feeling, is saying, is certain of that thing, I mean that not any one can be saying, thinking, feeling, not any one can be certain of that thing, I mean I am not certain of that thing, I am not ever saying, thinking, feeling, being certain of this thing, I mean, I mean, I know what I mean. (§2587)

Here, the words “I mean, I mean” imply the opposite, that one cannot actually *express* what one truly means (“that is not what I mean”), a point that is further amplified by the narrator-character’s progression toward her last words in the text: “I mean, I mean, I know what I mean.” The difference between the first and the last lines of this paragraph illustrate the narrator-character’s progression from being concerned that “I mean” is not

an adequate representation of the thought she is trying to relay and her ultimate conclusion –“I know what I mean”— which conveys that the act of expressing these thoughts with these words is what complicates the telling. At first, this declaration seems to gesture toward the notion that narrative and language are restrictive elements in the process of self-knowledge and identity formation. Yet, in the next paragraph, the narrator uses her last *I* statements (“I mean, I mean”) in a third-person account to explain that the end of narration does not have to indicate a teleology. Specifically, the struggle for self-knowledge and identity (what she describes here as “the moment of sensibility, emotion, and expression and origin”) is not “all in a state of completion” because “there was another something”:

Some of such of them have it that the moment of sensibility, emotion and expression and origin is all in a state of completion and then it is a finished thing and certainly then that one was meaning something and he was saying I mean, I mean, and it was all finished and then there was another something and this one certainly very often said I mean. That one said that very often in being one being living. (§2588)

By using her own words “I mean, I mean” and attributing them to “that one,” the narrator character becomes undifferentiated from the other “ones being living” she has been describing all along, a realization that heralds the text’s progression into the next, non-narrative phase of the text. Stein says about *Making*, “I have created a lot of characters, but that is another story” (“A Transatlantic Interview” 507)—that “another something” is “the other story” that continues the text’s argument about identity formation even as the narrative is seemingly concluded. This other story is told by the composition of the text.

III. Character development and composition in the second half of *The Making of Americans*

In a statement that is telling of Stein’s pride in the work she accomplished in the

second half of *Making*, she likens the second half of the text, in which character development progresses without narrative, to her well-received, subsequent work with portrait writing and to novels by Marcel Proust and James Joyce:

. . . in the three novels . . . that are the important things written in this generation, there is, in none of them a story. There is none in Proust in *The Making of Americans* or in *Ulysses* . . . you do see the important things written in this generation do not tell a story. I began to write [portraits] when I was about in the middle of *The Making of Americans*, and if you read *The Making of Americans* you will realize why this was inevitable (“Portraits and Repetition” 184-185).

Stein could be making this allusion to the “middle” of *Making* as a reference to a moment in the process of writing the text, but it could also gesture toward the middle of the text itself. Stein draws the comparison to portraits because her attempt in creating written portraits was much like what she considered a painter’s ought to be—to create “a picture that exists for and in itself” using “objects landscapes and people” without being “deeply conscious of these things as a subject” (“Masterpieces” 497). Tzvetan Todorov has argued that the portrait-writing genre entails descriptive, non-narrative writing, which incorporates an element of temporal pause that signals the temporary suspension of the narrative. The portrait is “a version of pure causality,” a cessation of time that he puts in opposition to a chronicle such as *Ulysses*, which “rejects, in appearance at least, submission to causality” since “the only, or at least the main, relation among the actions is their pure succession” (42). In contrast to the chronicle, then, a portrait represents a succession of time all at once.

At the same time, Stein thought that her “failure” to make her thoughts real or “whole” was related to concerns she had about composition and time that were not met by portrait-writing. “When I was up against the difficulty of putting down the complete conception that I had of an individual,” she writes,

the complete rhythm of a personality that I had gradually acquired by listening seeing feeling and experience. I was faced by the trouble that I had acquired all of this knowledge gradually but when I had it I had it completely at one time. And a great deal of *The Making of Americans* was a struggle to do this thing, to make a whole present of something that it had taken a great deal of time to find out, but it was a whole there within me and as such it had to be said. (“The Gradual Making of the Making of Americans” 277-278)

In fact, this ever-present contradiction that Stein recognized as the simultaneous occurrence of a “moving” knowledge that has an immediate aspect (“knowledge-of-acquaintance”) and a more static “knowledge about”¹¹⁸ element inspired Stein to create a text that instantiates what she determined was a way of accessing both while also satisfying her desire to write what she called a specifically twentieth-century American novel. In other words, Stein argued that this combinatory structure—of narrative and composition—embodied a formation of “self” that was essentially American:

Think of anything, of cowboys, of movies, of detective stories, of anybody who goes anywhere or stays at home and is an American and you will realize that it is something strictly American to conceive a space that is filled with moving, a space of time that is filled always filled with moving and my first real attempt to express this thing which is an American thing began in writing *The Making of Americans* (“The Gradual Making of The Making of Americans” 285-286).

Her attempt to construct this object, this “space of time that is always filled with moving,” in which the hierarchy of space and time is suspended and human character, which usually develops over time, is expressed all at once is the second half of *Making*.

¹¹⁸ The terms “knowledge-about” and “knowledge of acquaintance” were first explored in depth by William James, Stein’s mentor at Harvard. In a 1904 essay entitled “A World of Pure Experience” James explores the relationship between the subject and the object, “the knower and the known” which “[t]hroughout the history of philosophy . . . have been treated as absolutely discontinuous entities; and thereupon the presence of the latter to the former, or the apprehension by the former of the latter, has assumed a paradoxical character which all sorts of theories had to be invented to overcome.” In brief, he argues that “to make the relation intelligible,” one must consider perception as a type of knowing. Perception is divided into (1) “the type of case in which the mind enjoys direct acquaintance with a present object” and (2) one in which the “mind has knowledge-about an object not immediately there.” (James 52).

A. Methodology for reading

To describe *Making* as a project in which the rhetoric of narrative is the absence of narrative itself is a perspective that would adhere to the deconstructionist take on *Making's* comment on identity construction. Rather, I suggest that the text's rhetoric of narrative includes the temporal pause that the structure demands in the second half of the text. As such, it allows for and encompasses the characterizations that develop during this pause. James Phelan undermines the role composition can play in character development by introducing his basic premise about the "facts" of character as facts that are deeply intertwined with the progression of plot or the incidents of story that involve that character. This association between plot and character is well illustrated in Phelan's description of his attempt to analyze character by divorcing character from plot—a break-up he is ultimately unable to commit:

In the beginning I set out to write a book about character in narrative. It seemed to me that from Henry James through E.M. Forster and Walter J. Harvey down to most recent narratologists, the study of character had always gotten too mixed up with discussion of plot or action (the what-is-character-but-the-determination-of-incident?-what-is-incident-but-the-illustration-of-character? syndrome). I intended to isolate the element, analyze its nature, and report my findings to a breathlessly awaiting critical world. As the title of the book indicates, however, I too have ended up mixing the study of character with the study of plot—what is here called progression . . . the more I tried to isolate the species, the more I became convinced that the task was impossible: the only way to capture the species dazzling variety was to link it to the chief influence on that variety—the larger context of the whole narrative created by the progression. (*Reading People, Reading Plots* ix)

Phelan found his return to plot and incident inevitable since reading character development without them was "an impossible task." Phelan's summation of the relationship between character and plot seems to work well in analyzing character in a traditional novel, but what of the second half of *Making*? The second half of *The Making of Americans* contains little plot so the narrative crutch that plot and incident might

provide diminishes until it disappears by chapter 9. In a most significant way, Phelan's practice for analyzing characters created by progression necessitates an engagement with plot that puts a text like *The Making of Americans* in a precarious position. According to Phelan's practice, a reader's perception of character is based on "facts" born of plot. However, reading *Making* in accordance with this perspective, she will only see the dissolution of character development and thus the deconstruction of identity when plot is absent from the text. But what if plot is only temporarily suspended?

One method for analyzing character development within this temporal pause without relying on what becomes a non-existent framework of plot and incident is to view the progression of words taken from context and reconstituted according to non-causal framework, a framework that relies on comparative associations based on word usage. For instance, by using two analytic environments, *WordHoard*¹¹⁹ and *Wordle*,¹²⁰ we can establish which words are used more frequently and less frequently in *The Making of Americans* in comparison to words used in popular canonical novels from the nineteenth century by Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, and George Meredith.¹²¹ This process of comparison provides a means for determining a difference between the words used in *The Making of Americans* and the words used in these novels

¹¹⁹ Please see <http://wordhoard.northwestern.edu/userman/>.

¹²⁰ Please see <http://wordle.net/>.

¹²¹ This list includes novels by Jane Austen (*Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma: A Novel*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Persuasion*, *Lady Susan Watsons*, and *Sanditon*); by Charles Dickens (*The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*, *Oliver Twist*, *Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby*, *Barnaby Rudge*, *Old Curiosity Shop*, *A Christmas Story*, *Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit*, *Dombey and Son*, *The Personal History of David Copperfield*, *Bleak House*, *Hard Times*, *Little Dorrit*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Great Expectations*, *Our Mutual Friend*, and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*); by George Eliot (*Scenes of Clerical Life*, *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss*, *Silas Marner*, *Romola*, *Felix Holt*, *Middlemarch*, and *Daniel Deronda*); and by George Meredith (*The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, *Evan Harrington*, *Beauchamp's Career*, *The Egoist*, *Diana of the Crossways*, and *One of Our Conquerors*).

that include more traditional narrative structures.¹²² In addition, using *PosViz*,¹²³ we can compare individual chapters from *Making* to the text as a whole in order to isolate and analyze words used more and less frequently throughout the course of the novel in order to measure how and if these patterns change across the two halves of the text. That is, by identifying the manner in which word usage changes in correlation to the presence and absence of narrative, these comparisons enable a new perspective on the extent to which character development in the second half of the text can be analyzed as a function of the composition.

In *WordHoard*, the user can compare word usage between texts and text parts by determining a log-likelihood ratio that describes the size and significance of the difference between a word's frequency in a base text versus its frequency in a reference text.¹²⁴ For instance, in this analysis, I measure word usage in *The Making of Americans* in comparison to three different sets of reference texts: (a) a set of 19th century novels written by Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, and George Meredith; (b) between the first and second half of *Making*; and (c) across each individual chapter of *Making*.¹²⁵ This analysis allowed me to determine which words are more common in *The*

¹²² Stein makes multiple references to the differences between her novel and works by Dickens, Eliot, and Meredith and nineteenth century novels in general. In particular, see "A Transatlantic Interview 1946," pgs. 506-507 and "How Writing is Written," pgs. 489-490.

¹²³ *PosViz* was created by graduate student Roman Vuillemot during an internship at the Human Computer Interaction Lab (HCIL) at the University of Maryland, College Park (<http://www.cs.umd.edu/hcil/>). The analysis program used to label these uses is part of the SEASR (Software Environment for the Advancement of Scholarly Research) analytic routines (<http://seasr.org/>). Though imperfect, the system is consistent—it labels the same behaviors the same way each time. Thus each occurrence represents the *perception* of a different part of speech for a word. Both of these projects were available for my use through the MONK project (<http://monkproject.org/>).

¹²⁴ In essence, this kind of comparative analysis determines the log-likelihood ratio, which measures "the discrepancy of the observed word frequencies from the values which we would expect to see if the word frequencies (by percentage) were the same in the two texts."

<http://wordhoard.northwestern.edu/userman/analysis-comparewords.html#loglike>

¹²⁵ I visualized these comparisons within the free, online application *Wordle* with four sets of data for each data set, all of which are set in comparison to the base text *The Making of Americans*: (1) words that are

Making of Americans versus novels by Dickens (and *vice versa*) or which words are less common in the first half of *Making* versus the second or which words are more common in chapter 2 than in chapter 6. Visualizing this information in *Wordle*—a “word cloud” application—is useful primarily because *Wordle* provides a manifestation of the data (a snapshot of word frequencies) that is easy to compare and to publish for reference. The *Wordle* application facilitates this kind of analysis (and the subsequent creation of objects for reference) by visualizing the list of ratios as relative frequencies in a “cloud.” Using the cloud maximizes the space available on an average computer screen by visualizing words in sizes that reflect their relative frequencies. In this way, words with a greater value—because they are more or less frequent in a particular scenario—are rendered larger than words with lesser values.

In comparing *Making* with Austen, Dickens, Eliot, and Meredith novels, words that mark the difference between *Making* and these other texts stand out instantly. In clouds that visualize words used less in novels by Austen, Dickens, Eliot, and Meredith than in *Making*—the same words “one,” “living,” “feeling,” “being,” “them” are visualized prominently. The words “you” and “said” appear with more frequency in Austen, Dickens, Eliot, and Meredith novels than in *Making*. In terms of the story-discourse, the fact that most of these words are more frequent in either scenario makes sense. *The*

more common in the base text, excluding common words (2) words that are less common in the base text, excluding common words, (3) words that are more common in the base text, including common words, (4) words that are less common in the base text, including common words. I created multiple clouds in order to determine which words appear to be more and less common between *The Making of Americans* and these various sets of reference texts. In addition, “common words” such as articles, conjunctions, and pronouns may be quickly included and excluded from the visualization in order to provide maximum screen space for words that are commonly considered more “meaningful.” The full list of these “stop-words” is unavailable, but the creator Jonathan Feinberg has indicated in an email that “my stop word lists come from diverse sources, and I have modified them by hand over time. The English one came from the Snowball stemmer project” (personal correspondence). The Snowball stemmer project list (created by Martin Porter) can be accessed at <http://snowball.tartarus.org/algorithms/english/stop.txt>.

Making of Americans establishes itself in the first half of the text as a text that describes the living, feeling, and being of the “[m]iddle-class, middle-class” (§165). Middle-class Americans are the “them” from whom the narrator first separates her readers: “I know no one of my friends who will admit it, one can find no one among you all to belong to it, I know that here we are to be democratic and aristocratic and not have it;” at the same time, the “unillusioned unaspiring and always monotonous” material that comprises middle class life “is always there and to be always repeated” (§165). Further, that “you” and “said” are used more frequently in Austen, Dickens, Eliot, and Meredith makes sense in terms of Stein’s stated goal to avoid the realism invoked by these authors. Stein writes that “the Dickens characters, the George Eliot characters, the Meredith characters . . . were more real to the average human being than the people they knew” (“A Transatlantic Interview 1946” 506), and she contends that realism was not her goal: “. . . the realism of the people who did realism before was a realism of trying to make people real. I was not interested in making the people real, but in the essence or, as the painter would call it, value” (“A Transatlantic Interview 1946” 502). In part, this meant Stein was not interested in reconstructing realistic relationships on the page in which characters converse with one another, incidents that are usually marked by “he said” or “she said” and often invoke the second-person form of address. These comparisons represent the simple fact that different words are employed in *The Making of Americans*, but they also point to a more significant conclusion: certain words consistently mark the text’s difference to these novels that comprise more traditional narrative strategies.

What is also telling about these nineteenth-century-novel clouds is that the same words appear more and less frequently when comparing these novels to the first and

second half of *The Making of Americans*. This is significant because the same patterns are not visualized in clouds that manifest discrepancies between the first and second half of the text. That is, in comparing the first half of *The Making of Americans* (chapters 1 through 5) to the second half of *Making* (chapters 6 through 9), there is a clear difference between the words used in each section and this difference is not necessarily the same difference we see in clouds that represent discrepancies between these novels and the first and second half of *Making*. In other words, the first half of *Making* seems to be structured in contrast to the second half but in comparison to the nineteenth century novels, the first and second halves of *Making* exhibit similar word frequencies. That is, in terms of word usage, the first half of *Making* is more like the second half than it is like these nineteenth century novels. “Story” words or words that correspond to the narrator’s telling her history of every one such as “kind,” “always,” “children,” “inside,” “history,” “nature,” “whole,” “repeating” appear in the *more* clouds for the first half of the text compared to the text as a whole, but these are not words that appear in the *less* clouds that represent the first half of the text in comparison to novels by Austen, Dickens, Eliot, and Meredith. In these latter clouds, “being,” “certainly,” “needing,” “living,” and “one” still prevail. Summarily, the words “being,” “certainly,” “needing,” “living,” and “one” mark the difference between *Making* in its entirety and the nineteenth century novels, the first and second half of *Making* and the nineteenth century novels, as well as the difference between the first and second half of the text. Phrased differently, the words used predominately in the second half of *Making* also appear (though not as frequently) in the first half of the text though not, with the same weight, in the nineteenth century novels. In effect, this analysis indicates the same differences that a view of the structure of the text

in the previous chapter unveiled: even though the first half of the text employs narrative, it also employs some of the same words and the same structures as the second half of the text. At the same time, however, viewing these links between the first and second halves of the text with these new visualizations increases our understanding of *how* character is being developed since it guides an exploration into the method by which these words are being used differently. As a result, we gain a perspective on character development that is not solely dependent on plot or a narrative framework.

B. Reading the story of ‘one’

What becomes immediately evident in comparing these multiple visualizations is the prominence of a particular word that consistently scores a high value in terms of discrepancy between *Making* and the various sets of reference texts: *one*. The word *one* appears consistently across every cloud that marks the words that are more common in *Making* and less common in the sample of nineteenth century texts and words that are more common in the second half rather than the first half of the text.¹²⁶ Further, the word *one* increases substantially compared to other pronouns as the text progresses. By chapter 7, the word *one*’s propensity for different reading possibilities heightens as *one* represents multiple narrative positions at once.

The fact that the word *one* can play many positions in any given sentence in the role of a pronoun or an adjective in the subject or object position is essential to reading *Making*. Stein once noted that “a noun is a name of anything, why after a thing is named write about it,” but “pronouns” are “better than nouns” because they “represent some one

¹²⁶ The exceptions include chapter 3 in which *one* is used with high frequency and chapters 5 and 6 where *one* is used with the same relative frequency as the word is used in the text as a whole, thus “cancelling out” its appearance in the word clouds.

but they are not its or his name” and therefore “have a greater possibility of being something than if they were as a noun” (“Poetry and Grammar” 209, 212). Accordingly, since the word *one* can be a pronoun (and therefore something other than an object’s name) and an adjective (and therefore something other than a representative noun) the word provides for Stein’s desire to avoid naming and to avoid using nouns. Further, often it is difficult which role or part of speech *one* is playing.¹²⁷ It can—such as it does in the example below—represent multiple possibilities in the same sentence:

One is a young one and is knowing that one is not a young one and is knowing that one is a young one. One is an older one and is knowing that one is an older one and is knowing that one is not an older one. One is a middle-aged one and is knowing that one is a middle-aged one and is knowing that one is not a middle-aged one. One is an older one and is knowing that one is a middle-aged one and is knowing that one is not a middle-aged one. One is an older one and is knowing that one is not an older one and is knowing that one is an old one. (¶2658)

The paragraph provided above indicates the word’s propensity for possibility. If the narrator is assigning types to a group, “One is an older one . . .” may be read as “*This* one is an older one while *that* one is not.” At the same time, “One is an older one . . .” can also be read as a hypothetical or subjunctive statement much like “*When* one is an older one . . .” or “*If* one is an older one . . .” Ordinarily, the reader determines the meaning of *one* by other words in the context such as the word *that* or *if* or *when*, but in *Making*, the use of *one* is in play precisely to disrupt the reader’s ability to “pin down” or “kill” the sentence’s possibility through these contextual strategies. The notion that the word *one* actually expresses a passive directive at *you* is another reading. In this regard, *one* invokes the subjunctive mood, which is often used to express possibility such as “a wish, a command, exhortation, or a contingent, hypothetical, or prospective event”

¹²⁷ In 1832, grammarian Charles Lyon asserts, in disgust, that some think the word *one* has “six meanings as an *adjective*, and *thirteen* as a *noun*!” He finds no pervasive perception “so repugnant to common sense and so subversive to all order, as that the same word may be several different parts of speech” (100-101).

(*Oxford English Dictionary*). In other words, *one* is at once precise and ambiguous. It is precise in terms of being *one* as opposed to some or many (e.g., “that one is blue”) but it is ambiguous in that it can be understood to represent some or many (e.g., “One must not do that”). This is the reason that *one* plays an increasingly significant role in *The Making of Americans* compared to the other novels and in the second half of the text: it creates possibility.

In addition, the possibilities the word *one* engenders make charting its use difficult. For instance, *one* increases in frequency as the text progresses while the other pronouns dwindle by the close of the text. If we chart just the frequency of the pronouns across the various sections of the text it seems clear that some pronouns are used quite

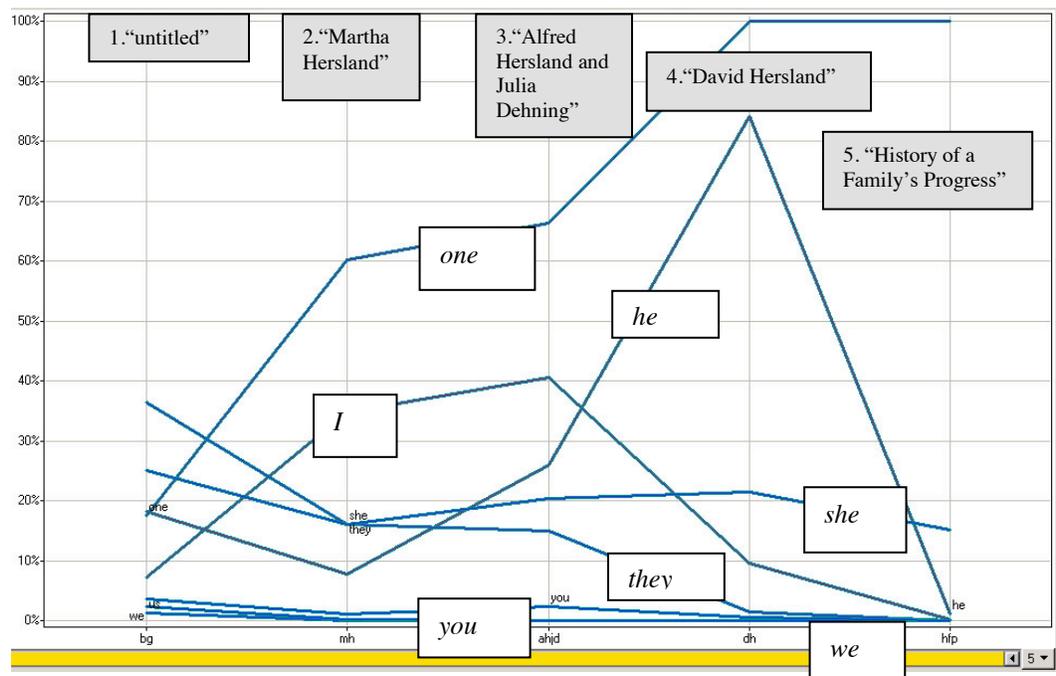


Figure 31: The frequency of *one*, *I*, *you*, *we*, *he*, *she*, and *they* are mapped across the five sections of the text in *Spotfire*

consistently across the text (*she*, *you*, and *we*.) while others, (*I* and *he*, and *they*) rise and fall to indicate differing trends between the first and second half of the text. What is perhaps most interesting about this graph is that the surge in frequency associated with

the pronoun *one* is the result of the confusion accomplished by the word's schizophrenic nature. *One* in this visualization is represented by its occurrence, not its type of occurrence. Using the *PosViz* tool, which visualizes words according to their perceived part-of-speech, however, allows for a different perspective on the word *one* because we can map the word's behavior across the text. In these visualizations, the words appear in the order they first appear in the text according to their part of speech—that is, the first time *one* appears as a pronoun, it appears in the cloud; the first time it appears as an adjective, it appears in the cloud; the second time the word appears in the text as a pronoun or an adjective, it does not appear in the cloud but the size of its previous appearance increases. Thus, the words are placed according to their appearance and sized according to their frequency. As a consequence, the progression of the splitting of the word *one* is documented. For instance, a relatively small word *one* appears three times in the chapter 1 cloud (see Figure 32). This indicates that the occurrence of the word *one* has little variance in terms of part of speech and occurs relatively infrequently in occurrences that are localized to the beginning paragraphs of the chapter. In chapter 2, *one* appears more often, illustrating that *one* varies here in terms of parts of speech. In chapter 3, the behavior of the word *one* changes dramatically. It appears frequently in the cloud, in many different spots, some of which increase fairly dramatically in size, indicating that the word is used often in the same two subject positions (in this case, as a count and as a pronoun). In chapters 4, 5, and 6, the word *one* is used variously and somewhat frequently. Compared to the number of overall different words that are used in these chapters (which still pertain to story and plot), the frequency of the word *one* is not dramatic, though its increasing variance in these chapters as compared to chapters 1 and 2

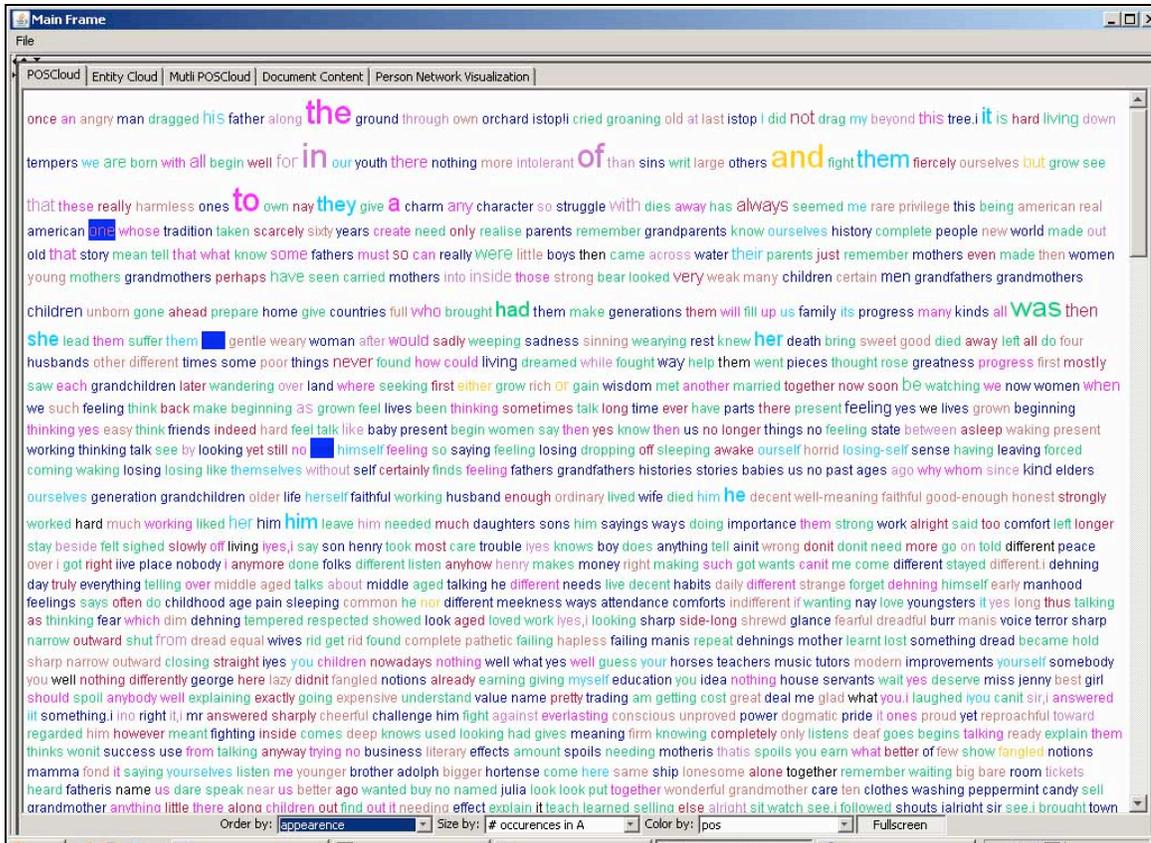


Figure 32: Words from chapter one visualized in PosViz. The word one is highlighted in blue.



Figure 33: Words from chapter nine visualized in PosViz. The word one is highlighted in yellow.

is notable. In chapters 7 and 8, the word *one* predominates in terms of both frequency and variance until, in chapter 9, *one* dominates the discourse (see Figure 33).

It is in this manner, in the ubiquitous use of the word *one* that the characters are still developed though the narrative progression is not based on plot or incident. By “isolat[ing] the element” of character development and “analyz[ing] its nature”—and thereby implementing Phelan’s original desire to avoid mixing up the study of character with the study of plot—we enable a new reading concerning the role composition plays in character development and identity construction in *The Making of Americans*. What little critical writing has been done on *one* narration appears hesitant in assigning it a place in the dialectical space of first, second, or third-person narration. Brian Richardson likens the use of *one* to “the same conceptual space that ‘you’ forms” where it “rests uncomfortably between second and third person forms, adjacent to the hypothetical second person mode, in which a narratee/protagonist is given instructions that form a narrative” (Richardson 78). The “hypothetical” and “instruction-like” aspect of *one* narration leads him to propose that “much subjunctive second person narration could be rewritten using ‘one’ instead of ‘you’ with little change in meaning” (146).¹²⁸ He cites Henry James’ “awkward use of ‘one’” in *The American Scene* as an example of an author’s using *one* to invoke the first-person standpoint though he is addressing himself “in the second person” (15). Through examples, Richardson suggests that while *one* narration initially appears to map to a *you* standpoint, it can and has been used to invoke first, second, and third-person subject positions. Indeed, it is the point at which the

¹²⁸ Richardson acknowledges the “uncomfortable” position this mode occupies in comparison to the more traditional modes when he cites alternate examples such as the English translation of Monique Wittig’s *L’Opopanax* (1964) in which *you* was used in lieu of *one* (“*on*”), a choice which Richardson maintains annoyed the author and “suggests an important difference” between *you* and *one* that is “rooted in divergent narrative persons” (Richardson 146-147).

narrator-character drops from *Making* that the word *one* begins to develop in its function as a representative of multiple narrative positions. The following quote is from the first-person narrator's last sustained *I* statements in the novel:¹²⁹

I mean, I mean and that is not what I mean, I mean that not any one is saying what they are meaning, I mean that I am feeling something, I mean that I mean something and I mean that not any one is thinking, is feeling, is saying, is certain of that thing, I mean that not any one can be saying, thinking, feeling, not any one can be certain of that thing, I mean I am not certain of that thing, I am not ever saying, thinking, feeling, being certain of this thing, I mean, I mean, I know what I mean. (§2587)

“I” is opposed to “one” here. The transfer from *I* to *one* is indicated by the repetition Stein uses to associate the same feelings and actions to “I” and to “any one.” She begins the section with “I mean, I mean” and then refers to “any one” not “saying what they are meaning;” next she claims that “not any one can be certain of that thing” and then immediately concludes “I am not certain of that thing.” The comparisons continue into the next paragraph in which the *one* narration gradually assumes the third-person narration as well:

And certainly some one is right in saying such a thing, such a one some of such of them certainly are right in saying such a thing. Some of such of them have it that the moment of sensibility, emotion and expression and origin is all in a state of completion and then it is a finished thing and certainly then that one was meaning something and he was saying I mean, I mean, and it was all finished and then there was another something and this one certainly very often said I mean. That one said that very often in being one being living. (§2588)

Here, *one* multiplies. “I” becomes “he” and “one” in that “I mean” becomes something “he was saying” and “this one certainly very often said” until, finally, “I mean” is

¹²⁹ The first-person narrator voice does appear four more times in chapter 8 in paragraphs 2610 (“as I was saying”), 2617 (“as I was saying”), and 2668 (“I am asking each one” and “I am doing this thing”) but these insertions are brief and do not represent the same level of intensity in talking about the writing process that this voice exhibits throughout the rest of the novel. It could be argued that these lines are vestiges of an “automatic” writing habit—a “tic” as it were—and do not represent the same “narrator character” which appears before the narrator’s last lines “I mean, I mean.”

something “this one” and “that one” said very often. Here *this* and *that* point to a particular *one* but, in turn, the dependent clause “in being one being living” remakes the term *one* into a subject position for *any* one. By chapter 8, sentences like the following are interchanged in such a manner that the repetition and the negation work to include all ones including characters that were part of the narrative:

Some are not knowing what kind they are of ones experiencing, of ones expressing, very many are not knowing what kind they are of ones experiencing, of ones expressing. In a way David Hersland did know very well what kind he was of ones experiencing, of ones expressing, in a way he never came to be completely certain that he was not perhaps another kind of a one experiencing, another kind of a one expressing (§2595).

Comparisons and negations like these above consume the latter half of *Making*. By delineating both knowing and not knowing plus a kind of expressing and experiencing and the potential for another kind expressing or experiencing, Stein has developed *one* to include all the narrative positions represented by *you*, *I*, *he*, and even David Hersland. As such, *one* assumes a position that refers back to one of the narrator’s beginning suppositions that “the three children, Martha, Alfred, and young David . . . these three are of them who are to be always in this history of us . . . Always they are us and we them” (§317). In this manner, *one* is also *we* and “us” and therefore, implicitly, *you*—encompassing the narrator, the narratee, and the main characters of the text.

In this manner, *one* establishes subjectivity as a complex identity that is both singular and multiple. By the time the reader reaches chapter 9 where *one* represents the most frequent word in the chapter, *one* encompasses all the characters in the text, proving Stein’s supposition that every one is *one*. At the same time, *one* denotes a singular narrative position that is one viewpoint. This simultaneous singularity and multiplicity is reflected by the composition of chapter 9, which is comprised of seventeen repeated

sentences and the sentences that form variations of these seventeen sentences and constellate around them. At once, the chapter includes indisputable facts that one can know of the history of a family's progress, truth statements that represent knowledge that is not the function of someone's memory: "Any one has come to be a dead one" (§3064). People die; if they are not dead, they are living; if they are living, they are doing something. Yet even these more active statements (such as "Any one is such a one," "Many of each kind of them are living," or "Some one is doing something standing") are held from definitively describing any thing in particular by the simple fact that they describe *any* one and *some* one. This is the point at which the multiplicity of language comes into play—these basic tenets are constructed of words in a certain order then a re-order in variation. Consequently, sentences that appear simple at first begin to evolve and the nature of the "facts" changes. In chapter 9, the centrifugal force of indeterminacy and the centripetal force of utter determinacy¹³⁰ is represented in a sentence such as "Any one coming to be an old enough one comes then to be a dead one" (§3167) in which indeterminacy is emphasized by the many sentences in variation that appear between and distort this repeated utterance plus the circuitous definition of terms that is intended by "coming to be an old enough one;" at the same time, "a dead one" is a determined and singular state. As such, sentences like these in chapter 9 in which *one* is both many and singular, both subject and object, both determinate and indeterminate represent the text's concern with "the politics of narrative person" (Richardson 62). While the composition proves that *one* can represent many, *one* is singular; it is *one*. Stein likened this

¹³⁰ In terms of these politics, Richardson points out a "general opposition" between "'centripetal' texts that begin by producing a number of seemingly disparate voices and stances only to reduce them to a single narrating position at the end, and 'centrifugal' texts that continue to proliferate an irreducible galaxy of different heterogeneous or antithetical, perspectives" (Richardson 62).

experience to one effected by the cinema: “. . . in the Making of Americans, I was doing what the cinema was doing, I was making a continuous succession of the statement of what that person was until I had not many things but one thing . . .” (“Portraits and Repetition” 198). This divided perspective, both singular and multiple, becomes the lynchpin around which a reading of identity formation in the text turns.

IV. Conclusion

The politics of narrative position represented by Stein’s use of *one* resists a binary between multiple and singular selves, not by throwing that binary into indeterminacy on another level, but by saying that one’s singular charm and one’s resemblance to another coexist because recognition requires their coexistence—just as words placed side-by-side are each understood in terms of their singular, individual meanings and their meanings in play together. Stein perceived that the process by which she came to know a person’s self engaged the same complexities she determined were at the root of discovering or knowing meaning in language. Both required not only time (immediacy) but also elements she considered prime elements of identity—recognition and memory:

This is what *The Making of Americans* was intended to be. I was to make a description of every kind of human being until I could know by these variations how everybody was to be known . . . I lost interest in it. As soon as I found definitely and clearly and completely that I could do it, I stopped writing the long book. It didn’t interest me any longer. In doing the thing, I found out this question of resemblances, and I found in making these analyses that the resemblances were not of memory. I had to remember what person looked like the other person. Then I found this contradiction: that the resemblances were a matter of memory. There were two prime elements involved, the element of memory and the other of immediacy. (“How Writing is Written” 492-493)

We see here a synopsis of Stein’s realization that representing “a whole present of something” or “the complete rhythm of a personality” (a person’s true self) fails because

one's understanding (both hers and the reader's) of this true self involves not only contradictory elements of time ("acquiring knowledge gradually" and "immediacy") but personal memory ("I had to remember what person looked like some other person"). In a literary work, the complexities that an understanding of people and words entail coincide, a coincidence that Stein makes clear in two similar statements she makes about "masterpieces": she maintained that creating literary masterpieces stems from "knowing that there is no identity and producing while identity is not" even though a masterpiece itself is "about identity and all it does and in being so it must not have any" ("Masterpieces" 499). Stein discovered in *The Making of Americans* that she could not avoid her definition of identity on either front. The reason that this is a contradiction stems from Stein's belief that "At any moment when you are you you are you without the memory of yourself because if you remember yourself while you are you you are not for the purposes of creating you" ("Masterpieces" 496). That is, your *entity* (what Stein opposes to *identity*) is present when you "forget yourself" or you are unaware of how others see you. First, there is the contradiction that determining or recognizing a person's unique self entails establishing her sameness and difference with another, a process which is contingent on the same issues of time and recognition that Stein associated with identity formation since "resemblances were a matter of memory." Because resemblances are a matter of memory and ultimately of perception, then, forming a singular view of someone's identity, in Stein's terms, is impossible. At the same time, writing what Stein calls "a masterpiece" is also contingent on elements of self-remembering or self-recognition: "if you do not remember while you are writing, it may seem confused to others but actually it is clear and eventually that clarity will be clear"

(¶498). Given this contradiction in remembering and knowing human entity and given Stein's contention that writing a masterpiece is also a contradiction between remembering and expressing human entity, it is not surprising that to know these characters—to understand or recognize their identities—is to read without the framework of memory, resemblance, or story, a reading scenario that is necessitated by the composition itself until, by the end of the text, the only characters left must be read in combination and as one: “o-n-e.”

This sense of a composite identity reflects Stein's understanding of identity versus entity. You are you because you are not someone else. You repeat yourself the same as and differently as another person. Therefore, one's (or another's) recognition of this self is based on repetition with variation in composite. Moreover, repetition is not only how identity is formed; this mode of composition is identity itself since this is how identity is perceived:

Repeating is the whole of living and by repeating comes understanding, and understanding is to some the most important part of living. Repeating is the whole of living, and it makes of living a thing always more familiar to each one and so we have old men's and women's wisdom, and repeating, simple repeating is the whole of them. (¶848)

Since “repeating is the whole of them,” it may be argued that Stein is not deconstructing identity formation by dismantling traditional narrative in the text; rather, Stein is reconstructing identity formation from another perspective—as identity recognition—and combining narrative and composition as a rhetorical method for making that point. For instance, the last line of the book—“Any family living can be one being existing and some can remember something of some such thing”—is reflected, modified, and determined by its sister statement that came before, “Any family living can be existing

when not every one has come to be a dead one,” reminding us through the narrative the words imply and the composition with which they are comprised that repeating and thus remembering end when the (hi)story is over (§3174). In this manner, Gertrude Stein’s *The Making of Americans*, in its surprising method for combining narrative with composition as rhetoric, is “about identity and all it does.”

Coda: reader response and digital tools

Prior readings of *Making* have been based on the frustration of knowledge and expectation associated with character and plot and on the consequent irresolution of these tensions in the discourse. It may appear that by using digital tools to isolate a predominate element of textual progression much of this frustration and stupor is eased. Yet, errors in designating *one* are not simply human; computer programs have much difficulty labeling *one* in terms of a part of speech. For example, unlike the other pronouns in Figure 31, the *one* category encompasses all of its speech uses. These digital tools are not “answering” the questions that arise in the text’s use of *one*, but they are isolating a starting point for reading the word, for determining its use and working toward resolving the discrepancies and instabilities that arise when readers perceive that the meaning-making process of the composition work against the meaning-making process of the narrative in the text. It is clear in *The Making of Americans* the story and the structure of the text are both knowledge-producing tools of which the purpose, in part, “is to expose the factitiousness of [the text’s] own local procedures” (Poirier 113). It is for this reason (among others) that proposing a computer-assisted analytic process that achieves understanding is not simple. Consider George Moore’s warning about *The Making of Americans*:

It is impossible to speak of both the local effects of syntactic variation and word choice, and the opposite macrocosmic results unless we assume the break down of certain semiotic structures. If semiotic arguments are found useful, they must be qualified, as suggested of the earlier critical approaches, by a constant reminder that Stein herself was both theorizing about and experimenting with the limits of such systems. (Moore 13)

Determining the nature of a correspondence between structures of repetition and the novel's discussion of identity and representation is purposefully not straightforward; in fact, as we have seen, it could be considered Stein's goal to confuse or disorient the reader who will constantly be in a state of irresolution about meaning, the human desire to attain it, and language's ability to provide it. The author herself notes this dubious possibility of any "fulfillment" experienced as a result of reading the kind of constant repetition employed in the text: "It is often irritating," she writes, "to listen to the repeating they are doing, always then that one that has it as being to love repeating that is the whole history of each one, such a one has it then that this irritation passes over into patient completed understanding" (§1087). To be frustrated is to "understand" part of her project. It is for this reason, that the text invites the user to seek tools that have simultaneous access to both the novel's philosophical trajectory and the repetitive patterns it uses to reflect that argument. Perhaps, as we have noted, it is also for this reason that most scholars who chart the novel's philosophical progression by noting changes in the lexicon, in its syntax, and its semiotic and narrative structures still call the text "obtuse" (Ruddick 1990 and DeKoven 1983), "fatiguing" (Taylor 2004 and Ngai 2000), and "monumentally tedious" (Levitt 2001). In addition, using digital, textual-analysis processes which count or map the occurrence of repetition in order to decrease the reader's irritation and increase the reader's ability to "pass over into patient completed understanding" seems at odds with the thematic function of characters such as

Martha and Alfred Hersland who reflect the idea that attaining a “whole” understanding is the end of the story or Julia Dehning and David Hersland who are so complex that in order to reflect their personhood “storybook” or traditional storytelling must not end. Indeed, these points of resistance to “completed” understanding are at the heart of poststructuralist, deconstructive critical appreciations which acknowledge (and praise) *The Making of Americans* as representative of productive and critical cultural knowledge for this very reason. Employing composition in her representation of identity formation and identity recognition in *The Making of Americans* becomes the method by which Stein seeks to make a masterpiece, but if and how the reader is able to recognize and interpret this endeavor is predicated by her ability to see it.

Chapter 4: Textual performance and the poetry of the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven

Described by *The Little Review* editor Margaret Anderson as “perhaps the only figure of our generation who deserves the epithet extraordinary,” (Anderson *My Thirty Years War* 177) the poet Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven published, between 1918 and 1929, approximately forty of her poems in little magazines such as *Broom*, *Liberator*, *The Little Review*, *transatlantic review*, *transition*, and the single issue of *New York Dada*. Born Else Hildegard Ploetz on July 12, 1874, in Swinemunde on the Baltic Sea, she ran away to Berlin in 1892, where she became involved in the Bohemian theatre circles; she then moved to New York City in 1913 where she met and married the penniless Baron Leo von Freytag-Loringhoven. It was in New York, after the Baron had returned to Germany during the war and subsequently committed suicide, that Freytag-Loringhoven became entrenched in the Greenwich Village artist movement and began her brief and successful writing career as “the Baroness.”¹³¹ And yet, despite the fact that Ernest Hemingway was her avid proponent at the *transatlantic review*, despite that fact that she appears in Ezra Pound’s *Cantos* and that William Carlos Williams dedicates an entire chapter of his autobiography to her, despite the fact that her extant collection of poetry is due to Djuna Barnes diligently collecting what Barnes considered important in her friend’s work, despite all this attention from her contemporaries, since 1929 the Baroness’s work has rarely appeared in print and until the 1980s, scholarship on her work was not published at all.

¹³¹ I have chosen to call Freytag-Loringhoven “the Baroness” throughout this piece as a gesture toward the name by which she was called in *The Little Review* and which has generally become her “stage name” in modern cultural studies that focus on her street performances.

We cannot reinstate the particular historical moments in which the Baroness's poetry was read and discussed, but the context in which she was read must be re-evaluated in order to locate the Baroness's disappeared text within current literary discussions of modernist poetry and editorial theory. What ultimately denudes the Baroness's poetry of its meaning-making possibilities is a failure to interrogate the textual conditions in which her poetry was read and appreciated.¹³² Within *The Little Review* culture of the late 1910s and early 1920s, this textual condition included the collaborative audience so important to a Dadaist performance. Dadaist provocation may no longer be shocking, but punitive and regulatory social conventions still exist for the Baroness's poetry: her gender performance has been widely discussed with little reference to her texts. As such, this discussion begins by providing a glimpse into how current readings of the Baroness's work have been centered in her dual roles as artistic muse and Dada queen—both designations that have produced much writing on her cultural studies but have not served to facilitate readings of her poetry. In order to promote a perspective and environment in which more productive readings of her poetry may be engaged, therefore, this discussion introduces a theory of text—*textual performance*—that is meant to encourage new kinds of access to and thus new readings of the Baroness's poetry.

I. Lifeart: defining the context of a Freytag-Loringhoven poem

The textual condition of a Baroness poem always concerns two primary elements: life and art. The failure to recognize that these elements coproduce meaning within the

¹³² The textual condition—as Jerome McGann so aptly named the confluence of events that converge around the point in time that represents “text”—of a Baroness poem may be understood here to mean a gathering of moments in which “certain communicative interchanges are being practiced” (McGann, *Textual Condition* 21).

textual field of her poetry has led to the failed attempts to produce an accessible and productive edition of the Baroness's poetry. In part, this failure is due to the underlying supposition that still exists in literary study that a poem's published words represent the whole textual event of a poem. Yet, life and page in this case (as in many cases) cannot be separated. Provocation was at the root of Dadaist art and the context in which Dadaist poetry was performed is essential to appreciating it. This dependency became what Walter Benjamin, among others, denigrated in Dadaism, which "by making works of art the center of scandal," made art that sought "to outrage the public" ("The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" 238). Even in her own time, the Baroness's ability to garner attention was, in part, based on her ability to foreground her marginalized identity, to make herself shocking as a woman, foreign-born and poor. The compelling nature of the Baroness's physicality, of her ability to provoke with her body and to engender outrage by sexualizing her resistance to bourgeois culture and mainstream art has also made her street performances more interesting to feminist, cultural, and art historians in the 1990s. This interest is reflected in Marjorie Perloff's essay "The Avant-Garde Phase of American Modernism," in which Perloff separates the Baroness's "work" from her street character: "If greatness is measured by sheer outrageousness, then Elsa Plötz," Perloff writes of the Baroness, "was undoubtedly great: her escapades on the New York streets are now legendary. But if we focus on the work rather than the life, I find the Baroness's productions, even her so called proto-performance art, both derivative and negligible" (211). What Perloff is polarizing here is the interest with which people regarded the performed character of the Baroness against the lack of interest with which artists and scholars regarded her poetry and other art alone.¹³³ Yet, separating her

¹³³ These "other" art forms are extensive. Klaus Martens has done extensive research on the Baroness's

character performance from the manner in which her poetic texts make meaning is shortchanging the significance this context had and has in terms of her poetry's creation, transmission, and reception. Thus, while her marginalized figure (both literal and figurative) has garnered cultural and historical interest, her poetic text has been rendered unexceptional in a modern culture in which her textual performances have been polarized from her life. Consequently, though she was an influence in her own time as a muse of authenticity and in recent decades as the queen of Dada, her "text"¹³⁴ has been denuded of these meaning-making possibilities.

A. Life: an artistic muse and dada queen

It is the consequence of perspectives that construct the Baroness as *muse* and the Baroness as *queen*¹³⁵—that the Baroness as *poet*, as the producer of texts, has been undermined. For instance, an anonymous commenter on an National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) proposal to digitize the Baroness's extant manuscripts and letters called the Baroness's literary importance "low," because "[h]er published body of work is slim and her influence on notable poets is negligible;" the reviewer continues, "Pound and Williams took an interest in her work; they were not influenced by it" (personal

theatrical work in Berlin at the beginning of the twentieth century (see "Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven: Theatrical Beginnings"), a period that is also described in Gammel's biography. She collaborated and associated with artists and photographers Bernice Abbott, George Biddle, Marcel Duchamp, and Man Ray. She is the subject of two photographs taken by Man Ray, which hang in the Philadelphia Museum of Art and another, which remains in the University of Maryland, College Park, Special Collections. In addition, a lithograph by George Biddle in the Francis M. Naumann collection in New York features the Baroness. Of her own paintings, Portrait of Marcel Duchamp (c. 1919) is in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem and Dada Portrait of Bernice Abbott (c. 1922-23) hangs in the New York Museum of Modern Art. Her sculptures appear in the Philadelphia Museum of Art and private collections.¹³⁴ "Text" here is understood in terms of Roland Barthes's definition of "text" versus "work" in which the meaning of text is more open-ended and uncontained; see Barthes's "From Work to Text" in *Image, Music, Text*.

¹³⁵ It is unclear where the name "Dada Queen" originated, but it is used widely in discussions that reference Gammel's biography. Such as Lappin's 2003 review of the biography titled "Dada queen—Irene Gammel's Baroness Elsa: Gender, Dada, and Everyday Modernity – Essays" in which she writes of that Baroness that she is "Now hailed as America's Dada queen and the great aunt of contemporary performance art."

correspondence). While it is true that the interest that Pound and Williams took in the Baroness stemmed more from her role as a muse than from the attributes (the style, structure, or content) of any single piece of her poetry, her role as muse played an important role in how her poetry was and is still read. In *Blue Studios*, Rachel Duplessis maintains that the life of the muse is an essential point of study for feminist critical work in literature since the muse figure “draw(s) on specific gender relations that are sustained, remixed, and activated in historical time by individuals seeking to establish their creative agency” (124). To be sure, the Baroness’s status as muse to both William Carlos Williams and Ezra Pound might be best characterized in the same way that Shakespeare describes his mistress whose “eyes are nothing like the sun” rather than as a typical nineteenth century object of desire, but, she did function as an creative entity against which Williams Carlos Williams defined his own role as poet. For Williams, the Baroness’s “pureness” was less about the chastity of her poetic form than about the chastity of the poetic ideal her lived experiences reflected. He describes the Baroness’s influence as follows:

You wonder why I admired Elsa von Loringhoven [sic], that river with a dead horse in it, because of her purity. What kind of purity? Because she was on it, on reality. She is not least Eliot in a cocoon of Latin all day long—shitty, shitty, shitty. Ezra is more than that, slippery as he is and literary shieber that he is . . . (UWM)¹³⁶

The Baroness influenced Williams by being in his estimate an “authentic” poet, one who was neither interested in impressing her audience with difficulty for difficulty’s sake (like Eliot using Latin) or for catering to the current, popular trends just to be published (as Williams’s pejorative slang “literary shieber” implies). In fact, she believed that to

¹³⁶ This letter is in the *Little Review* Papers in the Golda Meir Archives at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Subsequent references to this archive are noted as UWM.

engage art as an underlying mode of life meant to assume art as part of her identity: “I do duty to myself . . . Right way in writing is my only movement—expression—I can only act—as I am made” (UMD 2.040).¹³⁷ As a result, she herself became a model for inspiration, a muse for other, mostly male, artists. As Marcel Duchamp wrote, “The Baroness is not a futurist. She is the future,” signifying that her “work” and influence were, in part, the result of her lived experience (qtd. in Roxforth, 77 and Gammel, *Baroness Elsa* 156). On the other hand, most responses to her provocative stance were mixed. In this regard, William Carlos Williams’s description of his conflicted feelings about the Baroness are telling:

Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven came to me as sunlight. I drank pure helicon of her. But she revolted me, frightened me, beat me finally . . . I wished to rescue her for myself and for what I loved of her. Love with me is a burning attraction toward what I want. It rejects everything I do not want, and rejects everything if I cannot get what I want without what I do not want. (UWM)

Though Williams holds the Baroness as muse, he is also repulsed by the fact that she is a poor, syphilitic, foreign-born, and bisexual woman—all of that which he “does not want.”

Nonetheless, the perspective that the Baroness embodied some notion of artistic authenticity is what made her *lifeart*¹³⁸ aesthetic attractive to many modernist and avant-garde artists and editors. It is in part what established her creative agency. For instance, as a *provocateuse* who experienced exceptional liberties of expression under the non-traditional editorship of Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap at *The Little Review*,¹³⁹ the

¹³⁷ This number represents a reel and frame number from the microfilm of “The Papers of Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven” in Special Collections at the University of Maryland, College Park, Libraries. All subsequent references are noted as UMD.

¹³⁸ For the Baroness, the term “lifeart” expressed the authentic and essential elements of art that were the expression of one’s character, a result of one’s culture and one’s physical embodiment and experience. In an undated letter to Barnes from Germany, the Baroness admires the German Jews for their lifestyle: “they are movable—they had to be—adaptable—they have made an art of it—lifeart!” (UMD 2.019).

¹³⁹ For more on the impact of this editing relationship on the Baroness’s work see Gammel, “German Extravagance” 65.

Baroness contributed poems with an irreverent sense of play and obvious criticism for more traditional cultural institutions. Increasingly, she invited and provoked a response through her poetry. More often than not, these jabs were sexual in nature and helped to establish the relationship that came to exist between the Baroness and her audience. For instance, in the following excerpt from “King Adam,” the Baroness emphasizes the removal of what was meant to be an obscene passage by including a note to “the censor” at the bottom of the page:

Such mine love: electric fluid—current to thine wire—to make Light—
Ah—h—such mine love!
Kiss me upon the gleaming hill*
Adam—Mine Love!
[. . .]

**Donated to the censor*

Her representation of sex is both about freedom and play. By not taking sex or the censor seriously, she seeks to encourage sexual and expressive freedoms. The next excerpt is from the poem “Holy Skirts”:

Thought about holy skirts—to tune of “*Wheels are growing on
rosebushes.*”
Undisputedly! since—beneath skirts—they are not human!
What for—
What do they unload there—
why do they run?

In “Holy Skirts,” the Baroness uses wordplay to make comparisons between religion and the mechanics of modern technology: “Beneath immovable—carved skirt of forbidding sexless-/ness—over pavement shoving—gliding—nuns have wheels.” Proceeding with this metaphor, the implication becomes that religion moves in a culture much like a train (“running over religious track”) with a mechanical volition and shattering force that is neither “natural” nor inevitable or unstoppable (“according to velocity of holiness

through pious steam—up to/ heaven!”). This train is a constructed force that runs along the socially-established, yet empty, prestige (“pious steam”) and message (“religious track”) that is generated by the church. The fact that she establishes this metaphor jocularly, to what she calls “a popular tune,” makes the serious questions the Baroness is asking about the implications of religious power that much more provocative: What is the power of a nun if religion is as meaningless as a pop tune? Are pop tunes powerless? Can a woman be powerful if she is sexless like a nun? Is a nun, in fact, rendered sexless by being associated with the church and chastity? Or does that make her that much more compelling as a sexual object?

The poems “King Adam” and “Holy Skirts” ask general, provocative questions about the role and thus the value of women, religion, and sex in modernist society, but their political message is, in the historical context of the magazine and the pervasive discussion surrounding literature and freedom of expression, more performative than performance. For instance, “King Adam” was published in May 1919. The January 1919 issue of *The Little Review* featured the “Letrygonians” episode of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, the first episode to be officially censored by the postal authorities in New York because it contained passages mocking the King of England and detailing Leopold Bloom’s memories of an amorous meeting with Molly. As such, the Baroness is mocking a real censor and provoking censorship. Likewise, “Holy Skirts” is printed in the July-August 1920 issue, the same issue that contains the last section of *Ulysses* to be printed by *The Little Review* because Heap and Anderson are taken to court and sued over its contents. The *Ulysses* episode for which they are sued, which is published alongside “Holy Skirts,” culminates in Leopold Bloom’s orgasm while looking up a young woman’s skirt as she

leans back to look at a fireworks display. The coincident installment of “Holy Skirts” and *Ulysses* gave Heap and Anderson a reason to value the Baroness’s poem as a commentary on the objectification of women just as it seems the same desire to play Joyce and the Baroness off one another propelled Anderson and Heap to publish a photograph of the Baroness on the frontispiece of their September-December 1920 issue to accompany Heap’s article “Art and the Law.” Placed there as a pointer to the Baroness’s embodied performance, it has been argued that the photograph foregrounds the editors’ belief that the *Ulysses* censorship trial was about “women’s issues” and “claiming sexual pleasure and agency for American women” (Gammel “German Extravagance” 65), an agency that the Baroness’s work and life regularly engaged.

In Dadaism, the act of art is intricately tied with one’s ability to provoke a response from fellow Dadaists and the bourgeois culture, which was the target of most Dada performances. As such, having positioned herself in the powerful and dangerous role as both object of sexual desire and artistic muse, the Baroness eventually used that position to strike against those she perceived as frigid, weak, and cowardly both in terms of sexuality and artistry. Evidence of the effect of this element of her work appears under the title “The Poems of Abel Sanders,” written by Pound, which parodies the textual battle that was ensuing between the Baroness and William Carlos Williams in the pages of *The Little Review* due to the Baroness’s scathing two-part review of Williams’s “Kora in Hell” called “Thee I call ‘Hamlet of Wedding-Ring,’” published in the January-March 1921 and Autumn 1921 issues.¹⁴⁰ In this critique, Freytag-Loringhoven calls Williams a “wobbly-legged business satchel-carrying little louse” finally declaring that he is a

¹⁴⁰ The review is a piece called by one scholar “arguably the most outrageous item *The Little Review* published in all its years of existence”) and by Margaret Anderson as “one of the most intelligent pieces of criticism that has ever come to [*The Little Review*]” (Kuenzli 454; Anderson, *My Thirty Years War* 59).

“Tortured child” and reducing his work “Kora in Hell” to his soul’s “obligation to exhibit intellect” for the sake of his “expensive education” (“Thee I Call 'Hamlet of Wedding-Ring' . . .Part II” 110-111). The respect the literary community expressed for the Baroness’s piece is reflected in Pound’s reaction, which appears just at the end of Part II of the Baroness’s critical review (Autumn 1921). The Sanders poems, dedicated “To Bill Williams and Else von Johann Wolfgang Loringhoven y Fulano,” parody the Baroness’s Dada techniques by using nonsense words to play with sound (“Elseharf Suntag, Billsharf Freitag”) or stringing words together (“Chinesemandarinorlaundryman”), but considering the role performance, parody, and laughter play in Dada art, the poem also presents a kind of tribute to the work that the Baroness accomplished with her two-part review and the conversations it elicited.¹⁴¹ To be sure, the Baroness quite often targeted her fellow writers directly in her poetry, provoking them to respond in kind. Her critique of William Carlos Williams is not subtle; it is not a removed, poetic allusion to an unnamed target. It is at once pointed and profound, a fact that is reflected in Williams’ confused feelings about the Baroness after her death.¹⁴² Williams was not her only target. In a sculpture called “A portrait of Marcel Duchamp” the Baroness uses a wine glass and feathers to represent Duchamp as a frivolous peacock (reproduced in the Winter 1922 *Little Review*).¹⁴³ In her poem “Love-Chemical Relationship” published in *The Little Review*

¹⁴¹ While it is difficult to say with certainty how (or if) Pound was influenced by the Baroness, it is clear that Pound knew of her. With his almost tender appointment in *Canto XCV* of the Baroness as a “gal” who suffered at the “immense cowardice of advertised literati,” who “sd/several true things” in what is considered fondly “them days in Manhattan” juxtaposed with the empathetic description of “them days” having had “a certain strain” and having “laid a burden” on her, Pound does not vilify, demonize, or idolize the Baroness (Pound 666).

¹⁴² In a letter to Jane Heap, Williams calls her “a carnivorous beast, timid as a rabbit,” saying “I admire her still and couldn’t go near her,” and concluding “It’s a loss to have her gone, a loss I’m damn glad of” (UWM).

¹⁴³ Gammel argues that the Baroness is “pok[ing] fun at the fashionable avant-gardist who had it too easy in America and who was selling himself like a prostitute for public art consumption” (*Baroness Elsa* 300).

June 1918 she criticizes Duchamp's work *The Large Glass*. Duchamp describes *The Large Glass* in his early notes as his "hilarious picture" that was intended to diagram the courtship between the "Bride" in the upper panel and her nine "Bachelors" (Duchamp *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, 30). The image is made on glass and presents the story in a collage of machinery signifying the mechanical process of courtship in the age of technology. The Baroness's poem begins as a play with the characters Elsa "a German girl" and Marcel "a French boy"—an obvious reference to herself as the bride and Duchamp as one of the nine bachelors. She then begins to compare a younger Marcel (who was silly yet passionate, who "giggled" and "blabbered" like sensual, earthly "poplars" which smelled like "morocco leather"). Eventually, this Marcel "becamest like glass." The rest of the poem chronicles the bride's attempt to ward off becoming like the bachelor Marcel who "livest motionless in a mirror" wherein "everything is a mirage in thee," until finally she concludes "I must bleed—weep—laugh—ere I turn to glass and the world around me glassy." Ultimately, the Baroness rejects accepting Duchamp's passionless, bodiless, chemical love as a mere reflection for his inauthentic art—ultimately, her expression is more grounded in her own body. The Baroness's lifeart theory reflects a concept of art that was germane to the Dadaist movement since she believed creating art meant expressing authentic and essential life elements especially when those life elements (such as her sexuality and gender play) were most shocking.

At the same time, her position as "muse" and "queen" drew and draws on gender relations that simultaneously diminish the meaning-making possibilities of her poetry when that context is removed. While the Baroness's marginal identity as "other" (woman, Dadaist, international poet) lent her voice an element of authenticity in the conversations

that predominated in the experimental early and middle years of *The Little Review*, this identity became an easy target in the latter part of the decade for those who were entrenched in the institutionalization of “Modernism.”¹⁴⁴ While magazines such as *Poetry* or *The Dial* were meant to be tastemakers and canon-creators, *The Little Review*’s promotion of conversation and experimental literature was named in its masthead: “The Magazine That is Read by Those Who Write The Others.”¹⁴⁵ *The Little Review* was meant to be a forum for trying out what “other” magazines considered too risky even when—in fact, more often when—this meant encouraging a conversation about the very nature of art itself. Yet, the value of Dada poetry—for which *The Little Review* was a proponent—was certainly in debate. By 1936, Walter Benjamin would write that “the Dadaists attached much less importance to the sales of their work than to its uselessness for contemplative immersion . . . Their poems are ‘word salad’ containing obscenities and every imaginable waste product of language (237). Even in 1922, when the Baroness began to experience the first downswing in her publishing record at *The Little Review*, Dada was already under attack. In the Spring 1922 issue of *The Little Review*, Jane Heap writes that Harriet Monroe wrote in *Poetry* that “the *Little Review* . . . is headed straight for Dada; but we could forgive even that if it would drop Else von Freytag-Loringhoven on the way;” Heap responds that perhaps Monroe’s comment is due to the fact that “dada laughs, jeers, grimaces, gibbers, denounces, explodes, introduces ridicule into a too churchly game,” gesturing to the traditional notion of poetry to which *Poetry* ascribed

¹⁴⁴ Amelia Jones writes that the Baroness represented “the cacophonous clash of races, sexes, sexualities, and classes of people” which comprised interwar New York City, and in so doing she embodied the “irrational effects . . . the seedy and seamy underside of modernism that discourses of high art and architecture have labored to contain through their dominant models of rational practice” (*Irrational Modernism* 10).

¹⁴⁵ This dialogic relationship between *The Dial* and *The Little Review* is discussed in detail in Golding.

and sought to proselytize (Heap, “Dada” 46). Heap adds, gesturing towards the Baroness’s role as “muse,” that “[w]e do intend to drop the baroness—right into the middle of the history of American poetry,” for the very reason that the Baroness is “the first American dada” and represents lived art as “the only one living anywhere who dresses dada, loves dada, lives dada” (46). The exposure the Baroness’s embodied performances received peaked just at the moment that *The Little Review* and other little magazines were moving away from the popular (and populist) dialogic model it had engaged in the late teens and early twenties. Instead, discussions of literature were turning toward more academic issues that were concerned with poetry’s place in a canon.¹⁴⁶ At a time when the concept of what was considered *literary* was undergoing great changes, the little magazines functioned as a platform for discussing and enacting these debates.

This transition from popular culture to high art is marked in little magazine culture by the precipitous decline of the Baroness’s poetry in print after 1922—a decline that coincided with the sudden predominance of images of her body. For instance, the Baroness is the subject of Man Ray’s photograph from the April 1921 issue of the journal *New York Dada*, a montage entitled “Coat Stand” that features an image of a naked woman, her face de-personalized with a paper doll mask and her body conjoined with a metal frame upon which coats are usually hung (Gammel *Baroness Elsa* 292). There are two other photographs taken by Man Ray for the same 1921 *New York Dada*—one in which the Baroness’s bare breast and nipple figure prominently in her profile (almost in direct correspondence with her forehead and nose) and the other in which she is wearing

¹⁴⁶ This topic is well discussed in *Little Magazines and Modernism: New Approaches*, edited by Suzanne W. Churchill and Adam McKible.

a hat and jewelry, yet still unclothed (Gammel *Baroness Elsa* 294). While a poem “Yours with Devotion: Trumpets and Drums” appears in the issue, her presence in the magazine is foregrounded by the images of her body since the poem is printed upside down (Gammel *Baroness Elsa* 495). In addition, the Baroness was the subject of the first film collaboration between Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray entitled *Elsa, Baroness von Freytag-Loringhoven, Shaving her Pubic Hair*, a still of which remains pasted in a letter Man Ray sent to Tristan Tzara (Gammel, *Baroness Elsa* 290). The title of the now-ruined film only goes so far to describe its matter. The Baroness was not agent of the action; instead, it was a film in which Man Ray recalls that he himself acted “as barber” (Man Ray, *Self Portrait* 213). In the letter, the Baroness’s legs form a capital “A” in the middle of “L’amerique” underneath which Man Ray has written a running ticker that reads “de la mer” or of the sea, but over and over without space so that it may also read “la merde” or “shit.” Her hairless every-woman form is objectified to represent what Gammel calls “America’s kinetic energy and perpetual motion, its New Woman sexuality” (*Baroness Elsa* 292), but this new woman, with her thin limbs, her flat chest, and her hairless genitals is necessarily sexless and childish and therefore powerless on these two fronts. Under the photo, sounding the Baroness’s death knell, Man Ray has written “Che Tzara – dada cannot live in New York.” As the evidence shows, beginning in 1922, the Baroness’s venue for textual performance was essentially disbanded. The change could have been the result of the admonishment *The Little Review* received at the *Ulysses* trial or it could have been the result of an apparent falling out between Margaret Anderson and the Baroness¹⁴⁷ or it could have been largely due to the fact that just as the Baroness

¹⁴⁷Though Anderson never mentions an argument with the Baroness, the Baroness notes more than once in her letters to Barnes that she and Anderson had an argument UMD 2.21, 2.41-2.42, 2.306-2.307. For

left the immediate scene in New York and in Paris, modernist literature became less engaged with popular culture. Whatever the case, due to this confluence of causes, her role as inspirational muse and Dada queen dissipates and interest in her poetry fades.

As such, her performances were performative—they at once heightened and then diminished her ability to attract a readership in the literary community. Judith Butler reminds us that “although theatrical performances can meet with political censorship and scathing criticism, gender performances in non-theatrical contexts are governed by more clearly punitive and regulatory social conventions” primarily because this “acting out” (unlike acting) blends the distinction between reality and play and points to the places where performance becomes performative (Butler 161).¹⁴⁸ Yet, it would be reductive and misguided to argue that the Baroness’s poetry is not read in current literary study because of the “punitive and regulatory social conventions” that existed in the early part of the century. Indeed, the attention the Baroness received from “acting out” or being outrageous in her own time has the same tenor as the attention she received from critics in the 1980s and 1990s who sought to re-evaluate the work of socially marginal figures such as this artistic muse and Dada queen. While a collection of her poetry has yet to be published in English,¹⁴⁹ the Baroness has been the focus of much cultural study in the last decade, specifically in Irene Gammel’s “cultural biography” *Baroness Elsa: Gender, Dada, and Everyday Modernity* (MIT 2003), Amelia Jones’s “neurasthenic history” *Irrational Modernism* (MIT 2005), and in a collection of essays on *The Politics of*

instance, she writes to Barnes “What should I do? Beg them to print me – when I felt myself ostracized – blacklisted – because I would not let man handle myself by hysterically collapsed M.A.? . . . I shrink in horror from realisation of debacle – its true cause –: M.A.’s collapse upsetting me” (UMD 2.307).

¹⁴⁸ Gammel discusses this in “The Baroness Elsa and the Politics of Transgressive Body Talk.”

¹⁴⁹ At the time of this writing, the first edition of her poetry *Subjoyride: Selected Poems* selected and edited by Rudolf Kuenzli is being published by Green Integer press. It was to be released in Spring, 2008, but the publication has been indefinitely postponed.

Cultural Mediation edited by Paul Hjartarson and Tracy Kulba (2003). Much of this recent attention seems to have been precipitated by an attempt in the 1990's by art historians and feminist scholars to reclaim the Baroness's place as an influential member of the New York Dada scene.¹⁵⁰ Yet, in these studies, the Baroness's life and performance art garner more interest than her poetry.¹⁵¹ Always athletic, the Baroness was a dancer in Berlin before moving to the states and stood long hours in tableaux, her body posed in provocative stances. Fittingly, her first job in the U.S. was as a nude model for painting classes, and it is stories about her ability to pose in the nude that fuel most of the frequently cited anecdotes about her.¹⁵² Amelia Jones and Irene Gammel have done important work using these anecdotes to place the Baroness's performance art in a context for academic study, but their work focuses primarily on the Baroness's physical body and not on her body of texts. For instance, in her "Neurasthenic History of New York Dada" *Irrational Modernism*, Jones introduces the Baroness in the following manner:

. . . there is a body, 'traced by language and dissolved by ideas' as Michel Foucault would have it, that both epitomized and, in its performative lived forms, radically disrupted the [Dada] movement inside and out. This body (and the subject that enlivens it)—the Baroness . . . (*Irrational Modernism* 3)

Here, the Baroness is first and foremost "a body," and then, in a sweeping gesture to give that body nomenclature, it is called "the Baroness." The names "Elsa Ploetz" and "Elsa

¹⁵⁰ This scholarly trajectory begins with Reiss (1986) and a handful of articles written by her biographer Gammel (Fall 1994, Spring 1995, 1999, 2000). In addition, her autobiography, edited and published by Paul I. Hjartarson, and Douglas O. Spettigue was published in 1992 and an exhibition titled *Making Mischief: Dada invades New York*, curated by Francis Naumann with Beth Venn was put up at the Whitney Museum of Art in New York in 1997.

¹⁵¹ The partial exception to this rule is Irene Gammel's *Baroness Elsa: Gender, Dada, and Everyday Modernity* (MIT 2002) which provides historical contexts for some of the Baroness's poetry and often some readings of specific poems that bear cultural currency. Gammel also edited three poems ("She," "Cosmic Chemistry," and "Thunder and Lightning" with an introduction in "She Strips Naked."

¹⁵² For examples of such anecdotes see Biddle, pgs. 137-140 and Anderson, *My Thirty Years' War*, pgs. 177-183.

von Freytag-Loringhoven” are not introduced until page 7; her poetry is not cited until page 168. This is a book about the body (or lack thereof) in masculinist, modernist, art culture and performance—hence, the reason to privilege what might be considered the Baroness’s “proto-performances” and the reason not to focus primarily on her poetry. Moreover, Jones’s study plays an important role in placing the body and the Baroness in history and displacing notions about normative gender constructs within the art scene of 1920s New York. Similarly, Irene Gammel does excellent work considering the relationship between the body and language, what she calls “body-talk” in the Baroness’s writings:

The concept of body-talk applies to both her public exhibitions, her eccentric costumes, her spectacular appearances in New York, as well as to her letters and autobiography; in all these forums the body plays a predominant role and allows Elsa to assume new expressions and poses. (“The Baroness Elsa and the Politics of Transgressive Body Talk” 75)

Again, in this study—which does include reference to and excellent discussions of her autobiographical work and her correspondence in correlation with her art and her street performances, her poetry is not included in a discussion of performance. Performance in these discussions is primarily performative and evocative *in coordination with a* discussion of the place or the displacement of the body in the culture at large. In part, these interrogations by Jones and Gammel and others have done well in replacing the Baroness in the larger conversation about New York Dada.¹⁵³ Yet, while is important for interrogating the Baroness’s role as muse and queen, however, this previous scholarship must be constellated within a discussion of poetry and textual performance, a discussion

¹⁵³ Primarily male, Dadaists emphasized the importance of technology and science and encouraged traditional bourgeois values for the roles of men and women. Sawelson-Gorse covers this topic in great detail in *Women in Dada: Essays on Sex, Gender, and Identity* (MIT 1998).

that realizes the importance of the historical body—the Dada queen—being dissolved while also allowing for a discussion of language and text that is not just the trace of the body, but embodiment itself.

II. Defining textual performance

In *Unmarked*, Peggy Phelan charges scholars “to make counterfeit the currency of our representational economy –not by refusing to participate in it at all, but rather by making work in which the costs of women’s perpetual aversion are clearly measured” (164). In terms of performance, this new work must be transparent about the fact that reproducing commentary on performance is secondary; commentary textualizes the experience and brings in what Phelan calls “the performative possibilities of writing itself,” since, as reproduction, commentary no longer has the force of performance (148). Indeed, simply noting (or quoting) anecdotes by Duchamp and Williams (and many others) who were both excited and repulsed by the Baroness’s lifeart does not elicit the same response in modern readers who have not participated in the text’s element of performance, and this lack is crucial. The work that Jones and Gammel have done has been useful in making “counterfeit” the traditional representation of New York Dada as male-centered by making the “lack” of the Baroness’s body plain; they (and others) have worked hard to reincorporate that lack (the body’s erasure) into the larger conversation about New York Dada. However, in the context of *The Little Review* of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century, performance was also text-based, and what must also be made counterfeit is the traditional notion that text is always simply the “trace” of the body and not a form of embodiment itself. Ultimately, the art of performance is defined by the fact that the “original” performance is lacking because performance depends on

“incorporating living, real bodies” that “plung[e] into visibility and must “disappear into memory” (Phelan, *Unmarked* 148). At the same time, the textual attacks and parodies that focused on the Baroness were not just commentary; they fueled her artistic fire, adding to the conversation and the textual performance that in turn shaped the meaning and significance of her poetry.

Like the concept of “lifeart,” *text* and *performance* signify a unified concept in the textual event of a Baroness poem: a *textual performance*. This theory is based in the fact that the Baroness saw poetic meaning as a coherent combination of parts both performed and written.¹⁵⁴ Her Dadaistic lifeart and her physical relationship to language and words facilitated her movement “between the poles of enunciation and of *écriture*, from the sensorial-perceptive materiality of the stage-object (musicality/visuality) to literarity” (Erickson 67). She did not use words as merely a vehicle for a greater message. Her poetry is not to be seen through words, but with them and in them and in the creative act of making them and living by them. In a letter to Barnes she notes, “I am lost—I feel it. Look at line of my writing tilting down? It before always went up such things are significantly telling! I shudder to look at it!” (UMD 2.043) It is as if her mental state is realized within and through the action of making text. The concrete nature of the words on the page and the strictures of the medium not only reflect but inhabit her physical state of being, making the physical words and the very physical act of creating them signifiers as much as the words whose meaning we attempt to read almost a century later. As a result of her intense “synaesthesia,” one consistent medium for the Baroness’s lifeart was her body. It is with her body that the Baroness experienced language. She writes to

¹⁵⁴ John D. Erickson calls the dialectic between the “two distinct forms of discourse –nonwritten and written–” integral to “the evolution of Dada performance” (Erickson 67).

Barnes that she “move[d] in English sound,” her “taste nauseated by German sound.” In fact, as her English declines so too does her physical health and her spirit to make art; she writes to Barnes, “I am pricked by meanest lice on my body—undernourished—beggared—so that my beautiful pride and jubilant spirit writhes on the ground, a trodden disabled messy worm . . .” (“Selections” 27-28). Losing her physical health, she is like a painter who has lost use of her fingers or a dancer unable to walk. When her English is dead, she is physically stilted. When she speaks German, she is physically sick. As a new immigrant in America, a bilingual speaker, and a poet, the Baroness found words to be the shape of language that interested her most but always in regards to their relationship to her physical experience of them. Likewise, “The document of a performance,” Phelan writes, “is only a spur to memory, an encouragement of memory to become present” (*Unmarked* 146). For the Baroness, however, the little magazine became the venue in which she performed her poetry not a venue that merely documented its performance. As such, analyzing the little magazine culture as the venue in which the Baroness’s *textual performance* may be defined functions as “a spur to memory” that allows us to determine the current environment in which the Baroness’s poetry may be staged again.

A. The venue: little magazines and textual performance

In the late teens and early twenties of the twentieth century little magazines functioned as the performance space for the Baroness’s Dada poetry. With an active audience, a responsive artist, and a constant dialog between the two facilitated by a continuous publication schedule, this textual space better resembles a conversation than that engendered by a published book. It is a dialog among authors, readers, and editors that was in “real time,” always shifting, always unpredictable, and performative by

nature—meant to instill change by changing how words were used. The Baroness’s involvement with *The Little Review*, primarily between the years 1918 and 1922, was during the height of this dialectic phase. Alan Golding associates the “point that modernism becomes Modernism” with the moment that the Baroness left New York to return to Germany in 1923, a point that signals both a highly experimental phase of modernist writing and one in which conversation and dialog was freely flowing (Golding 76). Before this moment, in which Margaret Anderson has moved to Paris and T.S. Eliot is experiencing great commercial success with *The Waste Land*, modernism was more closely associated with the avant-garde and less with institutional and monetary success. Before the *Waste Land*, Cary Nelson argues, “a revolution in poetry seemed naturally to entail a commitment to social change [. . .] all the arts were in ferment and aesthetic innovations were politically inflected” (230). Much of this fermentation, innovation, and commitment to change was generated by the relationships that writers and editors formed off the page. Indeed, the conversation at the root of modernism extended to the offices of the little magazines where writers read each other’s work and discussed it both in person and in print. The Baroness, for instance, not only worked with Heap and Anderson at *The Little Review*, but she interacted with Djuna Barnes, William Carlos Williams, and Bernice Abbott, among others, at the office. Evidence proves that she also associated with Mike Gold and Claude McKay at *The Liberator* office¹⁵⁵ and that Ford Madox Ford and Hemingway argued about her and her poetry more than once at the Paris office of the *transatlantic review*.¹⁵⁶ As a venue for experimentation,¹⁵⁷ the pages of *The Little Review*

¹⁵⁵ For more information on the Baroness’s relationship with Mike Gold and Claude McKay see McKible 2007.

¹⁵⁶ This story was recounted in Ford Madox Ford’s autobiography *It Was the Nightingale*, pgs. 333-34.

were replete with discussions between artists and editors, artists and readers, and readers and editors. The editors in particular played a large role in facilitating the little magazine's function as a vehicle for dialog by including provocative pieces meant to spark debate. In thinking back on why she started *The Little Review*, Margaret Anderson writes:

It was the moment. The epoch needed it, the modern literary movement needed it. But this was of relative unimportance to me. I really began *The Little Review* the way one begins playing the piano or writing poetry: because of something one wants violently. The thing I wanted – would die without – was conversation. (Anderson, *Little Review Anthology* 351)

Indeed, conversation jumped from the pages of *The Little Review* and *Contact* between the Baroness's excoriating attack in *The Little Review* on "Kora in Hell" and Ezra Pound's parodic response to "Elseharf Suntag" and "Billsharf Freitag" to Williams's subsequent Baroness-lashing in *Contact*, which vilified a "fictional" La Baronne as "America personified in the filth of its own imagination" ("Sample Prose Piece: The Three Letters" 10). Indeed, some scholars argue that the "the key" to the cultural revolution of modernism rests in "the social form of the metropolis" (Williams *The Politics of Modernism* 46); it can also be said that the key to textual performance was the social form of the modernist little magazine culture.

B. Art: performing the Dada poem

The dialogic inherent to a Baroness poem is not only representative of a larger conversation between artists about art; the textual performance of her poetry also depended on elements of chance and audience collaboration as part of its production of

¹⁵⁷ Golding discusses the extent to which magazines such as *The Little Review* and *The Dial* helped shape the modernist canon in dialog, the former's focus providing a venue for the avant-garde and the latter's for the process of "canon-making and institutionalization" (72).

meaning. The first Dadaists have many definitions for “Dada.” “Dada means nothing,” Tristan Tzara writes in his “Dada Manifesto” of 1918, but it also means “nurse” in Russian and Rumanian and “the tail of a holy cow” to the “Kru Negroes” (“Dada Manifesto 1918” 77). Hans Richter remembers the term as a translation of “yes, yes” in Rumanian or “*da, da*” (Richter 31). Richard Huelsenbeck claims that he and Hugo Ball picked the word meaning “hobbyhorse” out of a French-German dictionary (qtd. in Richter 32). Ball has called it an “indication of idiot naivety,” “foolery extracted from the emptiness in which all the higher problems are wrapped,” and “a public execution of false morality,” but perhaps the most useful definition for this discussion is Ball’s “last word” on the topic in a letter to Huelsenbeck: “. . . and last of all I describe Dada, cabaret and gallery” (qtd. in Richter 32). This is to say that the performance aspect of Dada—the cabaret—included its gallery of creations and *vice versa*. Representing the elements of chance and “anti-chance” (conscious will) that Dadaists believed were constantly at play in Dada performance,¹⁵⁸ the cabaret and the gallery were constantly in dialog as well. In Dada art, letting go of societal and traditional art strictures with “the freedom not to care a damn about anything” was to let chance and therefore one’s unique unconscious voice (“the voice of the ‘Unknown’”) play a role (Richter 50, 58). The cabaret or performance element of Dada signified this element of chance and spontaneity. In real time, with the variance of artist personalities and talents and a different audience, anything could happen. Yet, while chance is a definite factor in art so too is the conscious will or artistry of the artist, which is represented in the gallery of creations found usually at the center of the Dada performance. For instance, in Tzara’s famous manifesto about making a Dadaist poem, one must cut up a newspaper article and place each word in a bag; then, pick

¹⁵⁸ For a discussion of the Dadaist take on “chance” versus “anti-chance” see Richter, pgs. 59-64.

words out at random and copy them in the order in which you find them. The resulting poem “will be like you,” Tzara writes, “infinitely original and endowed with a sensibility that is charming though beyond the understanding of the vulgar” (“manifesto on feeble love and bitter love” 92). At the same time, the example that Tzara includes as his “chance” poem contains elements of control: it has a title and line breaks (both of which he includes to add a thematic shape to the seemingly nonsensical lines), and the poem does not have one instance of grammatical nonsense such as contiguous verbs (“is was”) or prepositions (“of in”), lending to the supposition that the “chance” nature of this readable poem is slim.¹⁵⁹ Richter describes this apparent contradiction between chance and anti-chance in Dada art as the realization that to involve the whole self, the Dadaist must accept her unconscious and conscious self in dialog (Richter 59). This relationship between chance and anti-chance, between the performance and the *work* (in Barthes terms) is well-expressed as the relationship that exists in Dada art between the cabaret and the gallery, but it may also be used to articulate the relationship between text and performance in the terms of a Baroness poem.

Much of the element of chance that was incorporated in any Dada performance was due to the cabaret aspect of the art, the possibility a live audience brought to any performance. This relationship between the performance of the text and the text itself is necessary in terms of the “rhetoric of nonsense” the Baroness employed. David Escoffery calls rhetoric a “key factor determining the character of a performance event,” and the “rhetoric of nonsense” a tactic that persuaded audiences to participate and

¹⁵⁹ Experimenting with the same practice in The Museum of Modern Art’s online flash activity “Chance Words: Make a Dadaist poem” (<http://redstudio.moma.org/interactives/chance/>) adds weight to this argument since each poem produced contains elements of grammatical “error” that do not exist in Tzara’s example.

collaborate in the Dada performance event (3). By not making sense, Dada performance breaks through the “fourth wall” of theater, the “wall” that separates the play from the reality or the actors from the audience. This rhetoric is employed in the written Dada object by using nonsense to force audience participation and collaboration. For instance, the Baroness emphasizes the tension between chance and conscious will by placing the meaning of the poem (that is, one’s ability to “make sense” of it) squarely in how it is read. For instance, the material nature of her poetry on the page, facilitated by the modernist aesthetic for experimental typography, also necessitated the audience participation that engaged the textual performance of certain poems. For example, the poem “Ostentatious; Westward;; Eastward;; Agog” relies on strictures of reading order and space to make meaning. In this compilation poem, the Baroness includes four separate poems. The first and topmost stanza, titled “Ostentatious” discusses “Vivid fall’s/Bugle sky;” the second to the right is titled “WESTWARD:” while the next, lower to the left is titled “EASTWARD:”; the last stanza, at the bottom of the space, is titled “Agog” and discusses “Ultramarine/Avenues.” While the placement of the sky at the top and the water at the bottom provokes little thought, the *displacement* of East and West—in terms of mapping standards—is more curious. That these stanzas actually include the adverbial form of “*Eastward*” and “*Westward*” indicates missing verbs and therefore a missing subject or subjects. This occlusion emphasizes the perspective of that missing subject. For instance, the “Eastward” stanza in the traditionally “West” (because on the far left) position is about what one views from the West looking *Eastward*: a rising moon in the East. Likewise, the “Westward” stanza in the traditionally “East” position is about the setting sun. The day is bright as a bugle at the highest point of the sky (at the top of

the page). The sun begins to set in the “westward” looking perspective where the tones of the poem deepen, emphasized by the mention of the “golden saxophone.” As the day wanes or as the reader moves down the page in traditional reading order, however, the moon rises towards the East, and it seems that travesty prevails: from the centered perspective of the sea, the sun and the moon are both risen; resembling two eyes widened in shock, these eyes are “Agog” at the world. The tone and meaning of each word is dependent on the reader’s movement through the graphical interface of the page, making space an essential element within the poem. Indeed, in the first of the four manuscript versions of “Ostentatious,” the words of the text change little while their movement in the space on the page changes dramatically, emphasizing the fact that the Baroness anticipates the reader’s ordered movement through space as a signifying element in the poem.

In “Mineself — — Minesoul — — and — — Mine — — Cast-Iron Lover,” the Baroness uses a combinatory or montage technique to magnify the complex nature of expressive language and to evoke “the rhetoric of nonsense.” In this poem, she achieves what may be considered a “simultaneous poem” that evokes aspects of tonal poetry by synchronizing the multiple voices of “the self,” “the soul,” and “the body.” A Dada technique used frequently by Huelsenbeck, Tzara, Marcel Janco, Hans Arp and others, the simultaneous poem was traditionally a simultaneous recitation by multiple poets of multiple poems to a live audience. The goal was to create a bizarre effect that appeared nonsensical but ultimately made sense. As such, the simultaneous poem proved the fact “that an organic work of art has a will of its own, and also illustrates the decisive role played by accompaniment,” which represents the conscious will of the artists to structure

and make meaningful the combined recitations (Ball qtd. in Richter, 30). Appearing in a prose-like format that comprised nine full pages of *The Little Review*, the overall, chaotic effect of “Cast-Iron Lover” was due in large part to its confusion of voices. For example, two of the voices are recognizable in the following lines as “mine soul” (who “touches” through the body’s eyes) and “mine body” (whose “sensual” eyes provide for the soul’s song):

MINE SOUL—MINE SOUL—thou maketh me shiver—thus it can it not be! dost thou remember that song of his hair which made mine eyes thine fingers? Thine eyes made mine song—mine body—thine eyes. TOUCH! guard thine eyes—mine body—guard thine sensual eyes! Sing thine sensual song—mine soul—thus it ran: “HIS HAIR IS MOLTEN GOLD AND A RED PELT—[. . .]”

Tonal poetry—which may be defined as three or more voices speaking at once to create a cacophony of bizarre or funny sounds—often employs words that when mixed sound nonsensical. As this poem progresses, the Baroness achieves the same tonal affect on an ontological level by blurring the differences between the “soul” voice and that of the “body” voice, thus creating an intermingled voice that represents an intermingled identity. The body cries “I am tired of wisdom!” It thinks and is philosophical. The soul speaks and sings and has a “sensual” song and “fingers.” While these two voices are not overlaid on the page, their identities are certainly overlapping. The Baroness further mingles their voices and therefore their identities by punctuating each speech with referents to the direct object of the speech or the “listening” character, set off from the speech by dashes: “—mine soul—” or “mine body—”. While this structure functions to demarcate the speaker, it does not make the cacophony of second person references—“thou”—any less confusing; in fact it adds a ludicrous dimension of emphasis on the listener as the subject of each speech. Making the “you” the primary subject of each “I”

statement emphasizes the overlay of identities. In order to understand who is speaking, the reader must pay particular attention to the subject and referent (or object) of each line:

Mine body—thou maketh me sad—thou VERILY hast made sad—thine soul—!
Mine body—alas!—I bid thee—GO!
THOU—mine soul?!
I—mine body.

Because the reader is forced to pay closer attention, to be an active reader who must order the subject and object of each speech, she becomes immersed in the intermingled identities and voices, thus experiencing the tonal aspect of the poetry. Finally, though the piece is titled “MINESELF—MINESOUL,” “mineself” is never mentioned in the poem until the poem’s conclusion: “Upright we stand—slander we flare—thine body and thou—mine soul—hissing!—/thus—mine soul—is mine song to thee—thus its end!!” Here, “We” is the third voice—“mineself”—speaking to the referent of the speech “minesoul” and talking about “thine body” (the “minebody” that has been the referent of “minesoul” throughout the poem thus far). All become “We” as the speaker (the self) confirms that the poem has been the self’s song to the soul about its codependence with the body. Its form necessitates a performance or reading of the poem since understanding who is speaking is impossible without experiencing the pauses (the dashes and line breaks) that help to impose some order with which the reader may make sense of the chaos. As a consequence, the performance of the poem, which relies on splitting the “self,” the “soul,” and the “body” introduces a tension with the work which appears on the page as a simultaneous poem that embodies the reconnection of these forces.

Audience participation in the event of a Baroness poem is also reflected in textual conversations that surrounded her poetry. For instance, the discussion about “Cast Iron Lover” in *The Little Review* seems to reflect the poem itself. This discussion ensued in

December 1919 and January 1920 under the title “The Art of Madness” and included Jane Heap, Maxwell Bodenheim, Evelyn Scott, and, lastly, the Baroness. It was a conversation sparked by Jane Heap’s response in “The Reader Critic” (October 1919), which is the section of the magazine reserved for reader comments, to the readers’ reactions to “Cast-Iron-Lover.” “F.E.R.” from Chicago had written, “How can you who have had the honour of printing Yeats open your pages to the work of the Baroness von Freytag-Loringhoven?” Heap responds, calling the reader “sentimental” or a traditionalist and decrying that *The Little Review* was not “limiting itself to the Seven Arts;” she continues, “No one has yet done much with the Art of Madness” (“The Reader Critic” 56). This comment was taken up in the November issue by Maxwell Bodenheim who claims with admiration that the “Cast-Iron Lover” is “an unconscious volcano” that “holds a half-articulate frenzy” that “violates” the “sanctimonious ‘art’” of “delicate souls” and “F.E.R. from Chicago” scolds Heap for throwing out the term “Madness” without an explanation for why *The Little Review* publishes the Baroness’s poetry in particular (“The Reader Critic” 64). In the December discussion Evelyn Scott accuses the Baroness of being mad in “a condition of disease and mania,” but in response, Heap argues that the Baroness is merely “unhampered by sanity” and able to “work” insanity “to produce Art”: “It wouldn’t be the art of madness if it were merely an insanity,” Heap writes; “Madness is her chosen state of consciousness” (*The Little Review Anthology* 322). Scott, who argues against the notion that an artist has the power to condition “disorder” or to control madness once evoked sees the poet’s strength as her ability to stand back from life and make art, but Heap saw the Baroness as the living embodiment of the contradictory forces that exist between chance and anti-chance, and believed her

poetry instantiated the Baroness's ability to evoke this contradiction with words. Finally, in response to the debate, the Baroness likens a "worked" state of insanity in poetry to that of Mardi Gras in France or "die Dionysein" in Germany, wherein the Bacchanalian party functions as "a steam knozzle [sic] on a teakettle," a controlled release valve from the constant state of conscious will that keeps modern society in line (*The Little Review Anthology* 324). Essentially, the Baroness bemoans the state of poetry in America, which rejects the chaos of chance, and therefore takes the "life" out of art—all of which, she believes, causes a state in which "it is just an empty show at make believe, without anything to let go—let loose!" (*The Little Review Anthology* 323-4) Without something to let go, without incorporating the wild possibility that chance generates in art, "Every thing emotional in America," the Baroness writes, "becomes a mere show and make believe" ("The Art of Madness" 29). The dialog represented primarily in *The Little Review* that surrounded the publication of poems like "Mineself— —Minesoul— —and— —Mine— —Cast-Iron Lover" not only illustrates the "triangular intertextuality" or the "influences of biography, reception, and textual reproduction" (Smith, *Rowing in Eden* 2) that existed between the Baroness, her poetry, and the audience, the conversation itself mirrors the cacophony of voices represented in the poem.

"Ostentatious; Westward;; Eastward;; Agog" marks the last Baroness poem printed in a little magazine¹⁶⁰ and a change in the philosophy that governed notions of experimental poetry, and ultimately, a change in the element of textual performance in little magazine culture. The more informal, public conversation or dialog about poetry between artists was fading and criticism was becoming formalized in magazine culture

¹⁶⁰ Another poem of hers will not be printed until her poetry is reprinted in a few anthologies in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. For the most thorough bibliography of the works pertaining to the Baroness see Gammel, *Baroness Elsa* pgs. 495-496.

just as it would soon become formalized in the academy. This meant that longer, more formal arguments about art in *The Dial* and *The Egoist* took the place of the more “conversation-like” letters that comprised sections like “The Reader Critic” in *The Little Review*. These later articles contain language that disembodies the author and seems to anticipate William K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley’s 1954 concepts of “the intentional fallacy” and “the affective fallacy.” For example, Eugene Jolas’s piece “Logos” begins on the page after the Baroness’s poem compilation “Ostentatious; Westward;; Eastward;; Agog” appears. He begins the piece: “Poetry is at the cross-roads today,” and he goes on to define this crossroads as one between a “positivist” and “sterile” poetry that gives a “monotonous description” of a “mediocre universe” and experimental poetry that seeks to revise “traditional” values and is “in open revolt against naturalistic concepts” (Jolas 25). These are concepts already expressed in magazines such as *The Little Review* and others, but like the editors of *Dial* and *Poetry*, Jolas inscribes a transcendental and otherworldly element to the poet by denigrating “verbal freaks and literary acrobatics” and postulating that the “orphyic poet” has a vision that is “direct and pure.” This orphyic poet, he contends, has to do with the world, but his poetry does not: “Poetry, using the word as mechanics, may [. . .] produce a metaphoric universe which is a sublimation of the physical world” (26). The piece serves as a warning to the dead author of the posthumously published poem that precedes it: your poetry has little to do with your life.

The Little Review Spring 1925 issue marked the last issue containing “The Reader Critic” section. This section functioned as a place for discussion, debate, and reader/editor/artist response and became, essentially, the avenue for conversation that eventually made the Baroness poem a focal point for debate in the “Art of Madness” and

other smaller discussions. After this issue, there would only be three more issues (and a supplement) of *The Little Review* including the closing number in May 1929, “Confessions and Letters.” The format of this last number speaks volumes about the dubious future of the modernist conversation in print. Its impetus, Anderson claims, was her conclusion after fifteen years of *The Little Review*—a review “devoted to literature, drama, music, painting, sculpture”—that “I could no longer go on publishing a magazine in which no one really knows what he is talking about” (*Little Review Anthology* 351). With a correlative lament that books are “written because people know nothing of themselves” and that the review contributions became “first-rate creative expressions of these confusions” (351), Anderson now seeks, at the magazine’s conclusion, a “psychological conversation” (352). To this end, the issue was premised on a formal questionnaire that Anderson and Heap drew up for their contributors comprising queries that were open-ended and essentially biographical such as “What do you look forward to?” “What is your world view?” and “Why do you go on living?” Many contributors answered the questions, noting their personal and banal nature. Bertrand Russell writes, “I am making my answers truthful rather than interesting. I have a rooted belief that the truth is always dull” (374). Others like Demuth who begins “What girls you are!” (359) and Jacques Lipchitz who first notes “It’s almost a confession you’re asking” (369) answered begrudgingly and with derision. Some contributors chose to ignore the questions completely such as William Carlos Williams and Ford Madox Ford in order to write about *The Little Review* itself, the latter insisting that the last issue should not be “revelations as to our unworthy selves but expositions to the world of what you did” (382). James Joyce wrote a personal note instead saying he’d rather talk over the

questionnaire in person over tea with Heap and Anderson, but eventually, in Anderson's words, found "nothing to say" (370). Djuna Barnes was curt: "I am sorry but the list of questions does not interest me to answer. Nor have I that respect for the public" (356). The questions and the responses to them mark a curious shift in the culture of conversation in little magazines and in the modernist culture at large. Before this era, conversation in *The Little Review* comprised a dialog between writer and reader about the object and objective of art. Suddenly, "conversation" meant a personal declaration that was essentially one-sided, not dialogic or open-for-debate, and quite possibly for the reading public and the literary critic—in the words of Russell—rather truthful and rather dull. Finally, what Anderson sought from her contributors was modeled in what she chose to print for the Baroness, the only dead contributor. Culled from a personal letter that the Baroness wrote to Heap during the Baroness's stay in Germany sometime between 1923 and 1927, the letter is a long lament from the Baroness about her fallen spirits, her decline into poverty and ill-health, and a personal request for help that would never be and could never be answered in the pages of then-to-be debunk periodical. The conversation had been over for the Baroness since "The Reader Critic" was discontinued in 1925, the same *Little Review* issue in which her poetry (in this case, "Guttriese" and "Walküren") would appear. What was left were editors and critics like Anderson who privileged the Baroness's personal writings over her poetry, a preference that ultimately left the Baroness out of the literary conversation at large. "Consider me a fish that is left on bonedry beach by crazy time's tide," the Baroness writes in the letter; "Put me into the sea again. I will swim again . . ."

III. Poetry in performance: toward a digital scholarly edition

If we allow for the fact that a textual event may be defined as a textual performance—a non-reproducible, real-time performance that includes live textual bodies and embodied texts—one next step becomes putting this theory to practice in the form of a scholarly edition. The deformative and performative properties of digital texts and images put in play with a collaborative audience can be utilized to engage access to her lifeart (like a new production of an old musical score); this environment can provide a new venue for the audience response—the provocation and reaction, the derision and delight, the passion and anger—with which the Baroness’s artistry developed. By providing access to her poetry in this manner we are providing the means by which this important work stays well-engaged in the cultural works of language, not just the sensational memories of outrageous bodies. Because of the important cultural studies written on the Baroness in the nineties, much more work has been done to organize and increase access to the Baroness’s extant manuscripts within special collections. Consequently, most of the Baroness’s extant papers are now publicly accessible through the University of Maryland, College Park, special collections, and *The Little Review* Archives at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.¹⁶¹ The rest of this discussion proposes that an electronic scholarly edition makes possible a new consideration of the Baroness’s published and unpublished textual performances.

¹⁶¹ In addition, the papers at the University of Maryland are considered in the public domain, making free, electronic access to these artifacts a possibility.

A. The fluid text in theory

In textual and editorial studies, arguments abound about how a literary text's textual condition—its origins, its materiality, its transmission, and its reception—affect its meaning. Martha Nell Smith has “perus[ed] triangular intertextualities, or the influence of biography, reception, and textual production upon one another” in reading an Emily Dickinson poem (*Rowing in Eden 2*) and Jerome McGann describes the phenomenon of any poem more generally:

So it is that in a poetic field no unit can be assumed to be self-identical. The logic of the poem is only frameable in some kind of paradoxical articulation such as: “*a* equals *a* if and only if *a* does not equal *a*.” (McGann, “Visible and Invisible Books” 290)

In this manner, both Smith and McGann (and many others) use social text theory to narrow in on the textual event of a poem. In comparison, Jed Deppman, Daniel Ferrer, and Michael Groden argue that genetic criticism takes these n-dimensional triangulations and paradoxes into account by focusing on a text's many textual events. The genetic critic's focus on versions yields a critique that they argue (1) “grows out of a structuralist and post-structuralist notion of ‘text’ as an infinite play of signs, but [. . .] accepts a teleological model of textuality and constantly confronts the question of authorship;” and (2) “examines tangible documents such as writers' notes, drafts, and proof corrections, but its real object is something more abstract—not the existing documents but the movement of writing that must be inferred from them” (*Genetic Criticism 2*). At the same time, John Bryant's notion of the “fluid text” reflects social text theory and McGann's idea that the text is an “event” plus the geneticist notion that a literary work is “equivalent to the processes of genesis that create it” (Bryant 71). According to his definition of the fluid text, each of the Baroness's multiple versions in manuscript and print and all the

various notes and letters and comments of her contemporaries becomes an essential part of the literary work under investigation. Most importantly for this discussion, fluid text allows for an element that the others preclude in the form of a time and space dimension. Bryant sees the “event” of the text differently than social textual theorists and the geneticists by arguing that these camps measure process based on product where the work is always a “conceptual thing or actual set of things or even discrete events” (61). He suggests, instead, that the work is a “flow of energy”—a concept that facilitates a theoretical reckoning for the crucial element missing from attempts to make the Baroness’s poetry accessible: a collaborative audience. Literary work is a “phenomenon,” Bryant writes, “. . . best conceived not as a produced work (oeuvre) but as work itself (travail), the power of people and culture to create a text” (61). Because the Baroness’s “lifear” is centered in the Dada model of gallery *and* cabaret that depends on real-time audience participation, the underlying concept of a “flow of energy” within fluid text theory is most productive for creating an edition of her poetry.

At the same time, while the performance element of Dadaism is a concept of art that was germane to the Dadaist movement, producing a “flow of energy” that engages this element in practice within a scholarly edition could belie the fluid text theory’s basic expansiveness. It is a consequence of particular editing practices such as “clear” or “eclectic” editing that has left editors (Djuna Barnes, Peter Whigham, Hank O’Neal, Irene Gammel, and now Rudolf E. Kuenzli) seeking to produce an edition of the Baroness’s poetry without the ability to reproduce its performance or cabaret element. Moreover, it is a lack that theorists of performance and the body have been apt in pointing out. At the same time, the last section of this chapter has been spent locating the

textual dialogics of the little magazine within the larger conversation about Dada performance, spurring the memory of text in performance. This work has been done not to suggest that reproducing the texts of little magazines could or would reconstitute the textual performance. It has been developed to suggest that textual events can and should be defined as “embodied” performances since real people in real time are collaborating in the production (the creation and the transmission) of the poetic art objects. As Phelan reminds us, a performance “cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations” (Phelan, *Unmarked* 146), otherwise, it loses its status as performance. Similarly the reproduction of a textual performance is not the means by which we can access (or make meaning with) a Baroness poem; rather, the Baroness’s unpublished poems should be edited and presented in a manner that facilitates meaning-making possibilities that occur in performance.

B. The fluid text in practice: digital objects in n-dimensional space

Digital media provides a means for new practices in editing and representation that allow for the real time performance of a textual event. A digital archive made in response to the Baroness’s life art could engage well the Baroness’s gallery and her cabaret, her textual art objects and the collaborative audience needed to bring the texts into play. At the basis of the electronic textual performance of a Baroness poem exists a gallery of ready-made objects: images and encoded transcriptions. In French, Marcel Duchamp called his mass-produced “art” objects *le tout faire, en série*, which may be literally translated as “all done, in series.” In English, the closest equivalent, he surmised, was the word “readymade” used for mass-produced garments he saw in the fashion industry. While Walter Benjamin contends that what the Dadaists “intended and achieved was a

relentless destruction of the aura of their creations, which they branded as reproductions with the very means of production” (Benjamin 237-238), Duchamp started with the premise that his gallery objects (such as the bicycle wheel, the urinal, and the comb) were not unique or original “in the conventional sense” but that these objects each have an aura based on reception. Because the event of transmission and reception changes, each object is a replica but it is also self-identical—it exists as a discrete, unique object in a four-dimensional space (the gallery) in which the object is perceived by an interactive audience from any given perspective at any given moment in the moment’s performance (in cabaret). For instance, consider this gallery of works: a bicycle on a painted stool with a placard, a urinal with a hand-painted title, a dog grooming comb with an inscription, and the written anecdote of the Baroness, who “with seventy black and purple anklets clanking about her secular feet, a foreign postage stamp—canceled—perched upon her cheek; a wig of purple and gold caught roguishly up with strands from a cable once used to moor importations from far Cathay; red trousers” is described as “an ancient human notebook on which has been written all the follies of a past generation” (Barnes “How the Villagers Amuse Themselves”). In each instance, there is an object that can be replicated (a bicycle, a comb, a written description), but there are also multiple opportunities for interpreting their meaning given the audience’s relationship with the accompanying “inscriptions” (including Barnes’s analysis) and the performance venue, whether it be a museum or, in the case of Barnes’s description, in the *New York Morning Telegraph Sunday Magazine*. It goes without saying that Duchamp shook the art world by throwing into debate this question about uniqueness and his readymades: Is uniqueness (Benjamin’s “aura”) defined by the object’s “originality” (by its origin of production) or

is its uniqueness produced by how we perceive it (by its reception)? From the latter perspective, the readymade does not merely represent a reconstruction or replica of a missing original. It is a performance of a thing itself. By this definition, digital surrogates like images and encoded text may be defined as readymades without originals; they may be unique-in-play—both replicated and therefore mass-produced to serve as unique elements within each iteration or performance of text.

In addition, images and encoded texts function in this context as deformations rather than copies of an originary object (such as a manuscript or a previously published poem)—they are representations that are *de*-formed and *re*-formed according to critical analysis.¹⁶² Critical deformation is not unusual in printed scholarly editing projects; works that have been reproduced are by nature deformed in order to interrogate the work or present it from a certain perspective. Examples include Valerie Eliot's edition of *The Waste Land* which publishes T.S. Eliot's annotated typescripts or an edition which incorporates just a single version (as opposed to all of the versions) of Whitman's multi-volume *Leaves of Grass* or an edition of Samuel Beckett's *Stirrings Still / Soubresauts* in a translation in a third language. These editorial projects comprise deformative texts that are also performative: in choosing one presentation over another that presentation becomes emphasized in that instantiation. Moreover, using an image of a manuscript or a published page to initiate a particular tenor in a textual performance is not original to the digital edition. Valerie Eliot's use of manuscript images poses for review the on-page relationship between Eliot and Ezra Pound during the writing of *The Waste Land* and Robin G. Shulze's use of facsimiles of published poems by Marianne Moore in *Becoming*

¹⁶² Lisa Samuels and Jerome McGann write extensively about deformation as interpretation in "Deformance and Interpretation." Further discussion on the precise technical methods of deformation and reformation of these digital surrogates is provided in the next chapter.

Marianne Moore foregrounds the context and evolution of Moore’s poetry throughout her published career. The images that *The Little Review* published of two Baroness poems in manuscript—“Guttriese and “Walküren” (see Figure 34)— in Spring 1925 seems purposeful since it is an act that remained unprecedented and unique in the 15-year-long

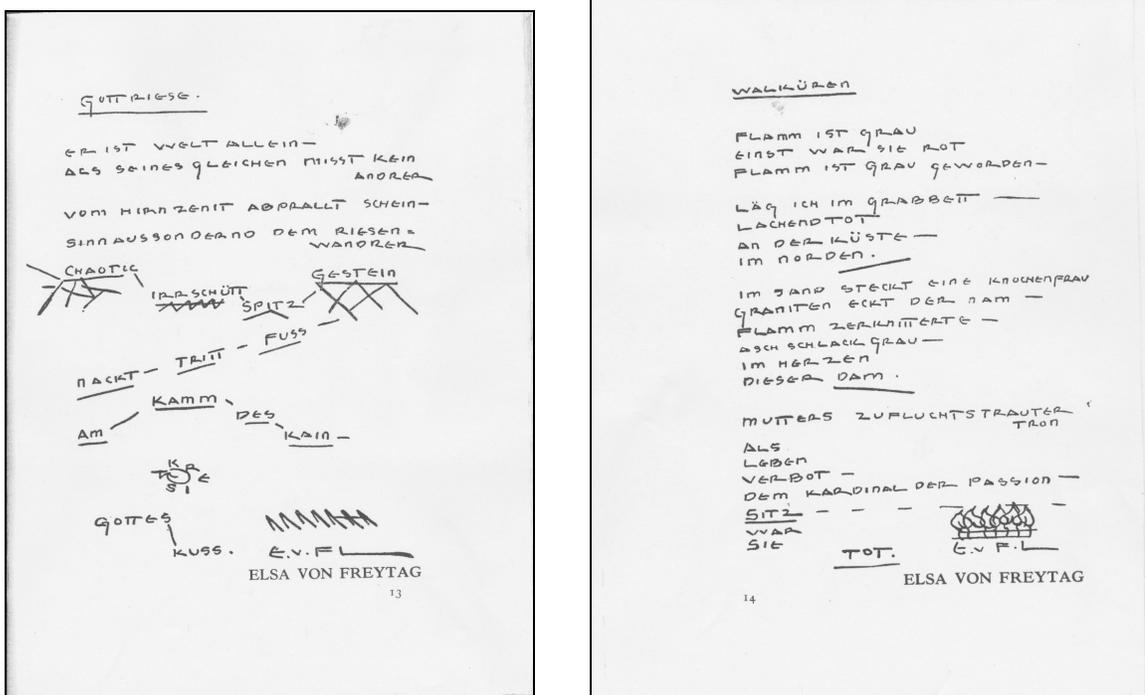


Figure 34: Manuscript pages published in *The Little Review*, 11.1 (Spring 1925): 13-14.

run of the magazine. At the same time, what becomes arresting about the publication of these manuscript pages is its seeming purposelessness. That is, aside from the flames that leap from the Baroness’s closing initials in “Walküren,” most of the lines of the page could have been well represented by printed lines and letters, especially given the modernist proclivity for experimental typography in general. Of course, the shape of the poem’s words and figures may not have been the impetus for printing these manuscript

pages at all. Perhaps instead, the Baroness's physical absence from New York¹⁶³ and the fact that the Spring 1925 issue in which "Guttriene and "Walküren" are printed marks the last issue containing "The Reader Critic" section have more to do with why these manuscript facsimiles were included. They point to the element of "lack" that was becoming inherent in *The Little Review* starting at this time and concluding with the 1929 final issue. To be sure, the impending conclusion of the magazine coincided in Margaret Anderson's mind with the end of original and authentic art and literature: "In 1929, in Paris, I decided that the time had come to end the *Little Review*. Our mission was accomplished; contemporary art had arrived; for a hundred years, perhaps, the literary world would produce only repetition" (Anderson, *Little Review Anthology* 349). Likewise, the digital image of a Baroness poem is not meant to replicate the original—it could never provide for the texture and weight of the rice paper the Baroness used for poems such as "Thistledown Flight" or the multiple pages that come before and after the manuscript pages of "Christ - Don Quixote - St. George." Instead, the image belies "a certain perspective on the object" that "does not accurately (so to speak) mirror its object," though "it consciously (so to speak) deforms its object" in order to relay a certain perspective (McGann and Samuels 65). In the electronic edition of the Baroness's poetry, then, the digital image is used to emphasize and—in some respects, point to— aspects of the desired textual performance that are missing: the live voices and conversation that were the trademark of *The Little Review* at the height of the Baroness's participation in its culture.

¹⁶³ After her poem "Affectionate" appeared in the magazine almost three years earlier (Winter 1922), the Baroness had not published in the magazine, and at this point in time, the Baroness has been in Germany (a locale that did not enjoy the same literary connections as Paris) for over two years; no one has seen her; no one has remarked upon her dress or her shenanigans in *The Little Review*.

Working from a perspective that comprises critical deformation helps determine the parameters by which the representation itself is engaged. Thus, if the digital text's instantiation is not meant to serve as a replica of the "real" object but as a critical deformation which seeks to create an environment for engaging the n-dimensional field of a textual event, then it pertains more closely to the theory of the fluid text that I argue should underlie the textual performance of a Baroness poem. Some explanation of n-dimensionality is needed. The Baroness poem, like all productive poetic texts, makes meaning in n-dimensional space. Jerome McGann argues that poetical works "are not expository or informational," but, since they "are built as complex nets of repetition and variation," of "feedback loops" (*Radiant Textuality* 290, 291), "every document, every moment in every document, conceals (or reveals) an indeterminate set of interfaces that open into alternate spaces and relations" (295). In other words, he asserts that all features of the text, whether they be perceptual, semantic, syntactic, or rhetorical signify meaning and not each by itself, but in accordance or discordance with the other. The interplay is "recursive" and appears "topological rather than hierarchic," such that he likens the poetic field of meaning to "a mobile with a shifting set of poles and hinge points carrying a variety of objects" (297). This field, occupied by the moving mobile, may be conceived as the fourth dimension in which three dimensional shapes move—a dimension that represents time and space. One faulty assumption Jerome McGann identifies in those who build and use digital tools for the analysis of digital texts is the idea that the texts make meaning in one dimension and that the "object [of using a digital tool for text analysis] would be the exposure of the informational content and expository structure of the text" ("Visible and Invisible Books" 68). One solution that McGann has argued for in

the past is a tool for marking the autopoietic fields in such a way that the fields may later be reproduced, dynamically generated so that the scholar may study the interplay of what McGann identifies as six fields at play: the linguistic, the graphical/auditional, the documentary, the semiotic, the rhetorical, and the social dimension (“Marking Texts of Many Dimensions”). At the same time, this solution—which is *theoretically* exciting—makes little practical sense since McGann’s solution still maintains that the fields may be known in isolation and then recombined for observation.

The desire to reconstruct reality for observational purposes is not new. A little-known mathematician who was well known by artists Pablo Picasso and Marcel Duchamp among others, Esprit Pascal Jouffret expressed a certain amount of skepticism about observing the fourth dimension, reportedly claiming that “while it is perfectly possible to conceive of the fourth-dimension, and of four-dimensional objects, it is impossible to *perceive* them” (Adcock 56). Nonetheless, Duchamp followed Jouffret’s writings closely and sought to work around this particular lack in human perspective. Duchamp maintained that one could create a perceptible four-dimensional space in the same way an architect erects a three-dimensional structure out of two-dimensional blueprints, by, essentially, offering the observer an infinite number of ways of seeing its three-dimensional “slices” around which he could move:

A four-dimensional figure is perceived (?) through an infinity of three-dimensional sides which are the sections of this four-dimensional figure by the infinite number of spaces (in three dimensions) which envelope this figure. –In other words: one can *move* around the four-dimensional figure according to the four directions of the continuum. The number of positions of the perceiver is infinite but one can reduce to a finite number these different positions (as in the case of regular three-dimensional figures) and then each perception, in these different positions, is a three-dimensional figure. The set of these three-dimensional perceptions of the four-dimensional figure would be the foundation

for a reconstruction of the four-dimensional figure. (Duchamp, *Salt Seller* 89-90; qtd. in Adcock 55)

Like McGann, Duchamp sought to “reconstruct” a four-dimensional figure in order that one may “perceive” the n-dimensional field. Like McGann who identifies six dimensions that are perceivable, Duchamp relegates a state of infinite dimensions to “a finite number of different positions” for the sake of practical implementation. Though the conception of this n-dimensional space seems promising, it remains doubtful whether McGann or Duchamp’s solution to reconstruct an observable fourth dimension is possible. The same can be said of digital space: just as the ontology of performance means it cannot be reproduced, so the ontology of the digital environment precludes successful attempts like these to *reproduce* reality. What seems clear, however, is that *conceiving* such a space for a Baroness poem is quite possible and real, and thus garnering access to an event within it is also possible. Thus, while digital tools do not allow us to “measure” or “observe” reality well (since they cannot reproduce every dimension of human experience), the electronic environment itself may constitute an n-dimensional space in which the Dada performance—the gallery and the cabaret—of a textual event may *happen*—may, in fact, be played.

It is the complexity of this notion of textual performance that behooves a print edition of the Baroness’s poetry. After all, what is unique about the Baroness, what makes her poetry texts difficult to access through traditional (and new) practices of literary analysis and presentation pertains to an element of textual performance that is so essential to understanding the significance of her work: her social network. The prevailing domain in which an electronic edition of her poetry is situated crosses into at least four domains of consideration: textual, performance, digital, and modernist studies

correspondingly, each of which values authenticity based on different criteria. Yet, the social dimension of authenticity plays a key role in each domain within notions of what is considered an “authentic” or “real” or “immediate.” Issues of authenticity and the social nature of texts are not new to editorial scholarship. Social text theorists such as D.C. Greetham, Jerome McGann, and Martha Nell Smith have long focused on exploring social dimensions that determine the definition and value of text.¹⁶⁴ In performance studies, authenticity (or the break down of mediation) is also key to its ontology. Peggy Phelan writes that “the belief that perception can be made endlessly new is one of the fundamental drives of all visual arts. But in most theatre, the opposition between watching and doing is broken down; the distinction is often made to seem ethically immaterial” (*Unmarked* 161). Consequently, Phelan argues that performance “is always in the present” (146), bound to the temporal variables that the social dimension of authentic performance demands: “performance honors the idea that a limited number of people in a specific time/space frame can have an experience of value which leaves no visible trace afterward” (149). Likewise, in digital studies, Jay Bolter and David Grusin write that “the remediation of material practice is inseparable from the remediation of social arrangements” (*Remediation* 69) in part because the “two logics” of remediation—“immediacy” and “hyperimmediacy” are brought together “by an appeal to authenticity” (71). Immediacy may be defined “as the absence of mediation or representation” or the experience of the real or “authentic” while hyperimmediacy may be defined as the experience of mediation as the “real” even though “what seems immediate to one group, seems highly mediated to another” (70-71). Similarly, the work of networking and social mapping has precedent in modernist literary studies. Whether it is in the New York Dada

¹⁶⁴ Please see Clement “A Digital Regiving.”

scene of the 1920s or within a cadre of cultural academics interested in renegotiating current discussions of that scene in the 1990s, it is the appeal the Baroness's street character and her poetry held as authentic representations of avant-garde art and literature that has attracted the attention of both artists and critics. Thus, William Carlos Williams "admired" her "because she was on it, on reality," (UWM) and Marcel Duchamp proclaimed that "The Baroness is not a futurist. She is the future" (qtd. in Roxforth 77 and in Gammel, *Baroness Elsa* 156). Likewise, in the nineties, cultural biographers Amelia Jones and Irene Gammel worked hard to reclaim the Baroness's place as an influential woman in the New York Dada scene in order to reintroduce her story into a narrative that had been dominated by primarily male artists. In response to such social systems, Bonnie Kime Scott proposes to resituate (or refigure) modernists texts and authors in a web of associations around three primary authors: Virginia Woolf, Rebecca West, and Djuna Barnes who were chosen as central representatives of modernist writing, "where typically a cluster of male figures have stood" (*Refiguring Modernism* xvi). The web metaphor (originally introduced by Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own*) allows Scott to identify a social element that "had not previously been figured as important to modernism" including dates and associated events, figurative patterns, and "workable domestic and professional arrangements" (xvi). In this way, Scott attempts to resituate modernist texts written by women within an area of influence that shows the impact of other modernist women writers instead of the social system of male writers that had previously dominated studies.

In light of these discussions within various fields about the impact the social culture has on concepts of value, it becomes essential in analyzing the "discursive

event”¹⁶⁵ of the textual performance of a Baroness poem, to examine the social community that exists for the reception of a digital edition. For instance, an online social network site such as *MySpace* provides for an example of the ways in which text-based embodiment and real-time performance is already engaged in an online community, an experience of text that could be incorporated in the experience of a digital edition of her poetry.¹⁶⁶ *MySpace* is an online “social network site”¹⁶⁷ aimed at facilitating a user’s ability to “(1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (boyd and Ellison). These three aspects work together to create an environment of *friends* (participating profiles connected in the network). At the time of this writing, the Baroness has more than 700 friends that comprise a live and interactive community and audience for the online performance of a Baroness *fakester*. A fakester, in this case, represents a “real” identity that has been assumed by an online user. In the Baroness’s network, for example, these fakesters include people with whom she was friends such as Djuna Barnes and Man Ray, but also contemporaries she very likely did not know at all such as Jean Cocteau, Salvador Dali, and Charles Darwin, among others. Other friends of the Baroness include profiles that represent real-life identities (participants’ own names) or online identities (names created for online use). These profiles—whether real or imagined

¹⁶⁵ Scott’s resituation is in keeping with Foucault’s assertion that “to reveal in all its purity the space in which discursive events are deployed is not to undertake to re-establish it in an isolation that nothing could overcome; it is not to close it upon itself; it is to leave oneself free to describe the interplay of relations within it and outside it” (*Archeology of Knowledge* 32).

¹⁶⁶ *MySpace* is one of the more popular and populated online social network sites. Please see the Baroness’s page at <http://www.myspace.com/dadaqueen>.

¹⁶⁷ In accordance with the criteria that boyd and Ellison establish, the term “social network site” is being used consciously to define “social network sites” as a subset of a larger category of social networking software, social media, or collaborative software, which might include blogs, wikis, or social bookmarking (such as *del.icio.us* or *Flickr*).

identities— are enacted within the bounded network of the *MySpace* system) and represent the textual embodiment of a live performance of identity—“an extension of the corporeal, as well as the physical refiguration or perhaps an incarnation of the textual” (Sunden 109). This is to say that this environment is not meant to represent or reproduce offline identities or social networks—the Baroness never knew Dali or Darwin—instead, this environment is performative, constructed to perform, and therefore to form and to embody social networks through textual practices. Indeed, the term *fakester* was proposed by a group of users in the early social network site *Friendster* who sought to use these assumed identities within the profile system to signal “not the individuals behind the profile but communities, cultural icons, or collective interests” that these individuals represented (boyd “None of this is real”). In Dadaist fashion, the 2003 “Fakester Manifesto” distributed to the *Friendster* social network community articulated their right to “be” whomever they chose online, to form identities that were at once entertaining and controversial.¹⁶⁸ In addition, networks are available for public consumption at each moment of existence, creating an environment that is constantly changing. As such, “visible connections [are] not simply an expression of an individual’s mental model of exterior relations, but an explicit performance of a social network intended for consumption by others, whether visible or invisible during the performance creation” (boyd “None of this is real”). As such, fakester networks like the Baroness’s heighten the performative aspect of this social performance, since the “new” embodiment of friendships that never existed throws together what was once disparate, creating a

¹⁶⁸ These rights included (1) a right to a “provisional identity,” to be “whom we choose to be at any given moment”; and (2) a right to assume archetypal characters such as icons who they argued represented “a form of public property and currency to be freely exchanged” since icons represent “a symbolic part of public cultural consciousness, and not ‘property’ in the accepted sense of the word” (“The Fakester Manifesto”).

space of development and evolution “with its adaptations, its capacity for innovation, the incessant correlation of its different elements, its systems of assimilation and exchange” (Foucault 24). Accordingly, a space like *MySpace* already enacts the social dimension on which a textual performance depends, a social dimension that engages an element of authenticity essential to Dada culture as the result of an interactive and collaborative audience, an element of authenticity that defines performance and is represented by “a limited number of people in a specific time/space frame” (Phelan, *Unmarked* 149) and an element of authenticity that validates “real” digital interactions immersed in hyperimmediacy. As such, online communities like *MySpace* have the capacity to engage the live, collaborative audience that a digital scholarly edition of the Baroness’s poetry that is undergirded by a theory of textual performance should engage.

IV. Conclusion

Finally, if we allow ourselves to consider an edition a performance, like a particular rendition of a musical score, we open our methods to incorporate voices and texts and lifearts that have been silenced in traditional editing practices. The Baroness is provocative to readers today. Her work is permeated with conflicting perspectives on sex, gender, race, class, nationalism (both American and German), capitalism, textuality, and, of course, all mediums of creating and living art. Yet, recent interest (and *disinterest*) in reevaluating the Baroness’s work has made apparent the extent to which the nature of her work and the history of its reception have precluded her inclusion in most academic evaluations of her period. To be sure, the material and the non-material aspects of her work have exacerbated this exclusion. These non-material elements which I have called performance have been considered irreproducible and therefore have not been

reproduced. A digital fluid text edition circulated within an online social network like *MySpace* could well present the textual and non-textual elements of play within the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven's poetry beyond simply allowing access to multiple versions of manuscript transcriptions and image reproductions of her various multi-media art objects. Such an instantiation would be an n-dimensional space that could include creative responses from current readers such as poetry or prose writings, performance pieces or readings, images of drawings, illustrations, sculptures, or other visual responses. Proposing access to the textual performance of a Baroness poem means allowing readers or users the ability to manipulate, deform, perform, discuss or adapt the Baroness's poetry in the expansive space of a real-time embodied environment; it is not an attempt to *reproduce* her lifeart. Ultimately, this kind of engagement is one in which her poetry has always signified, in which her art and her life meet with community participation, not only as an instantiation of her "life" and her social network and her poetry but as an engagement with the basic components of Dada performance: the gallery and the cabaret, *live* in textual performance.

Chapter 5: Knowledge Representation within the Digital Edition *In Transition: Selected Poems by the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven*

Knowledge representation is the work of all editors. One case in point is the selection of letters Djuna Barnes edited for her friend, “Selections from the Letters of Elsa Baroness Von Freytag-Loringhoven,” which was published in *transition* (February 1928). In the previous year, “the Baroness”¹⁶⁹ died of asphyxiation in a small apartment where she was living alone in Paris. An obituary and—many pages later—a death mask accompany Barnes’s selection of letters in *transition*. The Baroness, who had become accustomed to sending her poetry and biographical sketches in letters to Barnes had given her friend full reign over her words in order to “arouse interest [*sic*] for me – help – sympathy” (UMD 2.262)¹⁷⁰. “I send you all that happens to my hand – and you may select,” the Baroness writes in another letter to Barnes, “you may use every word of any letter whatsoever!” (UMD 2.233) Though Barnes states in her introduction to “Selections” that her transcriptions are verbatim, that they represent the Baroness’s “own” words, the differences between the letters the Baroness wrote and the words Barnes “selected” are many and seem to point less to a desire to replicate the Baroness’s “own words” and more to the goal of arousing some interest and empathy in the Baroness’s readers (“Selections”19). To this end, Barnes’s version of a key passage reorganizes erratic clauses and elides a reference to William Carlos Williams, who was

¹⁶⁹ I have chosen to call Freytag-Loringhoven “the Baroness” throughout this piece as a gesture toward the name by which she was called in *The Little Review* and which has generally become her “stage name” in modern cultural studies that focus on her street performances. In this, a discussion of her texts in performance, it seems suitable to maintain this element of the textual stage.

¹⁷⁰ This number represents a reel and frame number from the University of Maryland microfilm of “The Papers of Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven.” All subsequent references are noted as UMD.

also a reader of and frequent contributor to *transition*. In *transition*, the letter reads as follows:

I fight brave as I am and always was, but brave ones fall in war. I am not truly deranged even, but scattered – muted by fear, picking bits of heart flesh with its relentless beak, day and night, minute by minute, I must succumb soon. There are those who must be soiled to create, I must be clean. (“Selections” 27-28)

In comparison, the Baroness’s original letter reads:

I am not truly deranged even - but scattered - muted by fear! Picking bits of heart flesh with its relentless beak day and night - minute by minute - unless by necessity of preservation in self defense I try artificially to render myself aloof to it - insensible. But - I am not - never a beat. It is artifice - I must succumb soon. I fight brave - as I am - always was - but brave ones fall dead in war! And world is at war. Mental nausea + permanent - for proud [*unclear*] exultant me - how in sense can I last? You see that. I am not “w.c. Williams” He thrives on it. It is his output - his must be soiled to create. I must be clean (UMD 2.265)

In Barnes’s version of the passage, the agent or cause of the Baroness’s derangement—her poverty and her bitterness—is elided. “The world is at war,” the Baroness writes, and what she means is more figurative than literal, the figurative aspect of which is amplified by her vehement response to William Carlos Williams. In other writings, she argues that Williams is an inauthentic, bourgeois professional (a “wobbly-legged business satchel-carrying little louse”) who “attacks art” because “W.C. does not care about words” (“Thee I call ‘Hamlet of Wedding-Ring’” 110, 109). By supporting the likes of him, the Baroness implies, the world is at war with her, to whom “truth” and “authenticity” means “art.” This message was not one that Barnes considered appropriate for garnering empathy or arousing interest in the Baroness’s poetry so Barnes “selected” the words in the Baroness’s letter that she believed would better attract *transition*’s social network and ultimately an audience for an edition of the Baroness’s poetry. For this reason, Barnes selected the words that she believed imparted the knowledge about the Baroness that she wished to represent: the Baroness as a sympathetic figure.

Though Djuna Barnes was once one of a limited number of people with access to the Baroness's poetry manuscripts and letters, most of the Baroness's extant papers are now publicly accessible within the Papers of the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven in the Special Collections at the University of Maryland, College Park¹⁷¹ and *The Little Review* Records in the Archives Department at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.¹⁷² In addition, the Papers in College Park are in the public domain, making free, electronic access to these artifacts a possibility.¹⁷³ Much like Barnes's selection, the process for selection and engagement with the poems in the following edition has an impetus and a goal: *In Transition: Selected poems by the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven* is a publicly available scholarly edition of the Baroness's unpublished poetry manuscripts, which serves to provide access to a textual performance of the Baroness's creative work in a digital environment.¹⁷⁴ Accordingly, this introduction to *In Transition* discusses how these words were selected and why they are presented within a digital environment.

I. Knowledge representation

John F. Sowa writes in his seminal book on computational foundations, that theories of knowledge representation are particularly useful "for anyone whose job is to analyze knowledge about the real world and map it to a computable form" (*Knowledge*

¹⁷¹ Please see the finding aid at <http://www.lib.umd.edu/litmss/holdings.html#evfl>.

¹⁷² Please see the finding aid at <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/wiarchives.uw-mil-uwmms0001>.

¹⁷³ Currently, the Papers of the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven collection is considered part of the public domain at the University of Maryland, but *The Little Review* archives at the University of Milwaukee-Wisconsin does not have the same status.

¹⁷⁴ The *Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven Digital Library* includes seven Freytag-Loringhoven poems was created as a collaborative project by graduate students in the English Department and the College of Information Studies (CLIS) at the University of Maryland, College Park (<http://www.lib.umd.edu/dcr/collections/EvFL-class/>). It incorporates an earlier version of the TEI encoding standard (P4) and an earlier version of the *Versioning Machine* (v. 3.2) to encode and transform manuscript transcripts.

Representation xi). Sowa's suggested approach to designing systems for knowledge representation is not dissimilar to the principles for editors designing editions set forth in the *Guidelines for editors of Scholarly Editions*. Established by the Modern Language Association (MLA),¹⁷⁵ the guidelines recommend that an editor "choose what to attend to, what to represent, and how to represent it" according to "the editor's theory of text" or "a consistent principle that helps in making those decisions." As such, an analogy can be made between these guidelines and Sowa's assertion about the application of knowledge representation: "Knowledge representation," he writes, "is the application of logic and ontology to the task of constructing computable models for some domain" (Sowa xii). Thus, Sowa's concept of *logic* ("pure form") maps to the MLA's consideration for *how* a text is represented in an edition; *ontology* ("the content that is expressed in that form") maps to the MLA's concern with *what* is attended to or represented in an edition; and the *domain* maps to the notion of an edition's underlying theory of text (Sowa xiii). Further, the MLA considers a scholarly edition "a reliable text" by measuring its "accuracy, adequacy, appropriateness, consistency, and explicitness" against what editors define as the edition's form, content, and theory of text ("Guidelines for Editors of Scholarly Editions"). Similarly, Sowa notes that knowledge representation is unproductive if the logic and ontology which shape its application in a certain domain are unclear: "without logic, knowledge representation is vague, Sowa writes, "with no criteria for determining whether statements are redundant or contradictory," and "without ontology, the terms and symbols are ill-defined, confused, and confusing" (xii). This discussion seeks to take into account the language of knowledge representation in computation (*domain*, *ontology*, and *logic*) in order to define the goals of this edition because the central argument engaged by

¹⁷⁵ Please see http://www.mla.org/cse_guidelines.

In Transition is that the theory of text (*textual performance*) that engages its content (*the networked text*) relies on its particular application or form (*a digital edition*). In other words, increasing access to and supporting new readings of poetry by the Baroness relies on a particularly *digital* engagement with the texts.

The domain and theory of text

The domain or theory of text represented by *In Transition* engages principles based on a theory of textual performance. As described in detail in the previous chapter, textual performance theory is based on John Bryant's notion of fluid text theory in which social text theory and the geneticist notion that a literary work is "equivalent to the processes of genesis that create it" are engaged to reflect the textual event as a "flow of energy" rather than a product or a "conceptual thing or actual set of things or even discrete events" (Bryant 71, 61). As such, a text in performance can comprise multiple versions in manuscript and print, various notes and letters and comments of contemporaries or current readers, plus the element of performance—an element of time, space, and a collaborative audience—that work together in the meaning-making event of a text. Literary work is a "phenomenon," Bryant writes, ". . . best conceived not as a produced work (oeuvre) but as work itself (travail), the power of people and culture to create a text" (61). Accordingly, because the Baroness's "lifeart" is centered in the Dada model of the gallery and cabaret—and thus, real-time audience participation—this concept of the "flow of energy" within fluid text theory is best engaged when creating an electronic edition of her poetry.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ A more thorough discussion of the gallery and the cabaret in Dadaist art appears in the previous chapter.

A. The ontology and the content: the networked text

One aspect of textual performance theory to be explored in this introduction and in the edition in general is the notion of the networked text in the networked world. The network metaphor is at the basis of this edition in order to complicate the notion that meaning-making in an age of “transition” (both cultural and technological) is a new environment in which to read texts. In contrast, the textual network these twelve texts have always engaged—based primarily on reception, materiality, and themes both in the 1920s and now—presupposes the constant circulation of networked systems. In *We Have Never Been Modern* (1993), Bruno Latour explores the notion that the hybridization of nature and culture in this age of new technologies has necessitated discourses of purification and denial; these discourses, he argues, seek to create an age of digital “revolution” that diminishes what has always been a cyborgian culture (48). Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin also explore this perceived digital utopia as the result of the “double-logic” of “remediation” (the “repurposing” of old technologies) in which “our culture wants both to multiply its media and to erase all traces of mediation” (*Remediation* 5). The notion of the network is used both by Latour and Bolter and Grusin to ameliorate the polarities that exist in current discourse between nature and technology and between “old” and “new” technologies. Notions of the “network” help to diminish the polarities within the overriding discourse. Latour asserts:

Seen as networks, however, the modern world, like revolutions, permits scarcely anything more than small extensions of practices, slight accelerations in the circulation of knowledge, a tiny extension of societies, minuscule in-creses in the number of actors, small modifications of old belief. When we see them as networks, Western innovations remain recognizable and important, but they no longer suffice as the stuff of saga, a vast saga of radical rupture, fatal destiny, irreversible good or bad fortune. (*We Have Never Been Modern* 48)

The network metaphor is particularly useful for this edition because this edition is a textual event that serves to facilitate knowledge produced when text is in performance (within the constant circulation of these networked relationships) and thus, when the making of meaning is in a constant state of transition.

The idea of *transition* is a central theme that guides the inclusion of the networked texts in this edition. These twelve texts are included as expressions created during a time of transition in the Baroness's life between 1923 and 1927 when she moved from New York to Berlin and finally to Paris, but the edition also serves to represent a moment of transition in the culture of little magazines and the technologies of conversation during this time period, a period which sees the little magazine change shape from a venue that engages more popular textual performances and conversations about literature and art—such as the one represented by the inclusion of content in *The Little Review*—to a venue which begins to address an audience more attuned to and engaged with literature and poetry as a high art—such as that posed by what the editors of *transition* chose to include.¹⁷⁷ With the selection of these poems, the textual network is determined by three primary relationships that engage the meaning-making possibilities of these texts. The first relationship is based on the reception environment, by the fact that the editors at *transition* magazine¹⁷⁸ were interested in certain poems for their audience in the late nineteen-twenties.¹⁷⁹ During the period between 1927 and 1929, three of the twelve poems included (“Café Du Dôme,” “Xray,” and “Ostentatious”) were published in

¹⁷⁷ The discussion about the difference between the representation of the Baroness's poetry in *The Little Review* versus its representation in *transition* is made at some length in the previous chapter so it will not be rehearsed again here.

¹⁷⁸ Between 1927 and 1929, *transition* was edited by Eugene and Maria Jolas, Eliot Paul (until 1928), and Harry Crosby (until 1929).

¹⁷⁹ Reception here is considered as part of a “triangular intertextuality” or only as one aspect of the “influences of biography, reception, and textual reproduction” (Smith, *Rowing in Eden* 2).

transition while five of the other poems—“Ancestry,” “Christ - Don Quixote - St. George” (a subsection of “Contradictory Speculations”), “Cosmic Arithmetic,” “Sermon On Life's Beggar Truth,” and “A Dozen Cocktails Please”—were under consideration by the *transition* editors (and ultimately rejected) for future issues.¹⁸⁰ Thus, these eight poems share a relationship tied to a particular mode of reception and perceived audience. A second relationship represented by the textual network within this edition includes the material space that some of these poems share, a relationship that in some cases overlaps with the ties just mentioned. In other words, in some cases, draft versions of certain poems appear on the verso or in the margins of the manuscripts for draft versions of other poems such as versions of “Café Du Dôme,” “Ancestry,” and “Sermon,” which appear on versions of “Ostentatious” or versions of “Orchard Farming,” “Sermon,” “Christ – Don Quixote – St. George,” and “Ostentatious,” which appear on versions of “Xray.” The third interconnected relationship embodied by the content within this edition is one that is determined by thematic ties between poems written during this time period. The remaining three poems (“Purgatory Lilt/ Statements by Circumstanced Me,” “Orgasmic Toast,” “Matter Level Perspective”) embody these nodes of the network, but the other poems share thematic ties as well, such as images of “radiance” in “Orgasmic Toast,” “Sermon on Life’s Beggar Truth,” “Purgatory Lilt,” and “Xray” or mathematic formulas in “Orgasmic toast,” “Purgatory Lilt,” and “Cosmic Arithmetic.” All twelve poems participate by and through multiple and varied relationships based on reception,

¹⁸⁰ This information is indicated in two letters between the Baroness and Marie Jolas at *transition*. The letter from the Baroness asks the editors to include a dedication in “A Dozen Cocktails Please” to “Mary R.S.” and to change a line in “Sermon on Life’s Beggar Truth.” While Jolas’s return letter, dated October 12, 1927, does not mention “Sermon,” she does note that they “are keeping for future use” the poems that the Baroness sent in with “Contradictory Speculations,” namely “Ancestry,” “Cosmic Arithmetic,” “A Dozen Cocktails Please” and “Chill.” “Chill” is not included in this edition because there are two poems by the Baroness titled “Chill,” either of which could have been the one sent to *transition* (UMD 2.905).

materiality, and theme within the textual network that was circulating between 1923 and 1927. As such, these twelve poems all participate by and through multiple and varied relationships within the textual network as a whole. As such, *In Transition* is based on a theory of text that requires staging a textual performance that engages this textual network. Accordingly, an application of textual performance requires a hard look at how these poems are being represented in this digital edition.

B. Logic and form: digital surrogates in the *Versioning Machine*

As critical deformations of the originary manuscript rather than replicas,¹⁸¹ digital surrogates in text and image formats reflect the domain of textual performance being engaged within *In Transition*. Encoding a transcription of a printed or manuscript text is a method for creating a computable model of a text—that is, it is a method for creating a model that can be instantiated or implemented with computer programs for a variety of applications such as search and retrieval, linguistic analysis, or visualizations that can facilitate the staging of a text’s performance. To these ends, the encoded document includes logical and ontological metadata that can describe both the physical and the semantic nature of the manuscript. For instance, in lieu of simply transcribing the words that comprise the title of a poem such as “A Dozen Cocktails Please”, encoding allows for defining this string of letters and spaces as a title: <title>A Dozen Cocktails Please</title>. This encoding facilitates computations that involve an engagement with text that has been differentiated as “title” as opposed to text that has been labeled “line” or “stanza.” As a computable model, Willard McCarty calls encoded text “reductive and fixed” since it cannot detail “the massive amount and complexity of detail for a

¹⁸¹ This idea that the digital surrogates represent deformations instead of replicas is discussed more thoroughly in the preceding chapter.

microscopic phenomenon across 12000 lines of text” (*Humanities Computing* 58).

Similarly, an encoded text cannot, in Jerome McGann’s terms, capture the n-dimensional aspect of the “autopoetic” field. On the other hand, in an essay titled “Electronic Textual Editing: When not to use the TEI,” John Lavagnino discusses the advantages of using an encoding standard such as that supported by the TEI (Text Encoding Initiative) for a scholarly edition. For a scholarly edition in which “the creation of new writing” such as scholarly apparatus is just as essential as the transcription of the original text, Lavagnino quite simply argues, “the TEI is applicable to your texts” (334). The difference between these two sentiments is remarkable. The former is summarily reductive in application while the latter seems unduly expansive in theory until one considers the nature of the difference—determining the standard or model for encoding a text depends on how the scholar defines the digital textual event in which it will be engaged. “Knowledge representation,” Sowa writes “is the application of logic and ontology to the task of constructing computable models *for some domain*” (emphasis added; xii). McCarty’s sense of the limitations of encoding are premised by his argument that the encoded text does not represent a productive computable model since the ontology created in an encoded text does not accurately represent, he argues, the original object nor is it structured in such a manner to record what it is not able to represent. Essentially, McCarty’s concern is to build a better system of representation based on what could be learned from a given model within that system. Lavagnino, on the other hand, defines the function of an encoded text in terms of editorial scholarship. As scholarly editors, he argues, “we are engaged in analyzing texts and creating new representations of them, not in creating indistinguishable replicas” (Lavagnino 338). In terms of designating the

model for knowledge representation in a scholarly digital edition, therefore, the editor must determine if the model for encoding engages the editorial principles espoused in the edition.

Currently, the TEI schema is the most productive standard available for creating a scholarly edition of the Baroness's poetry because it is able to express the dynamic network of relationships that exist when multiple versions of a poem are performing at once.¹⁸² The TEI schema is the result of an ongoing conversation among scholars across a wide variety of academic disciplines about the nature of text. An open, nonproprietary format, the TEI is included as an exemplary encoding standard in guidelines produced by both the National Endowment for the Humanities and the MLA's *Guidelines for Editors of Scholarly Editions*. Accordingly, it represents a logic that is part of a larger conversation about the dynamic nature of these textual components. Second, the TEI standard was created primarily for use with linguistic and literary documents; as such, the newest version of the standard (released October 2007) has a robust schema for the consideration of manuscript texts in multiple versions, making it suitable for the particular textual ontology on which a scholarly edition based on these kinds of texts depends.¹⁸³ This schema, called "parallel segmentation," allows the editor to designate

¹⁸² Of course, there are many discussions about the limitations of the TEI standard. For example, in his desire to create an electronic edition that expresses the time and space dimension a cache of multiple versions necessarily engages, Edward Vanhoutte discovers that speech elements serve his editorial principles since he considers his project to be a recording of the "author" having a conversation with the biographical writer (Vanhoutte 175-176). Other discussions include Renear *et al.*, Hockey (specifically pgs. 24-28), and Huitfeldt.

¹⁸³ Certainly, publishing a multi-version textual phenomenon is not unprecedented in scholarly editions. *The Waste Land; A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts Including the Annotations of Ezra Pound*, edited by Valerie Eliot and Hans Gabler's synoptic edition, *Ulysses: The Corrected Text* (1986) both present multiple versions of well-read texts, though in these cases, a "final" or corrected text is privileged. Alternative versions of a given work, sometimes without clear teleological assumptions about a work's evolutionary progression are presented in Thomas Johnson's *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson* (1955) and in *The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Variorum Edition* (1998) edited by R.W. Franklin. Modernist texts have also been re-presented and re-published in this way in *Becoming Marianne*

and thus visualize linguistic codes (words, phrases, lines, paragraphs, etc.) and bibliographic codes (page images, page breaks, column breaks, and milestones) that correspond across various versions. For example, the poem “Xray,” which was published in *transition* (October 1927) has nine extant versions including the published text. Across the versions there are some phrases that remain more or less the same, some phrases that change course and change back, and still other phrases that evolve quite dramatically in a perceptive, linear fashion. For instance, the first three lines of the first stanza of the published version read:

Nature causes brass to oxidize
People to congest -
By dull-radiopenetrated soil . . .

In the first version, the first line is “Nature causes brass to oxidize,” which changes to “Nature intends brass to oxidize” in version six. The second line, in the first version, is “Nature causes people to amass,” which becomes in version six, “Nature intends people [sic] to amass;” this line evolves in version two to “Nature causes people to congest,” and eventually becomes, in the published text, a truncated clause: “People to congest –.” While the evolution of these lines are relatively easy to follow, the third line becomes something that seems entirely different if one merely looks at the last version in comparison to the first: “Because of latent ideal of brilliancy” becomes “By dull-radiopenetrated soil.” As a result of the TEI parallel segmentation encoding, however, the different versions of “Xray” can be compared in a browser window using the open

Moore: the Early Poems, 1907-1924 (2002) edited by Robin G. Schulze and *Nightwood: the Original Version and Related Drafts* (1995) edited by Cheryl J. Plumb. In these cases, versions of a work are presented in such a way that the “final draft” is not privileged, in which the notion of a final draft is summarily deconstructed. In fact, in each case—including the above-mentioned editions of *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land*—the presentation of alternatives forces us to reconsider what has long been considered the “final” or published version of a Dickinson, Moore or Eliot poem and of Barnes’s or Joyce’s well-read novels.

```

</>
<app type="line" xml:id="a5" loc="a6">
  <rdg wit="#va8">
    <app>
      <rdgGrp>
        <rdg wit="#va8">SUNS RADIOINFUSED </rdg>
        <rdg wit="#va8">RADIO'S
          <app>
            <rdgGrp>
              <rdg wit="#va8"><add place="below">SOIL SECRET </add></rdg>
              <rdg wit="#va8"><add place="below">SUN MESSAGE </add></rdg>
              <rdg wit="#va8"><add place="below"><del rend="overstrike">PENETR</del> SUNIMPREGNATED</add> </rdg>
            </rdgGrp>
          </app>
        </rdg>
      </rdgGrp>
    </app> SOIL
  </rdg>
</app>
</>
<n="3">
  <app type="line" xml:id="a6" loc="a6">
    <rdg wit="#va1 #va2 #va3 #va4 #va5 #va6">BECAUSE OF </rdg>
    <rdg wit="#va6">RADIO </rdg>
    <rdg wit="#va7"><del rend="overstrike">BECAUSE OF </del> RADIO - </rdg>
    <rdg wit="#va1">LATENT</rdg>
    <rdg wit="#va2">
      <del rend="overstrike">LATENT</del>
      <add place="above">DORMANT</add>
    </rdg>
    <rdg wit="#va3 #va4 #va5">DORMANT </rdg>
    <rdg wit="#va1 #va2 #va3 #va4 #va5"> IDEAL OF </rdg>
    <rdg wit="#va1 #va3 #va4">BRILLIANCY -</rdg>
    <rdg wit="#va5"><del rend="overstrike">BRILLIANCY</del></rdg>
    <rdg wit="#va7 #va8 #va6">DORMANT WITHIN SOIL FOR PROGRESS' </rdg>
    <rdg wit="#va8">DUMB </rdg>
    <rdg wit="#va9">BY DULL </rdg>
    <rdg wit="#va8 #va9">RADIOPENETRATED SOIL </rdg>
    <rdg wit="#pub1927">By dull-radiopenetrated soil </rdg>
  </app>
</>

```

Figure 35: an excerpt of “Xray” in TEI encoded XML, versions one through eight and the published 1927 text

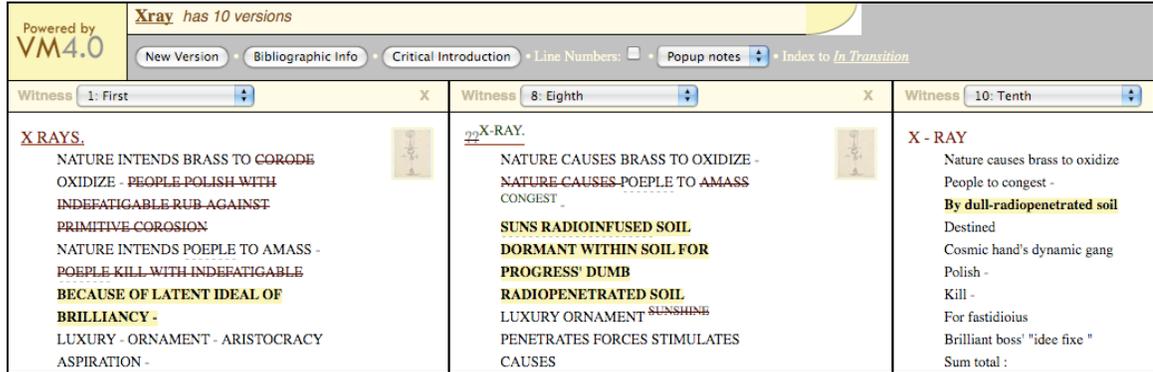


Figure 36: “Xray”, versions one, eight, and the published 1927 text, in the *Versioning Machine* platform application called the Versioning Machine (VM)¹⁸⁴ which renders the TEI XML (see Figure 35) into a dynamic HTML page using XSLT, CSS, and JavaScript (see Figure 36). Thus, while Figure 35 represents a static view of the third line of “Xray” as it changes across multiple versions, Figure 36 is an image from *In Transition* in which lines from various versions can be compared dynamically and differently depending on the scholar’s needs. As such, while the encoded text embodied in the TEI schema represents the script of a textual performance, the view in the *VM*, because it incorporates the element of real-time engagement and audience participation, represents the text in performance.

II. The difficulty of a digital textual performance

Applying the logic of the electronic edition (the form) and the ontology of the twelve networked texts to a computable model that represents textual performance is not a simple task—but perhaps this difficulty is to the point. Richard Poirier writes that modernist “texts are mimetic in that they simulate simultaneously the reading/writing

¹⁸⁴ More information about the *Versioning Machine* is at <http://www.v-machine.org/>. The iteration used for this project is based on VM version 4.0 with some modifications I implemented. These modifications are described at <http://www.lib.umd.edu/dcr/projects/baroness/vmchanges.html>.

activity;” thus, “[t]he meaning resides in the performance of writing and reading, of reading in the act of writing” (113). For this reason, he continues, modernist texts enact “a mode of experience, a way of reading, a way of being *with great difficulty* conscious of structures, techniques, codes and stylizations” (emphasis added; Poirier 114). *In Transition* seeks to set this “performance of writing and reading” into play by engaging the reader in some of the same “difficult” textual conditions the Baroness encountered in creating her poetry, such as the play between elements of ontology (content) and logic (form) and the temporal nature of writing in real-time while responding to audience participation.

A. The play between logic and ontology

The notion that simultaneous, and at times opposing, forces such as logic and ontology determine and are determined by textual performance took form for the Baroness in her belief that what she expressed and how she expressed it was interdependent with her conscious mode of expressing or performing it, whether that expression was through poetry or street performance or both. In a letter to Barnes, she refers to the strictures that logic imposes on writing poetry, noting that these strictures are actually productive and enabling forces. She writes to Barnes that her “rambling” way of “analytical speculation by emotional facts” is an “endless way –until now only to be mastered by rhythmical [sic] and symbolical force of poetry” in which “the logic is already the motive of the very start - and is contained in it and is the thing itself” (UMD 2.144). In another letter she notes, “I am all wave—first—arrangement—ability—comes later” since “the possibility of the structure grows your wings to ‘create’” (UMD 2.45). The Baroness is saying that her “art” is apparent in a wave of imagination that comes

before its logic or form and that the medium then serves as a catalyst within the creative act. Thus, various poetic expressions may start from the same wave, but each medium's particular structure lends itself to a unique performance of that expression. For instance, poems like "Orgasmic Toast," "Statements on Circumstanced Me," (also called "Purgatory Lilt" and "Hell's Wisdom"), and "Christ - Don Quixote - St. George," have multiple versions written as prose in paragraphs and other versions structured into more traditional stanza-and-line formats. The different forms were meaningful to the Baroness. She writes in a note on a version of "Purgatory Lilt" she has included in a letter to Barnes that "This is not a poem but an essay - statement. Maybe - it were better not to print it in this cut form - perpendicular but in usual sentence line -- horizontal?" (UMD 2.226-227)

Hans Richter calls this process of revision more dream-like than fancy: "What is important is the *poem-work*, the way in which the latent content of the poem undergoes transformation according to concealed mechanisms," transformations "that work the way dream-work strategies operate—through condensation, displacement, and the submission of the whole of the text to secondary revision" (Richter 80). Poirier puts it slightly differently: "[m]odernist writers, to put it too simply, keep on with the writing of a text because in reading what they are writing they find only the provocation to alternatives" (Poirier 113). For these reasons, the Baroness's manuscripts do not correspond to sequence that manifests the teleological evolution of a poem. In some cases, the extant manuscripts show little evidence of a clear, creative evolutionary path within a text. To the contrary, a text is often a manifestation of experiments on a theme, making one version's relationship to another an example of alternative choices rather than a system of rough drafts leading to final versions.

What makes it difficult to represent these alternate choices in a scholarly edition is the fact that the Baroness was a performer, compelled to make every performance unique. For instance, lines appear in some versions that never appear again and may have little relation to other lines added at a later or earlier date. Determining the nature of the XML elements reflects decisions about which actions performed on the digital document (such as comparisons) would be productive in terms of the theoretical goals of the edition. Thus, critical, editorial choices that ensure this kind of textual mobility are involved in every aspect of the text's transformation from a transcript to a fully encoded TEI XML document to a text presented in an application such as the *VM*. These choices include deciding how to sequence the versions to choosing the lines that correspond across versions to assessing the HTML rendering of such choices. For instance, the TEI XML (Figure 35) includes data within a structured logic that computer systems need to facilitate the scholar's ability to manage and manipulate various networks of relationships that comprise the bibliographic and linguistic codes of a text. Accordingly, in Figure 35, the logic represented by the "nested" structure indicates a particular relationship between the parent apparatus (<app>) element and the reading (<rdg>) elements "nested" within it (the children) that allows the editor to indicate and compare corresponding parts of the text across versions. In this manner, the <rdg> elements that appear between the opening (<app>) and closing (</app>) apparatus tags indicate which of the nine versions or witnesses (indicated by the numbers *va1*, *va2*, *va3*, etc. with the published version labeled as "pub1927") are associated with a particular aspect of the apparatus. In this case, the apparatus with *id* "a6" is being used to compare versions of the third line associated with each witness. In addition, the "loc" element (also "a6"), which links together readings

from different apparatus elements, indicates that the <app> element “a6” is associated with the <app> element “a5.” Consequently, the extra lines that appear in witness *va8* above the third line (area “A” in Figure 35) are associated with this line of text across the versions. This “link” is visualized in Figure 36 in which lines are highlighted according to the <app> element (expressed in the excerpt of XML in Figure 35). By clicking on a word or phrase, the application automatically highlights associated words, phrases, and lines across readings based on two criteria: the presence of these readings within the same <app> element or the association of the same *loc* attribute on the <app> element. As such, the editor can use these structures to group or organize both unique versions and changes across versions. The advantage to these groupings is demonstrated by the user’s ability to recognize them even when she seeks to order and re-order the sequence by which versions appear (or do not appear) within the browser, a capability that can be likened to re-arranging manuscript pages on a table according to the user’s research needs.¹⁸⁵ While the ability to re-order the sequence of the versions is useful for making comparisons and discovering various non-teleological arcs of formation and deformation within the networks of versions, it is equally important that the scholar can still realize the unique and discrete nature of individual versions.

At the same time, the Baroness’s compulsive desire to create multiple versions of each work is reflected in the ontology or content within which particular words, punctuation marks, and symbols move and change in what appears to be a process

¹⁸⁵ Of course, the similarity between laying pages on a table and moving them in the *VM* environment and is quickly dispelled when one considers that the digital space is still restricted by the HTML presentation which, in the *VM* necessitates a linear, left to right orientation. However, as is discussed later in this piece, there are other elements on the page which help emphasize these restrictions and therefore contribute to an aspect of editorial transparency concerning the impact that digital, material conditions have on editorial strategies.

directed entirely by fancy. Like the logic or structure, the material from which she could draw to create a particular performance shaped that performance. For instance, the Baroness believed that punctuation (what she calls “interpunction”) should be as varied as words yet with an *absolute* truth or meaning beyond the visual symbol for pace or breath that represents the general system of language (much like Ferdinand de Saussure’s *langue*) in which the general public participates. This sentiment is reflected in her asking Barnes,

. . . why does no scorn-mark mark of contempt—exist? I often miss it! see? that is one of thing’s [sic] I will invent. . . to invent happiness—joy mark! Not only exclamation mark. Djuna—as I just see now—our interpunction—system is puny! One should be able to express almost as much in interpunction as words [. . .] in this new strange thing—to express absolute in it! As I did in sounds—like music!
Wordnotes! (UMD 2.44)

While the logic represents the structure she used to fit these pieces together in a poem, here, the Baroness acknowledges that her ontology was the system of words and symbols from which she could draw. For instance, within the various versions of the poem “Sermon on Life’s Beggar Truth,” words are underlined and then not emphasized at all and dashes and colons are deleted and replaced with periods or spaces or exclamation points (and *vice versa*) in an order that seems to contradict an evolution of text. The VM space allows for an environment in which these textual differences can be compared across versions in a variety of ways without necessitating that the user research or present the versions in any specific order. In the following two examples the words “Menacing” and “Behold,” which function as “heading” words for two prose stanzas, are changed in similar ways but not in a similar sequence. In versions one and two, “Menacing” and “Behold” remain consistent, underlined with a colon. In versions three through six, “Menacing” is not underlined but is separated from the following prose group by a space.

In versions five and six it has a colon while in versions three and four, it has an exclamation point. “Behold” is always on its own line but the colon is deleted and replaced by an exclamation point in version five while versions three, four, and six maintain the colon. The word is underlined only in versions one through four. These observations are recorded in the XML (see Figure 37) and visualized in the VM interface (see Figure 38).

```

<app type="word" xml:id="a119">
  <rdg wit="#avante #va3">MENACING</rdg>
</app>
<app type="punc" xml:id="a120">
  <rdg wit="#va4 #va3">!</rdg>
  <rdg wit="#va6 #va5">:</rdg>
</app></p>
<p n="16">
  <app type="word" xml:id="a121">
    <rdg wit="#va2 #va1">
      <emph rend="underline">MENACING:</emph></rdg>

```

```

<p n="21">
  <app type="word" xml:id="a134">
    <rdg wit="#va6">BEHOLD:</rdg>
    <rdg wit="#va5"><del rend="overstrike">BEHOLD:</del>
BEHOLD!</rdg>
    <rdg wit="#va1 #va2 #va3 #va4"><emph
rend="underline">BEHOLD:</emph></rdg>
  </app>
</p>

```

Figure 37: TEI XML excerpt from "Sermon on Life's Beggar Truth"

One may discuss the “evolution” of these words across the versions in order to come to some conclusion about the “final text,” but since the sequence of the work’s creation is not precisely clear and since the punctuation seems to change (and in some instances, change back) across texts without consistency, it is better perhaps to discuss the manner

SNOOZE IN DOLDRUMS - BLOCKHEADEDLY DEFY CURRENT WHEN UPGLARES COMMONSENSES' SOBER CITIZEN MAP - 22 MENACING: IMAGINATION IS BATTERY POTENCY EFFUSIONS' NAVAL MAGNETICAL COMPASS NEEDLE - COSMOS PHALLUS - UNERRING - "IT" ACUISE - THERE IS NO HIGHER TREASURE BEHOLD:	CURRENT - WHEN UPGLARES COMMONSENSES' SOBER CITIZEN MAP MENACING IMAGINATION IS BATTERY POTENCY EFFUSIONS' NAVAL MAGNETICAL COMPASS NEEDLE - COSMOS PHALLUS - UNERRING IT - - ACUISE - THERE IS NO HIGHER TREASURE. BEHOLD: LEGS ARE UNHITCHED TO STRAY . FLINTY PAVEMENT OF FRIGGS IS FREE - FOR NOTHING - UNTIL - SPEEDY -	STALLING THIS UNTIRING DRIFTING ROCK WRECK - AS SILLY HAVARIE 6 . BY BLOCKHEADEDLY IN ADDLED ATTEMPT TO RETRACE INTO WAKE OR HIDE IN DOLDRUMS . DEFYING CURRENT. WHEN UPGLARES COMMONSENSES' SOBER CITIZENSHIP MAP MENACING IMAGINATION IS BATTERY EFFUSION POTENCY'S NAVAL MAGNETICAL COMPASS NEEDLE - MHA - UNERRING IT THERE IS NO HIGHER TREASURE AT SEA - ACUISE. BEHOLD; BEHOLD! LO TO STRAY - FLINTY PAVEMENT IS	BLOCKHEADEDLY DEFYING CURREN WHEN UPGLARES COM CITIZENSHIP ME POTENCYM BEHOLD: LEGS ARE UNHIT FLINTY PAVEMEN NOTHING - FLINT SPEEDY - THOU BUILD - BU FREEDOM NEEDS
---	---	---	---

Figure 38: The words "Menacing" and "Behold" compared across version of "Sermon on Life's Beggar Truth"

in which the text may be performed in various ways. The punctuation indicates that the words read differently depending on the particular instance of a text's reading much like a piece that can be played *fortissimo* and at other times *pianissimo* or varied in rhythm and tone within the very same instance of play. In other words, the shifting punctuation does not belie an element of imprecision but rather signifies an element of chance that is a result of the varied audience or the situation in which the piece is played. Likewise, analyzing or displaying one's reading of the changes across versions depends on the ability to re-order the sequence of how the versions are displayed. The structure of the XML encoding and the VM interface facilitate the reader's engagement with how the content of each version relates across texts while also maintaining the unique nature of each individual expression. Ultimately, using the structure and logic of TEI's parallel segmentation and the VM's capabilities for rearranging and manipulating how the versions are presented allows the user to see and construct different stories about the content of each expression, evoking a feeling of text that is "in play" or in performance according to the user's (the audience's) participation.

B. Engaging temporality

Versions are a matter of perspective and situation just as they are a matter of textual difference. For instance, two versions of a poem titled “He” and “Firstling” appear on the same manuscript page. Next to the versions, the Baroness writes a note to Djuna Barnes saying “These two poems are the same. I leave it to you if you will print them both?”

(UMD 4.54) Other versions of the poems that appear in the extant manuscripts are German versions. On yet another version, the Baroness writes to Barnes about combining “Firstling” and “He” but this time “Firstling” is in German: “What is interesting about the 2 together,” she writes,

is their vast difference of emotion – time knowledge – pain. That is why they should be printed together. For they are 1 + 2 the same poem – person sentiment life stretch between one – divided – assembled – dissembled. The German one is young – naïv [sic] – ingenuous [sic] – the English one ripe – experienced bitter. The German one is deep woe of child – in whoms [sic] very violence thus naïve expressed – lingers balm of recovery sensible. – The English one – as is superfluous to point out – is grim sophisticated. (UMD 4.58-59)

The Baroness reiterates her idea that the poems are versions of the same poem though they have different titles, are written in different languages and written in different countries. The details the Baroness emphasizes, however, are differences made by time and experience. In fact, what she is describing is not only her experience in writing the poems at different times in her life, but what would eventually be the readers’ experiences in reading this poem at a time later than they were written. Textual performance necessitates this difficulty, these temporal uncertainties or instabilities. As such, similar difficulties arise in engaging the element of temporality in a digital scholarly edition. In “Prose Fiction and Modern Manuscripts: Limitations and Possibilities of Text Encoding for Electronic Editions,” Edward Vanhoutte's main

contention is that a genetic textual edition can only be partially accomplished by the TEI standard. He cites “time and overlapping hierarchies” as the most problematic aspects of his attempt to encode modern manuscript material since “the structural unit of a modern manuscript is not the paragraph, page, or chapter but the temporal unit of writing” (Vanhoutte 172). He is not alone in contending that the TEI logic (the nesting elements) and its ontology (the aspects and behaviors of the text of which the elements are comprised) remain insufficient for representing modern textual events. On the other hand, perhaps it is not productive to assume that the TEI schema should be held culpable for the representation of every aspect of a textual performance. In “Psychoanalytic Reading and the Avant-texte,” Jean Bellemin-Noël sites “chance” as the salient element within the textual event that mollifies the need to reproduce what could be called the text’s *originary* temporality in the genetic edition. “Since the writing process is itself a production governed by uncertainty and chance,” Bellemin-Noël writes, “we absolutely must substitute spatial metaphors for temporal images to avoid reintroducing the idea of teleology” (Bellemin-Noël 31). In other words, instead of attempting to reproduce temporality in the scholarly edition (an attempt that presupposes a teleological textual event), the goals of an edition with concerns about versions might be better served by engaging the element of uncertainty and chance that the temporal nature of textual events inevitably produce.

The facility to engage an element of chance, especially as it is engendered by space, is enhanced by a dynamic and manipulative interface to the textual event. Visualizations facilitated by a combination of text and image work well to produce a space that functions as a signifier for temporal uncertainty. For instance, in version three of “Xray,”

certain lines (“Suns [sic] radioinfused soil,” “Radio’s soil secret,” “Radio’s sun message,” and “Radio’s sunimpregnated soil”) may be understood as alternative readings for the same point in a line of text because of their spatial arrangement (all radiating around the word “soil”) on the manuscript page (see Figure 39). Or, since the text appears between the second and third line of text, the word cluster could be a kind of brainstorming cluster that may or may not have helped the writer develop the final phrase “Dumb radiopetrated soil” that appears, for the first time in any version, on the line beneath the clustered constellation. Ultimately, uncertainty and chance are enacted by

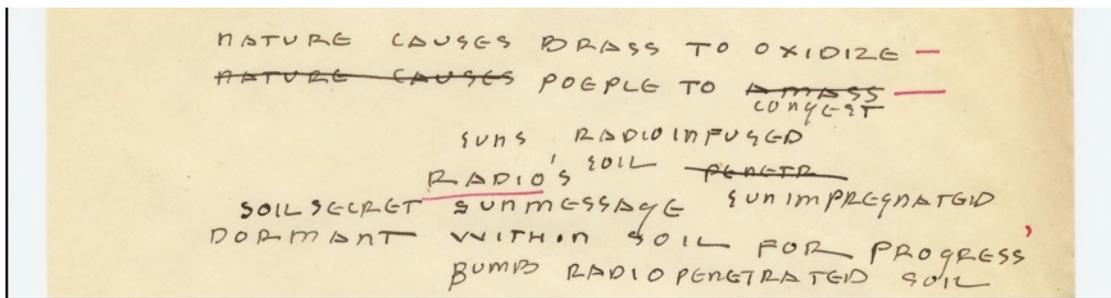


Figure 39: Excerpt from "Xray" manuscript, version three

the spatial arrangement of the words on the page. It is impossible to ascertain which words were written first; consequently, our inability to decipher the exact chain of events is emphasized. Yet, our access to this level of uncertainty is enacted by the combination of text and image that the VM facilitates. In the XML, the editor is able to express alternative readings for a given textual moment by using the reading-group element (<rdgGrp>) within a “parent” reading <rdg> element to group additional “children” readings (see <app> element id “a5” in Figure 35, Area “A”). At the same time, XML must be written in a linear form, first one reading, then another, which proscribes an order on text that is essentially unordered. For example, in Figure 40, a <rdgGrp> element is rendered by the presence of a dotted line under the phrase “Suns [sic]

radioinfused”. This line indicates that a mouseover will reveal alternative readings; yet, on the mouseover, the alternative readings are ordered, vertically, in the same order that the XML proscribes: first “Radios’ soil secret” then “sun message” then “~~penetr~~ sunimpregnated”. In part, this linear orientation is proscribed both by the XML and the resulting HTML (of which the *VM* interface is constructed), giving the impression that there is an order to the phrases that is not necessarily evident on the manuscript page. On the other hand, this discrepancy is what lends a powerful element of uncertainty to the textual performance of “Xray” in the *VM*. That is, because of the encoding, a dotted line is rendered that indicates alternate readings for the phrase “Suns radioinfused soil” (see Figure 40). By mousing over the dotted line, the above-mentioned alternative readings appear in a “floating box” that indicates to the reader that the variants included in the box are alternative choices for this spot in the text. In addition, in this example, “soil secret”

<p>PEOPLE TO ALL WITH NOT IDEAL OF</p>	<p>SUNS RADIOINFUSED SOIL <u>3</u> DORMANT WITHIN SOIL FOR PROGRESS' DUMB RADIOPENETRATED SOIL <u>4</u> LUXURY ORNAMENT ^{SUNSHINE} <u>5</u> PENETRATES FORCES</p>	<p><u>9</u> Polish - <u>10</u> Kill - <u>14</u> For fastidious <u>15</u> Brilliant boss' "idee fixe" <u>18</u> Sum total : <u>19</u> Radiance</p>
--	---	--

Figure 40: excerpt from “Xray” version three in the *Versioning Machine*

<p>AGAINST E TO AMASS - FATIGABLE DEAL OF ARISTOCRACY</p>	<p>CONGEST _ SUNS RADIOINFUSED SOIL RADIO'S SOIL SECRET RADIOPENI ^{SUN MESSAGE} PENETR SUNIMPREGNATED LUXURY ORNAMENT PENETRATES FORCES STIMULATES</p>	<p>By dull-radiop Destined Cosmic hand's dy Polish - Kill - For fastidious Brilliant boss' "ic</p>
---	---	---

Figure 41: excerpt from “Xray,” version three in the *Versioning Machine*

is also underlined with a dotted line indicating that alternative choices for this sub-reading are “sun message” and “sun impregnated.” In this way it is illustrated that there are multiple layers of alternative readings and textual choices. However, the general nature of the relationship between the parts is still unclear. It is for precisely this reason that the manuscript image is essential for the textual performance under way (see Figure 42). The encoded poem supports a logic of text that facilitates functions such as searching and highlighting linguistic codes across associated words and phrases while the image engages a logic of text that points to bibliographic codes associated with the material layout of the manuscript page. The different textual messages delivered by means of the

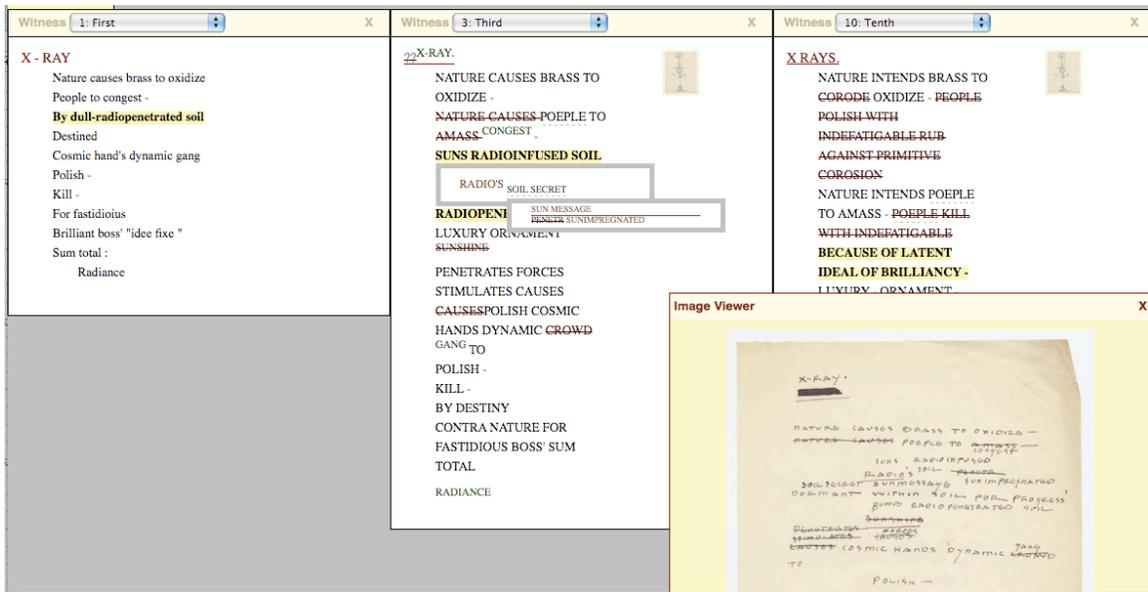


Figure 42: "Xray," version three in the *Versioning Machine*

encoding and the image and the dialogic these differences engage generates the element of temporal uncertainty that Bellemin-Noël mentions and that textual performance requires. In theory, these critically deformed digital surrogates at play open a space for uncertainty, for conversation, and for further play that, in practice, facilitates an environment for textual performance.

C. Incorporating and responding to audience participation

The above discussion has sought to make transparent how ontology and logic combine within this edition's digital surrogates and how these surrogates in play with the *VM* interface produce essential elements of textual performance within *In Transition*. The *VM* environment that I have described above in which the text may be in play in different ways at different moments provides for a situation in which a particular instantiation of text is never the same from one moment to the next, but how does one engage the element of real-time, live-body, evocative performance that informed how the Baroness and her contemporaries engaged in her poetry within *The Little Review* culture and the Dadaist art scene of the 1920s? While the goal of creating this environment is to comprise embodied texts and textual bodies in conversation within a real-time textual performance, the work remains, in part, incomplete.

The principles that undergird *In Transition* are not in place to present the Baroness in the trajectory of history as much as to theorize a method for locating her and this selection of poetry in the *now*, for enacting a digital, n-dimensional space that is in the present. Accordingly, to complete this work we must imagine what is possible. To this end, consider the network visualized in Figure 43. Figure 43 visualizes eighty-six of the Baroness's more than seven hundred "friends" from her *MySpace* network,¹⁸⁶ an online "social network site,"¹⁸⁷ aimed at facilitating a user's ability to "(1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with

¹⁸⁶ *MySpace* is one of the more popular and populated online social network sites. Please see the Baroness's page at <http://www.myspace.com/dadaqueen>. A more detailed discussion of the use of online communities like *MySpace* within the space of an electronic edition focused on textual performance appears in the previous chapter.

¹⁸⁷ In accordance with the criteria that boyd and Ellison establish, the term "social network site" is being used consciously to define "social network sites" as a subset of a larger category of social networking software, social media, or collaborative software, which might include blogs, wikis, or social bookmarking (such as *del.icio.us* or *Flickr*).

whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (boyd and Ellison). Though it only shows links to eighty-six friends, Figure 43 shows approximately 10,000 more links to second-level friends. Now, imagine this visualization in motion, nodes moving closer together and farther apart as friends are made and disbanded, links stretching and shrinking in reaction, and imagine augmenting the Baroness’s current profile, which presents

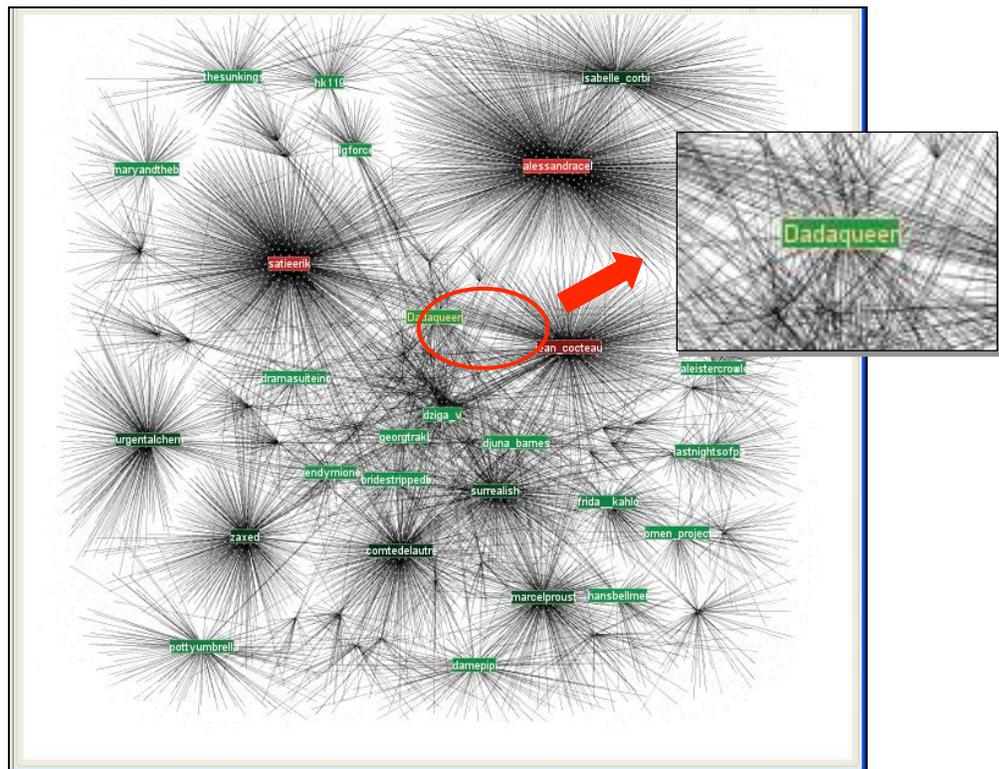


Figure 43: The Baroness fakester “Dadaqueen” visualized as a node in the *MySpace* network¹⁸⁸

biographical anecdotes about, images of, and personal “shout-outs” to the Baroness, with an instantiation of a digital edition of the Baroness’s poetry as outlined above. In this dynamic environment the textual performance would be constantly changing as part of

¹⁸⁸ The data used to form this visualization was extracted and pre-processed by Romain Vuillemot, a visiting doctoral student at the Human Computer Interaction Lab (HCIL) at the University of Maryland, College Park. It took approximately four hours to gather and extract the data from *MySpace* for a total size of 1.2 G of data. That data was then imported into *SocialAction* (<http://www.cs.umd.edu/hcil/socialaction/>) an application created by Adam Perer and Ben Shneiderman at HCIL.

the community exchange of real-time textual bodies which are participating in making the Baroness poem a textual event that is live and in play. danah boyd writes about *Friendster*, one of the first social network sites, that “[r]ather than having the context dictated by the environment itself, context emerged through Friends networks” (boyd “Friends, Friendsters, and MySpace Top 8: Writing Community Into Being on Social Network Sites”). This metaphor of networked space allows for a temporal exchange that is tradition and development moving around a de-centered center, a center that better represents the idiosyncrasies inherent in a character like the Baroness, the company she kept, and the company her fakester¹⁸⁹ keeps.

III. Conclusion

The knowledge represented and produced through an engagement with *In Transition: Selected poems by the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven* raises the same questions about theories of literature and text that *The Little Review* editors Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap may have considered in determining the place of the Baroness’s poetry within *The Little Review* environment: does this poem reflect or engage the larger conversation going on both in the pages of this issue and in these offices and in our society about culture and literature? Is this poem dynamic? Can it anticipate or provoke multiple kinds of conversation and facilitate the production of new knowledge in terms of the environment in which it is engaged? In terms of the domain of this electronic edition, similar questions have been considered: in this online, digital text environment, which nodes of the networked text are in play? Which elements of the textual event best engage the domain at hand? What is that domain? Reflecting Latour’s

¹⁸⁹ A *fakester*, in this case, represents a “real” identity that has been assumed by an online user.

notion of the network, the networked text invoked within *In Transition* provides for a theoretical structure that allows for new anchors for consideration without necessarily disrupting those that have already been established. As such, remediation is instantiated and notions of a “digital revolution” are kept at bay: the old is being repurposed within the new while the metaphor of networked space keeps chance and temporality engaged in the present. This is not to say that *In Transition* accomplishes an engagement with all the nodes of the networked texts with which it is involved, but it does provide for a selection of texts and a representation of knowledge—a textual performance—of the Baroness’s poetry that has not been staged in quite this way for quite some time.

Conclusion: a legacy of literary technologies

Technologies that produce new knowledge produce new ways of being. Willard McCarty uses a quote by computing scientists Winograd and Flores—“in designing tools we are designing ways of being” (xi)—to compare what “ways of being” computing humanists “have in mind” versus what “ways of knowing” those same scholars “have in hand” (‘Knowing true things by what their mockeries be’). McCarty ultimately concludes that in terms of digital methodologies, knowledge is both logical (in the mind) and tacit—shaped by the tools we design and engage (“in the hand”). For Stein and Freytag-Loringhoven, the tool “in the hand” was the pen or typewriter and the technology was writing. In 1903 when Stein first started writing *The Making of Americans*, she says she saw her novel as “a history of all human beings, all who ever were or are or could be living” (*Autobiography* 56). However, Stein learns that her success in producing this history is contingent on the technology of writing: “Sometime when I am all through all my writing,” the narrator of *The Making of Americans* proclaims, “when all my meaning, all my understanding, all my knowing, all my learning has been written, sometime then some will understand the being in all men and women” (*The Making of Americans* ¶1375). Freytag-Loringhoven expresses a similar relationship between the production of knowledge and its expression in written language. She notes in a letter to Djuna Barnes that her poetic projects begin with “first imagination wave – that proves strong enough – to become ability;” this ability, she contends, leads to the desire to express oneself: “you first construct –erect [sic]—and than [sic] the possibility of the structure grows your

wings to ‘create’” (UMD 2.45¹⁹⁰). Here again, writing is a technology that facilitates a state of knowledge production and thus a sense of being.

At the same time, technologies that produce knowledge rely on distortions. In *The Making of Americans*, Stein reiterates this point:

. . . I say vital singularity is as yet an unknown product with us, we who in our habits, dress-suit cases, clothes and hats and ways of thinking, walking, making money, talking, having simple lines in decorating, in ways of reforming, all with a metallic clicking like the type-writing which is our only way of thinking, our way of educating, our way of learning, all always the same way of doing, all the way down as far as there is any way down inside to us . . . (J237)

In other words, in reflecting on our machine-like processes ways of being (which the narrator later compares to “type-writing” and thus the mechanical aspect of writing), we perceive being as a manufactured state that falls short of reality. Similarly, once Freytag-Loringhoven has returned to Germany from the United States, poor and lonely, she realizes the extent to which her heightened awareness of writing produces a state of being in which her inability to write leads to a distorted sense of that being or what Priscilla Wald has called a “self-sense” (*Constituting Americans* 237). That is, when Freytag-Loringhoven cannot write, she is not truly living: “I am homesick for English language,” she writes to Djuna Barnes, “my ear declines, my taste nauseated at German sound –and yet I lose my facility in English, words come not easy, sometimes meaning is doubtful . . . As much as I read English it is not alive—living, because I am not, hence no fluctuation, instigation –creation . . .” (“Selections” 20). Lisa Samuels and Jerome McGann have written extensively about the interpretive nature of technologies that employ distortion in “Deformance and Interpretation.” Perhaps the most telling statement about this essay in

¹⁹⁰ This number represents a reel and frame number from the microfilm of “The Papers of Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven” in Special Collections at the University of Maryland, College Park, Libraries. All subsequent references are noted as UMD.

which Samuels and McGann discuss their work intentionally deforming digital images is one made in another piece by McGann in an almost offhand manner. When reflecting on his work on images with Samuels, he extrapolates their methodology to text: “A new level of computer-assisted textual analysis may be achieved,” he muses, “through programs that randomly but systematically deform the texts they search and that submit those deformations to human consideration” (*Radiant Textuality* 191).

Seemingly, the single most significant lesson digital humanities practitioners can learn from the process of the gradual making of *The Making of Americans* and the creative (d)evolution of Freytag-Loringhoven’s multiple extent manuscripts is written, knowledge-producing tools (like the novel, poetry, and literary criticism) which depend on language and representation to produce new perspectives on being also reflect the iterative nature of useful technologies. For instance, Stein maintains that she knew at the onset of writing *The Making of Americans* that her goal to write a complete description of everyone was possible to the extent that she *did not* describe everyone:

When I was working with William James I completely learned one thing, that science is continuously busy with the complete description of something, with ultimately the complete description of everything . . . When I began *The Making of Americans* I knew I really did know that a complete description was a possible thing. But as it is a possible thing one can stop continuing to describe this everything. That is where philosophy comes in, it begins when one stops continuing describing everything. (“The Gradual Making of *The Making of Americans*” 283-284)

Indeed, the points where digital data management ends and philosophizing humans come in are the points at which the process of creating knowledge incorporates and reflects personal experiences that involve a certain historical time and space (diachronic development), identity (sense of self as opposed to other or *ungeneralizability*), and personal context (synchronic development). In other words, to feel frustrated and

provoked to respond to the subjective nature of meaning and *art* is to understand part of the project in which each of these artists participates. “Modernist texts make grim readers of us all,” Richard Poirier writes, and continues, “It encourages us to humanize the work, the industry of modernist writing, to locate a self and a personality in it,” because “We are left precisely within the alternatives, and honestly to recognize this situation as our own allows us, at last, to recognize the writer as being in a situation not very different” (108). In other words, much modernist literature serves as a comment on the value of subjectivity that is the result of iterative modes of knowledge production.

Digital methods that attempt to resolve the frustration and provocation that is engaged in the process of writing and reading modernist texts or which attempt to *depersonalize* the experience of literature are not serving scholarly demand. Often, research questions are far more complicated than any algorithmic computation can answer. In fact, it could be considered Stein’s goal to confuse or disorient the reader who will constantly be in a state of irresolution about meaning, the human desire to attain it, and language’s ability to provide it just as it was part of Freytag-Loringhoven’s project to rattle her readers by drawing attention to her gender, her sexuality, her nationality, and the reputation that came with her tempestuous appeals to her live audience. Indeed, determining a correspondence between structures of repetition and the discussion of identity and representation in *The Making of Americans* or reading Freytag-Loringhoven’s poetry by attempting to experience the impact her collaborative audience has on the event of a poem is not easy and may still, in some sense, shortchange the power and pleasure of these texts. Yet, Poirier writes, “modernism is to be located . . . first, in the promotion, by a fraction of writers, of the virtues and necessities of difficulty,

and second, in the complicity of the faction of readers who assent to the proposition that the act of reading should entail difficulties analogous to those registered in the act of writing” (105). In other words, we allow for and expect difficulty and thus ambiguity when this state of knowing (or not knowing) helps us understand and interpret what it means to be human. Similarly, work that employs computer-assisted literary analysis applications descends from a legacy of literary technologies in which scholars and writers and readers are complicit in the process of knowledge production. This work is most successful—that is, tells us most about our manners of being even when this work is difficult—riddled with failure, uncertain, and ultimately very personal. The merit of digital methodologies in literary inquiry is measured by the extent to which they invite humans to step in.

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