Goodnight Moon: Master-piece, Identity, and the Shimmer

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Abstract

***Goodnight Moon*: Master-Piece, Identity, and the Shimmer**

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Goodnight Moon: Master-piece, Identity, and the Shimmer analyses a suite of philosophical concepts, artworks, and events from 1900-2026, central to which is the children's book *Goodnight Moon* (1947), written by Margaret Wise Brown and illustrated by Clement Hurd. I begin with the claim that *Goodnight Moon* is one of the great master-pieces of the 20th century, as a work of art, example of radical early childhood pedagogy, participatory score, and example *par excellence* of process philosophy of William James, Alfred North Whitehead, Susanne Langer, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Erin Manning, and Brian Massumi.

A key argument that this document makes is that *Goodnight Moon* produces subjectivity when it is activated in the milieu of the bedtime story. The concern with the 'production of subjectivity' emerges from the process-philosophical stakes that insist that the human is not at the centre of an event, nor do they *produce* the eventfulness of the present moment. One of the political questions that this understanding poses is, what moments of artfulness exist in germ, before the calcification of form?

Goodnight Moon: Master-piece, Identity, and the Shimmer is both a historically reparative and contemporary theoretical project: it traces Wise Brown's use of the pedagogical technique of "seen-and-heard" storytelling developed at the Bank Street School in New York under Lucy Sprague Mitchell, which is still in use today. Through a close engagement with Gertrude Stein's essays and lectures on the subjects of art, process, and identity during her famed 'Lectures in America' tour (1934-35), I demonstrate that Wise Brown was influenced by Stein's theories of the singularity of the art object and of the "rhythm of anybody's personality" — repetition and insistence.

After a careful study of the storybook form of *Goodnight Moon,* followed by studies of the book's text and images, the thesis closes with a spiraling opening to its outside, in the form of a description of the solo research-creation exhibition *Goodnight Moon: a Rhythm a Tempo,* which has toured Eastern Canada from 2022-2026.

Acknowledgments

Struggling, laughing, organizing, troubling alongside me is a disparate group of scholars who have chosen their own path through the University, in the Interdisciplinary Humanities program at Concordia. I'd like to express my love and solidarity to the friends I have made along the way, my HUMA Grad colleagues, including Emilie St. Hilaire, Darian Goldin Stahl, Salma El Hankouri, Eleni Polychronakos, Nik Forrest, Peter Dubé, Andrés Salas, Kelly Norah Drukker, Ifeoma Anyaeji, Morris Fox, as well as those in adjacent programs, including Tricia Toso and Nikola Stepić.

Friendship and mentorship are often so closely intertwined as to be an unnecessary distinction, but I'd especially like to thank Shauna Janssen, Alanna Thain, Lynn Hughes, and Jack Halberstam for letting me learn with you in the past years.

MJ Thompson, you've accompanied me on the entire journey. First, by believing in my capacity to teach undergrads during my MFA when I knew little more than they did; then, as a committee member during that degree; and alongside for this leg of the journey, which is finally coming to an end. You've taught me so much about how to hold a room's attention with humility and poise; how to demonstrate enthusiasm for learning and teaching as-if they were the same thing; how to swim in disciplinary waters which felt a little intimidating at the start.

My time at Concordia has seen the SenseLab, founded by Brian Massumi and Erin Manning in 2007, move rooms and buildings, and eventually morph into something totally different: the 3Ecologies institute, which I remain an enthusiastic contributor to. I have met so many fascinating organisms who (occasionally) person there, and though it has not always been easy for me to understand how an impersonal force can be generated alongside a collective commitment to study, I have come to appreciate the rigour with which this spectacular group has built a practice of attuning to the world as it worlds: Diego Gil, Mayra Morales, Ronald Rose-Antoinette, Toni Pape, Céline Pereira, Bianca Scliar, Melora Koepke, Laura Ilea, Hubert Gendron-Blais, Christof Brunner, Adam Szymanski, Khadijaba Xece Baker, and so many others, who have personed alongside me since (my) beginning, thank you.

3Ecologies, birthed after many years of gestation during the pandemic, continues to provide a profound outlet for me creatively, ethically, politically — poethically. I am so deeply appreciate of how it provides a lure for a speculative *pragmatics* that demands a transversal engagement with the ecologies of the mental, social, and ecological welter of experience in the here-and-now. I have developed and deepened relationships through my time at 3E with participants from around the corner and far, far away, including: Emma Flavian, Rémi Roy, Bex Markowitz, ro Heinrich, Mie Natius Andresen, Morgan and Sybil, Aerin Dunford, Oana Suteu Khintirian, Lise Tovesdatter Skou, Aaron Richmond, Mathew Arthur, Lilia Mestre… the list goes on and on, and will surely continue to grow!

Brian, with Erin, this has been your project, and your doing. I continue to learn from your work — I'll never catch up, and that's a relief, because I don't want to run out. 3E is the milieu that I've also gotten to know you in, which I think is really the best way: in the middle, pulling saplings,

sugaring off, sweeping solar panels, building saunas, sharing reading groups. Impersonal impersonal yes, but thank you also for personing into a friend.

I would like to thank and acknowledge the generous reading, time, heartfelt encouragement, and absolute rigour with which Dr. Steven Meyer and Dr. Jessie Beier approached this document as invigilators for my defence. *Thank you* for being in conversation with my work!

I have worked on a number of 'side-projects' while I have undertaken this long, long thesis… Recently, I asked myself if, in hindsight — knowing that having had a few *too* many things on the go had slowed this project down a bit — I would do them again. The answer, of course, was yes!

I met Treva Michelle Legassie and karen wong at the Milieux Institute in 2017; together with a few others, we formed what would become the Curatorial Research-Creation Collective (CRCC). For five years, we organized conferences, field schools, panel discussions, delivered papers, and with the generous support and patience of Nicole De Brabandere, published the book chapter and anti-manifesto "A Latento for Curation as Research-Creation" in 2022. The time that we have spent together, largely fueled by bubbles, nachos, and peals of laughter, has been wonderful.

The first time I sat across a table from Angélique Willkie, I was awe-inspired. She has a way of enlivening and softening a space at the same time. A few months later, when she put out her call for research assistants for her research project Dramaturgical Ecologies, I jumped at the occasion. A couple of months later, COVID struck.

One of the things that really held me together during the pandemic were the hours and hours of zoom meetings discussing B(b)lack dance, dramaturgy, diasporic experience and performance, with a group of people I would come to love: Haley Baird, Cadu Mello, Vanessa Montesi, Melina Scialom, and many others who came in and out of our orbit throughout the course of the project. Thank you for activating my thinking and study, Angélique, through conferences, articles, trips, colloquiums, performances, friendship, tears. I owe you so much… and a video essay.

Dana Dugan, this is where we really 'met.' Our few crossings beforehand had left me with the impression that you were a *live wire*! While that impression has not changed, I have learned to trust my instinct that when someone doesn't fit into a neat idea of who I think they are, or how I think they should perform (at the university, at the circus), they will have *certainly* have something to teach me about how to love and how to be a good friend and how to party. Through the absolute madness that is your life (I think that the world could be a little *less* disobedient sometimes, and just give you a break!), you and Dave have given me so much to appreciate and look forward to, each time we see each other. Even better, for our next adventures, I now have my own go-go cup!

(The structure of an 'acknowledgements' page, and the way it creates Categories, begins to tremble under the weight of a thick field of relation that comes to inform in *a* life — my own, thus far. There is a village that supports me in ways that I don't always acknowledge, so here is a great opportunity to do so).

My family has *remarkably* never, in almost ten years, suggested that I should stop this project, suggested that is without value, or that there is something more 'practical' that I should be doing — in spite of the fact that for most of them, life has not provided a frame of reference for this kind of non-commercial art or speculative academic practice. To support without totally understanding is, I think, both an expression of love and quite radical. Mom (Ginny), thank you for your persistent confidence that it would work out; Anthea and Ryan, thank you for the relief of laughter, parties, your kids, and for picking up the cheque from time to time. Dad and Jenn (Mom), thank you for being a place that I can return to where I know that can find love and a good meal, and for trying to get me to diagram my thesis on a piece of paper so that I could better communicate it (to you and others) (it didn't work). Ellen and JC, thank you for your steadfastness and belief in the project, and your remarkable girls. Anne and Steve, thank you for your friendship and your example of how to be in the world with care and firm conviction. Rob, thank you for the retreat from adulthood that your love of the outdoors provides. Sam, thank you for being a best friend, listener, gossiper, and for making me your bridesmaid under extreme duress. Thank you for travelling all over the country to be my second-biggest fan. Matt, thank you for being exactly who Sam needs, to be able to swim through the world, and the other way around.

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Hannah. My living idol, Hairy Mary Magdalene *as* Muppet. You have taught me one of the most important lessons I have ever learned: let the *other* person define how they can, and will, show up for you.

This document approaches the exhibition *Goodnight Moon: a Rhythm a Tempo* without writing it as an 'artist's statement,' by which I mean, it sidles up to the exhibition and kicks the tires without trying to give the reader the 'pitch.' Nevertheless, as a work I am immensely proud of the wonderful community it has crafted. I am so incredibly grateful for the commitment to wonder that my collaborators have engendered throughout its three iterations.

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and patience. The fact that the object that is the set that is a part of the art-work *Goodnight Moon: a Rhythm a Tempo* cleaves so closely to the Figure of the book is a testament to your mastery.

The team at Sunbury Shores in St. Andrews, New Brunswick, held the conditions for the work to be met so beautifully. They include Angela McLean, Mary Wobma, Florence Small, Caroline Young-Walker, and Sara Brinkhurst.

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At The Rooms, the proposition has come to full form; it is flourishing. The work was on its way to the dump when I received a call from Mireille Eagan and Angela Noseworthy, telling me that they'd like to program it for three months. Since then, it's been an artist's dream to work with the conservation, media, and installation teams, and to meet so many new friends and faces in St. John's.

Goodnight Moon: a Rhythm, a Tempo, was initially activated by invited interventions from my dear friends Jordan Arseneault and k.g. Guttman. As with Joel, you have both had a belief in me and my nascent practice of attuning to the artful that I have not always had in myself, and for far longer than this project. Thank you for your continued trust, friendship, experimentation and wisdom.

At The Rooms, I have *finally* been able to play with you, Annette Manning. And though, like the weather, I wasn't quite sure *where* the next step of your process led, I knew I wouldn't be disappointed. And I wasn't. And thank you for Lily and Joseph.

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(*Checks phonebook…*)

Dear Erin. I hope you collect these notes for cloudy days! You, your work, your guidance, your friendship, your rigour, your practices of attunement, your artfulness, and your movement have been an ongoing seismic event in my life. As a result, my thinking, my mode of relating, my understandings of the world have been wonderfully (and sometimes traumatically) unsettled over our long journey together. It will continue, but will also evolve into something else, and with excitement I thank you for that.

If this acknowledgements section could be a palimpsest instead of linear progression, you'd see echoes of your name throughout this text — nevertheless, the tracings through which you have crafted *my* experience are indelible and innumerable.

Finally, for Marc, my best *best* friend and deep love. Thank you for your alongsideness; for your patience; for your support; for your companionship; for adventure; for laughter; for your cooking;

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-Ursula K. Le Guin

How is art a critical site for queer techniques of survival and flourishing, against institutionalized forms of capture? Goodnight Moon*: Master-piece, Identity, and the Shimmer* analyses a suite of philosophical concepts, artworks, and events from 1900-2026, central to which is the children's book *Goodnight Moon* (1947), written by Margaret Wise Brown and illustrated by Clement Hurd.

A central claim of this thesis is that *Goodnight Moon* is one of the great master-pieces of the 20th century. This thesis proposes that *Goodnight Moon* is a children's book-as-work of art: the product of a fruitful collaboration between an artist and a poet, who found their success making work for children. It is a great participatory score; an intergenerational work; an experiment and revolution in form in the realm of children's pedagogy; and an example *par excellence* of process philosophy doing the work of finding the magic in the everyday. Alfred North Whitehead and Erin Manning's process philosophy — Brian Massumi's speculative pragmatism — William James' radical empiricism… what these terms have in common is that they are here understood as philosophies of the event, the study of experience from the point of view of the processes that give texture to the eventfulness of the world.

In its deviation from the otherworldly and nonsensical of fairytales and the logic and reason of adult worlds, *Goodnight Moon* is exemplary in its expression of the environmental static — what I will term *shimmers* — in the surrounds of every fairytale, story, or personal account of who we are, or how we become. Throughout the thesis, it is a key commitment to demonstrate how *Goodnight Moon* produces subjectivity when it is activated in the milieu of the bedtime story. The concern with the 'production of subjectivity' emerges from the process-philosophical stakes that insist that the human — the subject — is not at the centre of an event, nor do they *produce* the eventfulness of the present moment. Following Whitehead, Félix Guattari, Erin Manning, and others, one of the political questions that this understanding opens up is, "How to escape from the positioning of the personal before it takes hold?" (Manning 2020, 117). In *Goodnight Moon,* those

backgrounded, affective, virtual processes that are vital to experience stage a speculative-pragmatic encounter with artfulness in germ, wherein pre-personal subjectivity trembles.

Goodnight Moon*: Master-piece, Identity, and the Shimmer* is both a historically reparative (Sedgwick 2012) and contemporary theoretical project: Wise Brown is often credited for the shift in children's literature from the Victorian morality fable toward a pedagogical technique of "seen-and-heard" storytelling predominant in early childhood education today. Through a close engagement with Gertrude Stein's essays and lectures on the subjects of art, process, and identity during her famed 'Lectures in America' tour (1934-35), I demonstrate that Wise Brown was influenced by Stein's theories of the singularity of the art object and of the "rhythm of anybody's personality," *repetition* and *insistence*, which is itself in dialogue with the process-oriented philosophy of Stein's teacher William James — who also taught Wise Brown's mentor, Lucy Sprague Mitchell — and friend Alfred North Whitehead. This tracing of an alternative intellectual history of *Goodnight Moon* is vital because it shows that process thinking has had significant pragmatic effects on art, identity, and children's pedagogy, and can be felt to this day. Finally, at the conclusion of this thesis, in a research-creation solo exhibition entitled *Goodnight Moon: a Rhythm, a Tempo,* I enact an ecosophical (French philosopher, writer, and analyst Félix Guattari's term to conceptualize the interrelated spheres of nature, society, and the individual) staging of prototypical (queer) subjectivity/ies attuning to the possibility of the present moment. This work veins the dissertation-form with a concern for that which cannot be captured in words, but which is nevertheless felt.

The contribution that this thesis seeks to make exceeds *Goodnight Moon*. It's an exemplary example… but of what? If not about *Goodnight Moon* itself, what is this *other* thing that we might examine through the work of *Goodnight Moon*? In a way, the thesis works with *Goodnight Moon* as the operative question that orients a swirl of thinking and studying around it, as a singular event. Perhaps a better way to pose the question, then, is not to ask what *Goodnight Moon* is 'about,' but what it is 'doing' — and by following that mode of enquiry, I am striving toward a more direct way to the 'operative problem,' which, in retrospection, might lead to an 'operative question.' In *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galax*y, Douglas Adams famously provides the answer to "Life, the Universe, and Everything": 42! It's the *Question* that makes sense of this answer that proves to be a site of great consternation and adventure! In the spirit of this adventure, then, this thesis asks: What makes *Goodnight Moon* work? How *else* might identifying and addressing these operative questions lead to a more fulsome account of the experiences that make life at its edges flourish?

Goodnight Moon exemplifies what recent queer, trans, and affect theory has identified as the 'shimmer' (Gregg and Seigworth 2010, 2023; Steinbock 2019; pace Barthes 2005). The shimmer names a feeling that "something significant is happening," as defined by anthropologist and environmental humanities scholar Deborah Bird Rose (Rose 2022, 143), or that "something is doing" in the environment that has not yet taken a final form, in the process ontology of philosophers William James, Susanne Langer, Erin Manning, and Brian Massumi (2003; 1954;

2025; 2011). In my interdisciplinary approach to minoritarian sexual expression, combining studio art, process ontology, and performance studies, to read objects that make evident the conditions that foster shimmers is to value their eventfulness; their capacity to creatively and speculatively propose alter-values in the face of majoritarian flattening of difference.

Why intervene in the world of the children's book? In our psyche, the fairytale holds the place of the ideal form; one that shapes our perception of the real, but that paradoxically describes an unattainable reality. Another way of saying this is that the fairytale is a construction of reality based on a judgement of reality's actual concerns. A fairytale that does not have a subject in the form of an individual on which to hinge tension, release, and resolution is a form of dispersed story-for-itself; a story that is about every-one instead ends up being about no-one. Through a close study of *Goodnight Moon,* I aim to demonstrate that it is a story for the non-human, more-than-human, and inhuman processes that make up our world; if it even *is* a fairytale, it is one of and for (what Deleuze calls) the *impersonal*. When not at the service of a central character, those processes that comprise the more-than human are let loose and unfold of their own accord.

Goodnight Moon was developed at the Bank Street School by Lucy Sprague Mitchell in the first half of the 20th century in New York City. Her theory was that a child was most moved by their direct and immediate experience; not by appeals to myth or fear.

Drafted in 1946, and published in 1947, *Goodnight Moon* has become a timeless classic familiar to many children today. The book has been called a "delaying game" as children are put to bed: it narrates a simple, rhythmic counting of objects in a room occupied by two rabbits. The book deviates from what, to that point, had been the standard subject of a fairytale in that it does not have a moral, but a rhythm, a tempo — what, with Stein, I will respectively call 'insistence' and 'repetition.' In *Goodnight Moon,* there are fissures in the normative progressive logic of the standard storybook: the passing moon illustrated in its pages does not coincide with the hands on the clocks that sit on the mantle and bedside table; a bowl of "mush" is left overnight; the harsh reds, yellows and greens of the room cause unease; and the book contains a blank page wishing "goodnight nobody," to nothing. Each of these fissures challenge both the representative logic of the children's fable and the anti-representative logic of mid-century modernism, because in fact, the composition resists the call to adhere to these logics altogether: "*Goodnight Moon* is a here-and-now story," Margaret Wise Brown's biographer, Leonard Marcus writes, "but one so supercharged with emotion, with so freewheeling a sense of the fantastic as an aspect of the everyday, as to render it a cunning transparency of Bank Street ideas and their opposites" (Marcus 1992, 188-89).

My claim throughout this work is that *Goodnight Moon* is a collaborative and participatory intergenerational performance that exceeds identity. This might seem like a strange claim, particularly as there are remarkably few markers or instructions for how one is to 'perform the self' contained within the text. Compare this to a morality fable of the Victorian age or earlier: If you

climb a wall, you die. If you disobey your parents, you get eaten. Even a 20th century Disney movie, while softening these tales, only supplements them with more *explicit* instructions for how to behave as a nice young woman or heroic boy in society. While she may wander off, the time-worn "lesson" is that she will ultimately reach happiness by getting married and falling in love. Each of these examples are what Goffman would call "scripts" for how to perform as a gendered, productive member of society. *Goodnight Moon*, on the other hand, allows one's imagination to wander further afield and return, nourished in more complete ways.

Goodnight Moon might offer a way to think about individuation before identity. This singular work, and what I will argue is its speculative-pragmatic engagement with processes of subjectivation before subjectivity, might begin with Gertrude Stein's encounter with the philosopher William James in the late 19th century — at about the same time that he was encountered by Lucy Sprague Mitchell. As time progressed, Stein went on develop a friendship with the British philosopher Alfred North Whitehead, and Sprague Mitchell founded the Bank Street School. Both would continue to gather momentum and come to a head in their influence of a young Margaret Wise Brown during Stein's famed 'Lectures in America' tour of 1934, where, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Margaret Wise Brown was in attendance. Stein's influence on Margaret Wise Brown as a young writer cannot be understated, and is corroborated by the fact that Wise Brown championed the commission of Stein's only children's book, *The World is Round* in 1939, preceding *Goodnight Moon*'s publication in 1947 by eight years.

A refrain I return to: Will the mouse go to sleep with the reader? What of its becomings when the lights go out? In *Goodnight Moon*, there is something there, there. The evidence is in its non-representational logic. The bunny is not *like* a child; it is *as-if* it were a child; the pages of my well-worn board book do not show a room that I believe to be real any more than a child would; it is *as-if* there was a world contained within its pages. The semblance of the real — the drawing down from a field of potential to create this fantastical world — manages to carry a liveness that is demonstrated by the fact that the most astute judges of the *-esque* — children — have returned to it for almost eighty years.

The examples that I have selected for this project, then, are as follows:

The literary histories of *Goodnight Moon*.
The philosophical inheritances of *Goodnight Moon*.
The pedagogical histories of *Goodnight Moon*.
Goodnight Moon: its text.
Goodnight Moon: its images.
Goodnight Moon: a Rhythm, a Tempo: the exhibition, its activations and processes.

Goodnight Moon: a Rhythm, a Tempo.

Research-creation is a mode of study ideally suited to a minoritarian studies that "does not know itself in advance" (Manning 2016), innovating alongside difference-in-common — a form of critical utopianism that enacts other, more livable worlds. Identifying the shimmer in events coming-to-expression — in this case, in the creation, impact, and semblance of *Goodnight Moon* — provides a novel method for attending to the social and ecological forces that shape queerness before it is subtended by 'identity politics,' a concern central to current reimaginings of the value of queer studies and art practices today, including their co- imbrication with more-than human worlding. With Erin Manning, I understand the term 'worlding' to indicate that a body emerges *with* the world, not ahead of it: "the withness of time, a body in the making" (Manning 2020, 33). More specifically, the exhibition that resulted from this work — *Goodnight Moon: a Rhythm, a Tempo* — engages with shimmers with the belief that they are a form of ephemeral evidence (Muñoz 1996, 2018) of a queer 'wildness' or 'wild commons' (Muñoz 2020; Halberstam 2020), found in particular artworks, performances, and creative gestures which mark them as exceptional, enduring, and capacitating of radical social and political change.

This thesis encompasses a doctoral practice of harnessing research-creation as a creative methodology in order to "queer the archive." In 2022, I was invited by curator Joel Mason to create a life-size installation of *Goodnight Moon* as a major (research-creation) contemporary exhibition at the Sunbury Shores Arts and Nature Centre in St. Andrew's, New Brunswick. Constructed with the aid of master carpenter Rob Bird, *Goodnight Moon: a Rhythm, a Tempo* was a featured exhibition for the inaugural Arts Atlantic Symposium. The exhibition subsequently moved to New Brunswick's Beaverbrook Provincial Art Gallery in Fredericton, curated by John Leroux. In each setting, the process-led exhibition was activated by lectures, artistic interventions by artists k.g. Guttman and Jordan Arseneault, life drawing classes, and facilitated visits by hundreds of students of all school ages.

The exhibition was then remounted from November 2025 to March 2026 at The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery in St. John's, Newfoundland. Curated by Mireille Eagan, this version of the exhibition included further artistic interventions by Marlene Creates, Annette Manning, and Daze Jeffries. In addition to their interventions, lectures, and public programming by the museum, for this iteration we launched a 'documentation wall' to try to capture key elements of each intervention as the exhibition progressed, as a way to orient the art work's reception to an audience that, because the work could be entered in to, often misread it as an 'experience for children' — in the vein of interactive, big-budget and 'family friendly' exhibitions — rather than an exhibition for any and all 'audiences.' I will return to a reflection on the subject of exhibition-making for a diverse audience at the conclusion of this thesis.

As a travelling solo exhibition, the work aimed to open up the master-piece that is *Goodnight Moon* by engaging with the text as a proposition for a form of worlding operation. My assertion is that *Goodnight Moon* — as an art object in the form of a children's book — stages an ecosophical queer subjectivity in the transition from day to night. Bringing the book into a gallery helps it to be taken seriously as a work of art, and allows me to observe how audiences immerse themselves in it. To facilitate this experiment as a form of dramaturgical encounter, I invited the artists k.g. Guttman, Jordan Arseneault, Marlene Creates, Annette Manning, and Daze Jeffries to deploy their techniques unique to their own practices — what I will define as their 'diagrams' in *Spiral Three: Images* — in order to play around the storybook's edges, teasing out individual components that I believe have contributed to its artfulness. As such, my installation both pays homage to the work and asks the audience to re-engage with it by way of speculative and pragmatic thinking-feeling. I don't tell them what to do with the work: instead, the work is an open invitation to participate and invent. In this way, following Munoz (2009), I'm drawing on a shared nostalgia in order to activate a queer feeling in the present for a (hopefully imagined) future.

Cumulatively, this work has been experienced by tens of thousands of visitors. As a research-creation exhibition enacting a form of public scholarship, *Goodnight Moon: a Rhythm a Tempo* has worked to 'queer the canon' of museal spectatorship, as well as the public perception of the bedtime story, by attempting to educate a broad audience in the practice of reading for queer ephemeral evidence (Muñoz 1996, 2018) in unexpected places. Professionally, the aim of this project is to combine the conceptual vocabulary developed in this thesis with a creative work, in order to situate me as an emerging subject expert in the close reading of continental process-oriented philosophy, and the study of minoritarian theories of creativity, practice, and politics.

Turning Toward the Shimmer

'That which is being apportioned out is in the process of landing' (Arakawa and Gins 2020, 5). The site is in the process of apportioning itself out as the body is apportioning itself to it. The site lands itself for the body as much as the body lands the site. The site stretches between a single, two-way movement or potential. Do not presume to know concretely where the person who makes architectural-body sense lies. She lies in the field of her potential. 'We cannot define where a body begins and where external nature ends' (Whitehead 1968, 21) (Manning and Massumi 2014, 1).

Garth Greenwell writes that when something comes alive with the resonance of its past uses, it "shimmers" (Greenwell 2024, 182). *Goodnight Moon* shimmers with the legendary history of philosophical and artistic movements concerned with expressing the 'specious present.' Through this study, I propose that by seeking out the *shimmer* in historic works, contemporary art practices and their audiences, and expressions of identity, we might develop techniques and tools for survival in the headwind that is the polychrisis characterizing our contemporary moment.

In many surprising ways, *Goodnight Moon* is a phenomenal contemporary and historical example of how techniques have always already existed for building shimmers into art, pedagogy, and theories of identity and politics. The shimmer indicates a queer world-making event. A

shimmer is processual. What I mean is that its mystery is grounded in a radical openness to the world and its capacity to grow. In that openness, it is also a sign that the possibility for change is afoot. *Shimmers, process-oriented and pragmatic, function both as tools and techniques for thinking and doing differently.* In *Goodnight Moon*, the reading, recitation, pointing, negotiating, and drifting to sleep of the bedtime story, there is a ritual. This shimmering engagement with the storying-wording event is a [queer] utopia in the process of germination. *Goodnight Moon* is also exemplary of a theory of identity developed by Gertrude Stein of *existence* through art. In the reading of a nighttime story, the ritual of emphasizing and insisting, playing with rhythm and tempo, it is an example *par excellence* of emergent forms of subjectivity-in-germ, and in this shimmering emergence, evidence of an artwork worthy of study and exploration.

Late in life, Roland Barthes posits an array of 'twinklings' rather than definitions — shimmers — which will build the concept of *the Neutral*. These fragments, he says, are similar to Deleuze's studies of music: where rather than searching for final meaning, the "'contents' of forms matter less than their circulation"; their flux (Barthes 2005, 10). Here is a first definition of a shimmer: With Barthes, following Deleuze and Guattari, a shimmer is the edging-into pattern of experience, the anarrangement of the amodal, as it dances between affect, percept, and concept, before form-taking. The amodal is "the idea that perception does not locate itself in a sense modality but courses between in rhythms that build correspondences rather than rely on already-occurring sites for sensation" (Manning 2013, 5). A shimmer is allied to the process of individuation, rather than the individual's thought; a thinking-doing. "A shimmering of individuation" (Barthes 2005, 47).

Twinklings are a form of shimmering, this time as *technique* of immediation. Immediation is a term that pushes against the idea of mediation — the idea that a subject that can stand outside of an occasion of experience and peer into it. A modality that resists mediation accounts for the *whole* of experience, including what is not readily perceived and categorized by the subject. Barthes: "Going out, evenings at dusk, sharply receiving tiny, perfectly futile details of street life"; the feeling of life, both as power (will to possess, will-to-pleasure), and as duration, lived time: "to fall into the infinitely futile becomes then so to speak the very grain of this vital duration" (ibid 47). Coupled with tact — defined as "ritual" or "formal constraint" — this futility becomes "the fabric of life." I would substitute 'tact' for 'technique,' following Erin Manning (2013). Twilight, Barthes notes, is when the feeling of life at its incipient edges is most active. "The urban dusk has a great power of crispness, of activation, it's almost a drug" (ibid 47). It is both night and day, but neither night nor day. It is felt transition.

To say that a shimmer is a 'felt' transition is a bit misleading. A shimmer is not a phenomenological event, despite how it is frequently allied to vision: As in Barthes' example, twilight is when vision is at its most unstable. Phenomenology is understood here to be the study of the world from the point of view of perception, or what is perceived. A philosophy of the event, however, acknowledges that the world is already worlding before the introduction of the stable 'I,' and far outstrips it. It is when the vision of day tips over into night, a transition of optical processes that confuse perception, preceding it. Vision becomes unruly, unreliable. I've heard that many car

accidents happen at twilight, the moment when the perception of colour is shifting, closest, I think, to what Barthes calls *grisaille:* Greying.

An example of *grisaille* is the diptych which is the *exterior* of Hieronymus Bosch's triptych *Garden of Earthly Delights* (circa 1490-1510). The two external panels, less known than the colourful scene of unholy debauchery contained within, are painted in *grisaille,* and depict the creation the world on the third day, in Christian mythology. Barthes notes that the painting, an altarpiece, would have been opened and displayed in its vivid and saturated glory for only the privileged few; what would have been more commonly viewed are the external (enclosing) panels. Viewed when the altarpiece is closed, they show two half-spheres with (more relatively) muted activity in shades reminiscent of twilight. If the vivid colours of the famous triptych are associated with wealth and power, then "[t]he Neutral is mythically associated if not with poverty, at least with no-money, with the non-pertinence of the riches/poverty opposition" (ibid 50).

What Barthes means is that the resolution of a final form into representational vividness is reserved for a position of privilege, but that the opposite of privilege is not necessarily *lack*. The Neutral is anoriginal to — as in, it exists *before* — this resolution (read: reduction) of difference to stable, hierarchical form. Not 'no-form,' the Neutral glints and glistens with potential, in the nuance of the minor (and minoritarian) variation. For Barthes, the greying of colour is then not the absence of colour, but all-over colour in potential to be any colour or no-colour. The Neutral

> [s]ubstitutes for the idea of opposition that of the slight difference, of the onset, of the effort toward difference, in other words, of nuance: nuance becomes a principle of allover organization (which covers the totality of the surface, as in the landscape of the triptych) that in a way skips the paradigm: this integrally and almost exhaustively nuanced space is the shimmer: the Neutral is the shimmer: that whose aspect, perhaps whose meaning, is subtly modified according to the angle of the subject's gaze" (ibid. 51).

The modification of the gaze of which Barthes speaks, I would add, is premised on the fact that the subject/object distinction is not stable. This distinction is a reduction from an ongoing process of becoming, an excising of what I refer to in Chapter One as the 'slanted *I'*, following Erin Manning (2023). To speak of the slanted *I* is to suggest that there is no stable 'I' that exists in the ongoing process of the world unfolding, and we with it. 'I' is only a reflexive construction of the self separated out from the world. The slanted *I,* with Manning, is an acknowledgement that there is much more to 'me' than the stilling frame of self- or external identification proceedings, which among many other problematics, are a narrative loadstone that we carry with us from one moment to the next. *Nuance*, an integral aspect of the Neutral, is the infinitesimal differencing of tonality on the cusp of noticing difference. In the concrescing of an occasion of experience, from the point of view of process, it is also the strategic refusal to engage with majoritarian logics… all before the organization of discreet sense perception and subject/object separation.

In her enlightening reading of Barthes on the subject of the Neutral, Lila Braunschweig outlines the stakes of the concept in relation to gender expression and assignation: that the 'paradigm' which Barthes struggles against in his project of defining the Neutral is the refusal of the imposition

of structures of meaning on the subject, through linguistic and symbolic frames alike. It is through these frames that "we understand the world," and through which, "structured in a series of oppositions and antagonisms, [*these frames*] *are used to make sense* of experiences, phenomena, people, and objects, amongst others" (Braunschweig 2024, 5, emphasis added).

In the case of gender identity, the Neutral rallies against the external "*will to situate* someone or something with respect to categorical differences"; a reality or positionality imposed from within and without alike (ibid., emphasis in original).

Braunschweig's claim is not that gender doesn't *matter*; it is that, with Judith Butler (2003) and others, that gender paradigms don't need to matter *quite so much*. With the addition of this nuance, she opens her field of inquiry outside of queer frames of performance and performativity to include broader ecologies. "There is hence a distinction from queer development on gender trouble and nonconforming experience. This distinction moves us from the question of who we are and what our bodily practices can be to the question of how to transform our social, material, institutional and relational arrangements in ways that reduce the tyrannical aspects of gender" (Braunschweig 2024, 10). I see Braunschweig's point not as a differentiation from current discussions in queer and trans* theory, but a reflection of a deep understanding of how identity fluxes with world. Neither Barthes nor Braunschweig advocate for a permanent suspension of meaning because they valourize the experience of the Neutral; so much meaning, after all, is tied to our idea of our 'self.' In any case, our need for words and symbols to parse experience will always reassert itself. Instead, what the two are doing is opening their understandings of art and identity to these categories' outsides, and the imposition of value.

The best example for how a concept of the Neutral — and the shimmers that evidence it — can be found in the speculative-pragamatic stakes of what it means to be gendered at all, in the realm of contemporary trans* theory. Following Jack Halberstam (2018), I place an asterisk after the word 'trans' in order to signal the open-ended potential of trans* and allied onto-epistemologies to the *otherwise*. Halberstam argues that in *trans*,* "the asterisk modifies the meaning of transitivity by refusing to situate transition in relation to destination, to final form, a specific shape, or an established configuration of desire and identity" (Halberstam 2018, 4). The antepositionality of the asterisk resonates deeply with the goal of this project, which is to elide both the appeal to final form of the artwork as object, and identity as stable and fixed. Trans* — with asterisk intact — represents a disidentification from the call to reduce the complexity of singularity and becoming to identity markers that preconstitute a stable 'I.' Trans* is allied, I believe, to the understanding that "[t]he practice of the Neutral hence operates on the underside of the norm, attempting to defeat the class for its reproduction with its own tools silently, not by channeling specific gender performances but by giving the fewest directions possible" (Braunschweig 2024, 13).

To this end, it is often from Eliza Steinbock's sustained encounter with *The Neutral* in their text *Shimmering Images* (2019) — an exemplary contemporary work of queer and trans* theory — that further investigations of the term depart, and, in the case of this project, from which vital

groundwork toward my own understanding of the concept of the shimmer has been laid. At the heart of their text is the pursuit of an account of trans* embodiment that courts the processual, disjunctive *and* conjunctive expressions of *transition* (they write, following Massumi and Whitehead, and implicitly, William James).

For Steinbock, the *shimmer* emerges as a form of temporary, luring expression through the medium of cinema, toward an ontological account of trans*ness before identity. Shimmering is Steinbock's "concept for *change in its emergent, flickering form*" (Steinbock 2019, 8, emphasis added). In their project, trans* shimmering plays with the technologies of cinema to schizz the mechanisms of visuality that fix subject and identity into a stable form. In trans* embodiment and cinematic practices alike, the examples of shimmering that they cite "have experimented with changing around the components to literally create new images that reintroduce shimmering into our line of vision" (ibid, 6). Shimmers exist in cinema, for Steinbock, in the black frames between light-filled images, reminding us that while the frames are constantly changing, visuality — the imperative to be counted — uses narrative as a means of constructing the subject across frames. As a practice of disjunction, trans* shimmering uncovers the "patterning" of light-as-image in the cinematic medium, a patterning which otherwise habituates "the identity of emergent or in-flux entities" to become "stilled into a unit fixed with meaning" (ibid, 8).

Steinbock deploys the concept of the shimmer in order to capacitate "new understandings [of] trans onto-epistemologies as emergent, affective, and processual," a natural alignment, I believe, with Halberstam's argument for trans* as an identity without closure (Steinbock 2019, 11). Steinbock argues that a study of the shimmer resides in the realm of aesthetics, working through the intervals to alight upon the minor tendencies in molar forms of trans* ontologies. 'Transition' becomes then a process or way, rather than a before or after of medicalized bodily becoming. "A theory of shimmering images uses concepts associated with formal, bodily aesthetics in place of less precise identity terms, such as male/female, masculine/feminine, man/woman, which falls short of grasping movement and cause 'grid lock,' to borrow a pun from Massumi" (ibid., 13). Shimmering represents a relation to "incipient subjectivity" where an account is drawn from a study of the affective valences evidenced by shimmers and their capacitation of bodily becoming, a becoming that, in Steinbock's project, dances between feminist new materialism and processual studies of affect.

To entertain a shimmer is to dance the line between the actual and the virtual, the truth and the powers of the false. "Film is a subset of animation," Steinbock asserts, following Alan Cholodenko (ibid., 15). They argue against historical narratives of transexual representation in films that centre on narratives of birth, gender transition, or death; instead, suggesting that "trans cinematic space offers a material means of achieving embodiment through cut and sutured images that are shot through with projections of desire," a form of special effect leading to a more-than-human trans* worlding (ibid., 17). With Mel Chen, they argue that "Transing practices within filmmaking seize on this displacement of the life and nonlife binary at work in all cinema to access a contingent, provisional modus for depicting trans animacies"; *animacies* being the "affective forces and

tendencies that map racialized live and dead zones, broadening the field of (non)human life" (ibid., 20). Through these shimmers, Steinbock can stage a critique of sex and gender practices in cinema and political life, in order to undo some of (heteronormative) life's constraints. Following Susan Stryker, trans* shimmering has the effect of eschewing the binaries of truth or falsity as it cues to verification by visuality. "Shimmering suspends epistemological disbelief" (ibid., 17).

I gratefully accept Steinbock's assertion that their project is driven by their own positionally as a scholar and individual to trans*-and-cinema concerns. They offer that their project leaves room for potential explorations "developing with many other audiovisual image examples attuned to the ways the form and content of differentiated bodies are made to shimmer" (Steinbock 2019, 3).

What the Neutral, trans* processes of becoming, and the shimmer all attempt to evade is what Massumi, with Deleuze and Guattari, call the "Man-Standard," or, "whiteness in person:"

> White*ness,* not white people, it is important to emphasize. By 'in person' they mean 'in and of itself,' as an abstract, yet effective category — effective, because it is not only *applied* to lives as the yardstick of their value, it is imposed on them in the imperative, as a norm a life is duty-bound to embody as definitive of its modern existence. One does not *have* an identity. One is identif*ied*, through application of a category and the superimposition of its normative mode on the shape of life" (Massumi 2025b, emphasis in original).

Through the concept of the Man-Standard, Massumi is showing that 'gender' is itself always held up and measured against the categories of Man and whiteness — in fact, it is an abstract category constitutive of one: Man. As a result, any definition of gender identity will face a losing battle in the arena delimited by this hierarchical and prescriptive category, played out, as they are, as variations upon a theme. Terms that define genders other than 'Man' act in diminishing iterations in its *ur*-shadow. Critically, it is not only women or the gender non-conforming who fall under the troubling rubric of the Man-Standard: the Standard also includes "the intersecting Adult-Child, Straight-Gay, White-Black, and Human-Animal binaries, where the first term in each pair coincides with Man, and the second term deviates from it in its own contrastive way" — amongst others (Massumi 2025b). Rather than be insulated by this exclusionary logic, the negation at the heart of this exercise *begins* with the concept of 'Man' himself: alien and alienated from any of the other abstract Categories that the Man-Standard deigns to represent, the alienation from sociality and relation is so complete that the category excludes itself. Which is not to say that the effects and affects of this dangerous Standard are not real, in the virtual and actual alike.

Key to an understanding of the Man-Standard is that 'gender' and 'sex' occupy different strata of reality. Gender, Massumi argues, is a category of one; whereas, *n sex*, following Deleuze and Guattari, is a collection of singularities, where every instantiation of sex-expression is in, for, and of itself. If gender identification is always already a matter of being *identified*, sex and sexuality operate under a different schema: the sexual object, Massumi writes, "operates as a lure for a set of repeated bodily connections, relational postures, calls-and-responses and associated intensities

whose cyclic refrain constitutes a self-constructing existential territory" — (a "repeat destination patterning a life") — "expressing immanent forces of self-formation" (ibid.). Like identity, the sexual drive is not stable, however, and the resulting variations on "what a body can be" (or do), based on the call-and-response of a body in desiring-relation, will constitute a singular sex of *one*; not alone, but in multiplicity: *one* and *one* and *one* and… "a kind of one."

To take the concepts of trans* becoming, the Neutral (as an anoriginary force), and the shimmer seriously is to understand as well that there is no clear doxa outlining what differentiates the Man-Standard from anything else. For the last forty years, queer theory has striven to carve out a space for alterity against the heteronorm, which is in part why Barthes' science of nuance feels like an important place from which to launch this thesis. Whilst nominally, the subject of this thesis is the flourishing of shimmers contained in *Goodnight Moon*, by scratching below the surface, I hope the reader will note that almost every argument applied to this remarkable master-piece *also* applies to queer techniques of survival and flourishing. To move through this document without explicitly naming "queer strategies" as such, I (paradoxically) employ a queer strategy of underorientation to the norm; a subtle shifting away from the practice of naming. Nevertheless, these underorientations

> …murmur in the background. They continue to teem. They are legion. Their name is potential. They are the potential for other forms of life, not yet fully emerged. They inhabit a body. No body is without them. Each body's infestation of them defines its singularity, counter-current to its dominant identification, and in a continual challenge to its particular take on the general model in force […] These are the forces of 'contamination,' pulling a body in directions oriented away from the assigned Standard category onto whose spectrum it has been inducted. They are the powers of queering (Massumi 2025b).

A significant claim that this thesis will make is that part of what makes *Goodnight Moon* so successful 77 years after its publication is that in the book and its milieu, the distinction between the 'Adult' and the 'Child' falls away, leading to a becoming-child of the nighttime story, a "childhood of the world." In this thesis, I borrow from Deleuze to distinguish between the term *the* child and *a* child, in order to show that one of the speculatively queer operative gestures in *Goodnight Moon* is that, unlike most 'writing for children,' Margaret Wise Brown doesn't address or write to the general category of 'The Child.' Against the Man-Standard, *a* child — a specious, non-restrictive category — begins to worry at the edges of the norms of what we think *the* child to be. Within this line of questioning, the Man-Standard begins to tremble with the desiring-call of "again, again!" for this nighttime story, as it activates a *different* storying-worlding event. As with the difference between trans* practices of embodiment and becoming, and the Man-Standard, rather than work in a Category of one — the Adult — where the child is simply the unfulfilled promise of a Categorical norm, the 'A' in *a* child represents a refusal to adhere to a trajectory oriented to "destination, to final form, a specific shape, or an established configuration of desire and identity" (ibid.).

The book, nighttime ritual, master-piece, and philosophical experiment that is *Goodnight Moon* is a mode of life. A *mode of life* is the way that shimmering potential can be channeled, harnessed, oriented this way or that, to stupendous or deleterious effect. In the case of *Goodnight Moon*, that effect is surely good. "The self-inventive self-affirmation of one mode of life enables and emboldens others, often variations on itself, to move toward the threshold of appearance to fashion a sustainable existential territory for itself" (Massumi 2025b). The Categories tremble… and *Goodnight Moon* certainly trembles many a Category; and from there, they proliferate in series of storying-worlding events. "The category shimmers with a differential bundle of infra-orientations vying for expression. What appeared as a singularity, and was accommodated as a particular, proves itself a seething multiplicity" (ibid.).

Here, the concept of *n sex* as expressed in trans* becoming and the concept of *a* child begin to sidle alongside each other. My introduction of the Shimmer began with an outline of Barthes' concept of the Neutral, and the science of nuance. It tracked the concepts of the Neutral and the shimmer through recent trans* theoretical projects, as allied to the process- and affect-thinking that motor my own project. Nevertheless, *Goodnight Moon* is not a work of art that would fall into the category of the trans* art cannon. How is it, then, that I could make a connection between trans* life and the project of *Goodnight Moon*? The mention of transition, the amodal, and the queer strategies that are contained within the storybook *Goodnight Moon* are not accidental. In other words, there is a reason that I have deployed these definitions of trans* shimmerings at the start of this project, despite that, as with queerness, this is not (nominally) what the project is about. To make this claim would be to betray my argument that the potency of the concept of trans* becoming is that it is in relation, outside of stable Categorical form-taking.

Goodnight Moon does, however, model a mode of existence allied to the otherwise, which bears more than a passing similarity to the heterogenetic stakes addressed by Massumi, Halberstam, and Steinbock: that, with Massumi, "the 'object' of desire is what stands for the terminus toward which an attraction pulls." A terminus is William James' term for the *aim* of a process unfolding toward actualization; but one that is almost out of reach. Less an 'object' of desire, a terminus lures a process forward toward its actualization. The terminus is "a set of bodily connections, relational postures, gestures, calls-and-responses and associate intensities, toward which and through a life cycles, with an in-felt urge to repeat the exercises (in other words, the terminus is the attractor governing a 'drive')" (ibid.).

With Massumi, this is not to suggest that the expression of *n sex,* allied to trans* becoming, and the process of transition in gender affirmation can be fully separated-out. *Of course* the right to self-expression through gender affirmation should be inalienable; but invoking the *right* to self-affirmation demonstrates a different set of pressures on processes that come to bare upon the different modes of expression. 'Rights,' a (sometimes necessary) liberal social construct, operate in a very different milieu than the potential for differentiation allied to the lure of *n sex*. Similarly, that *Goodnight Moon* is a children's book, published for children, housed in children's libraries and gifted (by the million) at baby showers is not in dispute, here. What is being asserted, however,

is that *Goodnight Moon* has managed a queering of the form of children's literature, childhood pedagogy, and the architecting of the nighttime ritual by trembling the Categories in which each topic resides. As with the difference between having transitioned (transitioning across gender binaries) and trans*, the distinction is necessarily and *strategically* unclear: "[t]hat qualitative difference relates to the singular history and manner of each body's transition as it continues to inform its life, infra-to its life changes. In short, the official category is worked from within to accommodate lived difference" (ibid.). Strategically unclear; an unclassifiable difference: "Again, again!"

This thesis, throughout, strives to tremble the Categorical thinking that presupposes *Goodnight Moon* to be a 'book for children.' It is a master-piece, an educational experiment, a play with how language takes flight, an uncanny understanding of *a* child, a masterful deployment of a diagramming technique producing a semblance of the real in art, a storying-worlding event. The book is singular, and in its singularity, is generative of multiplicities. What I mean is that for 77 years, the book has continued to shimmer the fields in which it swims to something-extra effect; luring *a* child and their guardian alike (and *a* child and their guardian and *a* child and their guardian…) to the twilight hours of half-light, where shimmers abound.

As a master-piece, *Goodnight Moon* harnesses the chromaticism of *grisaille,* as the day tips over to night. *Grisaille* is not no-colour; it is not the opposite of colour, colour's impoverishment. It is chromaticism's potential *across* the senses, when the primacy of vision's hold on the subject is weakened. "Just as the chromaticism of the colour spectrum is not itself colour, so too the spectrum of potential of which every sex and gendering is a selective expression itself has not particular sex or gender" (ibid.). This chromaticism before placement on the spectrum of colour, and techniques for artfulness and life, are what this thesis is about.

Further up, and further in!

Spiral One: *Goodnight Moon* (Book)

1. Beginning at the end, with a high-kick

Goodnight Moon is one of the great artworks of the 20th century.

Goodnight Moon is 30 pages. The format of its pages vary: Some have text; some have images; and some have images *and* text. Some of the images are composed of the colours red, green, blue, and yellow; their tints and tones; some are in black and white; and some are in greyscale. Some of the pages have text inset into the picture plane, like a comic book, and some have text set outside of the images. Page 23, remarkably, has text which wishes "Goodnight" to "nobody." 'Nobody' is represented by an empty field.

For six months in 1934, Gertrude Stein criss-crossed America in a "triumphant" 74-lecture tour. A long-time admirer was in attendance at the first stop, a 500-person lecture at the Brooklyn Academy of Music: a young woman named Margaret Wise Brown. The charismatic Brown was, at the time, searching for purpose following her graduation from college, living in Manhattan with the financial assistance of her industrialist father while working odd jobs. In her journals, Wise Brown expressed her great admiration for how Stein employed rhythm to "write of many people without cutting them off from the grandparents who were once children whose parents produced them and from the flow of life that goes on about them and that went before them and that will go on after them" (journals of Wise Brown quoted in Marcus 1992, 40).

Shortly thereafter, in 1935, still unsure of what to make of herself, Wise Brown joined the Bank Street School, an experimental teaching academy run by Lucy Sprague Mitchell in New York City. In Bank Street, she entered into a novel pedagogical environment that would change the direction of her life.

Margaret Wise Brown's biographer, Leonard S. Marcus, describes Bank Street as "unique in the United States as a place where the three distinct functions of development research, teacher training, and nursery-led education […] had been thoroughly integrated. The school's organizational scheme was itself an expression of one of the most fundamental principles of Bank Street's educational philosophy, that of 'relationship thinking,' the notion that understanding is enhanced whenever the individual elements of a question are seen in relation to each other and to the larger whole" (Marcus 1992, 45). What made this theory of early childhood education radical was its emphasis on the importance of direct, lived experience — *relation* — as the core of childhood development. Marcus notes that Sprague Mitchell, in 1900, had a sustained encounter with William James, both as a student and due to the fact he was a friend of the family she was staying with.

It is here, as early as 1898, that Sprague Mitchell's interest in the direct experience of children began. This was almost exactly when Gertrude Stein was in William James' orbit; and shows that his work in the field of psychology, including his public lectures entitled *Talks to Teachers* of that year, left an impression on both. "James argued that the mental growth of children was certain to be advanced by regular exposure to non-cerebral, firsthand experiences such as manual work with different tools and materials, play with a variety of toys, and exploratory trips outside the classroom" (ibid., 49). Perhaps uncoincidentally, to her peers, the young Mitchell was remembered "as one of the chief campus troublemakers; Gertrude Stein had been another" (ibid., 88).

Goodnight Moon is a "cunning transparency" of Bank Street's ideas, I believe, because it achieves its artfulness *as a transcendence* of those educational ideas. *Goodnight Moon* is artful. Artfulness in the semblance of a children's book; and in that semblance — or artful expression — the work expresses a singularity entirely of its own accord, giving lie to the notion that any work of art might be produced according to formula.

What makes a master-piece? What makes identity? How does the making of identity correlate to Gertrude Stein's concept, as she articulates it, of 'genius' — the ability to "talk and listen" at the same time, an exceedingly rare event? This chapter will outline Stein's definition of a master-piece (a spelling that I will maintain in order to indicate that it is a concept rather than a turn-of-phrase) and how the making of a master-piece cannot occur without the suspension of the narration of form, narration of identity, or narration of how a work-of-art comes to know itself (and be known). In its undercurrents, this chapter will enter into the milieu of process philosophy in order to ask how this mode of accounting for the world might aid in an undoing of those calcifications of the same problems — identity, art — to imagine a queer worlding otherwise.

The event of a master-piece, as Stein writes it, is exceedingly rare. It cannot be *in* time; it must be *out* of it. If a work is described as 'time*ly*', then it most certainly is not a master-piece, because it is narrating a moment in time, it is self-conscious of its place in time's flow, moving along with it. Stein, here, is alongside a history of the philosophy of the event that might be traced through her encounters with Alfred North Whitehead and William James. Stein's thinking might be felt *forward* in its similarities with the work of Deleuze and Guattari, and contemporary process-oriented philosophy exemplified by Erin Manning and Brian Massumi. In the middle, it is impossible to ignore the fact that the work was produced shortly after Susanne Langer's *Philosophy in a New Key* (1942) and before *Feeling and Form (*1953). The impact and entanglement of these philosophical movements, Gertrude Stein's writing and lectures, and how they inflect those nascent threads of what might be called "identity" through Margaret Wise Brown's master-piece is of the subject of this thesis.

One point of entry to this project, then, is to think about how experience is crafted in the ongoing re-enactment of *Goodnight Moon* in art, pedagogical environments, in popular culture, and most significantly, during the event of the bedtime story (with all of its singular *and* generic associated rituals and calls-to-attention). One marker of what makes *Goodnight Moon* remarkable

is that it endures! As a master-piece, it impersonally expresses *through* the personal bed-time story. It's a technique of existence in the here-and-now. Process philosophy tells us that no event can be mapped in advance.

This chapter will explore the making of a master-piece, and its relation to identity from the point of view of Gertrude Stein's 1935 argument on the subject. It will encounter the concept of 'immediation' by Brian Massumi and Erin Manning in relation to Stein's concept of the master-piece; namely, how immediation might be a mode of entering the event-time of *Goodnight Moon*: not in a linear account of, say, the bedtime story; but in how the work skips across the notion of an 'event' by challenging habit. Finally, in her writing 'Portraits and Repetition,' Stein works against narrative and portraiture in a way that is faithful to Marcus's account of the unsentimentality of *a* life lived well, which encapsulates the concepts of the 'impersonal' and '*a* life' as advanced by Gilles Deleuze, and built upon by Erin Manning in her proposition of the slanted '*I.*' It is here, in the middle, that the question of how *a* life might begin to speculatively shimmer against the force of habit — in queerness as well as in *Goodnight Moon* and the ritual of the bedtime story — might find some purchase.

Margaret Wise Brown was born in Greenpoint, Brooklyn on May 23rd, 1910. 42 years later, she died performing a high-kick in a hospital in France. She had been in recovery from an emergency surgery. To demonstrate her vigour, she jumped up and let her limb fly. A blood clot dislodged from her leg, causing an aneurysm which killed her near-instantaneously.

There are two authoritative biographies of Brown; generally, I prefer to cite from the earlier *Margaret Wise Brown: Awakened By the Moon* by Leonard S. Marcus (1992). In its introduction, of her life and death, Marcus writes:

> Margaret, always something of a fatalist, had often remarked that becoming a children's author had been an accident of sorts. Her early death, sad as it was, simply happened.
>
> This point bears emphasis because Margaret's own approach to children's literature — and to living — was so bravely unsentimental. Her books have an underlying emotional tautness and honesty about them that is both salutary and raw. They express a clear-eyed respect for the young that both children and adults immediately recognize […] She never gave up on growing up. Not least of all for that reason, she was among the most memorable of people (Marcus 1992, 5).

Marcus, an expert on children's books and illustrations, and a professor of children's literature, demonstrates in this passage that to be "memorable" is not to be sentimental about the identity of a person. This is not to say that a *story* of a person might not be memorable; but it is by the texture of their encounter with the world — or, more precisely, how the world and a particular (as Arakawa and Gins would put it) 'organism that persons' coincides with and co-effectuates a shimmering enchantment to whomever or whatever is caught in that passing event's weft. Margaret Wise Brown is often associated with a "child-like wonder;" this wonderment, however, is indicative of

the angle on experience a truly singular personage often takes; this wide-eyed curiosity, as a mode of perception, stands out against that durational, quotidian rubbing-out of excitement that is so characteristic of the human aging process. *Habit* and *habituation* set in for all of us as we 'mature,' such that when this appetite for excitation hasn't been worn out, we take notice.

So, Margaret Wise Brown died performing a high-kick. It is the fact that Leonard Marcus recognizes the spectacular nature of her death, without making a spectacle of it, that I have chosen to rely on his account of her life (and his exhaustive research of it) as the primary source of biographical information on *Goodnight Moon*'s author.

2. Master-Piece as Technique of Immediation

In 1936 at Oxford University, following the success of her *Lectures in America* tour, Gertrude Stein delivered the lecture "What are Master-Pieces and Why Are There So Few of Them." In the writing, Stein's brilliance and self-awareness — despite that she argues self-awareness carries the remarkable capacity to trip genius up in its place — is dazzling in its display. The essay-cum-lecture is bookended by two statements: The latter, noted almost as if it were a passing thought, is that a master-piece, no matter how artfully constructed in isolation, is always inflected by its encounter with audience. Though a master-piece is often constructed *before* its encounter with a public, its force in the world only begins in earnest once it has entered into it, and at that point, it has little to do with its creator:

> When you are writing before there is an audience anything is written is as important as any other thing and you cherish anything and everything that you have written. After the audience begins, naturally they create something that is they create you, and so not everything is so important, something is more important than another thing, which was not true when you were you that is when you were not you as your little dog knows you (Stein 1998b, 363).

I understand this to mean that an artwork, as a nascent lure for feeling, before its immediation in the world beyond the walls of the studio or writing desk, has a kind of general potential, carrying a Spinozan capacity to affect and be affected. Once encountering audience, a work's activation alongside feeling makes it tremble in ways that its creator cannot anticipate. So, too, does the creator's identity: both their own self-perception, as well as that which is co-constituted with audience, wherein the singular force making a work becomes the work's 'author,' a semblance of a figure that is alien to the figure of the lived experience of one's "little dog" recognizing that author. An audience, as it both creates the work and the author simultaneously, is both *experiencing* the work, whilst engaging in an act of secondary creation, in the form of retrospective *narrative of the event as it will have come to pass* — in an echoing, and thus impoverished way. Each echo, generally speaking, furnishes diminishing returns on a faithful reenactment of the original event's lived importance, as well as from the event of the work and its reading. An audience member's ensuing account of their experience enfolds the narrative of the work, a narrative of the identity of the author, and an experience of themselves being moved by the work and the author, in the event.

The "thing that the audience creates" is in fact an ever-widening reverberation of the event itself. In most cases, a reverberation of both diminishing intensity and calcifying identity — in that the stories told simplify and harden in their simple facticity — which is often described as 'clarity.'

An artwork is an event. While throughout this thesis, I will refer to *Goodnight Moon* as a book, by its images, by its poetry, and by other terms, it is critical to establish that *Goodnight Moon* holds the place of a storying-worlding event. To experience the work is to be in immediation with it. Brian Massumi writes that the "term 'immediation' is a way of drawing attention to the *event* as the primary unit of the real. The idea is that whatever is real makes itself felt in some way, and whatever makes itself felt has done so as part of an event" (Massumi 2015, 147, emphasis added). To lose the activity of immediation within the event is to lose what Erin Manning, following Bergson, calls the *élan vital* — literally, 'vital momentum' — of creativity in-act. "*Élan vital* is the affective turn the world takes when it folds the many into one, and the one into many. Time's totality is felt here as pressure, as rhythm. Creativity is made at this interstice" (Manning 2022, 78). Slipping out of this pressured, minor event space/time is to concurrently engage in processes of subjectivation; that is, how majoritarian forces in the world at large orient toward the manufacture of the subject.

The second and earlier statement that bookends "What Are Master-Pieces and Why Are There So Few Of Them" is that for Stein, when a master-piece enters into 'relation,' it stills. Recognition and identification work against creativity and the concept of immediation. In mere recognition, the event loses much of its capacity to speculate.

> Identity is recognition, you know who you are because you and others remember anything about yourself but essentially you are not that when you are doing anything. I am I because my little dog knows me but, creatively speaking the little dog knowing that you are you and your recognizing that he knows, that is what destroys creation. That is what makes school (Stein 1998b, 355).

From the beginning, in this reading of a prepared text, Stein creates a differentiation between the tradition of oration and that of the recitation of a prepared work (a fact that has direct and interesting effects on performance theory, and how performance engages the archive). In oration, identity permeates the work retrospectively: "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 purposes of creating you" (Stein 1998b, 356). To draw these concepts together, what she means by this is that in moments of self-reflection during the act of creation, the creator loses their sense of immediation in the act of creation — both of the work and of themselves — and instead, becomes aware of them-self in the act of making, losing their immersion in the process itself.

Stein continues, "[t]his is so important because it has so much to do with the question of a writer to his audience. One of the things that I discovered in lecturing was that gradually one ceased to hear what one said one heard what the audience hears one say" (ibid., 356). The orator, aware of their role and identity, is no longer immersed in the process of creating meaning; instead, they

are performing themself. They become retrospectively aware of the audience's reception of what is meant, the efficacy and accuracy of their interpretation during the act of speaking, and the consequent production of a retrospective narration of the meaning made.

This is not to say that immediation is without concern for time's passing, or out of time: it is just that in the in-act of creation, "[t]here is no general reference to the past. There's a singular inclusion of the past in oncoming activity" (Massumi 2015a, 147). In the case of oratory or performance, according to Stein, when the orator comes to self-awareness in the midst of their delivery, not only does what is meant to be expressed become tailored to the interpretation and (forthcoming) retrospective narration by an audience; the work and artist's self-awareness in the presence of even a *hypothetical* audience — and their anticipative interpretation and the resulting co-production of meaning — amplifies and corrupts, in a recursive amplification of the creator's awareness of self-and-other. "[T]hat," Stein argues, "is the reason that oratory is practically never a master-piece very rarely and very rarely history, because history deals with people who are orators who hear not what they are not what they say but what their audience hears them say" (Stein 1998b, 356). Against immediation, this retrospection is the risk of the *general* thinking about the past, rather than an inclusion of the forces of the past in the present moment: "Immediation is more inclusive of the past than a reflective or general thinking about it, because it is the *force* of the past — where it is potentially heading beyond itself, as a function of its own momentum meeting the singularity of a new arising. Immediation is the past bumping against the future in the present" (Massumi 2015a, 147-148, emphasis in original).

A further precision on how the concept of immediation facilitates a way of thinking time in relation to the event, rather than as a retrospective fact, is offered by Erin Manning, in conversation with Brian Massumi: "[O]ne of the things immediation as a concept does is emphasize the nonlinearity of the time of the event, or what I sometimes call event-time. Event-time emphasizes time's affective force, in the event. This affective force is laden with both pastness and futurity, but in a way that is singularly active in the *now* of experience" (ibid., 148, emphasis added). This "now" of experience is what Stein calls, in 'Composition as Explanation,' "the continuous present," which is the "time of composition": a specious present, without the past and future separated out (Stein 1998a, 520-529). This time is palpable as the day tips into night, in the shimmering modality of twilight.

3. The Relation of Non-Relation

"And so always it is true that the master-piece has nothing to do with human nature or with identity, it has to do with the human mind and the entity that is to say with a thing in itself and not in relation" (Stein 1998b, 358). It might seem that Stein, when she argues that when a work enters relation, it stills, is arguing *against relation,* were it not for that her own thought was deeply integrated with that of both Alfred North Whitehead and William James. In keeping with Massumi's speculative pragmatism, the radical empiricism of James, the process philosophy of Whitehead and Manning alongside Deleuze and Guattari, Stein is not arguing against relation as the world's mode of

existence, but against '*simple* relation,' or what Massumi succinctly puts as the "romanticism of connection" (Massumi 2011, 84). Instead, she appears to follow James in advocating for continuity *and* discontinuity, prolonging the "speculative investment" of terms and relations (James quoted in Massumi 2011, 86). Her use of the word 'relation,' then, in this text refers to a *simple* relation; whereas a work of art and its concurrent forging of techniques of relation exists for its own speculative self-enjoyment.

The romanticism of connection that Massumi describes is already a second-order event; a narrative simplification and overlay of a complex processual event coming-to-expression, without the mass of tensions, contradictions, deaths and births of a process in-formation. "Something that is continuous with itself is so precisely because it detaches its activity from the outside it absolutely lives-in" (ibid., 84). Thus, for Stein, the lethal combination of "identity" and "time" can quickly saturate a work, arresting it in its heteropoetic becoming upon its encounter with the two. A master-piece engaged with "the human mind and the *entity that is with a thing in itself* and not in relation" elides the simple relation and repetition of what will become the soothing, but false narration of "anybody's personality," or what Whitehead calls "simple location," the myth that something or someone can be pulled out of existence and isolated as a discreet entity without concern for its surrounds (Stein 1998b, 293). "[W]ith the denial of simple location we must admit that within any region of space-time the innumerable multitude of these physical things are in a sense superposed. Thus the physical fact at each region of space-time is a composition of what the physical entities throughout the Universe mean for that region" (Whitehead 1967, 158). The master-piece, here, carries for Stein the monadic *semblance* — a term which will be further developed in Spiral Three — of meaning, without concern for the timely or for the narration of personal history. The work is alive with the intensity of the virtual. 'Intensity,' here, is Massumi's term for the "immanent affirmation of a process, in its own terms" (Massumi 2011, 84). The work is charged with a pent-up potential: life.

A work's tendency — its "performed self-referencing to other states, past and potential" — is its crackling and shimmering process of a feeling-thinking-survey of its potential to act, and be acted upon. Tendency "*feels* itself, catches itself in the relational act. And in some sense, not yet separable from this feeling, nonsensuously *thinks* itself. This is what Whitehead calls 'prehension' and Deleuze calls 'contemplation'" (ibid., 85, emphasis in original). In fact, it is not the work's self-enjoyment that Stein is concerned will trip it up; it is its encounter with cognition, or the narration of its activity, interrupting its capacity to *world*. When — or if — the work becomes a product, a situation where "use-oriented or behavioural focus on the flow of action translates the immanent overlap of experiences into an external relay from one action to the next," it moves into the realm of narrative capture and a process of simplification (ibid., 66). Stein's concern is for the situation where the work's capacity for immanent relation is "overlaid by the appearance of actual connection," pace Massumi (ibid., 66).

In a process where the capacity for relation decomposes, *interaction* supplants full-spectrum relation. The environments within which a work *works* are 'collectivities' that "include the human in its co-composing with the non-human," what Manning terms the 'more-than-human' (Manning quoted in Massumi 2015a, 149). To attune to how fields of relation agitate, then, is to (at minimum!) resist the call to centre a human — and their identity — in the situation of a work in event-time. This can be done by attending to modes of perception that are 'non-sensuous,' Whitehead's term for experience before sense-perception, but which are nevertheless real. While taken from a different perspective, Stein and Massumi converge on a similar point, with Manning, which is that, "consciousness is the poor cousin of experience as yet unparsed, in the scintillations of the force of form" (Manning 2025, 42):

> The privileging of sense-perception tends to lead us directly to human subjectivity — to a subjective notion of memory as founding human subjectivity. If we begin there, with the subject, with sensuous perception, with subjective memory, we begin much later in the account. Rather than seeing how the immanent event creates an emergent ecology, and then becoming interested in what this emergent ecology can do (how it expresses itself, how it is proto-political, etc.), we take the human as a given and ask what it is doing in the event (Manning quoted in Massumi 2015a, 149).

Returning to Stein, I am arguing here that relation is a critical concern in the composition of a master-piece; just not *simple* relation, but the 'relation of non-relation;' a form of creative practice which "activates the shape of enthusiasm, open writing itself to a drift that reorients the territory of the 'we.' For in this kind of writing, the 'we' is continuously replaced by the relation of non-relation, the more-than of the iteration, in the not-quite sayable of its ineffability, opening language to its prearticulation" (Manning 2011, 91).

In advocating a form of continuous-present of a relation of non-relation, it can be argued that Stein's craft carries an affective and speculative edge, in its accounting for time and relation outside of the calcified subject. This is so important that it is near-impossible to consider her definition of a master-piece and its creation without accounting for those processes vital to experience. The 'simple connection' of a false and soothing narration "occurs on an instrumental level forgetful of the non-sensuous perception at the heart of all experience. The virtual continuity *in* the gaps is arced over by what purported to be an actual continuity *across* the gaps. The monadic discontinuity between drops of experience is bridged over by a sense of interactivity that functionally passes over it, which is to say, passes it over" (ibid., 66). Simple relation, rather than process philosophy/speculative pragmatism/radical empiricism.

4. Immanence, *A* Life

Here, the master-piece and 'identity' begin to approach one and other. What I am calling 'normative time,' and Stein calls the 'timely,' is essential in the construction of identity. Stein's argument is that for a work to be 'timely' it cannot be a master-piece, because it is created in the remembrance and recognition of itself *of* a particular time. Similarly, identity is created by the

recognition-through-remembering of the self (often aided by the gaze of others) with the aid of time. According to Stein, identity stops the creation of master-pieces. Identity, caught in the act of being *in* time, or at best *timely*, is not able to forget time without forgetting itself. A master-piece can only be created in conditions outside of time: 'reality.' To make a master-piece, then, is both to forget the self and forget time. "If you do not keep remembering yourself you have no identity and if you have no identity and if you have no time you do not keep remembering yourself and as you remember yourself you do not create" (Stein 1998b, 361).

"One has no identity that is when one is in the act of doing anything. Identity is recognition, you know who you are because you and others remember anything about yourself but essentially you are not that when you are doing anything" (ibid., 355). When doing something, we are creating/worlding. The little dog knows you, and thus you are you, but it is worth repeating that "creatively speaking the little dog knowing that you are you and your recognizing that he knows, that is what destroys creation. *That is what makes school*" (ibid., 355, emphasis added). The pairing of the little dog and creation into disciplinarian and pupil is familiar. What Stein is suggesting when she argues that the moment of encounter with a 'mere' dog stills creation is that in the naughty leap to kiss the 'master,' a retroactive forging of identity is initiated. Before the recognition of the immediate encounter or territorializing spark that forms identity via recursive recognition of the self *as such* — including the dog bounding up, tail wagging; or sniffing excitedly at the crack between floor and door — it is only *entity* that is propelled along the event of encounter (or wave-crest of experience) by the little dog's feelings of excitement and anticipation. The secondary engagement of *recognition* of (what was) the encounter between *a* dog and the subject of its (presumed) affection retroactively codifies. "There are so few [master-pieces] because mostly people live in identity and memory that is when they think. They know they are they because their little dog knows them, *and so they are not an entity but an identity*" (ibid., 359-60, emphasis added). Does a dog recognize the *identity* of its companion, or the *entity* — read *event* — of coming warmth, pets, food, walks? Critically: is the intervention of *recognition* in the immediation of open-ended experience — an example that unfairly burdens the poor dog in Stein's lecture — actually a *memory* of the self, aided by the recognition of the self through the eyes of others? In this case, the poor dog's? One's capacity to speculatively create in event time, rather than normative time, in the slip from entity to identity is so thoroughly compromised that the capacity to invent a "master-piece" is essentially *nil*.

Stein's theory of 'entity' does not preclude a human hand; it is just that the account of creation and creativity does not start with it. If, in order to create, some other mode of being in relation is required; a theory of immediation in event-time must account from where experience takes its form — everything that resides in the world that is outside of objects and subjects. In his late essay "Immanence: A Life," Deleuze posits the 'transcendental field' as that which "can be distinguished from experience in that it doesn't refer to an object or belong to a subject (empirical representation). It appears therefore as a pure stream of a-subjective consciousness, a pre-reflexive impersonal

consciousness, a qualitative duration of consciousness without a self" (Deleuze 2001, 25). The transcendental field is before, around, and throughout the 'infra' of consciousness and the consciousness of sensation. It differs from sensation — what Deleuze calls "simple empiricism," because "sensation is only a break within the flow of absolute consciousness" (ibid., 25).

Perhaps part of *Goodnight Moon's* success might be attributed to the fact it does not presume to know where consciousness in its storying-worlding event lies. Leonard Marcus argues that it "was able to convey, as well as anyone has, a young child's liquid view of the world as a place both near at hand and vast beyond measure, toy bright yet shadow tinged, comfortingly familiar yet at times also fantastically strange" (Marcus 1997, 14). At Bank Street, Sprague Mitchell's 'Here and Now' school espoused the idea that children's nursery books had much more to offer a young child in the magic of their surrounds than an abstracted fairy tale. Marcus follows this description with a second, interesting fact: "In one of those apparently effortless creative acts that comes of a lifetime of preparation, Brown set down the text of *Goodnight Moon* in nearly finished form on awaking one morning in early 1945. The mercurial author who told friends that she 'dreamt' her books seems in this instance to have literally done so. She called the new book *Goodnight Room"* (Marcus 1997, 14-15).

In principle, the transcendental field is tied to consciousness. "Consciousness becomes a fact only when a subject is produced at the same time as its object, both being outside the field and appearing as "transcendents" (Deleuze 2001, 26). Consciousness traverses the transcendental field at infinite speed — and the transcendental field cannot be defined by consciousness because it is "coextensive with it." In other words, the transcendental field is evidenced — though not revealed — through consciousness' coextensive relation-in-principle to it, and consciousness' actualization through transcendence, when a subject is produced at the same time as its object. "[Consciousness] is expressed, in fact, only when it is reflected on a subject that refers it to objects" (ibid., 26). The transcendental field itself cannot be revealed by consciousness; or revealed at all. "Were it not for consciousness, the transcendental field would be defined as a pure plane of immanence, because it eludes all transcendence of the subject and of the object" (ibid., 26).

"Absolute immanence is in itself: it is not in something, *to* something; it does not depend on an object or belong to a subject" (ibid., 26). Deleuze follows Spinoza in the claim that "substance and modes are *in* immanence" (emphasis added), rather than immanence being in service to one or the other. Immanence is not a (Kantian) transcendental idea; it is not a template or a goal: "No more than the transcendental field is defined by consciousness can the plane of immanence be defined by a subject or an object that is able to contain it … [I]t is only when immanence is no longer imagined to anything other than itself that we can speak of a plane of immanence. No more than the transcendental field is defined by a subject or object that is able to contain it" (ibid., 27).

"We will say of pure immanence that it is A LIFE, and nothing else. It is not immanence to life, but the immanent that is in nothing is itself a life. A life is the immanence of immanence, absolute immanence: it is complete power, complete bliss" (ibid, 27). Reading Johann Fichte, Deleuze

argues that Fichte "presents the transcendental field as *a life*, no longer dependent on a Being or submitted to an Act — it is an absolute immediate consciousness whose very activity no longer refers to a being but is ceaselessly posed in a life. The transcendental field then becomes a genuine plane of immanence," in the spirit of Spinozan philosophical process (ibid., 27-28). He continues, "beneath the transcendence of effort, [there is] an absolute immanent life. The transcendental field is defined by a plane of immanence, and the plane of immanence by a life" (ibid., 28).

To touch on *a* life is to feel the pull of immanent life-living at the cusp of the personal as it crests into the impersonal. "*A* life" can be described "if we take the indefinite article as an index of the transcendental" (ibid., 28). The impersonal is that which is before and after, in the surrounds, in the absolute survey of subjectivity across the transcendental field of becoming in advance of its singularization in *a* life. The impersonal sutures the transcendental field with the survey of consciousness across it. Consciousness, revealed only when a subject is produced at the same time as its object, appears as a transcendent. "Were it not for consciousness, the transcendental field would be defined as a pure plane of immanence, because it eludes all transcendence of the subject and of the object" (ibid., 26). The transcendental field is evidenced — though not revealed — through consciousness' coextensive relation-in-principle to it, and consciousness' actualization through transcendence, when a subject is produced at the same time as its object.

5. Repetition and Insistence

In 'Portraits and Repetition,' Gertrude Stein claims that from generation to generation, "[t]he thing that is important is the way that portraits of men and women and children are written, by written I mean made. And by made I mean felt. Portraits of men and women and children are differently felt in every generation and by generation one means period of time" (Stein 1998b, 287). Through the experience of movement, a semblance of life in art can be made, motored by what Stein will call "insistence" through the variation of emphasis of the unique aspects of a personality, so accurately as to produce a likeness of them. Stein outlines the need for a new form of portraiture — what I will expand to say "image-making" — claiming that an American way of life that is so rapid, so full of movement that the passing of generations (as a marker of identity or as a categorical scheme) may not be necessary.

She argues that in fact there is really no such thing as simple repetition. Modes of written representation, from detective novels to journalistic reportage, might have the same theme, and often the same scene, but "the kind of invention that is necessary to make a general scheme is very limited in everybody's experience"; more important is the ability to apply variation to these general themes (ibid., 288). Though initially a theme can be repeated, once expressed "there can be no repetition because the essence of that expression is *insistence*, and if you *insist* you must each time use *emphasis* and if you use emphasis it is not possible while anybody is alive that they should use exactly the same emphasis" (ibid. 288, emphasis added).

I take this to mean that once a theme comes to expression it departs the general category of the 'thematic' and begins to have variability in reality. In other words, expression modulates once it

emerges from a general theme, and in doing so, the theme begins to express singularity: life. “As I say what one repeats is the scene in which one is acting, the days in which one is living, the coming and going which one is doing, anything one is remembering is a repetition, but existing as a human being, that is being listening and hearing is never repetition” (ibid., 295). The expression of living, once *insisted* upon by a modulation of *emphasis* cannot be repeated exactly. “That is what makes life that the insistence is different, no matter how often you tell the same story if there is anything alive in the telling the emphasis is different” (ibid., 288). Both the terms ‘variation on a theme’ and the concept of the ‘minor variation’ might aid in understanding how, for Stein, life exists in the interstice between the major form and the minor variations which give life its *zest* (pace, Massumi, Whitehead).

Stein illustrates this with the examples of the hopping of a frog, birdsong — pace Deleuze’s *refrain* — and the dawning consciousness that anyone experiences “when they first really know that the stars are worlds and that everything is moving, that is the first conscious feeling of necessary repetition, and it comes to one and is very disconcerting” (ibid., 289). She likens the birdsong to that which is closest to repetition, and the awareness of the sun and moon as surprising, even disconcerting. Stein describes a second coming-into-awareness of repetition and insistence in the historical fact of civilizations, specifically, the insistence that they express their own specificity, before their extinction or passing. This, she notes, is demonstration of an inevitable form of repetition, which comes with it the “difference of insistence” (ibid., 289).

When a child is making a story or a poem, many transformations are in effect. Recounting a young boy named Phillip whose spoken poem of the churning sea she transcribed, Margaret Wise Brown remarks (with Stein likely in mind) that “Sometimes the words just come pounding and pounding out. Perhaps even the mature writer has this dual experience” (Wise Brown 1939, 6). Phillip’s poem follows, with the addition of Wise Brown’s notation in parentheses when his words stuttered into sheer rhythm:

> When the ocean is blue
> And when ships go sailing on it
> The waves go fast or slow or high
> And the whistle is up very high
> And the water goes dashing
> And the fishes go swimming
> And the sharks have the pointiest nose
> And up and down
> And down and round
> And down
> And down came the whistles of the sea
> And when it came down
> And up and down
> When the waves go dashing by
> When to the waves so quick and down they go and

(sheer pounding rhythm at this point, a lot of it in nonsense syllables).

Here, Phillip's poem is enacting multiple transformations, both to Phillip and to the poetry-environment as he is generating it. The poem begins in language, in simple description. Its form becomes rhythmic; and then the rhythm begins to ingather: churning sonorously and somatically to the point that language itself is overtaken, subsumed. "There is enough rhythm of rough water in this song to get sea-sick on. There was enough rhythm to send the little boy into nonsense syllables at one point to get it out. Rhythm is important to him. Images are important, and even the abstract sound of words" (ibid., 7). It is magical that a five-year-old's spontaneous poem can transport the adult listener to the crashing waves of the ocean, creating a semblance of sea-sickness and the spray of briny mist…

Stein's most substantive example will be the ten or eleven "little Aunts" with whom she lived in Baltimore as a teenager, and the realization through observation of them that through their constant "talking and listening," they enacted the difference between repetition and insistence. As there were so many of them, information would constantly be repeated between them — the "same" information, perhaps — but with a twist: "No matter how often what happened had happened any time any one told anything there was no repetition. This is what William James calls the the Will to Live. If not, nobody would live.

"And so I began to find out then that by listening the difference between repetition and insisting and it is a very important thing to know. You listen as you know" (Stein 1998b, 289). As the information communicated between the Aunts begins to settle in their minds, gradually each would stop listening. For Stein, it is essential that the active *intake* and *engagement* — one might say co-composition — with the living movement of the percipient represents experience. The difficulty for Stein's Aunts, and many who are not "genius," by her definition, is that few are capable of talking while listening without quickly fatiguing. Genius is being "most intensely alive," having the capacity to sustain a mode of attunement on the registers of both noticing and engaging with; two motors acting in concert, generating movement apace with the world unfolding, as is so aptly demonstrated in Phillip's poem as it crashes into sonority. To ask the question "How do you like what you have," Stein suggests, is to probe at the interiority of a subject, and have that subject both reflect on their interiority while outwardly expressing it. It is a way, she argues, to get "essentially the portrait of any one, one portrait of any one" (ibid., 291). "Any one," here, is any singular life; *a* life.

If Stein finds the *differential* achieved in her little Aunts' talking and listening, Deleuze finds the shimmering exception that makes *a* life in Charles Dickens' *Our Mutual Friend*, in the example of the disreputable man on the edge of death. The man is loved by those who might otherwise abhor him, to the point that he senses "something sweet and soft penetrating him" in the affectations of concerned others; notably when in a coma, so not when 'conscious.' As he returns to the living, the concern recedes: it is only at the precipice

> between his life and his death, [that] there is a moment that is only that of *a* life playing with death. The life of the individual gives way to an *impersonal and yet singular life* that releases a pure event freed from the accidents of internal and external life, that is, from the subjectivity and objectivity of what happens: a 'Homo tantum'

— a man without qualities —

> with whom everyone empathizes and who attains a sort of beatitude. It is a haecceity no longer of individuation but of singularization: a life of pure immanence, neutral, beyond good and evil, for it was only the subject that incarnated it in the midst of things that made it good or bad. *The life of such individuality fades away in favour of the singular life immanent to man who no longer has a name, though he can be mistaken for no other.* A singular life essence, a life… (Deleuze 2001, 28-29, emphasis added).

Deleuze draws a contrast between individuation and singularization: the *thisness* (haecceity) exemplified by the rogue's saintliness (beatitude) at the edge of death clarifies the "singular essence" of a life near its end. The clarity of this example does not preclude the many other, more minor or incidental, ways that "*a* life is everywhere." *A* life can be found "in all the moments that a given living subject goes through and that are measured by given lived objects: an immanent life carrying with it the events or singularities that are merely actualized in subjects and objects" (Deleuze 2001, 29).

Note the contradistinction between the examples of Stein's little Aunts, Wise Brown's student Phillip, and Deleuze's disreputable man as expressions of a form of immanent genius — *a* life — to that offered by Brian Massumi: Writing of how the act of naming, or fixing a name, makes an identity, he uses the example of a name-tag: "When you go to a conference, you can't help being subjectively positioned, from the moment you put on your name badge, you are not just registering your presence, you're representing yourself, and you speak accordingly. Your angle of entry into the situation is personalized in this way" (Massumi 2015a, 170).

There is a difference between *a* life and *the* life: *A* life is carried in the in-between, in the singularities and events of the specious intervals between (actual) moments, offering "the immensity of an empty time where one sees the event yet to come and already happened, in the absolute of an immediate consciousness" (Deleuze 2001, 29). The *manner* in which *a* life connects to *the* life is "entirely different from how individuals connect" (ibid., 30). The *individual*, he argues, is not necessary in an exemplary *singular* life. The indefinite article - *a* - of *a* life is not "a marker of empirical indetermination but of a determination by immanence or a transcendental determinability. The indefinite article is the indetermination of the person only because it is a determination of the singular" (ibid., 30). The entity is singled out, instead of the identity. Though the individual concresces around "empirical determinations" — what might be thought of the *narrative accounts of moments experienced* — the "indefinite aspects in a life lose all

indetermination to the degree that they fill out the plane of immanence or, what amounts to the same thing, to the degree that they constitute the elements of a transcendental field" (ibid., 30).

Using the example of a child, Deleuze shows that while little of the "individual" has formed at such a young age, many "singularities — a smile, a gesture, a funny face — not subjective qualities" are present such that they "are infused with an immanent life that is pure power and even bliss" (ibid., 30). *A* child — "an event, a singularity, a life" — carries the index of multiplicity, before the calcification of subjectivity; personal histories, stories, self-consciousness. Returning to Massumi and the example of the conference name-tag, to resist personalization through a given mode of self-representation is to assume "that your identity coincides with your potential," which leads to an "individualized mode of potential." This, following Gilbert Simondon, mistakes "the field potential from which an individuation emerges for the interiority of a subject" (Massumi 2015a, 170). This 'field potential' is the transcendental field.

Marcus notes that as a student of William James, Lucy Sprague Mitchell and the Bank Street school were likely allied to this fact: In attempting to create a new class of educators more in line with a child's closeness to singularity, and through their open-ended attunement to the world, their capacity to wonder, rather than learn by rote:

> If, as William James had said, young children were little empiricists whose 'native interests' lay 'altogether in the sphere of sensation,' student teachers would have to undergo a wholesale reeducation of the senses, a kind of second childhood, before they would be ready to do their jobs well. For as James had also said, 'The child will always attend more to what the teacher does than to what the teacher says' (James *Talks to Teachers* 72, quoted in Marcus 1992, 58).

Consciousness, revealed only when a subject is produced at the same time as its object, appears as a transcendent. "Were it not for consciousness, the transcendental field would be defined as a pure plane of immanence, because it eludes all transcendence of the subject and of the object" (Deleuze 2001, 26). *Fort/Da*: a little death at the level of the virtual, on the plane of immanence? The transcendental field is evidenced — though not revealed — through its (consciousness') coextensive relation-in-principle to it, and consciousness' actualization through transcendence, when a subject is produced at the same time as its object. However, "transcendence is always a product of immanence" (ibid., 31). *Da/Fort*: Or, the world's capacity to return?

6. The Life of Rhythm

In order to get at the making of a written portrait of someone or some thing without relying on narrative *telling about* the subject — including what one remembers about it — Stein outlined her methodology of talking and listening, through which she believed she conceived "the rhythm of anybody's personality." Through finding the rhythm of anybody's personality, she was able to sidestep the creation of false or reductive narratives of a personality or object. Critically, each of the two elements taken out of the context of the other would produce mere resemblance. "If listening was talking and talking was listening then and at the same time any little movement any

little expression was a resemblance, and a resemblance was something that presupposed remembering" (Stein 1998b, 293). When taken together, however, a feeling of "bother" is avoided; the bother of making one thing another, likeness overshadowing singularity. By listening and talking simultaneously, meaning is produced in and with existence; in immediation with it. "Listening and talking did not presuppose resemblance and as they do not presuppose resemblance they do not necessitate remembering" (ibid., 293). Vision troubles the method of talking and listening, because it is so closely alloyed to memories and preformed ideas of things past.

Steven Meyer shows that Stein's interest in rhythm is likely influenced by her protracted visit to the Whiteheads in 1914; at the time, he was writing his first independent philosophical work, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Natural Knowledge* (1919), which concluded with a chapter on 'Rhythms.' In it, Whitehead advances the concept of the object as a 'pattern,' distinguishing it from an 'event.' An object, he writes,

> is a characteristic of an event. Such an object may be in fact a multiple relation between objects situated in various parts of the whole event. In this case the quality of the whole is the relationship between the parts, and the relation between the parts is the quality of the whole. The whole event being what it is, the parts have thereby certain defined relations; and the parts having all the relations which they do have, it follows that the whole event is what it is. The whole is explained by a full knowledge of the parts as situations of objects, and the parts by a full knowledge of the whole. Such an object is a pattern (Whitehead 1919, 195, quoted in Meyer 181).

While an object may be characteristic of an event, and may in fact be representative of it, it is not the event itself. "*Liveliness,* then, is a function of the 'multiple relations between objects' situated in a common event" (Meyer 2001, 181, emphasis in original). An event recognized merely through the objects that it is composed of is to view the event as pattern. It is lifeless; what Whitehead will later term "nature *lifeless*," in contradistinction to "nature *alive.*" Life is/as rhythm: Whitehead defines a 'life-bearing object' as one that is not ephemeral or abstract; it "carries the rhythm of the whole, 'unbroken'." It "is not a 'uniform' object. Life (as known to us) involves the completion of rhythmic parts within the life-bearing event which exhibits the object" (Whitehead 1991, 196; quoted in Meyer 2001, 181). For Whitehead, what differentiates a life-bearing object is that it is part of a(n event's) rhythm, and therefore cannot be singled out and detached from the event itself, just as with a rhythm.

As with the 'rhythm of any personality,' a rhythm is not a fact of mere repetition. In *The Function of Reason*, Whitehead will note that "'the rhythm of *life,'* in circumventing decay, 'is not merely to be sought in simple cyclical recurrence. The cyclical element is driven into the foundation, and variations of cycles, and of cycles of cycles, are elaborated" (Whitehead 1929, 17; quoted in Meyer 2001, 182).

7. Making Something out of Nothing

Stein's definition of the role of an artist is very similar to her thinking on genius: it is to activate the inner "excitation," and that which is exciting — rather than merely "happening" — in their

subject. “This as I say has been the great problem of our generation, so much happens and anybody at any moment knows everything that is happening that things happening although interesting are not really exciting” (Stein 1998b, 203). Foreshadowing Deleuze’s books on cinema, she notes that memory and time are scrambled in this newer medium, sweeping mere remembrance asunder: “By a continuously moving picture of any one there is no memory of any other thing and there is that thing existing, it is in a way if you like one portrait of anything not a number of them” (ibid., 293-294). The “continuous succession” of the image mirrored the “continuous succession of the statement” in her own writing; and in both cinema and her own writing, she “was making a continuous succession of the statement of what that person was until I had not many things but one thing” — identifying her contemporary moment as the “period of cinema and series production” (ibid., 294). Serial repetition, then, is not “mere repeating,” and certainly not remembering, but the authoring of a “continuous present.” “It is not repetition if it is that which you are actually doing because naturally each time the emphasis is different just as the cinema has each time a slight different thing to make it all be moving” (ibid., 295).

An artist, however, must be concerned with encapsulating the interior essence of that which is being represented; this, she calls the “emotion of moving;” and I will term “affect” (ibid., 305). After formal mid-period works like “Tender Buttons,” Stein describes a renewed interest in the inner “essence of the thing contained within itself” that she is trying to capture within her writing, calling it the “internal melody of existence that I had learned in relation to things seen into the feeling I had there in [the work of] Saint Remy of light and air and air moving and being still” (ibid., 307). The result was, by her account, an “increased melody” at danger of overpowering the sober successive moments of existence. When Stein refers to the danger of the melodic line, I take it to mean that a primacy of melody dips into sentiment; in her case, by the superfluous use of language. Beauty, here, is being indexed to the outside rather than being created by the work’s internal force. Stein attempted to modulate this by focusing her energy on an intensive reflection of the thing itself, allowing the subject to be bounded by its own form, melody becoming a by-product of the expression, not the expression itself. By focusing on the internal logic of the movement of expression, rather than its byproducts, the artwork *worlds*: “The thing in itself folded itself up inside itself like you might form a thing up to be another thing which is that thing inside in that thing” (ibid., 308). In the meticulous act of folding language (in Stein’s case) into an expression of movement, the outside becomes that expression’s interior motor.

Stein is explicit in her belief in what emerges from this creative activity: an existence, a world, populated by landscapes, people, things. Writing emerged that she saw

> quite definitely as a conception of what is seen was contained by itself inside it, although there it was to be itself inside in it, it was I said to be like an engraving wand I think it is. But the people in it were in it as contained within the whole of it. I wanted however to do portraits where there was more movement inside in the portrait and yet it was to be the whole portrait completely held within that inside (Stein 1998b, 310).

Here, near the end of her description of a trajectory of thinking-writing, she describes a mode of attunement that is almost ascetic in its refusal to acknowledge her own subjective environment in the portrait-making; but it would be too fast to call this an example of cool and dispassionate modernist hubris. Instead, might this process of reducing the self through careful insistence and varying emphasis, be a striving toward a shimmer attained? "But now to make you understand, that although I was as usual looking listening and talking perhaps more than ever at that time and leading a very complicated and perhaps too exciting every day living, never the less it really did not matter what I saw or said or heard, or if you like felt, because now there was at last something that was more vibrant than any of all that and somehow some way I had isolated it and in a way had got it written" (ibid., 311). The thing that was "more vibrant than any of all that" — talking, listening, looking, telling — was the creation of a spark of novelty. In her own words, "I created something out of something without adding anything," an impersonal shimmer across two "insides," transiting across and "outside." In this folding, "the important thing is that for the first time in writing, I felt something outside me while I was writing, hitherto I had always had nothing but that was inside me while I was writing" (ibid., 312).

If not herself, what is it that Stein is writing? Perhaps, what she is contributing to the written word is a minor language, a language of the outside, of virtuals. "A life contains only virtuals. It is made up of virtualities, events, singularities" (ibid., 31). Return to the indefinite article, *a*: *a* life is in the intervals, a state of becoming, to the power of the virtual. "*Beneath* the transcendence of effort," it becomes singular, becomes an event, "an absolute immanent life" (Deleuze 2001, 28, emphasis added). Sensations — that *product* of effort exerted — are a "break in the flow of absolute consciousness," a "simple empiricism;" whereas *a* life finds itself in the full reality of the virtual event coming to expression (ibid., 25). "The immanent event is actualized in a state of things and of the lived that make it happen," and remains in the (virtual) plane of immanence (ibid., 31). "The plane of immanence is itself actualized in an object and subject to which it attributes itself. But however inseparable an object and a subject may be from their actualization, the plane of immanence is itself virtual, so long as the events that populate it are virtualities" (ibid., 31). In a transcendental empiricism, "however close two sensations may be, the passage from one to the other as becoming, as increase or decrease in power (virtual quantity)" (Note: *puissance,* not *pouvoir*) (ibid., 25). "The event considered as non-actualized (indefinite) is lacking in nothing. It suffices to put it in relation to its concomitants: a transcendental field, a plane of immanence, a life, singularities" (ibid., 31).

8. As-If

To write 'as-if' is to engage in a technique of grasping the world of virtualities, events, and singularities where *a* life resides: shimmers of *a* life coming to expression in the rhythmic expansion and contraction of *this* life. Writing stories always has at least one implicit *as-if*, from the start: to write is to tell a story *as-if* the life in a story is really real; semblance of *a* life. To act *as-if* this life, *a* life, this interval, the ongoing fact of immanence matters and can be tasted just-so,

in the differential experienced in its recitation and reenactment. *As-if* creates a temporary holding for *a* life to speciate forth, with the world as it worlds, mattering. Perhaps for Stein, this enactment of a writing that folds the inside and the outside is a form of writing that harnesses the as-if in order to create elbow room in a specious present for the artfulness of *a* life.

Massumi and Manning note that to write *as-if*, in the mode of Virginia Woolf, is to sidle compossible realities at once in language. A second *as-if* emerges in the narrative form: when the character or characterization acknowledges, in their thoughts or actions, that they are motivated by a second, virtual reality that challenges the one that they are (apparently) presently experiencing. "As-if, the holding pattern of a difference in time, time looped onto itself toward the impossibility of getting the story straight once and for all. Not just 'it could have been this way,' but 'it was this way, and that way as well, at the same time': disjunctive synthesis, *just like that*. As-if — 'straight' in the middle" (Manning and Massumi 2014, 49, emphasis in original).

As-if we were *actually* wishing "goodnight" to the moon.

"As-if!!" is an expression seemingly left in the dustbin of history. But its expression is embodied, performative, deeply queer. It is an orientation away from sense-making; yes and no at the same time. A schizzing of identity-as-presented's systems.

For Erin Manning, to 'catch an incline' is to sidle up to the world *as-if* it were the only one that mattered, in the midst, as it matters itself into being, and with it, me. *As-if* troubles that 'me' while drawing 'me' along with it. "As-if, a rhythmic suspension that holds the presenting of the present to itself in itself, that denies *this* image its simplicity of unfolding, creating a knot in the discursivity of language. As-if: a mode that moves language to its narrative limit, pushing language to say not how if and then follow, but how 'if' becomes its own limit, a transversal limit that cuts across the if–then" (Manning and Massumi, 49, emphasis in original). In other words, *as-if* supercharges language to speculate on existence, accelerating toward thought's outside.

As the *as-if* in language takes flight, what pressures might be enacted on the in-formation of the impersonal as it folds compossible realities into itself? "Catching the incline angles existence into an intuiting modality. A slanted *I* gives way to a new shape. A crack opens. Below consciousness, the world meets a body obliquely. Impersonality spills across its surfacing. The world tips" (Manning 2023, 76). To sidle the world worlding is to understand that *"I"* is a temporary landing site, in the words of Arakawa and Gins, always already preparing for the next leap into (com-)possibility. As a landing site, *"I"* is caught in movement, on the run.

The suggestion is that "I*"* can only be figured with the slant of suggested movement: *I.* The crack — the queer inclination toward the otherwise — is radically open, radically hospitable toward that which moves with it. Without narration or executive directive, it is the fecund territory of the impersonal, the place before, under, and after identity.

"The impersonal is the biggest threat to identity, to the individual and all that is reduced to form by the imposition of time on a line" (ibid., 73). The impersonal, to me, is evidenced in the non-performance of a stutter, when I am asked to improvise movement in a group; in what is often thought of as the unguarded enchantment of innocence; in the capacity for queerness and blackness

to "not consent to be a single being;" and at what should always be the baseline of any decolonial project. "The angular sociality of a worlding that becomes us is a minor sociality – its inclination angles existence toward the sideways tendencies of attention decentreed. We are not the directors of this existence-sidling. Accompaniments in the relational field of worlds decisioning themselves into act, we participate. This is the queer inclination of an aesthetics of the earth" (ibid., 69).

The claim, here, is that *Goodnight Moon* models a form of impersonal rebuttal to the major narrative form, by encompassing the more-than of existence's worlding potential. The slanted *I* finds a compossible milieu in *Goodnight Moon* where the movement within it does not speak to or foster a stable I; it speaks to the rhythmic expansion and contraction of *a* life bidding "goodnight" to the intensities of life-living that are irreducible to a world that narrates itself as 'settled.'

Stein is known to have considered herself to be one of the 'great geniuses,' alongside Pablo Picasso and Alfred North Whitehead (as told in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*). As I have shown, for Stein, a 'genius' was not necessarily an expression of ego — the personal — so much as the capacity to 'talk and listen' at the same time. Genius, then, might be thought of as the ability to *immediate the creative process* by activating the impersonal; or, as Erin Manning puts it, the capacity to sidle alongside (or participate in) worlds "decisioning themselves into act." One technique to aid in this decisioning, Manning explains, is to avoid the 'habit' of believing that these techniques of creation can be determined in advance; the problem being that "[t]he habit of entering into a process brings with it the promise that a process engaging with the same conditions twice can generate an event that looks like the event that [the creative process] generated the first time" (Massumi 2015a, 157). Like identity, it is only from the rear-view mirror that something like an identifiable pathway to a stable subject or object can be found.

To 'catch an incline' is to understand that minor sociality *does not* cleave to 'personal feeling' or identity as such; instead, it exists in angular relation to the reverberatory force of *decision*, in the "crack": "'We' are (in) the momentum, (in) the abyss, of the crack, to use Bayo Akomolafe's words (2021b)," "out of which a singular mode of existence comes to be known" (Manning 2023, 67; Manning *Catch an Incline* manuscript, 1). The Whiteheadian concept of decision can be "understood as the cut propelling the continuing of a process. […] It is not individual will. It isn't about my going into this way of living because I judge it necessary for me but rather […] how the event constructs its own force of necessity" (Manning quoted in Massumi 2015a, 174). The crack is where we — the world and I — are made; "the world is made in the cracks, not "my" world, not the world in "my" image, but a worlding that dances me into it" (Manning 2023, 67). Now that magmatic potential, surveying the field, and arcing in a complex environmental choreography, issues forth in *this* way. The thisness of a crack: a decision's perspective. To 'catch an incline' is to participate without (executive) direction — narrative perspective — whiteness — from above.

What is happening when *I* catches an incline? The impersonal *I,* that which resists the call to calcify around a position or perspective, shimmers with the creative force of hesitation. A quality flutters in the interstice; a vitality affect is birthed in the crack. Decisional force surveys potential, hesitates. "The in-decision is the conduit of the impersonal. In-decision shimmers at the cusp of

the one-many, living it out in the multiplicity of the both-and. Being of relation" (ibid., 79). When the slanted *I* catches an incline, in the hesitation of the "what if?," the world is an oyster; the oyster a world. "The world is not ours to make. The world is the body affected and affecting. It is the force-flow of all that briefly resounds in the one of the many and the many of the one. Minor sociality is its grammar, its lexicon. To listen to it is to incline" (ibid., 80).

The what-if is allied to the as-if; the as-if is language's companion to what-if's hesitating movement toward the otherwise.

> Somehow, a likeness. Somehow, as if two times, two events, this and its likeness, could linger in cohabitation, as-if. *Just like that*, the flashpoint of nonsenusous similarity, the cut into likeness that brings time's overflow into the moment, this moment. But what a strange moment, this specious present, a moment qualified not by its being-present but by its spread, by the span of time it includes, the past and future rolling in to it. A visionary moment, a futurity in the making (Manning and Massumi 2014, 56).

9. Queering the Moon

I am trying to get to the bottom of 'queerness:' both the category, and the individual expression of it. *A* life might be best observed in a child; might be best observed in the "feeling of effort" contained in the manner — or way — of queer expression. What Erin Manning calls 'the artful' might also be felt in the immanence of *a* life-living across the absolute survey of the "pure stream of a-subjective consciousness, a pre-reflexive impersonal consciousness, a qualitative duration of consciousness without a self" in *Goodnight Moon* (Deleuze 2001, 25). But it can also be found in the deeply personal, I argue, of a wink, of building a sauna or stacking wood, of arranging a table scape, just so. Perhaps the queerness of *Goodnight Moon* is found in its aesthetic politics; the aesthetic, here, not "as a sort of a realm of free play of unconstrained expression," but instead "the aesthetic [as] immediately in connection with necessities of life," a different way of engaging with life's necessities (Massumi 2015a, 175-6).

One of the things that this text is aiming to do is bring Gertrude Stein into a different relation to the idea of queerness. Perhaps what Stein is actually trying to do when she is exploring concepts of identity is take a process-philosophical approach to her own queer identity, rather than a 'mere' political one. What I mean by this is that Gertrude Stein, in her own theorization, is looking for a different cadence (pace Akomolafe) of queerness that elides identitarian politics or markers. What I mean by 'identity' and 'identitarian' is the event wherein the subject — a person — is discursively pre-defined in their entity, such that their capacity for evolution (or becoming) is limited by the linguistic or ideological framing of who they are, and who they might become. Stein might have refused this form of capture because she was so interested/invested in the novel form — or the form of novelty (which is a particularly Whiteheadian construction). Another way to say this is that 'identity' — those discursive markers that pre-constitute who a person might be, how they might behave, and the expectations that are constructed around these facts about their values and potential to *affect change and be affected* — is anti-novelty; in that it is nearly impossible to invent anew from within the prison of a pre-defined "self."

For Stein, a *true* master-piece might be what Langer or Massumi would identify as the creation of semblance. The world of experience is a shock — "frightening" — and to live, Langer says, most of us prefer to be soothed from one moment to the next, rather than exist in a perpetual state of the shock of novelty. The master-piece, made out of time and out of identity, nevertheless must carry the charge of that shock through to the moment of expression in shared experience. Paradoxically(?), the creator of the master-piece cannot live in the identity-memory of the fright — they must sidle it in the "non-existence of time and identity which makes it a master-piece" (Stein 1998b, 362). The creation of the semblance of the event of experience, or the coming-to-expression of a work, is thus both caught in the torsion of the refusal of time while enacting the performance of the *as-if,* tacitly acknowledging time's existence:

> And so there are very few master-pieces of course there are very few master-pieces because to be able to know that is not to have identity and time but not to mind talking *as if* there was because it does not interfere with anything and to go on being not *as if* there were no time and identity but *as if* there were and at the same time existing without time and identity is so very simple that it is difficult to have many who are that (Stein 1998b, 362, emphasis added).

There are so few-master-pieces because there are so few works that are able to sidle the as-if in the act of creating, existing as entity across the currents of time's progression; all the while speaking about time and identity as-if either time or identity had anything to do with entity, beyond its negation. "It is the element of necessity, and the collectivity of the process from the very start to beyond its perishing, that make this kind of experimentation with expressive potential political. It is a practice of a 'politics to come,' to paraphrase […] Deleuze" (Massumi 2015a, 176).

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10. Decision: Further up, and Further In!

For Erin Manning, Whitehead's concept of 'decision' is the *force* to form imposed upon process's immanent valuation, which resides in the "cut, capture," and "crack" of existence (Manning, *Catch an Incline* manuscript, 1). Decision as a force to form takes a given angle on existence; supplying existence with a perspective on the activity that bubbles in the welter of experience not-yet taken final form, its "immanent valuation" (Manning 2023, 67). By giving existence a perspective, decisional force offers form to expression. If every occasion of experience has the capacity for many perspectives, it is the moment of decision that angles toward the *thisness* of a singular perspective: "That is to say, decision cuts the emerging occasion of experience from its field of potential, redirecting its momentum toward a certain subtraction" (Manning, *Catch an Incline* manuscript, 1). While decision is the force to form of expression, it acts as a *subtraction* from the welter of potential; however, it is also a force of *addition* to what has been: both addition and subtraction from immanent valuation of the world in process. The effect of the decisional force-

to-form — that which emerges from the cut, capture, and crack — as well as all that might have been actualized, but remains in the field of potential, is to body with the world. "To be in the world is to be in time, and to be in time is to make the world, one-many. 'The many become one, and are increased by one' (Whitehead 1978, 21)" (as quoted in Manning 2023, 94).

Decision subtracts a form from real potential (the virtual) and gives it perspective on the universe: *thisness.* Perhaps decision might be thought of, here, as the non-localized pressure that activates the capacity to irruption — before the eruption, or earthquake, has come to be experienced as such. The "yield" might be the *how* of the form that eruption takes, but for a twist: Make it an *ir*ruption, an infolding into itself, magmatic flows plunging first down into the world of potential: "The world's immanent agitations produce the orientation toward cusping out of which being – the being of relation – irrupts. The cut that sparks the recalibration is a necessity for something to "take," to be known. This something is not yet being. It is the quality on-its-way, a becoming, a tending toward form" (Manning 2023, 66). In the subtracting-out-of-potential, the world tends towards form; but still, this activity is "a movement of expression that is culminating […] pulses or phases in a process," and is "grounded in a prior activity, taking a new twist" (Massumi 2015a, 154).

What is burped out of this pressure is aesthetic potential. "The crack that fissures the processual field is a bodying that yields an aesthetic potential. Life is that aesthetic potential, angling itself into shape." (Manning 2023, 69). *A* life*?* Still no magma in this irruption, but a decisional force-to-form of becoming that will have had a 'take' on what has been. This is what Manning calls the *future anterior*: "how the living is felt: the world moves us into being in the afteraffect of the world's coming to form. We are bodied in the affective tonality of a world expressed through us" (ibid., 68). The many gather, subtract out a form, and add that to their sum total. The many become one, and are increased by one. "Every time there is a thought, there has already been activity in the body, there has been activity in the environment. There are interlinkings of different levels of activity channelled not certain points of more or less clear expression" (Massumi 2015a, 154).

To reverse-engineer this argument, at the end: In *Goodnight Moon*, techniques for flourishing *one*s emerge, *one* after another. But not 'one,' mind you; *One* and *one* and *one* and *one.* Slanted *I*s, immanently surveying the storybook formats outside, ingathering its potential in order to immediate in the world as it shimmers into night; insisting, in the repetition, on the compossibility of the otherwise.

Interlude One: *Goodnight Moon* (Text)

p.1	**In the great green room**	Preposition / Definite Article / Adjective / Adjective / Noun (Object)
	There was a telephone	Adverb / Verb (past tense) / Indefinite Article / Noun (Subject)
	And a red balloon	Conjunction / Indefinite Article / Adjective / Noun (Subject)
	And a picture of—	Conjunction / Indefinite Article / Noun (Subject) / Preposition / em dash
p.3	**The cow jumping over the moon**	Definite Article / Noun (Subject) / Verb (Present Participle) / Preposition / Definite Article / Noun (Object)
p.4	**And there were three little bears sitting on chairs**	Conjunction / Adverb / Verb (Past Plural) / Adjective / Adjective / Noun (Subject) / Verb (present participle) / Preposition / Noun (Object)
p.5	**And two little kittens**	Conjunction / Adjective / Adjective / Noun (Subject)
	and a pair of mittens	Conjunction / Indefinite Article / Noun (countable) / Preposition / Noun
p.6	**And a little toyhouse**	Conjunction / Indefinite Article / Adjective / Noun (Subject)

	And a young mouse	Conjunction / Indefinite Article / Adjective / Noun (Subject)
p.7	**And a comb and a brush and a bowl full of mush**	Conjunction / Indefinite Article / Noun (subject) / Conjunction / Indefinite Article / Noun (Subject) / Conjunction / Indefinite Article / Noun (Subject) / Adjective / Preposition / Noun (Object/Subject)
p.8	**And a quiet old lady who was whispering "hush"**	Conjunction / Indefinite Article / Adjective / Adjective / Noun (Subject) / Pronoun / Verb (Past tense singular) / Open Quotation / Verb (intransitive OR phrasal verb)/ Close Quotation
p.9	**Goodnight room**	Interjection* / Noun (object)
p.11	**Goodnight moon**	Interjection / Noun (object)
p.12	**Goodnight cow jumping over the moon**	Interjection* / Noun (object) / Verb (Present Participle) / Preposition / Definite Article / Noun (Object)
p.13	**Goodnight light** **And the red balloon**	Interjection / Noun (Object) Conjunction / Definite Article / Adjective / Noun (Object)
p.13	**Goodnight bears** **Goodnight chairs**	Interjection / Noun (Object) Interjection / Noun (Object)

p.15	**Goodnight kittens**	Interjection / Noun (Object)
p.16	**And goodnight mittens**	Conjunction / Interjection / Noun (Plural Object)
p.18	**Goodnight clocks** **And goodnight socks**	Interjection / Noun (Object) Conjunction / Interjection / Noun (Plural Object)
p.19	**Goodnight little house**	Interjection / Adjective / Noun (Object)
p.20	**And goodnight mouse**	Conjunction / Interjection / Noun (Object)
p.21	**Goodnight comb** **And goodnight brush**	Interjection / Noun (Object) Conjunction / Interjection / Noun (Object)
p.23	**Goodnight nobody**	Interjection / Indefinite Pronoun
p.24	**Goodnight mush**	Interjection / Noun (Object)
p.25	**And goodnight to the old lady whispering "hush"**	Conjunction / Interjection / Preposition / Definite Article / Adjective / Noun (Object) / Verb (Present Participle) / Open Quotation/ Verb (Intransitive OR Phrasal Verb) / Close Quotation
p.27	**Goodnight stars**	Interjection / Noun (Plural Object)

p.28	**Goodnight air**	Interjection / Noun (Object)
p.30	**Goodnight noises everywhere**	Interjection / Noun (Subject / Noun (‘every place/ all places’) OR Adverb (‘In or to every place or part’)
		*Can also be an adjective, i.e., ‘goodnight kiss’ Interjection is a word or phrase grammatically independent from the words around it, and mainly expresses feeling rather than meaning (Merriam-Webster) Good Night: Adjective + Noun. Can take the tonality of an imperative. Goodnight: Interjection/Adjective. Last farewell, leave-taking, salutation.

Spiral Two: *Goodnight Moon* (Language)

1. The stutter.

In his late essay "He Stuttered," Gilles Deleuze addresses the ways in which a novelist/writer constructs speech via dialogic markers (*indicatifs*) — as in, when an author writes "he stuttered" as a substitution for "he said." He notes that these variations are often thought of as the mark of a bad novelist; within the dialogic mode, "the writer seems to have only two possibilities: either *to do it,*" as in, to make the character perform the stutter, or "*to say it without doing it*, to be content with a simple indication that the reader is allowed to fill in" (Deleuze 1997, 107, emphasis in original). Of the latter, he calls the writer's external reference to a language effect an "indirect effectuation," which leaves the "*form of expression* intact ('he stuttered…')" while noting that this effectuation's "efficacy will be poorly understood unless there is a corresponding *form of content* — an atmospheric quality, a milieu that acts as the conductor of words — that brings together within itself the quiver, the murmur, the stutter, the tremolo, or the vibrato, and makes the indicated affect reverberate through the words" (ibid., 108, emphasis in original). This atmospheric quality, from the perspective of the reader, might be perceived as a form of veracity/truthfulness: the linguistic indication reverberating across the surrounds and reflecting back on the utterance, with an extra effect.

Though still an indirect effectuation of language, this second mode of constructing language — to have the character say something without stuttering, saying it without doing it — is closer to the first than it is to his theory of a third way: *to make language itself stutter.* To either performing the stutter or by indicating it indirectly, Deleuze adds "*when saying is doing*" (ibid., 107, emphasis in original). Rather than the stutter (or murmur, or whisper, or giggle, or cry…) being the product of a character's affectation, language itself (and through it, the writer) becomes the "stutterer." The writer engages in a "poetic operation" that "makes the language as such stutter: an affective and intensive language, and no longer an affectation of the one who speaks" (ibid., 107). Here, the stutter is not an *effect* of language or the product of a dialogue; it is language itself, in the making. As a system, language is in constant "disequilibrium or bifurcation," such that "if each of its terms in turn passes through a zone of continuous variation, then the language itself will begin to vibrate and stutter, but without being confused with speech, which never assumes more than one variable position among others, or moves in one direction" (ibid., 108). On the rare occasion that speech and language merge, "it is only with a very particular kind of speech, a poetic speech that actualizes these powers of bifurcation and variation, of heterogenesis and modulation, that are proper to language" (ibid., 108).

In this example, and in *Goodnight Moon*, the indefinite article "a" and the definite article "the" constitute the "zone of vibration" from which language is made: "a" "covers the entire zone of variation included in a movement of particularization" while "'the' covers the entire zone generated by the movement of generalization" (ibid., 108).

An example:
The second word — followed by the preposition '*in'* — of *Goodnight Moon* is '*the*,' a definite article. The definite article *the* encompasses *great green room*; two adjectives and a noun, led by a preposition *In*:

the great green room

One part of Deleuze's zone of vibration has been set: a movement of generalization, in the form of *THE great green room.*

In the great green room

The preposition *In* orients the noun *room*; sutures the *room* to another object in this sentence, continued on the following line:

a telephone

Ah! The movement of generalization in *the* (great green) *room* now engages a movement of particularization in (the indefinite article) *a* (noun) *telephone*: *A telephone In THE* (*great green*) *room:*

the room
a telephone

But, a telephone is contextualized…

There was

Oh! *There was*… Was? *Was.* Verb, past tense. If *the great green room* is a movement of generalization; in its breadth, it could be in the past or the present; or even the future. *A telephone* is a movement of particularization. How do the general and particular relate, here? *There* can either be an adverb, or it can be a pronoun. As an adverb it can indicate a place or location… but as a pronoun, it is introducing a sentence:

There was a telephone
(A telephone WAS In THE great green room).

A sequence has been established; a field of variation activated. We are in a room — *the* room — which has *a telephone*,

And a red balloon
And a picture of—

Constraints have been set; but so, too, has a rhythm. Might the act of recitation, the performance of this script be what Deleuze calls a rare example of "poetic speech," the particular merging of speech and language? Might this 17-word phrase, the opening onto a world contained within the great green room *as well as* the context of its recitation, be a form of a stutter across language's territories?

Goodnight Moon harnesses the most seemingly benign parts of speech, elements of language, to a 'something-extra' effect. "Language is subject to a double process, that of choices to be made and that of sequences to be established: disjunction or the selection of similars, connection or the consecution of combinables" (Deleuze 1997, 110). According to Deleuze, it is a fallacy to think of

disjunctions only as exclusive, or connections only as progressive or connective: were this to be the case, language could only have single, logical, and uncreative instantiations. "But far from equilibrium," he continues, "*the disjunctions become included or inclusive, and the connections, reflexive*, following a rolling gate that concerns the process of language and no longer the flow of speech" (ibid., 110, emphasis in original). Contained somewhere in the in-between, or surrounds… further beyond and further beneath the speech act (the utterance)… in the scintillating force of *Goodnight Moon* is the stuttering of language itself, in constant invention and reinvention *in concert with language's outside*.

> The outside is the name Deleuze and Foucault give to *the circulation of forces where thought remains irreducible to knowledge.* The outside […]is not the exterior (as opposed to the interior). It is not spatial. It is intensive. The outside is what remains unthought in thought, what remains unfelt in feeling. *It is what accompanies all emergent relationalities, what moves with all social life in the making* (Manning 2020, 223, emphasis added).

Language folds into itself while simultaneously surveying its outside; as-if, Deleuze continues, "the entire language started to roll from left to right, and to pitch forward and backward: *the two stutterings*" (ibid., 110, emphasis in original). Left to right, forward and backward: As language whirls and surveys, moans and murmurs, it strives to alight upon and affirm a final "block of sound," which itself proliferates novel and singular meaning. A bloc(k), for Deleuze and Guattari, is another way of referring to becoming; it "passes between" two points, "carrying them away in a shared proximity in which the discernibility of the points disappears" — their deterritorialization (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 294). As an "antimemory," a bloc(k) forges its own path. The stronger the bloc(k) — the more effective the passage through its component points/parts — the more likely the aggregate of the molecular components 'hold together.' From this point of view, one may contrast a *childhood bloc(k),* or a becoming-child, with the *childhood memory*: "'a' molecular child is produced…'a' child coexists with us, in a zone of proximity or a block of becoming, on a line of deterritorialization that carries us both off, as opposed to the child we once were, whom we remember or phantasize, the molar child whose future is the adult" (ibid., 1987, 294). For the bloc(k) of sound to take flight — the murmurings and groans beneath language — *language's outside must be lured*.

To continue with the example: these seventeen words end in an em dash:

And a picture of—

"In the early 17th century, in Okes-printed plays of William Shakespeare, dashes are attested that indicate a thinking pause, interruption, mid-speech realization, or change of subject."[1] In the introduction to *The First Quarto of Othello*, McMillan finds the earliest use of the em dash in these

[1] "Dash," wikipedia.com.

plays; the example of *Othello* — McMillan's text is an introduction to a new edition of the play, notable for the fact that it is much closer to Shakespeare's original punctuation and phrasing, as opposed to contemporary printings which were likely transcribed from performances — demonstrates a punctuation mark that performs much more than a mere pause: "The dash-combinations were introduced by someone sensitive to the *histrionic implications of the text* and troubling to convey those implications" (McMillan 2001, 23, emphasis added). Within these dash combinations (in the Shakespeare, often combined with other punctuation marks), McMillan identifies a "deliberate pointing" often toward a the mid-speech realization or change of subject (ibid., 21). These examples, of course, are in addition to more contemporary uses of the em dash: when used in a pair, as a parenthetical clause in the middle of a sentence; or as an attribute to a quotation. In *Goodnight Moon*, the em dash signals a break in direction, the opening to another modality at work.

One line from *Othello* that is characteristic of these "dash combinations" is exemplary of how language's outside can be activated in the wordless moan; and how, as with *Goodnight Moon*, the em dash can be imbued with the 'histrionic implications of the text.' For example, "[a]nd here is Roderigo … suffering his death pangs via a dash-combination and some dying groans" (ibid., 22):

"O, damnd Iago, O inhumaine dog, — o, o, o."

Here, McMillan is attributing Roderigo's final expressions not to the knife; not to Iago, who holds the knife; and not even to the dying groans which accompany his impending demise. The *dash combination* in the midst of Roderigo's *utterance* is that which most closely hues to his death pangs; which indicates the stuttering of language beneath speech. Only *after* the em dash is the 'second indicatif' — to say it without doing it, Roderigo's groans in the form of "o, o, o"![2]

Though McMillan's use of the term 'histrionic' likely referred to theatrical conventions of dramatic excess, the 'histrionic' em dash on the first page of *Goodnight Moon* demonstrates a language in the process of taking flight. *And a picture of—* is a sentence without end. It is an opening to the rest of the book, of course, but it is also an opening of language to its outside. It is a pre-acceleration toward an atmosphere that is always already in motion. The 'histrionic' nature of the em dash is simply the stuttering of language, its affective surplus, which has completed its initial survey of *the* great green room*,* and *a* telephone, *a* red balloon, and *a* picture of —

[2] It is interesting to add, here, that McMillan's *Othello* makes several changes in this line from the open-access version that it strives to correct: "inhuman" has been updated to "inhumaine," and in addition to the dash combination, the dying groan — "o, o, o" is restored: Roderigo: O damn'd Iago! O inhuman dog! (3215).

To "make language take flight," a great writer engages in the *minor* use of language; "as in music, where the minor mode refers to dynamic combinations in perpetual disequilibrium" (Deleuze 1997, 108). 'Minor,' in Deleuze and Guattari, does not refer to a 'minority' in relation to a majority. It is the molecular deviation in a molar centrifugal force. In language, 'minor' language is not a different language than that used by a majoritarian group; it is a different treatment of the same language, from within. It is the "what else!?" in a collective voice. "Minor languages are characterized not by overload and poverty in relation to a standard or major language, but a sobriety and variation are like a minor treatment of the standard language, a becoming-minor of the major language. The problem is not the destination between a major and minor language; it is one of becoming" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 104). Deleuze stresses that this is not a product of a "mastery" of language — for example, to be "well-spoken" or to merely balance syntax in a major musical mode — but the result of the technique of growing language from somewhere in its middle.

To stutter with language, growing it from its middle, is to creatively combine its content and expression in many different forms, such that language reaches its known and self-knowing limit, growing "a creation of syntax that gives birth to a foreign language within language, a grammar of disequilibrium (…) This final limit eventually abandons any grammatical appearance in order to appear in its raw state" (Deleuze 1997, 112). Eventually, language will even abandon syntax, in "exclamatory sentences and suspensions that do away with all syntax in favour of a pure dance of words" (ibid., 112). The content of this new sonorous, asyntactical language comes from *within* an existing language; and its expression is from language's outside. Here, "*language in its entirety reaches the limit* that marks it outside and makes it confront silence" (ibid., 113, emphasis in original).

What emerges from this precipitous silence, the cacophony of non-words — language's striving at its limits — is not a new, complete form, but an incompleteness: a yearning for the *otherwise* of language. "Style becomes nonstyle, and one's language lets an unknown foreign language escape from it, so that one can reach the limits of language itself and become something other than a writer, conquering fragmented visions that pass through the words of a poet, the colours of a painter, or the sounds of a musician" (ibid., 113). *Style* is not a form; it is "a mode of existence always intimately tied to the event of its expression" (Manning 2013, 210). A language's style is a kind of a consistency that makes it recognizable across the multitudinous occasions of its instantiation. As the language morphs and grows, in other words, so too does the 'identity' of the writer themself. They become impersonal, immanent to the event of writing, their identity calcifying in the retrospection. The one that was formerly a writer becomes a traveller with language, riding the asyntactical, the stutters and murmurs, that grammar of disequilibrium that charges language's outside.

Here, the outside of language is not its exterior, but its multiple thresholds and undersides, its possibilities, and emergent textures in their nascency. This is both the wonder and what is wonderful about a child's capacity for expression. In his recorded *Abecedaire* interview with

Claire Parnet, Deleuze elaborates on the idea that the function of literature (in general, though I argue that this *also* applies to literature for children) is to access a childhood of *a* world: "Perhaps in literature, just as, through pushing language to a limit, there is a becoming-animal of language itself and of the writer, there is also a becoming-child, but it's not *his* childhood. He becomes child, yes, but it's no longer his childhood, or anyone's childhood, it's the childhood of the world, the childhood of *a* world" (Deleuze, Parnet, and Boutang 1996, 31). The task of the writer and of literature, he continues, is "to become child through writing, reach a childhood of the world, restore *a* childhood of *the* world" (ibid., 31, emphasis added). *The* world is a molar form always already begging for *a* childhood — *a* life! — to break through its stultified order and activate its outside.

2. The magical stuttering of language, in the differential

Erin Manning argues that *language from the outside* is one that might orient us toward singular, more-than-human expression, as an activity in the differential (2022). A differential is the contrast that emerges and is felt in the joining of the conjunctive *and* disjunctive processes of an event coming to expression, and which forms an occasion of experience. Whitehead calls this a process of "mutual inclusion," wherein both the anarchic share *and* the appetition/reason for the events coming-to-expression foster a temporary cohesion. Here, rather than externally "judge" the efficacy of an occasion of experience coming to expression, Manning reminds us that for Whitehead, the function of reason is to foster a "canalization that can momentarily contain the anarchy," in order to entice a self-regulating and prospecting event, enabling its creativity. In the differential, "the mutual inclusion of the anarchic share tunes the event away from mere life toward life's more-than" (Manning 2016, 35-36). Brian Massumi calls this the "qualitative-relational economy of process." This qualitative-relational aspect of process…

> …concerns coincident differences in manner of activity *between* which things happen. The coming-together of the differences *as such* […] constitutes a formative force. It is this force that provides the impulse that the coming experience takes into its occurrence and appropriates as its own tendency […] Between them, they co-compose a singular effect of unity resulting from how it is that they come differently together. An integral of action and experience—a dynamic unity of self-enjoying occurrence—emerges from the energetic playing out of their impulsive difference (Massumi 2011, 5).

One question at the heart of this study of *Goodnight Moon* is: What makes the work *work,* from the point of view of how its language expresses or is expressive of experience? A process philosophical approach to the book cannot centre this exploration on the human, or human experience. As mentioned above, a study of the language used here — in text, in explication, in performance, and in refrain — is not merely a study of similars and dissimilars. It is a study of the *differentials* at work across these modalities, in the more-than-human event of the work's instantiation across time, geography, and in its many incantations in the same bed.

The human, here, is a form of major or molar state; expressed in language, it is shaped by knowledge/power. Manning argues that if or when we speak from the "we" of a "common voice"

— alloyed to the notion of shared identity — we make ourselves "human, all too human, when in fact our bodyings are transversal, collective before they are individual, more-than" (Manning 2020, 216.). Turning to Foucault (1972), she reminds us that a body is produced by the diagrammatic push and pull of (myriad forces of) power/knowledge, at least in part as product of what a current society needs. Though she speaks specifically in this essay to the University as one such site of power/knowledge, one which produces a particular kind of frontal, disciplined human body, I borrow this frame to apply to all forms of disciplinary systems, particularly those that produce a pupil-in-germ: the obedient child.

But, in the case of *Goodnight Moon,* something is activated in its language that proposes another form of relationality that eschews disciplinary systems. The mode of attunement that its syntax entices is an expression and engagement of language's differential, generated from within the book's worlding operation. Manning calls this mode of engagement a learning that is "allied to language's otherwise rhythms, to the stims and tics and poetic utterances that come of engaging asymmetrically with language's modalities of communication" (ibid., 215). The em dash that ends the first page of *Goodnight Moon* might be one such modality; exemplary less for its typographic use than how it draws out and elevates the rhythmic tonality of a nursery rhyme toward a suspenseful, lilting, limit. "A picture *of*—" opens the text to the outside of language, a nighttime world.

As I suggested above, one such engagement with language's asymmetric modalities of communication is the stutter. When an expositor stutters, the stutter initiates a suspension of the codified mode of communication that, up to that moment, had been in 'normal' operation. Here, the poem has stuttered, albeit gently. A recitation of the act of listening has been paused. In the event of the stutter, social exchange has faltered, toward *sociality as such*: in the event of a stutter, "[t]he terms of social exchange are in suspense, but there remains a social relation of a kind. It is one that articulates nothing in particular and is accorded no value: a dequalified relation. Both parties are provisionally dispossessed of their power to make a determinate difference through the production of meaning. They are no longer in a position to self-define in relation to each other. Yet they remain in relation" (Massumi 2021, 28). When the expositor stutters, their conversant holds space, non-verbally. Sociality as such reigns.

Breath is held as the page turns. To repeat: Massumi calls what emerges in the suspension of discursive exchange 'sociality as such,' where the codes of communication, and the social field that structures these codes itself 'stutters.' Stuttering "is the *holding in reserve* of articulated difference, under the action of an autonomous power that inhabits language without belonging to it: *a force of repetition immanent to language*, making it desist in its actual operations while it continues to *insist* on its own resumption, reduced to its own tendency to emerge" (ibid., 29, emphasis added). It is important to note that in the page facing this opening text, the eye can find *a* telephone; the eye can find *a* red ballon. But, there are *two* pictures. *A picture of*— what? Which picture? Sociality is held at the level of the impersonal, where differentiation between parties is

stark but sutured by the event of holding communication in reserve. We must turn the page to find out what becomes next. The story is in a process of *worlding;* it is a *storying-worlding event.*

This type of sociality — sociality held at the level of the impersonal, or 'sociality as such' — is a form of relation evidenced anywhere that a child can be found playing. Studying in the experimental pedagogical environment of the Bank Street School, Margaret Wise Brown learned through close observation of how children construct language in their play: rhyming, inventing sounds, engaging in onomatopoetic rhythm. Adult students and researchers at the school constantly observed the children who attended it, furiously writing down the words, sounds, and gestures that emerged from their young bodies. The educational researcher's practice was one of careful attunement to the children who passed through their doors.

In her paper 'Writing for Five-Year Olds,' Wise Brown tells of how when it appears as-if stories conceived by children are playing with phonetic nonsense, they are in fact forging language by activating a connection between rhythm and content. These connections can be mirrored in the stories that they gravitate to, which already exist in the world: "This close connection between rhythm and content is the same thing, perhaps, that makes *The Little Engine who Tried* such a popular story with a child — the little engine climbing the hill who 'thought he could, he thought he could, he thought he could,' all in train rhythm" (Wise Brown 1939, 6-7).

There is no doubt that (what has come to be known as) *The Little Engine That Could* (c. 1902-1906) is a folk story that is memorable for the reasons that Margaret Wise Brown has cited; but *Goodnight Moon'*s artfulness can be found, in part, in the departure from the predictable rhythm of the popular folk tale. Against rhythm, the language contained in *Goodnight Moon* departs from the simple, self-affirming pairing of the nursery rhyme and its repetition and rhyme (in syntax, stanza, form) and takes reason itself to task — the very reason that sutures knowledge to thought.

What I am trying to highlight is that, against simple repetition of rhythm and content, *Goodnight Moon* is exemplary for its harnessing of techniques for stuttering language, which are invented in multitudes, in every instant. To start by embracing how a child bodies forth the world by harnessing rhythm and content, as Wise Brown did, is a way of valourizing the language of *a* child. But Wise Brown's work is not a mere facsimile of those inventive child-like connections between rhythm and content; it is an immediation in that mode of experience. Both her own, as well as her mentor Lucy Sprague Mitchell's observations of how children play and learn are placed in significant relation to *Goodnight Moon* throughout this chapter because they take that mode of attunement seriously. In *Goodnight Moon,* it is as-if, in these intervals, the many *tendencies* at play in quotidian social exchange are enlivened with a renewed speculative charge, vying in the event for actualization. The fecundity of potential contained in this story will, and does (at least in some small way) inflect the world in which it is read.

Massumi argues that in the stutter, inequalities that structure language and exploit its in-built differentials are momentarily suspended. When language stutters, so too does the discourse that it often expresses, with its "enduring structures of inequality" (Massumi 2020, 30). At aim here are "social techniques that apply to the field of relation as such. Their practice would be unmediated

and carry a suspensive force" (ibid., 31). The stutter exemplifies an event that "breaks into the conversational chain, producing an interval that fills itself with half-formed words, flashes of thoughts, aborted intentions, suspended desires (for continuation and aid), and no doubt judgments of incompetence or handicap that involuntarily arise even when consciously resisted" (ibid., 32). In most cases, all these germs of potential expression will not have come to pass, but in the ensuing discussion they will weight the exchange with their possibility.

Relations will unsettle and recompose; it is hoped with some of the preindividual charge toward a more expansive process of individuation; and, as outlined in the previous spiral, by aggregating techniques of individuation in the service of singularization toward *a* life. For the philosopher Gilbert Simondon, an individual is "the point of inflection of a process of individuation"; an individual does not come to us fully formed, they are "emergent, not preconstituted" (Manning 2016, 53).

> In Simondon's vocabulary, there is an intrinsic relationship between individuation (the process), the preindividual (the force of form), and the individual (the turning point that opens the process toward new individuations). The individual (the singularity of a process) is never the starting point—it is what emerges from the middling of individuation. The individual is how the event expresses itself, never what sets it in motion (Manning 2016, 53).

In this interval, the preindividual relation "grasps the field of pure belonging, the field of infralinguistic sociality, as the field of emergence of the expressions that will positively constitute society" (Massumi 2020, 32). Quite simply, this preindividual relation can set a 'mood'; it can angle sociality this way or that. It can speak of a world to come in a polyphonic voice that is no-voice. The goal is to develop tools for sidling and shifting relation just-so, outside of the limitive realm of discursive exchange. 'Discursive,' here, singles-out fully formed individuals in conversation.

In the polyphonic nonsense, there is a compossibility in the murmur that is the scintillation of worlds-in-waiting, in sociality-as-such, where language is invented.

3. Questions from the Middle

In the first page of *Goodnight Moon,* I have highlighted the use of *the* and *a* as definite and indefinite articles that survey the surrounds of language. They are an example of a poetic utterance that creates a zone of vibration through simultaneous gestures of particularization and generalization. I have pointed to the em dash as an interruption of the fairytale-form's language, which also activates its outside. It is critical, here, to reiterate that the outside is not an 'exterior,' but an intensity that that gathers and pressures that which is apparent or codified. Now, questions abound with regards to *Goodnight Moon*, starting from what can only be hypothesized: Why is this text so popular? Or, from the point of view of preindividual relation, I return to the refrain, "What makes the work *work?"*

Key to understanding what makes *Goodnight Moon* so effective across both age groups and generations is understanding where in the work its artfulness resides. This chapter is not an analysis of the linguistics or pedagogy of the work (or their fields of study); instead, it is allied to the concerns that each of these fields might hold: *Where do words come from? How does a child come to experience? Do some words or particular uses of language carry more ontological weight than others? How do words intersect with experience? How does rhythm assert itself in the making of language? What is the role of rhythm in the shaping — and undoing of — identity?*

As this spiral progresses, I will closely read Gertrude Stein's lecture-cum-essay 'Poetry and Grammar' from her Lectures in America tour; I compare Bank Street founder Lucy Sprague Mitchell's essays on childhood pedagogy and late-in-life memoire to the radical empiricism of her teacher William James, and the creative writing of her star pupil Margaret Wise Brown, which encompass her own understandings of childhood experience and writing for children.

This exploration, however, should not be taken as an attempt to reify the singular genius of any of these three women: To suggest that what makes *Goodnight Moon* a master-piece is solely its lineage to the genius of Stein, Wise Brown, and Sprague Mitchell is to contradict the ethicopoetic stance of the first spiral, which is that a master-piece can only occur when narrative conceit, and the conceit of the personal genius of the creator(s), is placed in suspense. Further, to identify this work as a master-piece is to roundly deny that what Stein or Wise Brown excelled at was to write *as* a child, or from the point of view of childhood, for, as Deleuze states, to write in the *voice* of a child is to achieve, at best, mediocrity. Writing literature "means becoming, but it means becoming neither writer, nor one's own memorialist" (Deleuze, Parnet, and Boutang 1996, 31).

"When a process is delimited by the belief that there is a preexisting individual creating at its centre, the collective becomes an afterthought," Erin Manning writes (Manning 2016, 54). What is fascinating about *Goodnight Moon* (in part) is that its language harnesses the preindividual field, opening it to language's outside. That same language, which is so sutured to the *idea* of Margaret Wise Brown — she of the beautiful straw hair and untimely death — is no longer Margaret Wise Brown's in the same way that the blunt insistence and repetition of "a rose is a rose is a rose" is no longer Gertrude Stein's — though of course the singularity of each artist's personality textures their work, for:

> One of the things that is a very interesting thing to know is how you are feeling inside you to the words that are coming out to be outside of you.
>
> Do you always have the same kind of feeling in relation to the sounds as the words come out of you or do you not. All this has so much to do with grammar and with poetry and with prose (Stein 1998b, 313).

I want to explore how language emerges from experience; 'takes' an angle on it. Stein argues that that different forms of writing produce different aspects of the 'real' — that place where

language (in the written form) produces a form of 'pure expression' — and that parts of speech index or create different expressive forms.

But language, in speech and the written word, does not come to us fully formed; nor does it exit from experience with meaning assured. It is in process, in groans, murmurs, wails, mutterings, and stutterings. Language is disjunctive, in the sense that it is not in words themselves that meaning is carried, but through the differential field of relation at the level of the impersonal.

> No *system* of words could possibly describe the processes involved in 'weaving something ageless and immortal,' without one level or another falling into a non sequitur … for when a linguistic system, unlike a purely logical one, encounters a non sequitur, it indulges in some pretty immortal weaving of its own — suggesting, in a *visual* medium, the experience of a *voice*, and consequently recreating *the wonder of a personality's radiance,* in Whitehead's terms, or communicating *knowledge of acquaintance*, in William James's (Meyer 2001, 206, quoting Whitehead 1938, 52, emphasis in original).

When language is at its most creative, it carries the surplus forward as a capacity to affect and be affected. Affect is not an emotion; it is amoral, neither 'good' nor 'evil.' For Spinoza, against morality, there are only happy affects and sad affects: modes of existence, rather than phenomenological judgements. Affects that are happy are those that strive toward life; those that are sad tend toward death. The capacity to be affected moreso defines strata of being than species or genus; across all speciations, Deleuze reminds us, "Ethical *joy* is the correlate of speculative affirmation" (Deleuze 1988, 29). Joy, for Spinoza, is the striving towards action and satisfaction. "The *Ethics* is necessarily an ethics of joy: only joy is worthwhile, joy remains, bringing us near to action, and the bliss of action" (Deleuze 1998, 28). Joy is an external cause, not a human emotion. It is more precisely the self-enjoyment of processual becoming and the creative surplus of life exceeding itself. To return to Whitehead, the adventure of living life, better.

From language, to pedagogy, to affect, this spiral will end with magic. In 1953, the year after her death, Lucy Sprague Mitchell reflected on her former pupil and long-time collaborator's legacy. Margaret Wise Brown *had* become a "real writer for children," in harnessing the magic beneath language. She wrote that for Wise Brown, "[w]ords had their magic too — the infinite magic of rhythm, of changing tempo and of pattern. She moved words across a page even as she did her scraps of bright-hued paper; listening to the pattern they made. And children listened to her words and they too heard the pattern they made" (Bank Street 1953, 19). To get to the magic of language of *Goodnight Moon*, we need to understand how language passes through structures of discipline, logic, and control; towards its outside. To do so, I will begin with Gertrude Stein's introduction of herself and her use of language to an American audience; with a mild fabulation of how Wise Brown might have been influenced by Stein during her Lectures in America Tour; continue by exploring how Sprague Mitchell thought of the language function as it related to a child's experience and pedagogy; and close with a return to the magical stuttering of language as a way to once again lure language's outside.

4. This is how Gertrude Stein Moves us to Language

In the fall of 1932, in a radio interview for NBC promoting her forthcoming American lecture tour — which also marked a return to her country of birth after a 31-year absence — Gertrude Stein would foreshadow the tone of the "entire six-month lecture tour, that of seeing things for the first time, wide-eyed, the way a child can be but an adult is expected to have outgrown" (Meyer in Stein and Lundell 1990, 86). Stein impressed upon her listeners a wonderment at a world that, by her account, had exploded into movement and industry during her residency in France. One of these listeners was Margaret Wise Brown, who crowded the radio in her Greenwich Village apartment with rapturous attention to hear Stein speak, along with a fellow Hollins College alumna (Gary 2016, 56). Listening to Stein on the radio, and throughout her six-month tour, helped to elucidate the writer's work. Quoting an unnamed journalist, Steven Meyer writes:

> 'To hear Miss Stein read her own work,' another journalist wrote, 'is to understand it — I speak for myself — for the first time . . . . you see why she writes as she does; you see how from sentence to sentence, which seem so much alike, she introduces differences of tone, or perhaps of accent. And then when you think she has been saying the same thing four or five times, you suddenly know that she has carefully, link by link, been leading you to a new thing' (Meyer in Stein and Lundell, 1990, 86).

Two weeks later, in the autumn of 1934, Wise Brown would attend Stein's first lecture in America at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Reading from her diaries, Wise Brown biographer Amy Gary notes that her subject "instantly recognized the simple beauty of the great author's style. Stein's reliable rhythms created a cadence that bound the reader to the page. Repetition allowed readers to grasp a basic premise, and then, by turning the phrases over and over, successive layers of understanding were peeled away" (Gary 2016, 60). This experience, Gary writes, would deeply impact Wise Brown's sense of her own writing, which to this point had been unpublished, perhaps because it was "obtuse and elitist" and "overblown and haughty" — and moreover, "written for adults." What Wise Brown appreciated about Stein's style was that her language was "clear and concise, but behind those unpretentious words lay complex meanings" (ibid., 61).

While Gary identifies Stein's mastery of language as a technique to access a "universal experience" across a readership, it is important to return to a definition of *style* as it relates to language: tied to the event of its expression, 'style' is how language takes an angle on a given event. Perhaps what Wise Brown identified in Stein, then, was not so much Stein's capacity for "universal expression" through language, but a style that harnesses the preindividual field of relation as expressed *through* language, opening language to its outside.

In her interview with NBC Radio, the interviewer confronts Stein on her reputation as 'incomprehensible' to a general public; going so far as to suggest that "many American people doubt your ability to speak intelligibly." Her response challenges the interviewer's imperative to sense-making and legibility:

"Look here," she argues, "being intelligible is not what it seems, after all these things are a matter of habit (….) You mean by understanding that you talk about it in the way that you have the habit of talking… putting it in other words… but I mean by *understanding enjoyment*" (Stein and Lundell 1990, 89, emphasis added).

Stein goes on to argue that her audiences *do* 'understand' her works, not because they make "sense," relying on their previous understandings of 'sense,' but because they experience enjoyment in the listening and of being-with her in language. Here, Stein is questioning whether the pinnacle of 'language' is a reduction to a common tongue; and whether performing communication that acts "from saying to saying" is key to making "understanding:" "And you must not think that you do not understand because you cannot say it to yourself in other words. If you have something happen in you when you read these portraits you do understand no matter what you say to yourself and others about not understanding. Really and truly that is really and truly true" (ibid., 90).

In other words, Stein's philosophy of language suggests that different parts of speech and speech patternings produce different, singular worlds. For Gertrude Stein, "experience becomes material for composition and yields the vocabulary for her writing" (Dydo 2003, 9). I would add that the writing becomes material for experience when the writing has been transmitted to an audience. Stein's writing, then, exemplifies a capacity to affect and be affected.

Different forms of writing, however, may convey different aspects of experience with varying degrees of efficacy: in her essay "Poetry and Grammar," Stein claims that historically, poetry and prose are fundamentally different from one another, in that they use different parts of language, express different aspects of experience, and have different aims. The 'Lectures in America' tour was a way for Stein to orient her own experience of writing and language into a novel form — the public lecture — and through that form, experiment with the *way* of writing in a new relational milieu. Ella Dydo argues that the essays that emerged from Stein's 'Lectures in America' tour might be mistaken as an *explication* of the content of her writing; whereas in fact they are an elucidation of her writing *practice* to that date. Stein's lectures are "not about genius in America but about [Stein's] own work — the written writing and the impulse to do it that is her genius. They are not in another voice or about another voice but in and about her own" (ibid., 5).

Steven Meyer reports that Stein was regularly denigrated by ignorant and unsympathetic pundits as being euphemistically "intellectually unopinionated," meaning that her novel use of language led to snide suggestions that she possessed some mental 'deficiency.' Famously, B.F. Skinner, in his 1934 essay 'Has Gertrude Stein a Secret?,' for *The Atlantic Monthly*, "asserted that Stein was trading on techniques of automatic writing that she had learned as a psychology student and passing them off as literary innovations" (Meyer 2001, 224). Meyer describes how Skinner challenged Stein's assertion that her writing was not automatic (an invigorating discussion in Meyer's work, which he wholly refutes), relaying Skinner's argument that "in [Stein's] later 'experimental writing' she used these techniques to construct a secondary personality, the

'hypothetical author' of these works, as he phrased it — although a singularly immature one, 'intellectually unopinionated,' 'emotionally cold,' with 'no past' and 'unread and unlearned beyond grammar school' (HGS, pp. 67-68)" (ibid., 224).

As demonstrated in the radio interview from 1934, and the brief detour through B.F Skinner's critique of Stein, the so-called clarity of language has always been used to police what it means to be human, with makers of grammar, efficacy of 'communication,' and (misattributed) lack of self-consciousness being benchmarks for individual and creative 'maturity.' In the case of language and its expression, to be considered human, the *manner* in which language is used — and the perceived efficacy or clarity of its use in communication — is how value and the human are self-produced.

In her study of French philosopher and educator Fernand Deligny's work with the movement, art, and language of autistics in France, Erin Manning outlines the stakes of "tuning language to its languaging potential" (Manning 2025, 20). She draws the concept of "languaging" from Adam Wolfond (2023), who uses the term to describe the otherwise of language's form-taking, beneath language and in relation. The distinction is meant to highlight the fact that to listen for sense-making terms in language is to deny languaging's potential; "[a]nd so when we listen only to the words, when we read one-word-after-the-other as though the world weren't always getting in the way, we hear little of what languaging detours" (ibid., 26). Stein's lasting impact, and the success of her interview and subsequent tour, suggest that her capacity to tune language to its languaging potential far outmatched her critics. Within many spheres — certainly including B.F. Skinner's — to not have language, Manning reminds us, is to not have consciousness:

> The human, Man, We, neurotypicality, is formed in language. Language here is not reducible to words. It is meaning-making. It is colonialism's weapon. It is psychoanalysis's claim that without language there is no subjectivity, no 'symbolic order.' It is the conceit that those without it have no consciousness (Manning 2025, 23).

Stein's argument that understanding is found through enjoyment — what I am reading as form of co-imbrication — in accessing her language is allied, I think, to Manning and others' work on the subject of autistic languaging, what Manning calls the 'asideness of meaning-making': **"**Not because meaning can't be made, but because meaning-as-signification still holds on too emphatically to the presupposition that it is in language, and particularly spoken language, that experience is conveyed" (Manning 2025, 23). What is at stake is the claim that languaging can happen outside of words, and does not necessitate the parsing of experience in the service of categorization; that it has "the capacitation for other modes of expression that are neither denotative nor, strictly speaking, sense-making" without atomizing thought into particulars (ibid., 60).

The connection that I am attempting to draw here is between how when Stein argues that her writing *has* been 'understood' despite a lack of subservience to a meaning-as-signification, and that she is valuing the experience of languaging regardless of whether 'sense' has been registered.

These qualities in her writing — identified as neurodiverse in her time — are not a 'dumbing-down' of meaning: on the contrary, when "layers of understanding" are "peeled away" through rhythmic insistence and return, what is being exposed is something closer to pure experience itself, for as Manning writes, "[c]onsciousness is the poor cousin of perception as yet unparsed, of the scintillations of the force of form" (ibid., 42).

5. Modelings of more-than languaging:

How *Goodnight Moon* was written cannot be fully apprehended without a detour through Lucy Sprague Mitchell's pedagogical philosophy, as it relates to language and image in both the Bank Street School's adult teacher training and in early childhood education. In the first chapter, I alluded to the fact that William James taught both Gertrude Stein and Lucy Sprague Mitchell at Radcliffe College (Harvard University) as undergraduates at the turn of the 20th century. Like Stein, Sprague Mitchell's time with William James at Radcliffe had a lasting — if sometimes uneven — effect on her thinking about how *experience contours language* (and not the other way around) (Sprague Mitchell 1953, Marcus 1992). With language as a lens on experience, much of her pedagogical philosophy oriented around how a child *becomes* (for better or worse) an adult.

> Lucy Mitchell's investigations in this field were of pathfinding importance. Among the more striking insights to emerge early on was the observation that '*communication is not the earliest impulse that leads to the use of language*' — a discovery that ran directly counter to the most basic assumptions of traditional pedagogy, with its emphasis on vocabulary building and early mastery of the mechanics of grammar, syntax, and spelling (Marcus 1992, 52, emphasis added).

Led by the teachings of educational philosopher John Dewey — a lifelong friend and mentor, who would sit on the school's advisory board for a time — this radical thinking grounded her pedagogy not only of children, but of the young teachers who trained at Bank Street, including Margaret Wise Brown.

Lucy Sprague Mitchell founded the Bureau of Educational Experiments, which would later become the Bank Street School, in 1916, with her collaborator Harriet Johnson (d. 1934). Its aim was to marry two new forms in education for young children: research organizations studying child development and teacher training, and experimental schools. "The essential and hitherto untried feature of the Bureau plan was to combine these two kinds of thinking and work within one organization in a functional relationship" (Sprague Mitchell 1953, 273). Its method was to rigorously document children's activity and learning through both quantitative and (more importantly) qualitative observation and direct engagement with their broader social and environmental milieus, in order to give Sprague Mitchell and the researchers "a sort of perspective view of the organic, interdependent complexities within each child that made him a unique individual" (ibid., 274). "Consistent with Dewey's arguments about reflectivity (1933), this approach was generated through a systematic scientific inquiry grounded in the study of experience (Dewey, 1938)" (Grinberg 2005, 41). The insight resulting from this methodology provided the

Bureau with the "appreciation that, though children pass through the same stages in developing, they mature in their own individual way and at their own rate" (Sprague Mitchell 1953, 274).

Jaime Grinberg argues that the reason the Bank Street School's duration and success is not better known is due to an array of factors, some of which are more apparent: The school was small, private, run by women, unaffiliated with a major university (though members of Columbia University and the New School were active pedagogues, organizers, and board members), and focussed heavily on preschool-aged children. Some reasons for its relative obscurity are more structural: though a small trove on its scholarship exists, Grinberg's argument is that the deficit of literature on Bank Street's advancements in education are a result of the fact that because the Bank Street's is not an *institutional* history, much of its collective discovery stayed in the classroom. Grinberg follows Clifford (1980) in arguing that there is a general tendency toward the historical valourization of major institutional forces rather than histories of *life* in the classroom; and Finkelstein (1992) through her argument that Bank Street's shift in processes of educational acculturation are elided by the prevailing tendency of research that focusses on "the analysis of structure rather than process, prescription rather than practice, and ideology rather than consciousness"; as a result, many "historians of education had unknowingly concealed private processes from view (e.g., the formation and evolution of community, the acquisition of identity, the cultivation of intellect, sensibility, and aspiration) (p. 284)" (Finkelstein quoted in Grinberg 2005, 7).

The Bank Street School has not, however, been forgotten, and is still very much active. It is credited as a major example of Dewey's philosophy, and the originator and ongoing champion of what is called the 'Development-Interaction Approach' to early childhood pedagogy (a renaming of what Sprague Mitchell coined "the Bank Street method"). From its inception in 1916 to the writing of Sprague Mitchell's autobiography (and its robust account of the timespan described) in 1953, The Bank Street School straddled, pioneered, and advanced many pedagogical 'givens' that are in practice today: cited in the same summaries of early childhood education as Montessori, Nursery Schools, Reggio Emilia, and others[3]. The Development-Interaction Approach,

> identified but not unique to Bank Street College of Education, was named for its salient concepts: the changing patterns of growth, understanding, and response that characterize children and adults as they develop; and the dual meaning of interaction as, first, the interconnected spheres of thought and emotion, and, equally, the importance of engagement with the environment of children, adults, and the material world (Nager and Shapiro 2000, 11).

In her writings, Sprague Mitchell recounts engagements with the nascent Freudian theories (and their subsequent rejection), Alexander technique, practices in the emerging field of 'human

[3] See, for example, Feeny et al, 2019.

geography,' play therapy, theories of psychological and hormonal development as active subjects in the teaching lab. Turning away from the measurement of children to dialogue with many significant developments in the understanding of child psychology, physiology, and experimental pedagogies, the school expanded to being a regional powerhouse and eventual teacher's college that is still in operation. At centre, however, was always the child and the observation and collaboration with their experience. "The importance of learning observational skills for teaching was not just for the purpose of developing researcher skills, it was primary 'Because the basic idea was to see what the child is like before you figure out what his education should be' (Biber, 3/27/75, p. 25)" (Grinberg 2005, 35).[4]

6. The Wiggle

An example of how the Bureau of Educational Experiments, and later the Bank Street School, differed from the contemporaneous wisdom of early childhood pedagogy comes in Sprague Mitchell's attitude toward 'the wiggle' in young children. Of the wiggling infant, she relays how difficult it was for researchers to build an accurate growth chart of children lying down at the Child Research Institute in Minneapolis, where "they put the babies into casts so that they *couldn't* wiggle. They got the measurements. And they weren't interested in the wiggle. We were. Nor were they bothered that the casts might be an emotional strain to babies. Again, we were" (Sprague Mitchell 1953, 460, emphasis in original).

I have suggested that in *Goodnight Moon*, a surveying of language (and its surrounds) through the combination of the indefinite article "a" and the definite article "the" is initiated on its first page. That first page, and those subsequent, are inalienable from the approach of the Bank Street School and its influence on Margaret Wise Brown. Perhaps the wiggle or squirm evidences the impossibility of accounting for *the* experience of childhood, and writing for or educating *the* child, against the immense singularity of *a* child in *a* process of worlding, both in the classroom and in the reading of this bedtime story. Does moving between *the* Great Green Room and the various items it contains, identified by the indefinite article '*a*,' activate the semblance of a movement akin to a wiggle in the milieu in which *Goodnight Moon* features? Might the roving structure of this storybook — and its narratively "errant" wander lines — come close to the relational pacing of a wiggling child, in what Erin Manning elsewhere calls an "approximation of proximity" (Manning 2020)?

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[4] In the school's early years, their discovery that individual processes of 'maturation' were more important in assessing the needs of a student than metrics related to age was but one of their important findings, particularly as at the time, the Superintendent of New York Schools was much-quoted in his "his expression of an ideal for schools. He wished to look at his watch and know that every child in Grade 2B was at that moment reading or reciting the contents of a certain page in a certain textbook" (Sprague Mitchell 1953, 436).

Gilles Deleuze, in his essay "What Children Say" (1997) can help to illustrate the point that sidling alongside the wiggle might better facilitate an understanding of how *Goodnight Moon* operates. Arguing against Freud and his emphasis on the Oedipal family unit as metaphorically representative of a child's "inner world," Deleuze alights upon Freud's study of "Little Hans," a young boy terrified of horses and castration — whose terror Freud attributes to the boy's attraction to his mother and fear of his father, an expression of a 'dysfunctional' libido. According to Freud, Deleuze argues, *a* horse is an investment of the libido that signifies something or someone that the consciousness is defending against. "For psychoanalysis, it is always a question of *my* father, *me*, *my* body. It has a mania for the possessive and the personal, and the interpretation consists in recovering persons and possessions" (Deleuze 1997, 65, emphasis in original). Deleuze disagrees with this interpretation for many reasons, but for the sake of this argument, I would like to emphasize one of his points here: *A* horse is not a metaphor; it is an intensification of childhood affect. The indefinite *a* of a horse (or a Great Green Room, or a telephone, or…) does not "lack determination. It is the determination of a becoming, its characteristic power, the power of an impersonal that is not a generality but a singularity at its highest point" (ibid., 65). In other words, to account for childhood experience by ascribing libidinal investments to metaphorical relationships — or in the case of the wiggle, as signs of so-called errant development — is to deny the creative and speculative nature of childhood becoming.

I think that Sprague Mitchell demonstrates her commitment to studious, non-judgemental observation and radical empiricism in her assessment that, in the wiggle, her contemporaries were measuring the wrong thing: "Wiggling was an interesting behaviour in young children. Emotions are a very important part of children. But could wiggles or emotions be measured? If not, they must lie outside the realm of scientific study" — a conclusion that while dominant, Sprague Mitchell found improbable (Sprague Mitchell 1953, 462).[5] Led, after 1928, by the psychologist

[5] Another countercurrent in children's pedagogical development and teacher training was how the school responded to the sea-change that came with the invention of I.Q. testing and, most problematically, the categorizations of students along a so-called 'scientific' scale. For example, with the notion that 'intelligence' could be measured came introduction of such concepts as that of the "moron," who Sprague Mitchell recounts had "first come to notice through Madam Montessori's work. Morons soon left Italy, spread over our country, and before I left Berkeley had crossed the Rockies to California, where they were put into separate classes in schools."

Showing her disdain for what she clearly identifies as a form of educational separating-out of neurodivergent or simply non-conforming students, Sprague Mitchell rejected this aspect of Montessori-style schools, expressing her frustration at the fact that "with unconscious irony, these classes" — what might come to be known as "Special Ed" — "were called 'opportunity classes,' a name which we should hope might apply to all classes for children" (Sprague Mitchell 1953, 461).

Working intermittently with psychologists over the decades, she found metrics such as the (at the time) novel I.Q. tests to be inadequate, and worse, a tool to pigeonhole dynamic experience. "Measure a child's mentality — get

Barbara Biber, the school's study of the qualitative "stages of development" of children (influenced by predominant developmental theorists including Werner and Piaget) balanced these new sciences with direct study and observation: "The conception of 'maturity levels' of behaviour made it possible to handle materials that could not be translated into numerical terms. At last THE CHILD became a small person interacting with his environment, a complex organism behaving in certain characteristic ways (which in this case happened to be with crayons or paints) as he passed through stages of his development" (ibid., 462, emphasis in original).[6]

The definite article "the" rears its head in this quote by Sprague Mitchell. My aim is not to highlight her emphasis on "stages of development," so much as to show that the outcome of this manner of thinking — though present in the pedagogical environment that was part of Margaret Wise Brown's formation — can add complexity to a historical account of how Wise Brown's creativity eventually found expression; and, to show that even though there were tendrils of radical empiricism in Lucy Sprague Mitchell's *own* formation and subsequent pedagogy, the routes to understanding how these historical moments find purchase in *Goodnight Moon* are many and circuitous. If an exact tracing of the pedagogy of the Bank Street School is not what is to be taken up in Sprague Mitchell's observations, what is?

Manning challenges us to follow the "transversal diagrams rather than premade maps of what education can be" (Manning 2020b, 1). She continues, "the real work of the maps ... is to retrace the wander line of a child and to notice that this wander line escapes us, that we do not catch at all that might be the child's project, to note that the wander lines are magnetized by something" (ibid., 2). I relate this description to Wise Brown's formative education at Bank Street and the tendency to try to find meaning in what the map or plan is thought to communicate. What Manning is suggesting is that what is truly important is valuing transversal movements *across* what has been

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him pigeonholed — feeble-minded at one end and 'genius' at the other — and then feed him what the inhabitants of that pigeonhole required. It was audaciously simple and sounded comfortingly scientific" (Sprague Mitchell 1953, 461). This is not to leave the concept of 'development' and 'maturation' unchallenged; but to note that, as Nager and Shapiro suggest, "that an insistence on understanding development in its specific context, a rejection of narrow measures and concomitant use of descriptive and qualitative analysis, as well as attention to teachers' voices in framing the research questions, are also concerns of contemporary researchers. This form of thinking is fundamentally subversive of the dominant paradigms that have come to govern university research and define expert knowledge" (Nager and Shapiro 2000, 16).

[6] Seventy years later, this sentiment would be echoed by Erin Manning in a broader critique of how postsecondary institutions enforce disciplinary (and physical) rigidity in the collective student body, itself a riot of difference: calling for a reimagining of what *else* teaching and learning can be in the University classroom. She advocates for actively experimenting with practices that challenge frontality, techniques of facilitation, and other ways of learning in the classroom, which attune a pedagogue to a form of learning that is "allied to language's otherwise rhythms, to the stims and tics and poetic utterances that come of engaging asymmetrically with languages and modalities of communication" (Manning 2020a, 215).

mapped in pedagogical doctrine; instead, tracing the becoming-singular intensities experienced by *a* child.

> When Deleuze speaks of the need to foreground the indefinite article when it comes to the child, '*a* child', when he speaks of the 'any child whatsoever' (*enfant quelconque*), he is speaking of the quality of moving that troubles inscription. He is speaking of what escapes with the line, of what escapes the line. Becoming-child, the indefinite child quality that moves across all life-living but is in a particular approximation of proximity to the child, is antidote to method, to site, to simple location. A becoming-child is a childing-worlding, to 'reach a childhood of the world, restore a childhood of the world' (Abécédaire, 'Enfance') (Manning 2020b, 5).

The wiggle is one such indication of the incipient movement if a childing-worlding. What Sprague Mitchell found valuable (and in this example, what is to be valued in her practice) in the act of studying alongside children is a quality of movement that is *not* stilled by the entrainment of disciplinary education. A wiggle is the marker of a bodying of intensive feeling into extensive movement — a relational function — that so perfectly illustrates, to my mind, how neurotypical behaviour has a history of being *literally* straight-jacketed into place, in order to adhere to the function of the 'rule.' Rather than practicing the indifferent separation of world from mind so characteristic of adult behaviour in the service of dispassionate observation, children *body* their surrounds through play. "The map expresses the identity of the journey and what one journeys through, it merges with its object, when the object itself is movement" (Deleuze 1997, 61).

The Bureau's engagement with the study of *how* children learn, from a young age, led to Mitchell's first published work: *The Here and Now Story Book* (1921), in which she advanced her theory of "here and now" pedagogy. In 1953, 32 years later, of a child's learning through direct perception in a world of immediate experience, she wrote:

> Young children live in the 'here and now' world around them which they use as a laboratory for their explorations. They are interested in what the people they know are doing and in how things work. *They take in this world around them primarily through their five senses and their muscle experiences — not through words. They are natural investigators, explorers, scientists on a young level* (Sprague Mitchell 1953, 275, emphasis added).

Sprague Mitchell observed that it was in the act of identifying with their immediate (and often familial surrounds) that young children respond most fulsomely. "Since they *are so motor themselves*, they easily feel like moving objects — animals, trains, boats, autos. They play being these moving things" (Sprague Mitchell 1953, 275, emphasis added). In living back their experiences, they "create new roles for themselves, roles that give them the sense of adventure and power in which they control the boat as captains or the train as engineers" (ibid., 275).

The proposition advanced by *Goodnight Moon* is, in part, that it has a repetition and insistence that seems to catch this nonrepresentative thought, allowing a child to motor along with the turning of the pages, pacing alongside. It is my contention here that the pacings of a bedtime ritual are in immanent relation with the wiggle, or more simply, as Deleuze says above, they are part of a

"childing-worlding" milieu. Of this fecund moment at the Bank Street School, Barbara Biber et al. write that the "mix of qualitative and quantitative measurement," collected at the Bureau in 1936 and 1937 would create what they would call

> 'contextual records' of the children in a range of school situations, as well as the children's responses to psychological performance tests, problem-solving tasks, and projective techniques. 'Our approach,' they wrote, 'has more in common with the problems and methods of ecology, of regional studies, of topological psychology, than it has with the approach which led to development of intelligence scales on the basis of age norms' (Biber et al. 1952/1942, 7, cited in Nager and Shapiro 2000, 19).

There is much, again, that might be alarming in this summary were it not for the fact that the movement away from mere measurement and the averaging of statistics was radical in its time, the age of "Progressive Education" at the beginning of the 20th century. Rather than a "top-down" approach to education, in the Development-Interaction Approach, "the developing child and the adult are viewed as actively constructing meaning, and developmental progress is seen as multidetermined and characterized by qualitative change. Growth and development require conflict in both cognitive and affective domains" (Nager and Shapiro 2000, 21). In addition to the challenge staged against the romanticized ideal of childhood (unadulterated growth), or the god-like view of adulthood, the combination of development and interaction "differentiat[ed] it from dominant images of development that located all sources of change inside the individual," — though not quite wholly relational — "[t]eachers in this tradition respond to the individuality of each child and to the dynamic interactions among children, adults, and the material environment" (ibid., 22-23).

The ongoing success of *Goodnight Moon* evidences the fact that it is a technique for worlding the day into night. It activates a milieu characterized by transition; one that although it incorporates what for many is a parental technique to get a child to transition to a state of rest, implicitly acknowledges that the parental unit is *not* the centre of the event of the bedtime story that is already underway. A milieu, Deleuze says, is more than the individuals or objects that make up a scene; it is "made up of qualities, substances, powers, and events"; its "trajectory merges not only with the subjectivity of those who travel through a milieu, but also with the subjectivity of the milieu itself, insofar as it is reflected in those who travel with it" (Deleuze 1997, 61).

Arguing that they are 'natural artists,' Sprague Mitchell observed that not only do children interpret the world around them through dramatic play and other art forms, they also process their experiences through reenactment, playing them back. "And here again, they change their roles to suit their emotional needs. Sometimes they are all-powerful fathers or mothers; sometimes they are helpless crying babies — clear pictures of the ambivalent, dependent-independent, yes-no stage of their development. They get into action under the stimulus of any idea or emotion. Their bodies are a natural medium for expression as shown by their incessant dramatic play" (Sprague Mitchell 1953, 275).

Sprague Mitchell is describing a kind of play that is co-creative and embodied, but I don't agree that with her suggestion that what is being expressed is the 'role' of the parent, so much as there is a play-mapping of a milieu underway, of which a parent is a part:

> Parents are themselves a milieu that children travel through: they pass through its qualities and powers and make a map of them. They take on a personal and parental form only as the representatives of one milieu within another. But it is wrong to think that children are limited before all else to their parents, and only had access to milieus *afterward*, by extension or derivation. The father and mother are not the coordinates of everything that is invested by the unconscious. There is never a moment when children are not already plunged into an actual milieu in which they are moving about, and in which the parents as persons simply play the role of openers or closers of doors, guardians of thresholds, connectors or disconnectors of zones. The parents always occupy a position in a world that is not derived from them. Even with an infant, the parents are defined in relation to a continent-bed, as agents along the child's route (Deleuze 1997, 61-62).

Traditionally, in the world of bedtime stories, narrative, morality, and their categorical structures impart an ethical imperative on the subject. The theory goes that the subject proceeds to develop along with a series of such imperatives, which in the case of a child, are rapidly embodied and performed from a young age — naturalized. Contrary to this, what Sprague Mitchell is describing is a form of play that is driven by thought from the outside: where thought is *in the act, before its narration* — it is inventive, experimental, propositional, and exploratory. "For example, I do not play *the* horse, any more than I imitate *this* or *that* horse, but I become *a* horse, by reaching a zone of proximity where I can no longer be distinguished from what I am becoming" (Deleuze 1997, 65). From the point of view of a child, an educator, and a writer, expressing the act of becoming through play and/or language is a lure for thought's outside, in order to grow it from within the event, before its self-representation. It is a wiggle in defiance of stillness.

Brian Massumi illustrates this point in *What Animals Teach Us About Politics.* He argues that "noncognitive consciousness is *actively nonrepresentative*" (Massumi 2014, 40). He is describing an affective politics in the realm of the more-than human, wherein the body's enthusiasm is a fielding of its appetite for more. A child has a favourite book; the propositional force of a particular story has them returning to it, again and again. Of course, this book may also function in any manner of regulation or as a technique for learning; but an animal learns not through disciplinary tools, but through playful inter-action. Massumi uses the example of a nip in juvenile animal play: A nip is a bite that carries the *form* of aggression but the *content* of play. "This is not a bite," the animal says, but it is *as-if* it were a bite. In the affective tonality of this bite — the feeling outside of one particular sense-presentation — *could be* but is not an 'actual' bite. The play interaction carries a ludic operation; "becoming animal dramatizes the affective situation by performing gestures that have bite without biting" (ibid., 56). It is a drama-play harnessing the affective situation of conflict.

There is a mapping that is taking place across the examples of the childhood wiggle, pedagogy, the bedtime story, and the animal nip/bite. Contrary to a mode of analysis based on psychoanalytic, developmental, or behavioural benchmarks, this cartographic study of the tracings of intensities

and the distribution of affects is a study of "becoming" (Deleuze 1997, 63). Of Freud's Little Hans, Deleuze writes:

> We see clearly why the real and the imaginary were led to exceed themselves, or even to interchange with each other: a becoming is not imaginary, any more than a voyage is real. It is becoming that turns the most negligible of trajectories, or even a fixed immobility, into a voyage; and it is the trajectory that turns the imaginary into a becoming. Each of these two types of maps, those of trajectories and those of affects, refers to the other (Deleuze 1997, 65).

Becoming-child is a refusal of categorical determination. "Art also attains this celestial state that no longer retains anything of the personal or rational. In its own way, art says what children say. It is made up of trajectories and becomings, and it too makes maps, both extensive and intensive" (ibid., 65-66). I think what Deleuze means by this is that a childhood becoming is one way of edging on to *a* life, the absolute immanence that I referred to in the previous chapter, when I wrote "the impersonal is that which is before and after, in the surrounds, in the absolute survey of subjectivity across the transcendental field of becoming in advance of its singularization in *a* life."

What art and a becoming-child have in common, then, is the joining of the two cartographies that embark on voyages of discovery, where the map will falter and fail, "depending on paths internal to the work itself; the external path is a creation that does not exist before the work, and depends on its internal relations" (ibid., 67).

"*A* and *an* both mean 'one' or 'one among many' … *The* shows that a noun is specific; use *the* with one or more specific thing *the* newspaper, *the* soldiers" (Hacker and Sommers 2019, 234). *Goodnight Moon* can be divided into two sections: the first, where every object in the room is identified by an indefinite article in the past tense: There was a telephone; a balloon; a picture; a (pair of) mittens; a toyhouse; a mouse; a comb; a brush; a bowl; a lady. In the second section, the first set of objects identified by indefinite articles are joined by others and made *definite*: the moon, the light, chairs, clocks, socks, nobody, the mush (replacing the bowl as subject), stars, air, noises (everywhere). Each are bid "Goodnight," and in the hailing, shift to the present tense.

The most significant exception to the movement from Wise Brown's use of indefinite articles in the past tense, to nouns introduced by (implied or explicit) definite articles in the present, is in the first line of the book: "In *the* great green room." Here, the worlding operation to be entered into over the course of thirty pages is subtended by *the* (definite article) Great Green Room. There is only one room, and its place is within a milieu shared in the event with the reader. The room of the storybook acts as determined ground in the procedure of creating an emergent cartography within the surrounds of the bedtime story. As the pages turn, the act of concretizing these objects by locating them and identifying them brings them from the milieu into the present moment, (perhaps) stilling them.

Though only three nouns are identified in this second half of the story by the definite article *the — the* moon, *the* balloon, *the* old lady — I propose that both for those that have initially been lured by their (indefinite) invocation, as well as those which have been hailed as-if they were

always already there, an exercise of mapping where the wiggle is afoot. It is the determination of a becoming, as Deleuze proposes above: one that understands that the ritual has been entered into before. The storying paces alongside the event of transition from day into night, where as the pages progress the day that *was* is carried into the present-time of night that *is*; and the objects that have been hailed and selected-out have concretized, switching places in their extensive trajectory and intensive affective cartographies. The affect of the milieu is one of soothing transition through event-time.

That the rhythmic insistence and return of *Goodnight Moon* carries an artfulness that, as part of its constitution, is one that is soothing and regulating, is clear. Were this not to be the case, it would not function as a nighttime ritual that calms the wiggle. But its artfulness is not explained by a trajectory of pacification; or by attributing programmatic overdetermination to it. Its wonder suggests something more is afoot, if for no other reason than the fact that its return is not scripted by adults or children. Deleuze: "Art is defined, then, as an impersonal process in which the work is composed somewhat like a *cairn*, with stones carried in by different voyagers and beings in becoming (rather than ghosts) that may or may not depend on a single author" (Deleuze 1997, 66).

7. The Experience of Relation

The artfulness of these pre-subjective, pre-personal encounters is not in the score or text itself: the potential that they contain is in the interval, the minor variation that furnishes forth singular forms of expression. The simple repetition of a marching drum is not music; its line of escape from the refrain is in the in-between. An understanding of how a radical empiricist might take on questions of becoming and subjectivation bears directly upon how Bank Street's educational philosophies were formed, and in turn, how these conceptions found purchase in Margaret Wise Brown's output, namely, in the creation and ongoing affective valence of *Goodnight Moon.*

In his "radical empiricism," William James is careful to state that *relation* is not a matter of mere alongsideness: radical empiricism is a philosophy that "lays the explanatory stress upon the part, the element, the individual, and treats the whole as a collection and the universe as an abstraction," in contradistinction to an empiricist philosophy, which seeks to define universal truths by generalizing particular examples (James 2003, 22). What makes this form of empiricism 'radical,' James argues, is that the propositions that emerge from this philosophy must derive from direct experience — as in, *lived* experience — in conjunctive and disjunctive relation: "For such a philosophy, *the relations that connect experiences must themselves be experienced relations, and any kind of relation experienced must be accounted as 'real' as anything else in the system*" (ibid., 22-23, emphasis in original).

As I have outlined above, James' influence on Sprague Mitchell's understanding that experience contours language, and not the other way around, is evidenced by her own pedagogical philosophy of 'seen and heard' education. But as with the claim that a childing-worlding far outstrips a chronological account of developmental stages, so too must we continue to trouble the notion (outlined above) that the relationship between *a* child and their surrounds is one of simple

connection, or for that matter, even begins with an entity that will come to be known as "the child."[7] Like the milieu from which a becoming-child emerges, "[r]adical empiricism begins in the midst, in the mess of relations not yet organized into terms such as 'subject' and 'object.' In this mess, everything that happens is real, be it the redness of the fire or its molecular makeup. James calls this field of relations "pure experience," pure understood not in the sense of "purity" but in the sense of *immanent to actual relations*" (Manning 2016, 29, emphasis in original).

Sprague Mitchell's account of her time spent studying with William James, from 1896 to 1903, gives clue to her awareness of this more complex understanding of how a subjectivity emerges from experience. As a major in philosophy at Radcliffe College at Harvard University, she wrote of her encounter with James — then a Professor of psychology — and her attempt to embody his teaching as follows:

> When I first heard of James' theory that behaviour produces emotion as well as that emotion produces behaviour, I resolved to test it. These men in the philosophy department were highly individualized in their behaviour as well as their thinking. If I *behaved* like one of them, would I not *feel* like one of them? So I took each in turn. I let my mind and my speech fly off at a tangent if it felt like doing so, though I never found anything to parallel James when he rushed into the house one day and shouted, 'Palmer, I've raised the last cent for the psychological laboratory. Come now and we'll clean out our chimney flues.' All this week I tried earnestly to interpret all behaviour I saw around me as something that was producing emotions. I classified people as 'tender-minded' or 'tough-minded.' I couldn't make up my mind which I was, however (Sprague Mitchell 1953, 119-20).

Sprague Mitchell's attempt at understanding through mimesis failed because she sought to duplicate rather than singularize behaviour in her experiment. Nevertheless, what is in evidence here is her commitment to a nascent form of immediation within the local relations of her subject. Though I am arguing that James left a mark on Sprague Mitchell's thinking through the notion that it is *experience itself* that is the base material for study and philosophy, some elements of his teaching seem to be lost on Sprague Mitchell: she clearly understood from her learning with James that *the feeling is in the event*, as evidenced by her attempt to embody James' excitement in order to produce her own, but her examples both of children as 'natural artists' who *imagine* and then produce a world, and her own attempt to produce James' world through emulation misses the singularity of the event of expression, which generates the feeling in the prehending subject of experience, each time, anew. For as Manning reminds us, "[t]o reorient toward the radically

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[7] Nager and Shapiro note that the Psychologist Kurt Lewin's contribution of the concept of 'field theory' advanced "the necessity of viewing behaviour in context," arguing that this concept is known to have had lasting impact on the Bank Street School and the Development-Interaction Approach (2020, 25). The problem with this is that it foregrounds perception over immediation within experience, which taken from the point of view of 'the' child, always already reduces the childing-worlding event to a counting of its parts ("behaviour as a function of person and environment"). For conversation on Lewin, see Simondon 2020, 259.

empirical is to profoundly challenge the knower-known relation as it is customarily defined. Neither the knower nor the known can be situated in advance of the occasion's coming to be— both are immanent to the field's composition" (Manning 2016, 30). When James writes that "relations … must themselves be experienced relations," he means that experience in and for itself, and not its mere repetition, is privileged in forming understandings of how the world operates. In the context of *Goodnight Moon,* another way to say this is that the mere repetition of the text cannot sufficiently account for the *event* of the bedtime story, because a simple repetition takes for granted that the relational field immanent to the event exists purely in the story and its language, instead of the storying-worlding event itself.

Nevertheless, there is much to be appreciated in how Lucy Sprague Mitchell demonstrated that she was a speculative pragmatist in her theory of the importance of "seen-and-heard" stories for children, likely having thought of children as little 'radical empiricists,' following in the footsteps of James. Children, she observed, were enamoured by the wonder of their immediate environment, and those places were where she felt they were best situated to learn and grow. As a way to keenly grasp their surrounds, and orient themselves within those surrounds, she argued that growing *from* their immediate environment was key to healthy development. Her philosophy — that "[i]t is impossible to conceive of children working their way from the familiar to the unknown unless they develop a method in understanding the familiar which will apply to the unfamiliar as well" — would come to be the cornerstone of Bank Street's pedagogy (Sprague Mitchell 2015, 7).

Sprague Mitchell found that, through her practice of observing children in their native environments, their nascent relational experience (from infancy to the second year) takes the form of a continuous, rather than staged, development. Through close observation, she "tried to see what in his home, in his school, in the streets, he seized upon and how he made this his own," thereby attempting "to determine what were the relationships he used to order his experiences" (ibid., 15). Her theory was that (what I have defined as) the immediation experienced by a child — notably the manner in which they embody their surrounds — shifts with age. A two-year-old might make a fire engine "a gigantic extension of his own energy and movement"; whereas for a seven-year old, the interpretation of "his observations may make of the scientific example of the expansion of steam or of the desire of men to get rapidly from one place to another" (ibid. 2015, 14). In both of these cases, the "relationship" that the child has to the fire engine is a reflection of their immediation in the world. (Of course, in her account of how a child ages, a separation of subject from relation is afoot in the service of 'development'). Here, imagine how a young child playing with an engine *rolls* with it — as one bodily unit — across the floor; or how at a certain age, the act of pulling a toy apart and putting it back together might be most amusing.

As for the genesis of childhood movement in relation to play in the mind of an infant, however, Sprague Mitchell expressed bafflement:

> Fortunately for the purposes of writing stories I did not have to get behind the baffling eyes and the inscrutable sounds of a small baby. Yet I learned much for understanding the twos by watching even through the first months. What 'the great, big, blooming, buzzing confusion' (as James describes it) means to an infant, I suppose we

> grown-ups will never really know. But I suppose we may be sure that existence is to him largely a stream of sense-impressions (Sprague Mitchell 2015, 15).

For James, "the great, big, blooming confusion" is experience that has not had 'meaning' extracted from it; but this does not mean that experience itself does not already contain its own *a priori* self-organizing cohesion, as in, its own creative perspective on the universe. Experience is outside of human perception. *Consciousness*, he famously posited, does not exist; at least not as a matter of the fact of pure experience. James' "great, big, blooming confusion" is a phrase that emerges in his books on Psychology in order to describe the mass of unordered sensory milieu — experience — that an infant experiences no separation from in its first days, weeks, and months. Adapted and abridged from *Principles of Psychology (*1890), his *Psychology: Briefer Course* (1892) is reordered to further emphasize his conception of 'sensation' as the departure point for his theory of the human mind. It is from sensation that he progresses to other aspects of human psychology, including perception. Whereas perception is "the higher consciousness of things" — a reduction from the welter — sensation is "the mere inarticulate feeling of [an incoming current's] presence" (James 1992, 21). Thus, beginning an account of experience in the world as a mass of activity, these first impressions upon the sensory organs travel unorganized to the brain of the infant mind. That cohesion is not monolithic, however; it is monadic, singular: "…I now have to say that there is no *general* stuff of which experience at large is made. There are as many stuffs as there are 'natures' in the things experienced" (James 2003, 14).

Here, James is arguing against his contemporaries in the field of Psychology, asserting that the world is not in the mind, but in the space of relation, which includes the body but is not of it; what Erin Manning calls "bodying." The 'great, big, blooming confusion' of a baby's first encounter with sensation is "the baby's universe; and the universe of all of us is still to a great extent such a Confusion, potentially resolvable, and demanding to be resolved, but not yet actually resolved, into parts" (James 1992, 24). These parts do not come as a homogeneity but as an initial hailing — "'lo!", he says — an acknowledgement of sensation before discrimination (James 1992, 23).

While I have introduced the first sentence of the following quote throughout this document — that "[c]onsciousness is the poor cousin of perception as yet unparsed, of the scintillations of the force of form," — here, I will continue with Manning's subsequent line: Consciousness "is also the imposed denominator of intelligence categorized, of knowledge organized" (Manning 2025, 42). The object that has been hailed has within it already "all of the categories of understanding" prior to human consciousness of it: "*It has externality, objectivity, unity, substantiality, causality, in the full sense in which any later object or system of objects has these things,*" but most importantly at first, the object of sensation is apprehended as a unity (James 1992, 23, emphasis in original). 'Consciousness' is the reduction of these qualities from 'sense,' in the service of so-called 'higher-order processing.'

The object of sensation *will* eventually be hailed, through a process of repetition, discrimination, and perception; and with the memory of previous experiential happenings,

recognition. “The first time we see the light, in Condillac’s phrase, we *are* it rather than see it. But all our later optical knowledge is about what this experience gives. And though we were struck blind from the first moment, our scholarship on the subject would lack no essential feature so long as our memory remained” (James 1992, 22, emphasis in original). It is from this first contact, through the sensory organs and nerves, that the “tang” of “real presence which the objects of sensation possess” is felt (ibid., 22-23). Much more so than in instances of imagination or recollection, which he believes are relatively faint in comparison, both sensation and perception carry the capacity to *activate* a bodying “from the periphery,” arousing a tang-like becoming-body.

The present occasion (of experience) has its own contours. “The present, for Whitehead, does have a self-identity, but it is not of the subject of consciousness with itself. It is of the present with the past” (Massumi 2021, 190). Quoting Whitehead — “The present moment is constituted by the influx of the *other* into that self-identity which is the continued life of the immediate past within the immediacy of the present’ (Whitehead 1967, 281 in Massumi 2021, 190, emphasis in original)” — Massumi identifies a “swivel from subject to time” that places self-identity not in consciousness, but in the “basic fact.” The basic fact is not in subjectivity, but in the world, in relation. “The basic fact is the processual inheritance, by the present, of the activity of the immediate past” (ibid.).

It is in the looking back that self-identity, the “was that me?,” can be affirmed. And it is only from this rapidly receding vantage point that the surrounds, possessively selected-out by the self, can be seen. At the same time, a new version of the self is busy in-gathering, as the former calcifies and fades away. “The moment of self-ascription comes at the end, in the occasion’s self-completion, separated by self-identity as a genesis. The self-completion of the occasion precisely coincides with its ‘perishing.’ ’So, that’s what it was!’ says a pulse of the world, in an expiration of climactic ‘self-enjoyment.’ ‘So that was me!’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1983, 20)” (ibid., 191).

Pure experience, James writes, is made of “*that,* of just what appears, of space, of intensity, of flatness, brownness, heaviness, or what not” (James 2003, 14). *That,* in this case, can be either a determiner, pronoun, or a relative pronoun. As a determiner, it indicates a specific object that has already been hailed (“lo’”) (me!); when a specific thing, object, or quality is being pointed to. As a pronoun, *that* can be used to point back to a whole clause, which has passed, requiring a noun. It modifies and concretizes, in the searching, a specific noun, *that* one; *that* “old lady whispering hush.” As a relative pronoun, *that* can be used in the place of who, whom, or which, introducing defining relative clauses. These examples all fall under the category of “that-clauses,” wherein *that* can also be “used as a conjunction to link a verb, adjective, or noun with the following clause.”[8]

In Whitehead as in James, consciousness is a crude reduction of the much broader welter of experience. Somewhere along the way, *that* takes a form: “Oh, so *that’s* what *that* was.” Critically,

[8] ‘Pronoun,’ dictionary.cambridge.com.

the aim is to describe how the process of bodying is crafted in the relation, against philosophical accounts which centre consciousness as the motor of the sensing body of mere 'dumb matter.' When Lucy Sprague Mitchell is looking for a method that will apply to the "familiar and the unfamiliar as well," we can hear echoes of this influence to the extent that she acknowledges that for many, experience is understood to be ordered through acculturation or habituation. The difference here is that Sprague Mitchell's investigation as a young adult of James' behaviour producing emotions *fails* — she is never quite able to match what she describes as his characteristic excitation — because she deemphasizes the importance of the fact that experience is in the world, and James is *singularly* bodying-forth the world's excitation, rather than producing it from within. Regarding life, however, she seems to be closer to James' intent, valuing the immediation of an infant within their experiential surrounds.

Alfred North Whitehead argues that the world of processual ferment is only parsed into *appearance* and *reality* by 'higher order organisms' (1933). This parsing is an accounting of how data from the world of experience ingresses into human perception, simplifying in the process. In other words, perception originates in the actual occasion or event — the world — *not* in the human. Critically for Whitehead, "the contemporary world is not perceived in virtue of its own proper activity, but in virtue of activities derived from the past, the past which conditions it and which also conditions the contemporary percipient" (Whitehead 1933, 219). In the present moment, what the percipient apprehends is the appearance of the reality of the past, as the past saw itself in the present moment. The world is in a process of prospecting enjoyment *for itself*; and the critique here is that an account of a present occasion of experience from the point of view of mere sense-perception presumes that the world is made up of dead matter, until activated by human intervention. This error "is the result of high-grade intellectuality. The instinctive interpretations which govern human life and animal life presuppose a contemporary world throbbing with energetic values" (ibid., 219). The *appearance* of the world, therefore, is merely a reduction of its complexity in its encounter with human cognition, which is always belated. "For Whitehead, consciousness is the tip, the subtracted left-over of all that is still teeming with potential, the denuded, short-lived reorientation, through what he calls 'subjective form,' of how things took" (Manning 2025, 43).

In what James calls the "specious present," the world is already underway on its next adventure. "There is no thought stuff different from thing stuff," James writes. Instead, 'pure experience' is the name he gives to the "*materia prima* of everything"; though the "same identical piece of 'pure experience' can stand alternatively for a 'fact of consciousness' or for a physical reality, according as it is taken in one context or in another" (James 2003, 72). Affects or *appreciations*, as James elsewhere calls them, can be taken as subjective or objective by the percipient, and their natures are assigned as attributes, "because in both contexts they affect their associates actively, though in neither quite as 'strongly' or as sharply as things affect one another by their physical energies" (ibid., 18). These "*appreciations,* which form an ambiguous sphere of being, belonging with

emotion on the one hand, and having objective 'value' on the other, yet seeming not quite inner nor quite outer, as if a diremption" — a sharp division into two parts — "had begun but had not made itself complete" (ibid).

Appreciations affix themselves to objects or states, and colourize or inflect them: Soft touch becomes an experience of softness. In James, the adjective that denotes the presence of an appreciation in the perceptive experience might wander "as if uncertain where to fix itself. Shall we speak of seductive visions or visions of seductive things?" (ibid., 18). He notes that in the world of pure experience, "both in the mind and in the thing, these natures modify their content, exclude certain associates and determine others, have their mates and incompatibilities" (ibid.). In the novelty of experience, the materially affective gives tonality to experience — as all experience is material, in James — expressing the *thisness* of the experience at hand.

While there is no "thought stuff different than thing stuff" in James, experience might be categorized as 'inner' or 'outer,' not in terms of its content, but in how these modes affect one and other. Those affects in the latter group act energetically (kinetically), while those on the former act as ideas or sensations. Critically, both inner and outer affectations are interpenetrable and can have the same content, as "[t]he basis of the two groups respectively is the different type of interrelation, the mutual impenetrability [in the case of 'hard' objects], on the one hand, and the lack of physical interference and interaction, on the other" (ibid., 73). Of those affects that are classified as ideas or sensations — lacking physical interference or interaction — James is at pains to note that they do not reside in a phenomenological interiority, but are in the world of pure experience, before the bifurcation of object and subject; temporary classifications of experience post-facto. "Language," he says, "would lose most of its aesthetic and rhetorical value were we forbidden to project words primarily connoting our affectations upon the objects by which the affectations are aroused" (ibid., 75). A 'sullen sky,' for example, really *does* carry the feeling of sullenness when spoken of, as such; but it would be impossible to reduce the sky to 'sullen' just as much as it would be to reduce 'sullen' to the quality of sky. Somewhere in the interactive admixture of a sky-affectation-percipient, the *tonality* of a sullen sky has temporarily become the subject of an experience. Movement, he notes, can be felt, and as evidence that it is not located exclusively in the body, though it can be registered there: "When clouds float by the moon, it is as if both clouds and moon and we ourselves shared in the motion" (ibid., 76). Motion is a "pure fact" of experience, to be retroactively categorized in space and time.

In the moment of the event, every experience has this retrospective quality, before being sorted into common sense, including assignation to mental or physical 'facts.' "Let the reader arrest himself in the act of reading this article now. *Now* this is a pure experience, a phenomenon, or datum, a mere *that* or content of fact. *'Reading simply is, is there;* and whether there for some one's consciousness, or there for physical nature, is a question not yet put. At the moment, it is there for neither; later we shall probably judge it to have been there for both" (ibid., 76, emphasis in original). The reading is happening in and for itself. It is only when we stop to assign what is 'happening now' that we are embarking on the classification of what was happening *then:* "The

common-sense state of thought is a perfectly definite halting-place, the place where we ourselves can proceed to act unhesitatingly" (ibid., 77). Experience interweaves both within a neighbourhood of activity of thought, which remains outside of the subject, and is also active in its secondary qualities, and yet is still not yet 'subjective' in the sense that they belong to a subject; concrescing "with one set or another of associates for definitely practical or intellectual ends" (ibid., 77).

Just as experience is not in the subject, it is neither in the object. Objects do not act upon one another; or at the very least, there is no such thing as mere physical interaction without a form of what Whitehead might refer to as 'mentality.' "The beauty of a thing or its value is no force that can be plotted in a polygon of compositions, nor does its 'use' or 'significance' affect in the minutest degree its vicissitudes or destiny at the hands of physical nature" (ibid., 78). As evidence of his philosophy of pure experience, James points to how our attention is produced *in* the interaction with those 'objects' of the world outside of our bodies, but which are nevertheless registered *by* our bodies: "for an object to be emphatic […] means also that it produces immediate bodily effects upon us. Alterations of tone and tension, of heartbeat and breathing, and of vascular and visceral action. The 'interesting' aspects of things are the not wholly inert physically, though they be active only in these small corners of physical nature which our bodies occupy" (ibid., 78-79).

The wonder produced in a children's book is not inherent in the thing itself. It is a product of a qualitatively durational *withness* and *alongsideness* and even *emergence* that is contained in a neighbourhood of experience. While in the reading of *Goodnight Moon*, there is a speciation of event that is produced by the repetition of its reading; a certain score that activates a reading-listening-snoozing-restless body alongside the refrain of well-turned pages. The coming into relation of the event of reading *Goodnight Moon* is always already the production of more-than the sum of any identifiable set of parts. In James' terms, *Goodnight Moon* would be a percept — or a Whiteheadian lure for feeling — primed to be activated with variation each time, anew. The book exists across multiple experiences of it (undoubtedly), but the *thisness,* or singular quality of *this* event of reading-listening-snoozing-restless-sleeping-bodying in *this* telling carries its own unique capacity for feeling otherwise. Is this capacity for feeling otherwise — for a renewal, invention of feeling — the *something doing* of this particular bedtime story, in the relational field that it co-composes?

Relation, Erin Manning writes, "is a making apparent of a third space opened up for experience in the making. This third space (or interval) is active with the tendencies of interaction but is not limited to them. Relation folds experience into it such that what emerges is always more than the sum of its parts" (Manning 2013, 2). That reading a nighttime story is a form of interaction is undeniable; but that *Goodnight Moon* capacitates something greater than mere interaction is also clear: there is something happening in the over fulness of the event that is not reducible to verification by age or state of maturation… or even language itself.

Manning argues that the psychoanalyst Daniel Stern treats relation as a "node of creative interpersonal potential" *key* to an infant's immediation in the world, thereby orienting away from an idea of development from infancy built upon an accumulation of interactive experiences. Instead, "[q]uantum leaps of development occur in a fractal mode of relation where events build on events, each of them affecting at once the infant and the environment, altering what Stern calls the 'social feel' of the infant" (ibid., 4). Stern introduces the concept of the 'amodal' in order to describe how infants learn not through contact between body and world — or skin-to-skin — but through "cross-modal transfer." Rather than learning through direct sense-perception, Stern's research shows that cross-modal transfer occurs before sense-presentation is routed toward one mode of perception or another; here, as the infant comes to experience, experience comes to her; perception is in the event. "Cross-modal correspondence, and, even more so, *amodality* (the idea that perception does not locate itself in a sense modality but courses between in rhythms that build correspondences rather than on already-occurring sites for sensation), Stern argues, transcends the sense 'channel'" (ibid., 5, emphasis added).

The chromaticism of yet-to-be defined sense organization in infancy *and* in the storybook puts both in the world and in multiplicity: a childhood of the world, a storying-worlding event. Returning to James, if *Goodnight Moon* is a percept shared by you/me/the event of reading-the physical book (etc.), it cannot be "in my mind" or "in your mind;" even if we happen to share the same physical book. The book is selected out for its singularity from the field of experience and its ability to secrete further experience, serially and amodally. "Amodality foregrounds not the sense itself but its relational potential […] Amodality makes apparent that the infant functions comfortably in the abstract concreteness of the radically empirical: the relation" (ibid., 5).

"Stern speaks of 'a thousand smiles, a thousand getting-out-of-chairs, a thousand variations of performance of any and all behaviors . . . each one present[ing] a different vitality affect' (1985, 56). Vitality affects function in the associated milieu of relation: they merge with experience's tendings-toward feeling and emerge as the feeling of the event" (ibid., 7). Through Stern, Manning defines *vitality affect* as "a range of affect 'elicited by changes in motivational states, appetites, and tensions' (Stern 1985, 54)." The 'reading' of a nighttime story — and specifically, in this spiral, the experience of its poetry — is the announcement of one vitality affect upon another. "The event, fed by vitality affects, prompted by amodal relays, and re-routed by senses of coherence (affective tonalities dephasing), takes the form not of discrete "things seen, heard or touched" but of "qualities of shape, number, intensity level" (Stern 1985, 57 in Manning 2013, 7).

The relational intensity that arises from an infant's encounter with the eventfulness of vitality affects across the amodality of a child's eventful experience orients her toward what Stern calls an "affective attunement," where "relation radically precedes the purported unity of the self" (ibid., 7). As vitality affects are amodally perceived in a child's experience of an event, she will forge affective attunements towards the various selves she might 'become' — a series of singularities in germ. These accretions are impersonal, in the sense that they have not resolved on a state of being categorized by object/subject interaction. They are twinklings, affinities, and orientations which

make up a personality that shimmers with possibility. At infancy, this relational aliveness is most felt.

The affectations or appreciations that give vitality to the experience of *Goodnight Moon* are, at least in an approximation of proximity, evidence that in James' philosophy of pure experience, *activity is in the relation*. "If your objects do not coalesce with my objects, if they be not identically where mine are, they must be proved to be positively somewhere else. But no other location can be assigned for them, so their place must be what it seems to be, the same." The percept that is the event of *Goodnight Moon* is not located here, in my mind, any more than it is in yours. It is in the interplay: "Our percepts, yours and mine […] are created in the interplay. So, percepts can't be 'out there, somewhere.' They are always in the field we share ("no other location can be assigned to them). This means they are not IN THE MIND. That is, the mind is in the [book]!" (Email from Erin Manning, William James Reading Group, Fall 2020).

In his earlier *Principles of Psychology*, James notes that while "perception" is more closely allied to a form of separated-out attention, it is when the mind wanders and attention is dispersed — as in, not focussed on subject/object relationships but *in the world* — that sensations wash across the body like energetic currents. This, he terms "knowledge of acquaintance," the sensation's "object, becoming a simple quality, is sensibly *homogenous*; and its function is that of mere *acquaintance* with this homogenous seeming fact" (James 1992, 22). "What", "which," "that," and "it" are all the territory of *acquaintance*; knowledge *about* is carried by the conceptual expansion of ideas about objects when familiarity with them grows. Similar to Whitehead's conception of the interrelationship of 'rhythm' and 'pattern', however, knowledge of acquaintance cannot exist without knowledge-about.

An infant's first sensorial experiences *are* of the universe in total. "And the universe in which he comes to know later in life is nothing but an amplification of that first simple germ which, by *accretion* on one hand and *intussusception* on the other, has grown so big and complex and articulate that its first state is unrememberable" (ibid., 23, emphasis added). Intussusception is "a drawing in of something from without," and "the assimilation of new material and its dispersal among preexistent matter"; and accretion is "the process of growth or enlargement by a gradual buildup: such as [an] increase by external addition or accumulation (as by adhesion of external parts or particles)" (Miriam-Webster). The germ, here, I take to be 'knowledge about' through experience. Experience, from the point of view of the mind, both intensifies (deepens) and expands (grows). But experience is not *in* the mind; it is in the transition from one event to another. For Whitehead, this is called 'nonsensuous perception':

> "In the fielding of experience, Whitehead suggests, we perceive not first and foremost from sense to sense but from relation to relation. 'The present moment is constituted by the influx of the other into that self-identity which is the continued life of the immediate past within the immediacy of the present' (1933, 181). It is not the past as such or the object as such we perceive in the then-now" (Manning 2013, 94).

It is too simple to ascribe mere tragedy to the fact that the wide open field of potential that an infant first encounters — that 'great, big, blooming buzzing confusion' — will never be remembered. But first, with the dawning of awareness, "the young knower meets and greets his world; and the miracle of knowledge bursts forth, as Voltaire says, as much in the infant's lowest sensation as in the highest achievement of a Newton's brain" (James 1992 23-24). The capacity has always already existed; the tragedy is that it is trained out.

Sprague Mitchell and her colleagues concluded that at a young age, children did *not* learn from books or words as much as had been previously thought, and as was codified in curricula nation-wide. Here, by learning from young children as much as from her own experience as a Professor teaching young adults at the University of California, she observed the "difference learning from direct and from vicarious experience both in investigations and in expressive experiences," and began to theorize a mode of apprehension which had been heretofore under-theorized in pedagogical environments (Sprague Mitchell 1953, 276). From these observations, she formulated the basis of her understanding of how a child learns, in her theory of 'intake' and 'outgo.' Intake is experience as it occurs to the percipient (in this case, child), "something that happens to one." In other words, the world as it presents itself. "Then there follows a transmutation, a digestion of the experience out of which comes doing-something-about-it, an expression in one's own terms which is essentially a creative, active thing": "outgo" (ibid., 276). She writes that outgo can come in many forms — "some kind of art expression; or a new attitude or seeing of a new relationship, which is thinking" (ibid., 276). Though this process is present in any form of development, in marrying this concept to what Sprague Mitchell called "maturity," she recognized the singularity of each child in both their own experience and educational process, in the essential understanding of the *singularity* of the here-and-now.

Sprague Mitchell followed contemporaneous behaviour theorists when she proposed that "thought is itself a motor" and that "a small child's expressions are still in unmistakable motor terms," Sprague Mitchell's proposed methodology is to make sense of the world through speculative-pragmatic interaction (Sprague Mitchell 2015, 16). Like James, she believed that it was through sensation that a child first encounters the world; and particularly at a young age, the child is not able to entirely separate themselves from it, in contradistinction to adults who are "somewhat attenuated" in this manner. A child "takes in through his senses; and he interprets through his muscles" (ibid., 16). Here, the heart of Sprague Mitchell's "Here and Now" observation of young pupils is in evidence: a prevailing concern with a child's world(s) through bodily and relational interaction with it; across sense modalities and in attunement to their immediate ecology.

Like James, Sprague Mitchell did *not* believe that a young child's encounter with the world was one of 'knowledge about,' but was populated by knowledge by acquaintance. When a child is incessantly asking "why?," it is not necessarily because they are looking for a particular form of reasoning — or even an "answer" to a question at all! — they are engaging in a rhythmic (relational

pacing, Wolfond) interaction and co-composition with their world, thinking-feeling through both sensations and muscles. If James argues that sensations are an abstraction of the sense qualities that a sensation is pointing toward, does it not make sense for the call and response of the question "why?" to be expressed as an agitated wiggling produced in the event itself? Erin Manning calls the force behind the question "why" "the force of the indefinite that transversalizes" the becoming-child:

> This double-gesture of following and remaking is the force of all speculative pragmatism, and no one knows this better than the child-researcher. The child's 'why' question is never, after all, a question that could properly be answered. It is a question that begs a worlding. Deleuze and Guattari speak of children's questions as 'question-machines', operations for clearing paths toward more complex qualities of relation. What a child asks is not that we define experience in advance, but that we make it. 'That's what the book is about' (Manning 2020b, 8).

Children lead the way, Sprague Mitchell argues, in showing how they engage with relation by becoming it; the task of the adult author is to "discover what *is* pattern to the untrained but unspoiled ears, eyes, muscles and minds of the little folk who are to consume the stories. But fortunately in each, children do point the way if we have the courage to forget our own adult way and follow theirs" (Sprague Mitchell 2015, 14).

She believed that stories should be written in the mode of the children that they are meant for. Arguing against fantastical stories divorced from the so-called 'real' world, nevertheless, her observation was that children's reality is also not simply 'mechanistic': while not magical, per se, it still exceeds the bounded arena of adult 'reason': "Of course […] I always recognized that young children were not limited to the 'real' world. A child's play, his paintings and language show that personification, identification of himself with familiar powerful people and things are a child's way of heightening actual experiences" (ibid., 10). This is not, however, to suggest that she was against creativity or imagination; in fact, she was a great champion of art, but not at the expense of clarity or a child's confusion between what was actual in the world outside of their experience. "We seem to identify imagination with gullibility or vague thinking. But surely true imagination is not based on confusion. Imagination is the basis of art. But confused art is a contradiction of terms" (ibid., 24).

"[C]hildren's own inimitable language has been the inspiration for whatever charm in rhythm, sound quality and pattern" that has been most successful in her own story-writing (ibid., 9). The magic in the invention of language from the wellspring of a child's experience far exceeds, in its ability to sustainingly charm and entertain, the gibberish that an adult might muster. "For a child's imagination, since it is in his native endowment, will surely flourish if he is given freedom of expression, without calling on the stimulus of adult fancies. It is only the jaded adult mind, afraid *to trust the children's own fresh springs of imagination,* that feels for children the stimulus of magic" (ibid., 25, emphasis in original).

"Here and now stories mean to me stories which include the children's first-hand experiences as a starting point, not stories that are literally limited to these experiences" (ibid., 15). Though I

disagree with Sprague Mitchell's belief that young children are not able to conceptualize relationships that others might have to the outside world until they mature, she acknowledges here that there is room for speculation in the realm of the here-and-now. The content of a story must be something that a child can grasp, not for its capacity to *represent* a familiar life, but in that it represents the welter of experience that has not yet been categorized into molar forms. In *Goodnight Moon,* as an expression of Mitchell's study, what a young child attends to within their immediate experience might be gently massaged to reveal a more fundamental truth, namely that they are *more* likely to be attuned to the welter of experience than an adult, for whom experience has been reduced and overlaid in service of 'meaning.' To this end, at a young age, I concur with Sprague Mitchell in her assertion that plot is less important to a child than the pleasure that they derive from "a sense of completeness, the sense that a walk or a story has a beginning and a middle and an end," because "the real plot pleasure, is negligible compared with the pleasure he gets in the action itself" (ibid., 18). Rather than being a process whereby a young child emerges from ignorance, the act of maturation is one of a loss of enchantment — a "blindness" — toward the immediate world. Likening these stories to a "string of beads," she insists that consistent sequencing is more appealing to a young reader than grand narrative — a conclusion evidenced by the all-to familiar (and occasionally maddening) "and then what? And then what?," or, the question-machine "why, why, why?," of a childing-worlding operation. If the childing-worlding operation is already underway, then, of the need to imagine magic elsewhere in the world of the intangible, Sprague Mitchell's remark that it is a cruelty to confuse nonsense with reality in children's literature — "the moreso because its insinuations are subtle" — feels particularly true (ibid., 21).

8. Searching for the "ever *of-itself*"

Gertrude Stein's public lectures have more in common, stylistically, with *Goodnight Moon* than might be initially supposed: The language of Stein's public speaking takes an angle on experience that integrates and plays with a differential — allied to the stuttering of language — in a manner that is akin to reading a storybook aloud. Style, again, is a "mode of existence always intimately tied to the event of its expression" — a form of consistency carried across different occasions of experience. That Stein's public remarks were prepared in advance, including the radio interview quoted above, is a reinforcement of my argument that her oratory shared the quality of recitation that is engendered by a familiar nighttime text, and that the recitation is not reducible to the text itself.

Through her writing, it is "realizing the thing in itself" via language that is Stein's ultimate goal: "I had to feel anything and everything that for me was existing so intensely that I could put it down in writing *as a thing in itself* without at all necessarily using its name. The name of a thing might be something in itself if it could come to be real enough but just as a name it was not enough something" (Stein 1998b, 334, emphasis added). Contrary to narrative structure, to name a thing is not enough to reconstruct it. Nor can it be reincarnated via description. The writing of the thing

— or, as I believe she means, an event — through its 'mere' description produces a narrative of it. Stein likens this to the function of newspapers, which "tell us about it but they tell it to us as nouns tell it to us that is they name it, and in naming it, it as a telling of it is no longer anything" (ibid., 334). Describing without existing in the intensity of the 'thing in itself' — or without accurate acquaintance — ends up stilling and overwriting that which the language has attempted to describe.

So, is it actually a *thing in itself* that Stein is trying to describe, or is it a form of singularity in relation? I suggest that the 'thing-in-itself' should be taken as a misnomer; for what Stein is trying to achieve in her art form is illuminate a singular moment of experience and its relations. Stein's writing, Ulla Dyodo reminds us, is a "language that rises" *in the writing* for Stein, "as it rises for us in moments of felicitous reading" (Dyodo 2003, 338). The *manner* in which language rises is also the question of how language 'takes' an angle on the experience that she is trying to create; a singular event coming to expression through the art form of writing. Expression, here, is not in Stein herself or in a given subject; it is "in the world," as Massumi puts it (Massumi 2021, 6). It is a semblance of the real event of expression that Stein is trying to summon through her writing. The 'thing in itself' that Stein hopes to attain, be it poetry or prose, is anything but a 'thing' in isolation; the real is "[t]he giving of itself of potential," the "ever *of-itself* of the world's potential, ongoing" (ibid., 6, emphasis in original). In other words, what Stein is trying to establish is an account of the 'real': experience of and for itself.

The 'real' narrative that Stein aims to achieve is an angle on the ever *of-itself* of the world's potential, ongoing: experience. Expression — in this case, the language that rises — gives a form to experience; experience is the 'real,' which is made up of virtualities "nine times out of ten" (ibid., 4).

Stein tells how she eventually came to the distinction that while prose was about describing movement in space, *poetry* would take up the thing in itself [ever *of-itself* of the world's potential, ongoing]: "narrative that is not newspaper narrative but *real* narrative must of necessity be told by any one having come to the realization that the noun must be replaced not by inner balance but by the thing in itself [ever *of-itself* of the world's potential, ongoing] and that will eventually lead to everything" (Stein 1998b, 336, emphasis my own). I take this to mean that mere representation of fact does not enliven the event of experience itself, and further, this struggle is one experienced by any writer trying to entice words to lift themselves off of the page. "And so I went on with this exceeding struggle of knowing really knowing that a thing was really knowing it knowing anything I was seeing anything I was feeling so that its name could be something, by its name coming to be a thing in itself [ever *of-itself* of the world's potential, ongoing] as it was but would not be anything just and only as a name" (ibid., 334, citation modified).

Margaret Wise Brown would likely have agreed with Stein's belief that poetry carries a far-easier capacity to build, in the event of languaging, the ever *of-itself* of the world's potential, ongoing. Like adults, Wise Brown writes, children

> …delight in the pattern and rounded timing of the story that is not too long or too short, the story that is begun and ended with the precision of a poem—inevitable in its own length, in the melodious rhythms of the spoken word. For children's literature is a literature of the speaking voice, like the Bible. It is a distinct form of prose writing, more rhythmical in its pounding, flowing lines than the words that are written for the eye (Wise Brown 1939, 2-3).

She understood that a child is an astute judge of whether or not that capacity has been fulfilled and exceeded. How they listen — the *quality* of listening — is a good measure of whether that writing has achieved its goals:

> Watch the very physical postures they take and the expressions on their faces, the tenseness in them or the relaxation or the restlessness. These are the signs that tell you more about a story than what a child can tell you in words. Sometimes they are well able to tell you what they think of a story, but more often they are not prone to the more detached processes of criticism. Either they give themselves up to the story or they don't. It is not for them to say why (Wise Brown 1939, 4).

Like her mentor Lucy Sprague Mitchell, Margaret Wise Brown was an astute and engaged student of childhood. When she uses the term 'detached criticism' for how a child engages or does not engage with a story, I take this to mean that children practice a form of critique immanent to the event of the storying-worlding operation. Rather than practicing a 'learned' intellectual detachment, immanent critique — "an act that only knows the conditions of its existence from within its own process, an act that refuses to judge from without" (Manning 2016, 12) — takes the form, here, of enthusiasm (or lack thereof).[9] Wise Brown goes on to say that sometimes, a story doesn't find purchase because the conditions for its telling are not right, with factors including the time of day, mood, season, or because it doesn't respond to some other appetite. But, I follow and enjoin Steven Meyer in his interpretation of Stein when she insists that language "is a real thing," not "exclusively a creature of its environment, merely serving to register external factors" (Meyer 2002, 115). In searching for the ever *of-itself* of the world's potential, ongoing, the form of public oration has many similar characteristics with the worlding operation of a bedtime story, and its reception.

It is important to emphasize the difference between a 'thing in itself' (more broadly understood) and the 'ever *of-itself* of the world's potential, ongoing,' because the story doesn't exist without its milieu any more than the prepared notes for a lecture, though both strive to create a novel experiential event, even in the recitation. Massumi calls ever *of-itself* of the world's potential,

[9] For more on immanent critique, see Erin Manning's *The Minor Gesture* (2016) and "A Latento for Curation as Research-Creation," by Legassie, Nye, and Wong (2022).

ongoing, the "denial of the doctrine of substance" (Massumi 2021, 6). For Deleuze (reading Nietzsche), the concept of a thing-in-itself is part of what he calls the "paralogism of *ressentiment*: the fiction of a force separated from what it can do. It is thanks to this fiction that reactive forces triumph" (Deleuze 1986, 123, emphasis in original).[10] In other words, the concept of the thing in itself promotes the notion that a force can be abstracted from its function or duration, giving it a fictive and subjective agency — or at the least the idea that an external, rather than integral, agency might be attributed to it. Furthermore, within a Kantian transcendental logic, the concept of a 'force' becomes a moral inversion of the world's ongoing process of affirmation.

A simple example of this reasoning occurs when the bedtime story is treated as an apparatus rather than as a lure for feeling, for example, as a disciplinary tool *à la* (the albeit humorous) *Go The Fuck To Sleep*.[11] Here, the story does not seem to carry the same capacity for excitation across different bodies — which, in a child, manifests as the demand for *that* book, in the nighttime ritual of reading a book before bedtime. *Ressentiment*, Brian Massumi writes, is "the absorption of a body's capacities to affect and be affected into a world-filling feeling of generalized resentment. The resentment is so generalized that its object is the very world it fills, experienced as a bottomless reservoir of painfully and anxiogenic impinging others […] *Ressentiment* is maximally retentive of traces of "sad" encounters. It is marked by an inability to forget" Massumi 2025a, 95). Or, I would argue, the vaguely sad feeling that although one *shouldn't* forget, one already has.

Deleuze's critique of the 'thing-in-itself' shows what is at stake in attempting to value writing or creative expression as an object detached from its relational milieu at the moment of its creation, without taking into account the relations that it is constitutive of. Substituting, as I have, the thing-

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[10] By "paralogism" — a fallacy in reason based on subjective bias — Deleuze might be referring to Kant's 'four paralogisms of pure reason,' where the latter argues that the soul is "conscious of the existence of itself only, and of other things only as representations," in order to point to the fact that *morality* has no place in the process-philosophical account of experience (oxfordreference.com, "paralogism"). The two paralogisms that Deleuze outlines constitute the (artificial) division of force, when it becomes truly reactive: the first is the "moment of causality," where force is divided in two. Here, "force is not separated from its manifestation, the manifestation is turned into an effect which is referred to the force as if it were a distinct and separated cause;" the problem being that an "imaginary relation of causality is substituted for a real relation of significance" (Deleuze 1986, 123).

The second bifurcation emerges from the first, in the "the moment of substance." The imaginary relation of causality contained within that bifurcated force is…

> …projected into a substrate, into a subject which is free to manifest it or not. Force is neutralised, it is made the act of a subject which could just as easily not act. Nietzsche constantly exposes "the subject" as a fiction or a grammatical function. All subjects — the Epicureans' atom, Descartes' substance or Kant's thing-in-itself — are the projection of 'little imaginary incubuses' (GM I 13 p. 141) (ibid).

[11] Mansbach, Adam and Ricardo Cortés. 2011. *Go the Fuck to Sleep.* Akashic Books, Ltd. A (highly successful) parody of *Goodnight Moon*, referred to by the Washington Post as "A Parenting Zeitgeist" and National Public Radio as a "hilarious take on that age-old problem: getting the beloved child to go to sleep."

in-itself for the ever *of-itself* of the world's potential, ongoing, is a way to combat the (ultimately false) normative logics of writing-as-expression of ego, and writing-as-expression of morality… and why they often end in failure. Deleuze's critique of the thing-in-itself as a processual and philosophical dead-end is articulated, he argues, as an expression the separation of object from world.

This bears immediate relevance upon Stein's aim to write a thing in itself [ever *of-itself* of the world's potential, ongoing] because it shows, from a complementary angle, the stakes of the difference between writing a subject and writing an event: for a process of *immediation* to be present in language and writing, Stein's search for the ever *of-itself* of the world's potential, ongoing, is a practice of sidling the relational milieu of which writing is a part, rather than attempting to create the *idea* of the 'real' (a facsimile, a term I will further explore in the next spiral). The simple aesthetics of linguistic balance are trumped by the immanent intensity of writing-with. The aesthetic charge — the force — of the process of languaging is, in turn, deployed in the participatory reading and reenactment of the story, as the day transitions to night.

Margaret Wise Brown's *Goodnight Moon*, and many of her other children's books, were famously excluded from the all-important register of acquisitions at the New York Public Library, as they did not adhere to the tradition of children's books based on fairytales and moral messages. What came to be known as the 'fairytale wars' between the library's head, Anne Carroll Moore, who represented the children's book establishment in American literature, and Lucy Sprague Mitchell, who represented progressive education, lasted 50 years. But, "Margaret's simple-sounding bedtime story was her most incisive response to the old Fairy Tale War" (Marcus 1992, 188-189). It was not until 1973 that The New York Public Library placed an order for *Goodnight Moon*; some years after Anne Carroll Moore had left her position (Marcus 1991, 54-55, 216).

This connection is not coincidental. Following her graduation from the Bank Street School, Margaret Wise Brown continued to actively participate in its writer's laboratory with other children's authors. There, modernist writers like Gertrude Stein and Virginia Woolf were revered for their "aesthetic of recreating in art the immediacy of sensory impressions;" Gertrude Stein, in particular, for "her particular genius for making words seem to speak directly from the page" — a style that Wise Brown would attempt to emulate, which she would eventually grow into her own (Marcus 1992, 86). The New York Public Library, headed by Moore, had initially dismissed the book as an "unbearably sentimental piece of work" (ibid., 215-216). To ascribe external sentiment to the work, I think, is to completely misunderstand it and enact those processes of paralogism that Deleuze argues against: the sentiment in *Goodnight Moon* is in the world, and avoids the trap of being captured by the feeling of sadness at what has been separated out, and missed.

Goodnight Moon's timelessness can be attributed to the fact that the author managed to capture in it a sense of open-ended possibility, as registered by its audiences since. This technique was gleaned, in part, from her idol Gertrude Stein, whose public lectures demonstrated her own pursuit of the ever *of-itself* of the world's potential, ongoing.

9. "Relationship thinking" as relationing

Here is a paradox: To value experience is to not ascribe preestablished value to it.

Lucy Sprague Mitchell believed that as a child grows older, their relationship thinking expands. Between the ages of six and eight, she argues, a child will begin to develop a social frame and the capacity to parse subjects through Categorical thinking, pointing towards certain established 'laws.' Her theory of here-and-now stories for children takes this premise into account, by arguing that it is through a younger child's experience of their immediate environment that their world extends. As they grow, personification of objects, and then of morals within objects and environments — which had previously been confusing — may become a device that sutures what she calls those "general facts" of immediate experience with a broader world. As a way to access scientific or social norms, she wrote that "there are certain general truths which tie together isolated familiar facts which can be most simply pictured through some device such as personification — for at this age personification is recognized and enjoyed as a device and not, as in earlier years, as a necessary expression of thought" (Sprague Mitchell 2015, 38). In other words, metaphors and other literary devices for interpreting and overlaying 'bare fact' or 'bald statement' begin to emerge in a young pupil's psyche as they grow older, creating meaning. "This uniting bond, this underlying relation may be a physical law like the dependence of life on life; it may be a social law like the division of labour in modern industry. Any dramatic statement of these laws is a simplification as is a diagram or a map. And like a diagram or a map, it is in a way artificial since it gives weight to one element at the expense of the others" (ibid., 38).

I think it is easy to find a faulty logic of an era of enlightenment-thinking that values a mind-body separation over relation and relation*ing*. In the previous paragraph, it would be fair to conclude that Sprague Mitchell's thesis is that the experience of relation complexifies as a child grows older by way of metaphor, whereas it has been a core argument of this thesis that *a* child is most attuned to the welter of experience, and that as they increasingly encounter categorical thinking (for example, in the overlaying of narration that is the device of personification), their engagement with relation falters.

However, when it seems that Sprague Mitchell will aim towards normalization — or what will become normativity — she surprises: Though she is not suggesting that her aim is to produce radical empiricists *for life*, what she does acknowledge is that by a certain point, *the* life begins to overtake the wide-open capacity for *a* life that a child innately possesses. *A* life as the zone of variation in a movement of particularization; *the* life as the zone generated by the movement of generalization.

> [B]ut again like the diagram or the map, the thing it shows is a fact, a fact which is more readily grasped by this artificial device than by bald statement. Maps do not take the place of photographs, nevertheless they have their own peculiar place in making intelligible the make-up of the physical world. In the same way, personification does not take the place of science. Nevertheless it has its own peculiar place in making clear to the child some simplifying principle, — physical or social, — which unifies his multitudinous experiences (Sprague Mitchell 2015, 39).

For Sprague Mitchell, a map was also a symbol; and teaching geography to young students expanded her "relationship thinking" into three dimensions. Relationship thinking, here, is demonstrated as ecological thinking; for she found in conventional maps a deficit in their representations of how people and the earth interacted. To remedy this, she developed tools for students to superimpose different kinds of maps — those found in atlases, as well as those which contained topographical representations — on top of one another, creating what she called "tool maps" as opposed to "source maps." To abstractly superimpose maps with different information on top of one another, she found, was difficult for adults and impossible for children; and yet, "it was the *relationships* that was important. Maps must be invented on which children could discover geographic relationships." Responding to this need, Tool Maps were born: "meaning a tool for working out relationships" (Sprague Mitchell 1953, 426). For children, symbols that abstractly denote terrain, vegetation, land use are incomprehensible. Instead, "upness and downness, roughness and smoothness, is more important for the relationships which children need to understand than actual elevation in feet, anyway" (ibid.). With these basic indicators, a child can understand the placement of a road, a field, available resources and places of rest; and from this information, they could draw, paint, imagine, enact, envision what Sprague Mitchell called "human geography" for themselves.

The concept of the map returns, here, of which much is written and much of which exceeds the scope of this project. It is necessary, however, to emphasize that the connection between relationing and mapping exercises, as Sprague Mitchell describes them, is much more than one of simple meaning-making through cartography. A storybook is a map, as well, a lure for what (as Manning says above) escapes the line; it is capacious enough to co-compose with the wiggle, in an approximation of proximity — events that capacitate the something-doing of the relational milieus of which they are a part. But the map does not precede the event, so much as act as a constituent part of it.

It is stories, Sprague Mitchell argues, that begin to facilitate (in my words) those techniques for life-living to a young child, who reciprocally derives pleasure from the retelling of their own activities, in order to verify and solidify their perception of their own experience. I think that Sprague Mitchell is partially correct when she says that, "[a]t first the stories will have to be of this running and partly spontaneous type. But soon a child will like to have the story to recall an experience recently enjoyed. The living over of a walk, a ride, the sight of *a* horse or *a* cow, will give him a renewed sense of participation in a pleasurable activity. This is his first venture in vicarious experiences. And he must be helped to it through strong sense and muscular recalls" (Sprague Mitchell 2015, 20, emphasis added). It is true that the getting at the ever *of-itself* of the world, ongoing, is aided in the layering and mapping adventure of the story. But along with the story comes the wiggle, often in the form of an out-of-timeness that can be read as impatience, but I believe more frequently responds to a refusal of narrative structure — what is often in queer theory referred to as "queer time:" the idea that there is shared history and a future to be moved

toward; and a present that harnesses the power of the past in order to speculate different futures (pace Muñoz 2009). A child participates in the story, in a form of immanent critique that is inherently queer: to repeat Margaret Wise Brown, "either they give themselves to the story or they don't."

A child fabulates in the retelling, detouring through a wild admixture of so-called reality and creation; but what they are actually doing is modulating the actual and the virtual across *a* childhood of the world. In the storying event, with the aid of the participant who likely does not yet know how to read, language stutters in the milieu as much as it does in the em dash; language stutters because it is *not* a single voice; it stutters because the experience of reading the bedtime story carries a novelty that exceeds itself in each event with shifts, question-machines, the unpredictability of *when* sleep will overtake child(-ren) and adult alike. The educational observer, as much as me writing now, always carries the externalities of habit and 'distance,' only able to — at best — *theorize* the admixture-in-excess of the languaging event and my perception of it.

Note here that Sprague Mitchell's living through reenactment of experience via repetition is akin to James' 'intussusception' and 'accretion'; the great, big, blooming confusion of infancy gradually structured by experience and expanding with it; but goes a step further in understanding that experience is the originator of the repetition and shifting pattern and emphatic differentiation of storying. It *matters* what time of experience, and what type of reality a story produces and reinscribes. Sprague Mitchell argues that "the growth of the sense of reality is a growth of the sense of relations," and that this form of pedagogy that foregrounds relations promotes a "sense of relationship between facts, material or social: that is, to further scientific conception (Sprague Mitchell 2015, 24-25).

Languaging plays a unique roll in the building of the storying-worlding operation of *Goodnight Moon.* As a bloc[k] of sound passing through the twilight milieu, the refrains of insistence and repetition, which (every night) carry minor variations in their recitation and intonation — as much as in relation to its outside its attunement to the ecological conditions which capacitate the transition from day to night, wakefulness to sleepiness, and beyond…

But even outside of facts of intellectual concern, Sprague Mitchell argues that it is through the ability to reason through the relationships that a story "clarifies." It is interesting to me, here, to note how Sprague Mitchell observes that imagination co-constitutes reality via relationship thinking, in the example of her own child, who "personified" a horse at the age of four. "[F]or one whole summer, he led the actual life of a horse as far as he knew it. His bed was always 'a stall,' his food was always 'hay,' he always brushed his 'mane' and 'put on his harness' for breakfast. It was only when real horse information gave out that he supplied experiences from his own life. He was not limited by reality. He was exercising his imagination" (ibid., 24).

I'd like to fabulate that Sprague Mitchell, when referring to the imagination as something separate from the 'real,' is thinking process-philosophically. I like to imagine that her definition of the 'real' espouses an understanding that the virtual — the forces-to-form that make up our

world and that are perceived amodally — include *imagination* without separating it out as something outside of the real. I want to believe that when Sprague Mitchell uses this example to show that the 'magic' of children's experience does not need to be supplied by narrative, which with its adult morals, simplification of experience, world-wariness… could never satisfy the wonder of a child. I believe this because Sprague Mitchell herself argued that the content of a story should not aim to be merely scientific; it should focus not so much on "new information" so much as "new relationships among many already familiar facts," raising inquiries, not giving instructions (ibid., 28).

One of the things at stake in the account of how the Bank Street School's pedagogical environment — for adult students as well as for the children who co-composed in the formation of the school's explorations of how to think education differently — is tracing how this form of pedagogy impacted and can be found in *Goodnight Moon.* In this chapter, I have attempted to cleave near-exclusively to what the work generates through its text, mainly for the reason that the setting of the text, in the overlapping landscapes (relationing) of story and image, nighttime milieu, and pedagogical environment can spiral outwards from this account. Chronologically, the text also acts as an anchor in tracing the development of the book. But if the style of *Goodnight Moon* is so tied to the stuttering of language, luring its outside, the expression of childing-worlding potential, languaging, and the experience of the ever *of-itself*, of the world's potential, ongoing, the pedagogical and philosophical events that were in the world alongside the book's creation challenge language's capacity to contain the artfulness of this bedtime story.

10. *…by any other name*

"Naming," Massumi notes, "is a technique for fixing the procedures, in the sense that you fix a compound. It gives you a practical handle on what region of potential you've collectively brought to provisional expression, and holds it together in a way that you can do things with" (Massumi 2015, 170). Goodnight *moon…* goodnight *mush…* goodnight *cow* jumping over the *moon…* goodnight *nothing.*

Although there are undeniably procedures being fixed in the act of naming, what are they? There are no given names in *Goodnight Moon.* This is not to say that something has not been selected-out in the process of naming; it is just that in the ambiguity created by the lack of *given* names, these nouns lack fixed identity. In prose, one exception that Stein makes to her rule of disliking nouns is in the given name: not only does a name generally denote a specific person; even if that person chooses to change their given name, they are exercising an element of choice in the use of a particular noun, as opposed to nouns in general, which have "been the name of something for such a long time" (Stein 1998b, 316). But in *Goodnight Moon,* this is not the case. The objects in the room (and its surrounds, in the case of stars, air, noises, and nothing) are not counted. They are just *there.*

Though numerals are generally considered to be quantifiers or determiners — and sometimes adjectives — like nouns, Stein argues that numerals lack singularity. Instead she advocates for

enumeration by means of repetition rather than counting, because, "[a]fter all the natural way to count is not that one and one make two but to go on counting one by one as chinamen do as Spaniards do as my little Aunts did. One and one and one and one and one. That is the natural way to go on counting" (ibid., 324-325). By "one and one and one and one," her technique for getting at the "whole of a thing" is evidenced by singling-out objects or subjects as singularities. The objects in the room are *accounted* for.

In the act of selecting out entities from the welter of experience — including Stein's Aunts — 'one' functions *less* as a substitutive pronoun (oneself) and *more* as a part of speech known as a 'pro-form.' A pro-form is "a function of a word or phrase that stands in for (expresses the same content as) another, where *the meaning is recoverable from the context.*"[12] As a substitutive pronoun and pro-form, here 'one' acts to index the subject(s)/object(s) being selected-out, not against the abstracted numerical form, but from within the local milieu in which 'one' already exists: foregrounding one Aunt amongst the others. In Stein's technique for getting at the ever *of-itself* of the world's potential, ongoing, 'one' drifts from its own self-enjoyment — the activity of existing for itself within its own local relations, perhaps, as 'one(-self)' as an indefinite pronoun — to being taken up by the activity of indexing and being indexed — *one* singularity in relation.

Here, getting at the ever *of-itself* of the world's potential, ongoing, finds an example in Margaret Wise Brown's selection of objects in a room — nominally, nouns — as the pages of the storybook turn, as they are hailed. These objects do not have proper names, but nevertheless come to be known by the nouns used to identify them: Goodnight *moon*… goodnight *bears*… goodnight *chairs*… goodnight *mush.*

Perhaps the procedure is not quite so fixed. The named objects never repeat on the same page; sometimes there is more than *one* one with the same name (as with the case of pictures and clocks). *One* moon… *one* mush… *one* cow jumping over the moon… *one* nothing. But also: Goodnight *one*… goodnight *one*… goodnight *one*… goodnight *one*… goodnight *one*…

I have argued that *Goodnight Moon* is an example of a languaging operation in which the eventfulness of experience in-gathers and pivots towards language's outside, accompanying "all emergent relationalities," moving "with social life in the making" (Manning 2020, 223). The outside is the circulation of forces that are unthought in thought. Nevertheless, Deleuze and Guattari will show that language — and in particular, grammar — can function as a disciplinary tool when educating and indoctrinating a child. Language can also accrue and act as a conduit for power. But the idea that it is exclusively one or the other, creative or reductively disciplinary, is the parologism of ressentiment that Deleuze warned about, above. The outside is the virtual

[12] Crystal, David. 1985. *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics* (2nd ed.). Basil Blackwell, cited in Wikipedia "*One* (pronoun)," emphasis added.

intensification of processes of thinking-feeling where relation can be tuned toward or away from processual death, toward and away from more life.

In language, there are words that pass, and words that command: pass-words and order-words. It is Deleuze and Guattari's claim that in the *teaching* of language, words that command — "order words" — are delivered. In the instruction of language via the order-word, "[l]anguage is made not to be believed, but to be obeyed, and to compel obedience" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 76). However, "[t]here are pass-words beneath order-words. Words that pass, words that are components of passage," cutting across "order-words [which] mark stoppages or organized, stratified compositions. A single thing or word undoubtedly has this twofold nature: it is necessary to extract one from the other—to transform the compositions of order into components of passage" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 110).

How does *Goodnight Moon* seem to evade the fate of being a mere disciplinary tool, avoiding the particularization of the naming procedure?

I think that in *Goodnight Moon*, Margaret Wise Brown understood the difference between pass-words and order-words, and how they inter-operate: 'Goodnight' is used twenty times in the body of the text. 'Goodnight' acts as a pass-word *in the guise* of an order-word, on the underside of 'Good night'; and as such, acts as a pro-form for language's outside — aiding in the getting-at of the ever *of-itself* of the world's potential, ongoing, through the book's languaging operation. All, because a space is missing between 'good' and 'night;' a space that would otherwise still relation.

Following German philosopher Oswald Spengler, Deleuze and Guattari write that (notably) in the realm of pedagogy,

> the fundamental forms of speech are not the statement of a judgment or the expression of a feeling, but 'the command, the expression of obedience, the assertion, the question, the affirmation or negation,' very short phrases that command life and are inseparable from enterprises and large-scale projects: 'Ready?' 'Yes.' 'Go ahead.' Words are not tools, but we give children language, pens, and notebooks as we give workers shovels and pickaxes. *A rule of grammar is a power marker before it is a syntactical marker* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 76, emphasis added).

Margaret Wise Brown's choice to use a compound word to carry the pattern and rhythm of her storybook could not have been accidental. In the mid-century, in English speaking North America and Britain, the term 'Good night' was five to seven times more likely to be used than its compound equivalent:

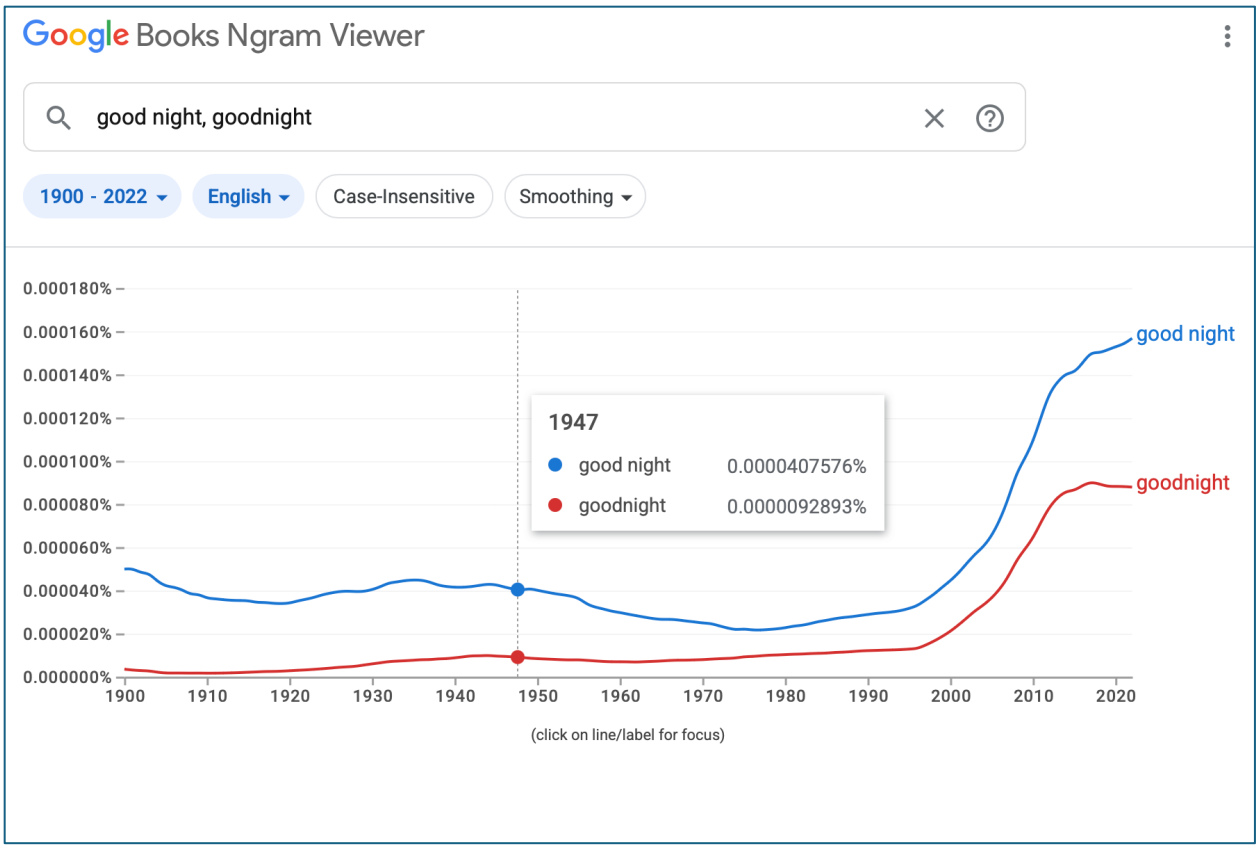

Figure 2. 'Good night' vs. 'Goodnight,' Google Books Ngram Viewer

Here, does the concept of the pass-word take flight beyond these registers of command to contribute to the construction of an existential Territory? 'Goodnight' is not an admonition to 'go to sleep;' instead, 'goodnight' carries the lull of the yellowing of experience; the muted tonality of the nighttime environment, curated by a careful guardian, which might include, perhaps, their total exhaustion from having not slept for five days…

The so-called 'nonsense' of a young child is also an elision of the rules of grammar and the imposition of power that comes with it, which itself seeks to harness the linguistic and nonlinguistic factors of content and expression as they weave their way through language, producing a disciplined subject. Contrary to grammar's ordering and disciplining function, the work has entered into the middle as a *collective* agencement *of enunciation*. *Agencement,* a French term often translated to "assemblage," is a concept which in its original language carries the auto-volitional and heterogenetic fielding of relational movement that the anglicized expression does not. A collective *agencement* of enunciation "accounts for the social character" of language; 'indirect' and 'free-indirect discourse' is its product. Indirect discourse is an *agencement* that "explains all the voices present within a single voice, […] the languages in a language, the order-words in a word" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 80). These voices, emerging from the collective

agencement of enunciation, result in "the determination of relative subjectification proceedings, or assignations of individuality and their shifting distributions within discourse" (ibid., 80). In other words, language speaks through us, making and moving a collective "us," and having spoken, alight upon the subject in-formation in order to give the subject form. A collective *agencement* of enunciation strives to uncover "what consist these acts immanent to language that are in redundancy with statements or constitute order-words" (ibid., 80).

If a beatification of *Goodnight Moon* resided solely in its creation and in the narration of its creator's biography, then the processual unfolding engendered in each of its readings-performances-enactments would be backgrounded, as too would the fact that its beguiling language seems to harness a feeling shared by many of its readers. This atmospheric feeling is evidence, I think, of the collective *agencement* of enunciation at work; here, "the redundant complex of the act and the statement that necessarily accomplishes it" — *good* space *night* — opens these acts to their languaging operation, and in doing so, poses the following question: "what consist these acts immanent to language that are in redundancy with statements or constitute order-words?" (ibid., 80). Like Stein's Aunts, gossiping and telling and retelling, in the act of reading a storybook, *languaging* is happening in all of these cases of physical 'acts,' if the 'act' is taken to be but one part of the collective *agencement* of enunciation. Looking for the 'pure expressed of a statement' — its 'non-corporeal attribute' — is thus to find the instantaneous transformation that coincides with the statement/act, opening language to its outside, letting it fly in a childhood bloc(k) of nighttime-worlding.

"What is at stake here is understanding not the agency of the subject, but the *agencement* of the event in its speculatively pragmatic unfolding" argues Manning, "[y]ou have to understand the event itself as agency-ing" (Massumi 2015a, 157, emphasis in original). In order for it to do so, the Category of the Human needs to get out of the way. The collective *agencement* of enunciation harnesses the outside of language, its more-than, in service of a collective movement: a collective voice for a people to come. In the space between "good" and "night" as typically written, those voices may have difficulty entering. But in 'goodnight,' the space is there, but only in potential: it is a virtual space pressing into the molar form of the nighttime story. This virtual space might be a textual cipher for the entirety of the book; 'Goodnight' opens and renews itself with each instantiation. This virtual space is allied to this thesis's broader project of being if not against, very uncomfortable with a study of the biographies that swirl around *Goodnight Moon.* A biographical account of this story would suggest that there was a premeditation to the efficacy of this virtual space. If left 'merely' in the biographical, only the initial creative act is lauded; "[t]he participatory is left to the end, and with this, a decisive stage of the event is muted. In segregating participation from the work, in making participation the afterthought of a practice already under way, what we do is set apart integral aspects of a process" (Manning 2016, 54). But the virtual space — a held potential — is as constitutive of the event as any artistic 'choice' might have been. It is activated as a free-indirect, a pass-word beneath the order word, in the collective *agencement* of enunciation of a storying-worlding operation.

"Indirect discourse is the presence of a reported statement within the reporting statement, the presence of the order-word within the word. Language in its entirety is indirect discourse" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 84). There is *one* and *one* and *one* and *one*, but also, Stein's Aunts verbally repeat the same thing over and over again, and as such, there is no 'direct communication' taking place. 'Communication' in both the storybook *Goodnight Moon* and in Stein's account of her Aunts in "Portraits and Repetition" is in the excess of language; language's potential to capacitate the more-than of communication. The true act of languaging in Stein's Aunts takes place in the surrounds of the mundanities of their communication. "Indirect discourse in no way supposes direct discourse; rather, the latter is extracted from the former, to the extent that the operations of signifiance and proceedings of subjectification in an *agencement* are distributed, attributed, and assigned, or that the variables of the *agencement* enter into constant relations, however temporarily" (ibid., 84). The Aunts chatter and chatter, and both their personalities as well as the communication that emerges is a result of the singular emphasis that they each bring to their conversation. "Direct discourse is a detached fragment of a mass and is born of the dismemberment of the collective *agencement*; but the collective *agencement* is always like the murmur from which I take my proper name, the constellation of voices, concordant or not, from which I draw my voice" (ibid., 84, translation modified).

In her observation of young children, Sprague Mitchell identifies how their pleasure in the sensation and motor appreciation of the world is allied to the appreciation and expression of pattern and recognition. Crowded out in adulthood, a child's excitation traverses sense-perception in the act of recognition and repetition, bodying the world across language and the senses: "Now the pleasure of enumeration, [which is] like that of a refrain, is in part at least a pleasure in muscle pattern" (Sprague Mitchell 2015, 19); *one* and *one* and *one*…

Direct language, for Sprague Mitchell, is very close to Stein's: it is not interpreting the object of language, not "telling-about" it, in her words. The free-indirect is contained within what Sprague Mitchell calls 'direct language,' immediate within the languaging operation itself: "It is writing in terms of images instead of interpretation. The reader makes the interpretation for himself from the images evoked. Modern writers have raised direct language to a high point. Hemingway, Joyce, and a host of others use the technique of direct language almost to the exclusion of intellectual, interpretive, 'telling-about' language. Little children's native language is direct in spite of their handicap of a slender vocabulary" (Sprague Mitchell 1953, 279-280). In agreement with Piaget's (later) *Language and Thought of the Child*, Sprague Mitchell delights in recognizing her own observation that little of this language is what we might think of as 'communication,' which with Piaget she terms 'social monologue.' Breaking with Piaget, who saw leaving the play with language as a sign of a maturing individual, Sprague Mitchell decries the loss of artfulness in this ethos of education, which would result in the loss of a child's (who was as a result of this loss, now becoming adult) capacity to creatively express through the play of language. "To me, it is a tragedy, for to me a child's pleasure in rhythm, sound quality and pattern is the seed from which

literature springs. Using language as an art usually dies because children are surrounded by adults who seldom use language as an art themselves" (ibid., 281). Has this tragedy changed that much in the ensuing years?

Sprague Mitchell collected thousands of examples of children's use of language between the ages of two and seven. As I have shown, she theorized language as "rhythm and sound quality and pattern." These elements, as language's "art medium," are what makes language *expressive*. Rather than superfluous to the experience of language, rhythm and sound quality and pattern are "not to be divorced from meaning, except for the occasional spree of nonsense which also has its place in literature. If used for themselves, they become artifices, tricks that absorb our attention and sidetrack us from the meaning. Rather, these art elements heighten meaning, clarify meaning and at the same time charge it with emotional significance" (ibid., 281). Before communication, children play with rhythm, sound quality and pattern — those elements that "heighten language and give it individuality" — and yet in formal education, *these same qualities* are what is actively suppressed in favour of communication; "the *meaning* of words and their grammatical arrangement are the chief elements of *communication*" — not language (ibid., 281, emphasis in original). That Sprague Mitchell recognized 'art language' as an expression of creativity for itself and separate from communication and its corresponding imperative to grammaticality (and the transmission of the order word), would suggest that she would be in alignment with Deleuze and Guattari's claim that in most cases, language is made not to be believed, but to be obeyed, and to compel obedience, placing her project in defiance of language's disciplining operation.

"Here, then, I had my program for language for children, whether in written stories or in talk, at home or in classrooms. Language must be direct — told in terms of images —visual, auditory, tactile muscle images. It must have rhythm, sound quality, simple patterns. The content of the stories must spring from the here and now world which little children experience directly and with things and people that they show what are interested in" (ibid., 281-282). Rather than follow adult forms, Sprague Mitchell was fascinated by "the quality of children's native, spontaneous language, what children spontaneously attended to, or 'took in' from the world around them, and what they 'gave out' in their forms of language expression" (ibid., 277). What was being missed in more traditional thinking of children's pedagogy, she argued, was "the satisfaction that expressing his own idea brought him or by what he learned through his own expression" (ibid., 277).

In the *Here and Now Storybook*, Sprague Mitchell argues that she aimed to marry the qualities of language that children experience and express — her theory of 'intake' and 'outgo' — with her ideas of 'content' and 'form.' "Content, which was based on children's interests, what they paid attention to — in brief, their intake experiences; and Form, which was based on their own play of language — in brief, their outgo experiences" (ibid., 283). *A* child's language, she came to realize, was an example of learning-though experiment and play. "A child's language became a special behaviour through which he learned — an intake experience and an outgo response to the experience" (ibid., 278).

Rather than an isolated activity, however, she theorized that for children, language itself was both cross-modal in its intake — as in, through senses and muscles — and responded in kind in its outgo.

> My study convinced me that young children recall their experiences in the same terms as those through which they took in the experience in the first place — that is, through their five senses and their muscles. Four-year-old Polly Miller, back in Berkeley days, had made me aware how largely little children take in through their muscles and remember though their motor images. I had never forgotten how she told me *her* image of our walk. 'Oh, you mean the place where the legs ache!' That was a hill as she experienced it: that was the motor image of the hill as she remembered it (Sprague Mitchell 1953, 279).

Polly's legs and the hill are in the world, in her account, part of the same event of experience. The ache is in the hill as much as it is in the legs. Language is helping to pattern experience for the little girl, who is describing her pain; but she is also describing how the world amodally comes to experience: "In this entwinement with the qualitative, a living of feeling creates a taking-form of expression. This taking-form of expression is the dynamic of becoming-selves" (Manning 2013, 7).

> Now I discovered this same image quality in the 'free' language of all little children. When we moved into our new house on West Twelfth Street, our youngest child was three. He played for a time in the sun on the roof outside the nursery quarters. After supper he wandered out on the roof again. An adult would have said, 'The sun has set' — an intellectual, a memory remark, an interpretation, not a report, of what he actually saw. But the three-year-old said, 'The big shadow is all around' — a direct report of his immediate experience. I called this 'direct language' (Sprague Mitchell 1953, 279).

Here, Sprague Mitchell comes close to defining the 'free indirect' in her own words: that free-indirect carries language's outside (and the outside of experience) in its languaging capacity. The shadow, here, really *is* all around. It is enveloping and has an all-over quality with which the abstracting (from the welter of experience) operation of the phrase "the sun has set" cannot compare. The aim in writing for children, therefor, was not to "sugarcoat information" so that it might "go down" more easily; but to find connection with the reader in the "charm of adventure that 'reality' has for young children" as well as the "charm of language" (ibid., 284-285). It is from her core thesis that "children's imagination can and does spring from real experience in the here and now world" (ibid., 285). A child is an astute judge of the really there, really all there is.

For Sprague Mitchell, it was impossible to think about language *without* images. She found in her observations and note-taking that a mere record of the words that her subjects used in storytelling and conversation were not enough, as the record itself was "inadequate as a *language* experience as it left out the images I was sure the children have inside them" (ibid., 407). To overcome this deficit, she engaged in word-play and imaginative play with her young pupils, through prompts and somatic exercises. When children could sway along with rhythmic poetry, they became more engaged. In an example of the creation of what she termed "group stories," she

recounts her invention of a guessing game, where the bell buoy in the harbour that they saw the day before is evoked through descriptive rhyme and repetition:

> *...I'm rocking, rocking on the waves,*
> *Ding—dong—hear my song,*
> *I'm calling, calling from the waves*
> *Ding—dong, ding—dong, ding—dong, dong…*

This invented ditty lead immediately to an enthusiastic and cross-modal response: "The children not only shouted "Bell buoy," but joined in the refrain, rocking dramatically" (ibid., 407). Similar exercises elicited "a burst of images from the children […] — sights, sounds, smells, muscle-images, even unseen images" (ibid.). In a game of call-and response, Sprague Mitchell would rearrange the children's words and repeat them back. They would add information and narrate beginnings and endings; demonstrating an interest in "form as well as content."

This immediation — bodying with the world in *undisciplined* excitation — is in the register of the amodal, the "direct perception of what happens between the senses, in no one mode" (Massumi 2013, 110). Rather than identify this as immature, Sprague Mitchell addresses a *need* for *artful enumeration and repetition* in children's literature, pointing to its presence in the (adult) works of Walt Whitman, company with whom Gertrude Stein could easily be included: *One* and *one* and *one* and *one.* Literature *can* respond to this excitation by creating a temporary cartography from which experience can grow and expand: in the form of nascent techniques-for-living that a child can weave against the more normative trajectories of 'development,' in both their capacities for immediation and how they body the world.

And so. There is a difference between 'good (space) night' and 'goodnight.' The extra space demands a crisper consonant distinction between 'd' and 'n.' 'Good night' holds much more of an order-word than goodnight; the latter has an atmosphere of feeling to it. Perhaps 'goodnight' is an invitation to immediate with language's outside.

All language is in the free indirect. "My direct discourse is still the free indirect discourse running through me, coming from other words or other planets" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 84). A child listening to a story does not know how to read; but they know the story by ear. They are in the murmur of language. For a child, if you skip the words, they insist: "No, you're reading it wrong!" They know! For in a beloved storybook which successfully deploys the free indirect, repetition, insistence, reading, talking, and listening accompany the images; there's no separation. The images carry the propositional lure of language. Gertrude Stein might say that this is always the case with language: there's no separation! Languages carry the rhythmic force of their imagistic potential.

11. Magic

In 1930, the Bureau for Educational Experiments moved to 69 Bank Street — a former Fleischmann's yeast factory — and became the Bank Street School. Here, it divided into the Nursery School, the School for Teachers, and the Division of Studies and Publications, where in addition to educating teachers, it developed a robust publishing record of textbooks, handbooks, workbooks for children, and storybooks. It is during this era, where Sprague Mitchell's philosophy of "inflow" and "outgo" was expanded to include teacher education, that Margaret Wise Brown was in attendance.

In her words, Lucy Sprague Mitchell saw education as an important tool in activating the potential of human beings; schools a "strategic force in developing children's potentialities" (Sprague Mitchell 1953, 548). In a report written shortly before the publishing of her autobiography, she outlines the potentialities that she believed all people — from students to teachers — needed to develop. They are:

> -A zest for living that comes form taking in the words with all five senses alert
> -Lively intellectual curiosities that turn the world into an exciting laboratory and keep one ever a learner
> -Flexibility when confronted with change and ability to relinquish patterns that no longer fit the present
> -Courage to work, unafraid and efficiently, in a world of new needs, new problems, new ideas
> -Gentleness combined with justice in passing judgements on other human beings
> -Sensitivity, not only to the external formal rights of the 'other fellow' but to him as another human being seeking a good life through his own standards
> -A striving to love democratically, in and out of schools, as the best way to advance our concept of democracy, Our credo demands ethical standards as well as scientific attitudes."
> (Sprague Mitchell 1953, 548)

Leading into the next section of this work — on the images within *Goodnight Moon* itself — I want to hold on to Lucy Sprague Mitchell's idea of school as a strategic force for developing potential. It is interesting to think about how neatly she summarizes, here, the problem of knowledge production in education — or the being-with of knowledge that doesn't know itself in advance (as Manning defines research-creation (2016)); two sides of the same coin in the problem of how the forces of power and the structuring of knowledge take place in an educational environment, and in turn, how a typical structuring of knowledge in language might have been eschewed in Margaret Wise Brown's magical work.

"When knowledge begins to escape stratification, when its form begins to blur, its anarchic share surfacing, its alignment to power also shifts. Power and knowledge begin to compose differently" (Manning 2020, 224). When knowledge begins to writhe against the structuring forces of power, Manning describes the shifting of the relationship between the two as a form of *scintillation*; she suggests that this scintillation might be a marker for knowledge's blurring and transition to forms that are better known as "study" (Moten and Harney 2012) or "research-creation" (2016). If knowledge is sutured in most environments to power formations, Sprague Mitchell's

credo valuing the potentiality of study is all the more radical after 72 years: Are not (just the first three!) imperatives to engage in the zest for living, to renew curiosity in the world (rhythm), to modulate techniques for living (pattern) in themselves a strong challenge to the paradigm of the order-word?

Knowledge and power are irreducible to one and other. In their irreducibility, there is always the potential for something extra to be afoot. I think that when we are young, it is a natural concept that "something is doing" in the world; but like Sprague Mitchell, I believe that even the fairytale, exciting as it may be, is still a form of acculturation to the power-knowledge formations that most of us will come to take as granted as we mature into adulthood. Children have a much better *empirical* understanding that knowledge and power are separate entities; and are naturally attuned to the "irreducibility [that] begins to scintillate in ways that give knowledge the breadth, the force, to subvert the striations that usually contain it" (Manning 2020, 224).

The variation is not in language itself. Deleuze and Guattari argue that "the first determination of language is not the trope or metaphor but indirect discourse" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 77). The order-word is *beneath* language — it is power coded in saying. Language operates in the transmission of saying to saying, coding, recoding, and overcoding in that transmission. Order-words "mark stoppages or organized, stratified compositions" (ibid., 110). Contrary to simple variation, such as variation "pertaining to pronunciation, style, or non-pertinent features that lie outside the system and leave the homogeneity intact," *inherent variation* is when it is "the variation itself that is systematic, in the sense in which musicians say that 'the theme is the variation'" (ibid., 93). Inherent variation is the transmission that the wiggling infant, the language that embodies the crashing sea, and that *Goodnight Moon* play with. The scintillation is the frictive possibility that is felt, in the dance between virtual and actual, that is felt in the irreducibility — or incommensurability — of form and function dancing to attention: Magic.

An act of magic is like setting a depth charge into language, as harnessed by the order-word. Below (and across) order-words are pass-words, "words that are components of passage." To attribute "magic" to an event in formation is to mark the noticing of the more-than human scintillation of power's striation of knowledge. Manning reminds us that power, too, has an outside; and "while there is no question that power also contributes to how form-taking occurs, Foucault's insistence on the importance of the outside is a reminder that power always carries an excess that is not captured by the form itself" (Manning 2020, 224).

Margaret Wise Brown was an unruly, undisciplined pupil. Even as she memorialized her, Lucy Sprague Mitchell noted with wan humour that "[a]lways Brownie was moving on to something new. This often kept her from perfecting a technique. Her experiments were not always successful. But a new exploration intrigued her more than perfecting an old one. She chose to '*follow the gleam*' ahead. This is the way children learn. I think it is the way Brownie learned" (Sprague Mitchell 1953, 20, emphasis added).

In Wise Brown, Sprague Mitchell is noticing the queer capacity to attune the gleam — scintillation — shimmer — that is rubbed out by even the most benevolent of disciplinary regimes,

or quickly captured and made operational by disciplinary power. Sprague Mitchell herself calls Margaret Wise Brown not only “sensitive to the magic of the world,” but “an artist even as children are artists,” and deeply experimental, “as experimental as anyone I have ever known.” Like Gertrude Stein, Margaret Wise Brown’s ability to talk and listen was a reflection of the “vividness of the picture she represented,” a form of genius as a capacity to immediate with life in its worlding operation.

> But chiefly I shall miss her talk. Brownie's talk was shot through with glints of sudden insight that often held one suspended in surprise. One expected a surprise but never the surprise that came. "What time is it?" some factual soul once asked her. And she answered, "What time do you wish it to be?" A priest meeting her for the first time inquired, "Daughter, what interests you most?" "Magic," she said, "The world is full of magic." And the priest, catching her gleam replied, "Daughter, magic is what interests me, too."
>
> What was magic to her? The rustle of leaves as the wind stirred them. And so in her summer home in Maine, she built herself a place to write high in a great tree amid leaf magic. She listened to sounds. They held a magic to her as they do to children. And she wrote The Noisy Books for children. Color was magic. She cut out little strange-shaped bits of bright-hued paper and moved them around, watching the magic of pattern come and go. She planned her stories for children to include the magic of color.
>
> She felt magic in her finger-tips in the warm softness of fur and the sliding smoothness of satin. The dark was full of magic where busy little animals with gleaming eyes went about their work and play and the moon moved silent overhead.
>
> Words had their magic too — the infinite magic of rhythm, of changing tempo and of pattern. She moved words across a page even as she did her scraps of bright-hued paper; listening to the pattern they made. And children listened to her words and they too heard the pattern they made (Sprague Mitchell 1953, 18-20).

Interlude Two: *Goodnight Moon* (Pictures)

Page One:

(No Image - white background. Text is a bolded sans-serif font centred to the page, right justified).

In the great green room
There was a telephone
And a red balloon
And a picture of—

Page Two:

(Image: Right side of a room, which is bifurcated by the centrefold of the book, aligned with the left edge of the mantle. The image is bordered in the following quadrants: A grey semicircular braided rug is in the lower left corner; a green wall is in the upper left corner, image cut off just after a fireplace; the top right corner of the page is also a green wall, ceiling out of frame; the lower right corner depicts the outside front edge of a mustard-yellow two-drawer nightstand. Brushing the top edge of the page, almost one-third of the way into the image, is a red balloon which has two white forms floating in it. These forms are meant to depict bright spots on the reflective surface of the balloon: one is diamond-shaped, the other a white curved line, inset from the edge of the balloon.

In the bed, a rabbit sits peering to its left at a telephone which rests on the mustard-yellow two-drawer nightstand. The rabbit is wearing blue- and white-striped pyjamas. The stripes are vertical at the torso and horizontal along the arms. The rabbit has three visible 'fingers' per 'hand.' A dusty-rose coloured blanket at the foot of the bed is loosely folded into a triangle, marking its hypotenuse, the peak pointing up. It is placed over a green comforter with white sheets folded over it. The rabbit is propped upright against a large plush pillow. On the nightstand rests a green square book, a black wired telephone, and a mustard-yellow clock with a small pendulum. There is faint writing on the green book that rests on the nightstand. The writing is upside down to the viewer but right-side up from the point of view of the rabbit. The letters spell 'GOODNIGHT MOON,' accompanied by a faint line drawing of a curtain: It is a depiction of the cover of this book — Note January 22nd, 2024: Goodnight Moon 60 Years revised edition 2005, inscribed to Lindsey, July 6th, 2013 "Love Ya Aunt Janice," the line drawing is very difficult to decipher; I cannot make out a curtain — I find myself wondering if the outline of the cover of the book was added after the cover's design had been settled. The hour on the clock marks several minutes to 7:00; this time corresponds to that which is depicted on an ornate blue clock on the fireplace mantel, which is flanked by two blue urn-like objects.

To the rabbit's right, sitting on a mustard-yellow pedestal table with two visible legs, is: a white comb with 22 needles; a white hand brush (with no handle) with the word 'Bunny' inscribed on it; a blue lamp with a yellow shade with stitching along the top and bottom edges; and a red bowl filled with a white substance. The white handle of a spoon or fork rests on the edge of the red bowl, emerging from the bowl's contents.

A green and white curtain hanging on a red rod frames a red three-paned window. It is tied to the right, and drapes to the floor behind the table. It appears to be pleated twice along the top and pinched twice to the right side of the frame, creating a waterfall as it descends to the floor. The window is open to a starry night sky. The stars visible from the window vary slightly in form and size, from white dots to asterisks with four to six points. The third windowpane is almost completely blocked by the cascading curtain pane, while the first pane on the left, closest to the centrefold, is the most unobstructed.

Along the wall to the left of the window is the fireplace with the clock and urns atop of it. The fireplace is a light, warm grey. There is an active fire in it with three red flames reaching up the black fireplace interior. One of the flames splits into two branches; a fourth is faintly outlined with a black line in front of the central and largest flame. Yellow borders the edges of the red flames — Note January 22nd, 2024: Goodnight Moon 60 Years revised edition 2005, inscribed to Lindsey, July 6th, 2013 "Love Ya Aunt Janice," does not have yellow borders on the edge of the black flames; but white — and black lines assist in delineating interior contours. The fire pit has vertical edges and a rounded top, finishing in a semicircle. Two yellow objects, each comprised of three yellow balls and two legs, stand in front of two dark brown logs: the logs are only faintly distinguishable from the black interior of the fireplace. To the left of the fire, almost at the centrefold of the book, are a series of standing yellow fire pokers, with an ash shovel akimbo. Beyond the ash shovel, it is not possible to tell which of the three remaining pokers is actually a poker, and which is part of the structure holding these implements. To the right of the fireplace, three logs sit in a yellow open basket. A small white mouse, which after the stars is the smallest object in the image, emerges from behind the basket. Its tail is not visible, hidden by the larger object. It has large white ears.

Above the fireplace is a representation of a painting in a yellow ornate frame. The image is in a landscape orientation. The picture plane is divided approximately into thirds: The top two thirds are filled with a sky in medium blue. A yellow cow, front legs splayed forward, hindlegs back, leaps across the blue field. Between the cow's torso and the horizon line, a crescent moon rests low in the sky. On the lower third of the image, three small red buildings dot an undulating mustard landscape. A faint rough path in a yellow meanders between the two of them, and extends beyond the bottom right corner of the picture plane.

A second painting, also in landscape orientation, hangs above the red bed on the right wall of the room. It has a yellow frame with large scalloped edges. The image depicts the corner of a dark blue room, which is in the opposite orientation of the room that the picture is hung in. In the image, grey curtains frame a white window with four panes in equal quadrants on the right of two walls.

On the left wall, there is a picture frame with an image in it, which is indistinguishable but for several lines. The floor of the room in the picture is red; the same red as the floor of the room where the image is hung. Three brown bears sit in a semicircle on low yellow chairs that do not have arms, their paws resting in their laps. The two bears to the left peer out of the image; the third bear sits to the right of the frame, its body oriented toward the left side of the room; its two black dots-for-eyes appear to be gazing to the bottom left of the frame, *almost as if the gaze is unfocused in the middle distance, lost on thought.*

A pair of slippers are placed on the floor, near the foot of the right side of the bunny's bed. They are mustard with a fluffy white lining, seeming to depict shearling. A second rug rests on the floor parallel to the bed, between the slippers and the bottom of the image. It appears to be a tiger skin. Its tail snakes under the side table, its head and left forepaw cut off from the bottom of the page).

No text

Page Three:

(Image: Pages three and four create a diptych; they are close-ups of the two pictures hanging on the wall, shown in the previous image. On the left side of the diptych, page three, is a black and white illustration of the ornate frame that sits atop the fireplace, showing a cow in the sky above a landscape, as previously described. All colours of that comprised this image on the previous page — the yellow frame, dark blue sky, and red houses — are replaced by gradations of grey. There is more detail in this image: the ornate frame, which was outlined in a black line, is hand-painted in with a dark grey outline and a medium-fill, with watery, darker brush strokes and light-grey highlights inlayed in the image, which lends it a sense of dimensionality. The cow, now a light grey, remains largely unchanged but for a slight increase in detail, provided by the contouring of its outlines. *Note January 22nd, 2024:* Goodnight Moon 60 Years *revised edition 2005, inscribed to Lindsey, July 6th, 2013 "Love Ya Aunt Janice," the cow has three nipples on its udder.* The sky and landscape in this image benefit the most from the page's enhanced detail. The sky, previously a monochrome blue, is darkened the most toward the top of the image by horizontal grey brushstrokes, and is punctuated by dozens of pinpricks of white and crossed lines, denoting stars. Nearer to the horizon, a slightly lighter grey suggests a hazy sky. The interior edges of the crescent moon are ragged.

At the bottom left of the image is light grey mound: It is intersected by black lines creating a thatch: hay. Of the three houses, one has gained detail from the previous page, one has less detail, and another, while enlarged, appears to remain the same. The largest house, to the left of the page, has a single door and one window on the face that has the peak of the roof. On the longer side, it has one window and two white columns flanking it, indicating the presence of an extended sloped roof, and a porch. The middle house, which is the smallest of the three, is now arranged directly perpendicular to the picture plane. It has lost a door and has no detail beyond the appearance of a

grey square with a triangle atop it. The third and rightmost house remains largely the same: it has one black door and is perpendicular to the picture plane. It has a line parallel to the triangular roof pitch to indicate the presence of the roof's soffit. The landscape that these houses rest upon, and the path leading to two of the three houses remains in the same location relative to other objects in the image. The terrain is now textured with mottled black marks: these are shrubs, boulders or shadows, indistinct).

The cow jumping over the moon

Page Four:

(Image: The scalloped frame surrounding the three bears is more pronounced: As with the previous page, white highlights and grey lowlights have been added to the circular scallops to give them dimension. As with the preceding image, has this image has a matte between the frame and the scene depicted. This matte is white; the former, surrounding the cow jumping over the moon, is grey. Those scalloped edges along the top and right sides of the frame have a white highlight in each of the scallops' top right corner. Those scalloped edges along the bottom and left sides of the frame have a darker grey brush stroke in each of the scallops' bottom left corner. Two scallops — one on the upper left corner, and one on the lower right corner — have both a highlight and a lowlight. All volumes are outlined in watery dark grey ink.

While the basic composition of the three bears sitting on chairs has remained the same as it was depicted on page two, there are significant shifts in the details of the larger image: Each bear has gained a white muzzle, and while their postures remain the same, two of the trio's gazes seem to have shifted focus. Their black eyes, now encircled in white, take on a somewhat mystified or dismayed expression; stunned. The first bear on the left still stares out at the viewer, but has now taken on the appearance of alarm. The second bear in the middle, who also once appeared to be gazing out to the viewer, now appears downcast, staring (blankly?) at the third bear's feet. Sitting to the rightmost of the composition, the third bear, who previously appeared to be gazing into the lower left corner of the frame, has lifted their gaze, peering into the zone between the two bears to their left; perhaps to the wall beyond them, upon which hangs a picture, previously noted, albeit now with detail:

While sketchy and minimally detailed, the shape of the cow jumping over the moon is now distinguishable. It appears that this is the same image that is on the wall in the the great green room, as well as the on the facing page.

The curtains in this room remain in the same shape as in the image's earlier depiction, however, they are now white, and the outside beyond the window dark; whereas this contrast was previously inverted).

And there were three little bears sitting on chairs

Page Five:

(Image: The following image is of the bottom left side of the room, spreading across two pages. The book's centrefold is just to the right of the left corner of the room, meaning that across two pages, this illustration is almost two-thirds of the width of the room. The convention for integrating text in these pages has shifted: Whereas text in previous images was either set on its own page or set below an illustration in black ink on a white background, the text on these pages is printed in red ink that is embedded in two purple bubbles; one is placed in the upper left corner of this page, and the second in the lower right corner of the following page. *Note March 4th, 2024:* Goodnight Moon 75th Anniversary *revised edition 2005, speech bubbles are in a grey-brown; might be called 'portobello'.*

The fireplace acts as a tool for spatial orientation in its repetition from one spread to the next. Four-fifths of the horizontal orientation of this room is visible for the first time, meaning that in the two-page spread, only one fifth of the room has been previously viewed. The fireplace sits between a mirror of the window previously described, though it is not placed at a perfect midpoint between the two windows, huddling slightly to the window on the right. The time on the clock that rests on the mantle is 7:10. The flames have changed their orientation somewhat, but are still three-pronged. The white mouse, at the far-right of the page, has moved from behind the stack of firewood onto the carpet. A second shift in the space is along the vertical orientation of the image: The windows are now cut-off about two-thirds of the way up; only the bottom of the framed picture of the cow jumping over the moon above the mantlepiece is visible. More of the large circular grey woven rug is visible, as is its placement in the room, which is slightly to the left of centre of the fireplace and the two windows that frame it.

On the rug are two cats: one has a white face and white stomach and paws and black back and tail. The second is completely white. Both have bushy tails, and the appearance of full hair on their bodies. The first cat is sitting on its hindquarters, facing the second, which is crouched as if to pounce. These are the 'kittens' that the text refers to. There is something incongruous in their representation as cats; the eyes are similar in shape and upwards tilt to the rabbit's, or to how a squirrel might be represented in this illustrative style.

Underneath the second window is a yellow folding drying stand with four items pinned to it. In light grey, with a slight pink hue, are two mittens with thumbs pointing in the same direction ("And a pair of mittens"). Beside them, in a pink made from red with white tint, are two socks or booties. Outside of the window above the stand, we catch our first glance of the moon, in the bottom-leftmost corner. *Note January 22nd, 2024:* Goodnight Moon 60 Years *revised edition 2005, inscribed to Lindsey, July 6th, 2013 "Love Ya Aunt Janice," this is completely hidden by the centre fold in this edition.* It is a small white blot with a curvilinear outline. I know this to be a moon more than I recognize it as such. Stars of white dots and asterixes dot the dark blue windowpanes.

To the left of the window there is a perpendicular wall, cheated at an exaggerated perspective in the manner of a stage, as with previous images. Lining the wall are two large objects: A four-tiered bookshelf, and a toy house ("And a little toyhouse"). The bookshelf, in mustard-yellow with

tones of grey to indicate shading, has rows of books on each shelf in colour blocks of green, blue, and red. Resting on top of it are two toys: a dusty-rose doll, with straight lines for hair that radiate out from its head and no indication of clothing; and a four legged creature with a long neck, yellow, standing, its head cut off by the top of the page. Its long neck suggests that it is a giraffe. Below these objects on the topmost of the four shelves, shaded dark grey, from left to right are: the spines of seven red-bound books with an eighth leaning against it; an empty space followed by a green book laying flat; and another green book leaning against a row of five books with red spines. The second shelf from the top is full of books: Eleven blue-bound books; six green-bound books; and another five blue-bound books.

The remaining two shelves are partially obstructed by a yellow rocking chair on the red floor in front of the bookshelf. The third shelf from the top contains seven red-bound books; a space obstructed by the back of the yellow rocking chair; and nine blue-bound books. All volumes on the bottom three shelves appear to be thick; as if they were encyclopedias. The bottom-most shelf has two more toys, and eight green books. The toys are: A grey elephant, standing and facing out from the shelf; and a second doll, also dusty rose, sitting, with curly lines cascading from its head to indicate longer hair: gendered feminine. This means that the previous doll was meant to be male.

The toy house is the same red colour as the floor. It is one and a half stories, and has a central hall plan, indicated by the door in the centre of one of its faces. The house has a simple black pitched roof centred to the house's facade. The door is flanked by two windows, and capped by a third above it, indicating a second floor. Two more windows on the first floor are evenly placed along the side of the house, making five visible windows in total. Each window is divided into four panes, framed by curtains which are pulled to the side, indicating the presence of curtain ties. The curtains are the same yellow as the windows, and are only indicated by faint black scalloped lines. The door is the same colour as the house, and has one small window divided by a mullion. A small circle indicates a knob. A small yellow platform with green sides, barely wider that the front door, indicates porch. A large rectangular volume in red — a chimney stack — protrudes from the peak of the roof, near the back of the house.

Finally, a yellow rocking chair with a high oval back and a round seat sits in front of the bookcase. Unoccupied, sitting on the rocking chair there is a green ball of yarn, a green square of knitting, with green needles in the knitting. A thread tangles, drops halfway down the chair, loops in a figure eight, and returns, connecting the ball of yarn and the square of knitting).

And two little kittens
and a pair of mittens

Page Six:
(Image: described above)

And a little toyhouse

Page Seven:

(Image: A technique of selecting out particular vignettes within the larger scene to produce a diptych is beginning to emerge. As with the spread on pages three and four, which depicted closeups of the two images on the wall, these illustrations are in greyscale, possess enhanced detail, and provide new visual information. Here, selected objects have been isolated from the larger scene and the presence of spatializing or referential dimensions: In the absence of floor, wall, or ceiling, they float in large grey amorphous washes. On this page, which is the left side of the diptych, the objects depicted are the mustard-yellow table, on which sits the bowl of mush, the comb, the white brush with the word 'Bunny' on it, and a lamp. The circular table, formerly on a pedestal base with only two feet improbably holding it upright, has gained a third stabilizing foot between the two. The third foot is a darker grey than the other two, indicating that it is spreading and balancing behind and away from the two closer to the foreground, creating a tripod formation. Though the objects that rest on the table are in the same approximate location as previously depicted, the comb and the brush with the word 'Bunny' on it are now more evenly spaced apart relative to the bowl and lamp, whereas previously they were touching. As with the close-up/vignette of the pictures and their frames in the prior diptych, the base of the lamp — presently dark grey, initially blue — has white shapes that indicate that it has volume and dimension.

The most noteworthy aspect of this vignette is that the lamp appears to be turned on. Against the dark background, the surface of the table is a light grey, as is the shade of the lamp. A faint line connects the bottom corner edges of the conical lamp shade and the outermost edges of the surface of the round table that the lamp is sitting on. In the void between these spaces, the field of dark grey that these objects float in is lighter; lightened, as if by the downcast glow of the lamp's unseen bulb. No such lightening effect appears to emanate upward into the grey field from the circular hole at the top of the shade).

And a comb and a brush and a bowl full of mush

Page Eight:

(Image: The rocking chair with knitting, depicted in on page six — which is now occupied by a rabbit in a dress — is the subject of this illustration, floating, as with the description above, in an amorphous grey field. What can be seen of the chair, in greyscale, remains largely the same as that which was previously depicted, with one variation: the chair's ovular back, crowned with a pile of squiggles representing decorative woodwork, is inset by a second oval representing the chair's back set in a frame. In the previous image, the frame is darker than the back of the chair; here, the back is a darker grey that the frame — with the knitting that rests on the rabbit's lap, the darkest grey in forms in the image — suggesting that it might be padded or a different material.

The rabbit sitting in the chair has a white head, and its paws, or hands and feet, are white. Its face is similar in proportion and style to that of the rabbit sitting in the bed, looking at the telephone.

It has long, white ears that point back, black eyes with a backward tilt in the same direction. Its right forearm rests on its lap; the left forearm is raised, its paw or hand appears to hover, as if paused, next to its mouth. The rabbit seems to be gazing into the distance at the right of the page.

The rabbit is wearing a full-length dress, from wrist to ankle. A lighter rectangle on the front of the dress, from shoulder to knee, suggests that an apron sits atop it. The rabbit's paws, or hands and feet, are rounded and outlined by a meandering line, indicating the presence of digits without illustrating them as such.

The knitting that was previously resting on this chair is in the rabbit's lap. The ball of yarn connected to the square of knitting is on the floor, connected a curved grey line).

And a quiet old lady who was whispering "hush"

Page Nine:

(Image: This image is the first, and only one of two, which depicts the entire expanse of the room. It is also the most detailed overview of the room, and thus, is that which was used as a template for the construction of the stage in *Goodnight Moon: a Rhythm, a Tempo.* Most aspects of the room have been seen before; the only new perspectives of the room are within the top left picture plane, in the vector of the green wall above and between the little toy house and the yellow bookshelf. Here, hung on the wall, is a greyscale picture contained within a red frame, which has an undulating scalloped edge along each side. In the two corners of the frame that are visible in this image, the scalloped edge resolves into red semicircles, marking where they meet.

Both the top of the image and the frame are cut off by a purple text bubble that contains red sans-serif lettering that reads 'Goodnight room.' *Note March 4th, 2024:* Goodnight Moon 75th Anniversary *revised edition 2005, speech bubbles are in a grey-brown; might be called 'portobello'.* This ovoid bubble, which descends roughly a fifth the way down from the top of the page, and a little over half-way across it, is outlined by a black line. The line appears to have less visual weight than the other objects that are outlined in the room, due to the fact that the black line borders the purple bubble, which is of a similar tonal quality.

The image contained in the red frame is of a white rabbit standing in a river, framed by two banks, which occupy the lower left section of the image and the upper right section of the image (cut off by text bubble). The former bank is light-grey and grassy, in the image's foreground, while the latter, darker bank occupies the image's mid-ground. The foreground and mid-ground or middle-distance are bifurcated by the river. The background is largely obstructed by the purple text bubble.

The rabbit has a satchel over its right shoulder, a small net in its left hand/forepaw, and fishing rod with a short curved line extending from it its right hand/forepaw. At the end of the line is a triangular form, appearing to represent a carrot. Just beyond the carrot, apparently floating or mid-leap in the air above the water — indicated by the fact that all limbs are visible, there does not appear to be a disturbance in the water — is a much smaller rabbit. Unlike every other depiction

of a rabbit contained in these pages, it lacks anthropomorphic conceit or reference. It is merely a rabbit. The rabbit fishing appears to be casting a carrot on a stick, in order to catch the smaller rabbit, using a carrot as a lure.

The darkest aspect of the image is a below the midsection and bushy tail of the standing rabbit's torso: Two conical volumes (outlined) with three vertical black lines, creating the appearance of a fill, indicate shiny black rubber boots.

The trunk of a mature tree, broken at the base near the root, extends diagonally across the grassy bank from where it is planted on the edge of the bank near the river, toward the lower left corner of the red frame, where it continues beyond the picture plane. The fallen trunk has two small branches, and casts a grey shadow on the lighter grey ground. The trunk, which remains partially attached at the break point at the base of the tree — now a stump — seems to come to rest on the ground somewhere around where the trunk meets the edge of the image. It is not possible to know how large the fallen tree is, or whether the rest of the fallen tree is intact.

The river, which is darker in the foreground and lighter as it rounds the bend of the further bank, can be understood to be such because the brushstrokes of water, in their gradations of grey, follow the shape of the water's banks. These brushstrokes, in parallel form, suggest movement in a given direction. In other words, by following the shape of the landforms that contain it, the water is being directed and is in motion. The edges of the picture plane do not seem to interrupt or impede that motion, suggesting that it continues.

Standing on the bookshelf, the yellow toy animal with a long neck, whose head was previously beyond the picture plane (on page five), is now restored. As previously surmised, it is an illustration of a giraffe, as indicated by the fact that in addition to two rounded ears two small bulb-like forms protrude from its head, suggesting rounded horns.

The yellow rocking chair is no longer unoccupied. Sitting in it is the rabbit with the full-length dress, now coloured blue. Her right hand/forepaw rests on her lap, upon which also rests the green square of knitting. Her left hand/forepaw seems to be arrested mid-motion; elbow bent, rounded paw hovering between lap and mouth. She could be yawing, pausing to indicate some point of order, returning her hand to her lap after touching her face or scratching an ear, or pointing. Her gaze is directed toward the rabbit in blue and white pyjamas, resting in the bed.

The ball of yarn that was previously on the seat of the yellow rocking chair has rolled onto the floor, connected to the knitting by one long thread. The yarn sits on top of the braided rug, and the two kittens are on the floor amidst its unraveled tangles, between the square of knitting and the green ball of yarn. The black and white kitten, between the ball of yarn and the sitting rabbit in blue dress, appears to be lounging on the rug, lifting a corner of thread with its right forepaw, gazing at the white kitten in front of it. The white kitten's body is crouched forward facing the black kitten, as if to pounce, however, its head is tilted away from the kitten, peering further into the image. The white mouse has moved further into the room from the back wall, and behind the basket of firewood where it was first noticed, and appears to be sitting in a pool of light cast by

the blue lamp with yellow shade sitting atop the yellow pedestal table. The mouse's head is tilted up, by about ten degrees, as if alert.

The room has marginally darkened. This is difficult to discern, and is only noticeable by the section of red carpet, green wall, and bed which are illuminated in by two conical colour fields emanating outward from the top and bottom of the lamp shade, edged by a faint line. The upper inverted cone cuts diagonally across the left window frame as it extends toward the (unseen) ceiling; and the in the frame, the starry sky's blue which is within the conical field holds the highest differentiation in tone from the 'unlit' portion of the windowpanes. The lower cone does not extend in an unlimited fashion: it covers the floor just past the edge of the rug in its centre, terminating between the playing kittens and the alert mouse, rounds about to the edge of the bed where it is cut off on the floor by the apparent edge of the bed frame. It appears to illuminate the rabbit sitting upright in the bed, and the bed itself. This conclusion is reached by the fact that there is no change in tone in these objects. It illuminates a small corner of the green wall in the corner of the room, and a corner of the red headboard. Curiously, it does not seem to illuminate the top of the yellow table, or the white comb or brush with the work 'BUNNY' on it, or the red bowl with white mush; though this is difficult to assert as the change in tone is very slight from previous images.

The rabbit, tucked into bed with just upper torso and arms resting on white top sheet remains in a similar positions as described in previous pages; but the head, in near-to full profile, appears to be looking in the direction of the fireplace at the centre of the room, or the mouse on the floor, or at the table with the lamp on it.

Above the rabbit in bed, a small detail in the image has changed: the first bear's gaze appears to be directed toward the third bears; a minor variation from page two and four.

The hands of the blue clock on the mantle indicate 7:20; on the dresser next to the rabbit's bed 7:21 or 7:22. The moon in the far left window has risen, almost to its equatorial line. It has also progressed across the first of the three vertical windowpanes, to encroach about 1/6th of the way into the second pane).

Goodnight room

Page 10
(Image: Described above)

No text

Page 11:
(Image: This image, and that which is on the following page, returns to the convention introduced on pages three and four, and repeated on pages seven and eight, of selecting out particular vignettes within the larger scenes to produce a diptych. It continues the technique introduced on page seven of isolating the objects and floating them in greyscale amorphous washes,

with one deviation from the previous technique: Whereas in the washes on pages seven and eight, the objects are separated from their background (and may thus be distinguished as washes), the content of this and the following image *also* constitute the volume of the wash. In this image, the window frame to the left of the fireplace in the great green room, and surrounding curtain, have been isolated from the surrounds *but they have also become the surrounds themselves:* the interior of the curtain, which frame the window panes, is bordered by clearly legible black outlines, as is the window itself. The exterior edged of the curtain, however, become the wash (or the other way around), and as a result, the grey field appears to encroach and delimit the object that is the window.

Within the window frame, the moon has moved from so that over 3/4s of it are exposed to the viewer. Three quarters of it have moved into the central windowpane, with less than a quarter remaining in the first).

Goodnight moon

(Text: It is interesting to note that this is the first introduction of the titular "moon" in this story. Previously, the moon in the image of "The cow jumping over the moon" on page three was addressed, but is a different moon both in order of abstraction - as it was a "picture of," as introduced on page two; as well as in shape. Wishing goodnight to this moon is interesting, in that as it has not yet been referred to (is the title a reference within the story, or a reference *to* the story?) and is thus a preemptive greeting of dismissal).

Page 12:

(Image: This image follows the same techniques as the previous page. It is a closeup of the cow jumping over the moon, the subject of the painting hanging over the fireplace. The cow itself, in greyscale, is nearly identical to the close-up of the cow in the first diptych, in page three, including the crescent moon that it is "jumping over," below it. The one difference in its depiction is that the three nipples on its udder are barely discernible. The sky that the cow floats in is simplified, in that it lacks the horizontal grey brushstrokes, and suggestion of a hazy sky.

There is an absence of the horizon, landscape, houses, shrubs or boulders that completed the previous surround/context to the cow jumping over the moon. Instead, the cow floats in a darker grey field, which is inset in a lighter grey field. White dots and asterisks denote stars that continue through both).

Goodnight cow jumping over the moon

(Text: Of note in the first depiction of this image, the textual line began on the first page, in the last line: "And a picture of — " introduced and completed the sentence fragment "The cow jumping over the moon." The subject of the first sentence — the picture — gives way to a new subject, (the) "cow jumping over the moon").

Page 13:

(Image: This image, a return to the great green room, is a new framing of the overall image: It crops the top three quarters of the top right section of the room, cropping the image at the edge of the bookshelf to the left of the page, and at the bottom corner of the bed and the black telephone on the night dresser at the bottom right of the page. From its first appearance on page two, the red balloon has marginally descended. All objects are now proportionally larger; the red balloon most benefits from this enhancement as it seems to gain visual immediacy and importance.

The mouse is now perched on the corner of the drying rack that is closet to the fireplace. It appears to be looking up at the picture of the cow jumping over the moon.

The time on both clocks reads 7:30. The moon is now bifurcated by the first muntin between the first and second windowpane, and it grazes the windowsill, almost completely clear of it. This means that while it has gained elevation, it has also moved backward in what appears to be its forward trajectory.

The bunny has climbed out from under the covers. It is kneeling on its pillowcase, peering up at the picture of the three bears rocking on chairs above it, oriented away from the viewer/picture plane. A bushy tail is on its backside, implying a hole in its pyjamas. A small detail in the image has changed: While their postures remain the same, the second bear's gaze appears to be downcast, a minor variation from page two, but in conformation with pages four and ten.

The convention of red text in purple (*or* Goodnight Moon 75th Anniversary *revised edition 2005, speech bubbles are in a grey-brown; might be called 'portobello'*) continues. "And the red balloon" in the top left corner of page 13; "Goodnight bears Goodnight chairs" in the lower left corner of page thirteen.

The contrast created by the conical glow of light, first seen in pages nine and ten, has increased. The area outside of the cones of light is marginally darker, however, the contrast is more evident. Unchanged (beyond the objects previously lit) are the tones of the starry sky; the surfaces of the mustard table and the nightstand. The edge of the round tabletop of the nightstand is now more clearly shaded. Reviewing the first appearance of this table, on page two, it is clear that when the room is illuminated by what the British call "big lights" (overhead lighting), it has an un-tinted yellow hue).

Goodnight light
And the red balloon

Goodnight bears
Goodnight chairs

Page 14:

(Image: Same as above)

No text

Page 15:

(Image: This, and the following page, returns to the technique of vignettes of objects or subjects selected-out (in order to be counted?). The two kittens are in the same configuration as they were shown on pages nine and ten: The black and white kitten continues to lounge; but no longer on a rug, as it is not there; nor is it occupied as it was before by the ball of yarn, as it is also absent. It looks forward, at the viewer, eyes open wide, without anthropomorphized expression. The white cat's posture is exactly the same as depicted on page ten: Body crouched forward, oriented toward the black and white kitten in front of it, with head tilted away, as if looking at something out of the dark grey bubble where they are suspended. With nothing discernible to the viewer, the scene becomes almost menacing… what has startled this cat?).

Goodnight kittens

Page 16:

(Image: Something strange is afoot. This pair of mittens, in greyscale, are on a drying rack that is shorter in length that the one seen in the great green room. The pair of socks that were also pinned to them are no longer present).

And goodnight mittens

Page 17:

(Image: The moon has resumed its march. It is now well above the window sill, and has nearly cleared the first muntin into the second and middle pane.

The framing of the great green room on this and the next page is similar to that on pages thirteen and fourteen, but for the fact that a small portion of the top of the image is hidden — about one tenth — revealing a similar amount of the lower part of the room. This allows for the two kittens, who are now animated in play, to be visible. The white kitten has moved close to the drying rack, on which the socks that were missing in the previous page have been restored. The kitten is lying on its side, with a segment of thread between its two visible forepaws and one visible hind paw. The black kitten is also on its side, facing away from the picture plane, oriented toward the white kitten, lying on another segment of thread/yarn. The unspooled yarn covers a greater area of the rug; evidence of play.

The quiet old lady whispering "hush" remains in her place, unobstructed as she was on page thirteen by a text bubble. Her position appears to be nearly identical to that which we found her in on page nine: Her left hand/forepaw seems to be arrested mid-motion; elbow bent, rounded paw

hovering between lap and mouth. She could be yawning, pausing to indicate some point of order, returning her hand to her lap after touching her face or scratching an ear, or pointing. Her gaze is directed toward the rabbit in blue and white pyjamas, resting in the bed. Her forepaw, however, now touches her face, in the region of her mouth. Her chair is in a portion of the room that is not illuminated by the bedside lamp. The fur on her face, depicted as white when shown in greyscale on page eight, and light grey in the moderately dimmed room of page nine, is now approaching a mid-tone grey. Black lines that indicate fur, framing her face and head, are more pronounced in this picture. The square of green knitting on her lap appears to have one or two more rows added to it.

The clocks on the mantel and the bedside dresser both read 7:40.

The mouse has moved to the far left of the scene, perched on the edge of the yellow bookcase, looking down. It is about 25% larger than last depicted, but upon further inspection, approximately the same size as shown on page six, before it caught the attention of the kittens.

The rabbit in the bed sits on its pillow, on top of the folded white top sheet and green blanket. Its knees are held tightly to its chest, hind paws visible for the first time atop the bedding. Its gaze is cast toward the far side of the room, perhaps at the quiet old lady whispering hush; the mouse perched atop the bookcase, or the kittens playing on the rug.

All three bears appear to be gazing out of the frame).

No text

Page 18:

(Image: as described above).

Goodnight clocks
And goodnight socks

Page 19:

(Image: The little house is shown for the first time in greyscale, as per the now established convention of isolating objects. It floats in a puddle of dark grey. No details have shifted from previous depictions of the house, except that the front door no longer has a handle or keyhole).

Goodnight little house

Page 20:

(Image: In the smallest field of grey yet shown, the mouse sits, head and tail larger than its body. One circular black eye is visible).

And goodnight mouse

Page 21:

(Image: We return to the great green room. The scale presented is that of page five and six. As a result of the fact that the room is slightly enlarged, the image is justified to the right of the room, and crops (approximately) one quarter of the left side of the room out. On the horizontal axis, the room is cropped along the bottom and the top of the frame: along the top of the image of the cow jumping over the moon, and the top of the yellow scalloped frame of the three little bears sitting on chairs; and along the bottom, just above the lower left edge of the night table with the telephone and the green picture book, titled "Goodnight Moon." The clocks both read 7:50.

The remains outside of its covers, and is perched on the folded top sheet and white pillow, its body orienting toward the nightstand; presumably toward the comb and brush that this spread is wishing 'goodnight' to. The mouse sits perched on its hindquarters, facing the fire. The bears' gaze has not shifted from their previous appearance. Neither the kittens nor the old lady whispering 'hush' are visible. The text is inlaid in a purple/grey field, in the bottom right corner of the two-page image).

Goodnight comb
And goodnight brush

Page 22:

(Image: as described above)

No text

Page 23:

(No Image: This page is blank. The black sans-serif text which says "Goodnight nobody", without punctuation, is in the bottom left corner of the frame, in the same place that it would be if there were a greyscale pool with an object in the middle of it. Without object to isolate, there is no atmosphere).

Goodnight nobody

Page 24:

(Image: The bowl of mush is isolated in a greyscale atmosphere. The red bowl has become black).

Goodnight mush

Page 25:

(Image: The leading edge of the full moon has now passed the second muntin and has edged into the third window frame of the window to the left of the fireplace. While the room has a similar shading to previous images, the windows themselves, with the moon and stars beyond, are bright, barely shaded by the darkness of the great green room. The sky, as well as the orange fire which continues to roar in the fireplace, and the orange text which reads "And goodnight to the old lady whispering hush" in the (now habitual) bottom-left corner of the two-page spread, are the brightest objects in the room — they have the feeling of internal illumination.

The bunny sits in its bed under the covers once again, peering toward the old lady whispering hush, who needless to say, is not 'quiet.' Her knitting is now a perfect square, and it rests on her lap alongside the ball of yarn, which until now rolling around the floor. Little else has changed about her: her left forepaw remains elevated near to her mouth, presumably gesturing while whispering "hush." The two kittens sit on hind paws on the grey circular rug, attentively peering toward her. The mouse is on the yellow nightstand, also on hindquarters, peering into the red bowl of mush).

And goodnight to the old lady whispering "hush"

Page 26:
(Image: As described above)

No text

Page 27:
(Image: The following two-page spread departs from convention: while "Goodnight stars" and "Goodnight air" are in black sans-serif font on white background, justified to the left of each of their respective pages, as previously seen on (similarly) greyscale pages where objects — or nothing — have been isolated, the white "nothing" that the text floats in is arrested. A grey starry sky covers the top two-thirds of the two-page spread, demarcated as a waving or undulating volume with three humps, abutting the white space of "nothing." White stars of three, four, five, six, and once seven points join dots and smudges of white against the grey sky. Where the sky meets the white field of nothing at the bottom of the page, its grey slightly darkens; and some of the pointed stars have faint grey triangular insets on their points. Otherwise, there is no suggestion of three dimensions; the picture plane is relatively flat).

Goodnight stars

Page 28:
(Image: as described above)

Goodnight air

Page 29:

(Image: In this, the final spread, we see the great green room for the second time in its entirety. The blue light with yellow shade on the bedstead has been turned off. The room is illuminated by the blue sky and full moon; the glow of the fire in the fireplace, and the illuminated yellow windows of the little toy house. All other colours in the room are deeply tinted versions of what was first depicted. The text, “Goodnight noises everywhere”, is in a purple field in the bottom right corner of the two-page picture plane.

The bunny is under the covers, eyes closed. The white and black kittens lay on the yellow rocking chair; both the old lady whispering “hush” and knitting are not in the room. The mouse sits on the window sill of the window to the right. It appears to be gazing at the moon. The moon is now bisected by the second muntin of the left window.

The clocks both read 8:10).

Page 30

(Image: As described above).

Goodnight noises everywhere

Spiral Three: *Goodnight Moon* (Images)

"I like the rabbit, he has real sleepyness."
"Yes, but I'm worried about the yarn. It loses real personality and softness."
— As reported by Bruce Bliven Jr., in *Life Magazine,* 1946.

Prelude

Goodnight Moon was written in the 'here-and-now' mode of storytelling developed at the Bank Street School. It traces the immediate surrounds of a bunny's bedroom as the book and reader wish 'goodnight' to objects in the Great Green Room. Leonard Marcus, writing on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the book's publication, describes this mode of storytelling as one which is attuned to the "clocks and socks of daily living as revealed to [young children] by their wondrously acute five senses" (Marcus 1997, 5). What if the storying-worlding of *Goodnight Moon* is activating something that precedes and envelops the separation of the five senses, and sense-making, in the parsing out of experience?

This chapter will explore the images that co-compose, along with Margaret Wise Brown's words and dramaturgy, *Goodnight Moon*'s worlding operation — the act of creating a storying milieu — through Clement Hurd's (1908-1988) artwork, whilst gently challenging Marcus's claim that what Hurd is representing in his images is in fact a lure for acute and discretely *differentiated* "five senses." Beginning with a cadencing encounter with Gertrude Stein and her essay 'Pictures' from her Lectures in America tour, it will show that the images of *Goodnight Moon*, made by Clement Hurd in collaborative dialogue with Margaret Wise Brown — whose aim was to appeal to "all five senses" in her writing — is a diagramming technique for creating a semblance of the world through the amodal *as such*. (*Refrain from Spiral Two*:) The amodal is the direct perception of what happens between the senses, in no one mode. It is an acknowledgement that sense-presentation is cross-modal, and it is in the separating-out that the field of sense is reduced and particularized. "Five year old children, [Wise Brown] maintains, reach a peak of sensory awareness and she therefore likes the challenge of writing for them. After five, she says, the average child's perception, especially in touch, taste, and smell, begin to dull. 'Once in a while,' Miss Brown says, 'a five-year-old retains his awareness and then he becomes either a painter, a writer, or a poet'" (Bliven Jr. 1946, 63).

Before the differentiation of the senses is the event-in-waiting of the storybook itself. The poem that led to the textual component of *Goodnight Moon* began as a patterning technique: its first iteration was in a textbook, in a much shorter version. Amy Gary writes that Wise Brown composed a teacher's manual to go along with the poem, which encouraged the teacher and teacher's aid to ask students to "identify their own patterns" (Gary and King 2022). Marcus contradicts this account of the writing of *Goodnight Moon*, however, writing that Brown "dreamt" the book in 1945, and wrote it the next morning: "In one of those apparently effortless creative

acts that comes of a lifetime of preparation, Brown set down the text of *Goodnight Moon* in a nearly finished form on awaking," initially calling the book *Goodnight Room* (Marcus 1997, 13).

Whether developed over time or written in a waking burst of inspiration, that practice of creating rhythm and pattern by hailing objects in a room, and the technique of saying 'goodnight' to them, was one that Wise Brown carried from childhood, according to her sister. That this rhythmic hailing was always at the base of the text of *Goodnight Moon* is a fact that both authors seem to agree upon: "In an early typescript Brown experimented with recreating several text lines in the manner of a musical refrain. She also considered — and thought better of — breaking the magical spell of 'goodnights' with a silly-sounding throwaway ending: 'Goodnight cucumber/goodnight fly'" (ibid., 14).

It's important for the success of the work that this direction was not chosen; in her poetry for adults, Wise Brown was known to be sweet and silly to the point of saccharine and cliché, a quality that frustrated her to no end, as she strove to make a name for herself outside of children's literature.

Like Margaret Wise Brown, Clement Hurd seems to have (nominally) found his success in the eyes of children more than those of adults. Wise Brown first alighted upon the young illustrator upon his return to the United States after having spent two years in Paris, where he studied with Fernand Léger at the Académie Moderne. "From Léger," Marcus notes, Hurd "learned important lessons in pictorial design, developing a graphic approach to form and colour that was to serve him well as an illustrator" (Marcus 1999, 91). Through Léger, Hurd "discovered the vibrant immediacy of flat-painted primary and secondary colours, and developed a boldly simplified approach to composition and form" (Marcus 1997, 9).

Visiting Connecticut in the mid-late 30s, Wise Brown was enticed by a series of studies for murals at a friend's apartment, including one "semi-abstraction" of a fantastical sea monster for the ceiling of a bathhouse ceiling entitled *Perils of the Sea*. She sought out the artist, Clement Hurd, in order to add to him to a growing roster of talented illustrators for both her own books and those of others. As with Brown, who had never intended to become an 'author for children,' Hurd had set his mind to painting and scenic design, though his works from this era seem to have been largely commissioned by individuals in the circles of his wealthy family, and are mostly unknown today (Marcus 1999, 91). By the time of his passing, however, Hurd had left a remarkable legacy, having illustrated nearly 100 books for children, and has become known as a respected — even legendary — 'illustrator for children.'

1: Introducing the *Chevêtre*

And so, we have a Great Green Room. In the interlude preceding this chapter, *Goodnight Moon*: Images, I have described at length the images, vignettes, and overall appearance of the pictures as they are presented in the pages of the storybook *Goodnight Moon*. In a way, despite the necessity of staying with the work, this practice of slow noticing is an exercise in futility: the pictures are

remarkable in and of themselves. Nevertheless, the effort of *tracing* the images may yield further, unexpected result. Erin Manning writes:

> A tracing is not an account of a site, or of a displacement, as though it could reveal something staid and final about a person or a situation. *A tracing, an errant line, is the amalgamation of zones of intensity through which something in excess of a subject or a site emerges.* This is what Deligny discovers in his work with autistics. In palimpsest, the tracings reveal not an interiority but a set of conditions through which a world is momentarily held up. *Chevêtres* are the concept Deligny invents to name this holding up, fostering, with the concept, a certain sense of a *truss of existence* (Manning 2025, 122, emphasis added).

'Slow noticing' is often seen as a way to validate and authorize an image, forcing, I believe, a separating-out (in the form of object and subject) which is antithetical to this project. What I mean when I claim that there is a futile aspect to the work of slow noticing is that to take these descriptions at face value and as a 'mere' description, and in doing so to attempt at a textual reproduction of the work, would be to suggest that what this project believes in is the valourization of the work through its representation, and more specifically, the capacity of 'thick description' to get at the 'meaning' of the work. From there, this logic continues, the next step would be to launch into a laboured taxonomic exercise of suturing an idea of the self — in this case, *my*self as *the* child reading the work, inhabiting the role of reading and being read to.

The problem with this effort at reproduction is that no such reality exists for me, or I believe, is neatly contained within the work itself. Rather, the task at hand is to engage with the worlding operation that is initiated by the images of the book itself, and the tracings of experience that these images leave, given by the open-ended architecting by the book's *chevêtres*. *Chevêtres,* in Manning's project, accompany the "errant lines" of the shape of languaging of autistic expression; with existence, they are "the reminder that the shape things take matters. This is not about form per se, it is about the trace the shape of experience leaves behind. How it worlds" (Manning 2025, 5).

Finding the *chevêtres* of *Goodnight Moon*'s images through this tracing exercise is how we might best appreciate the significance of the work. The tracings are tricky: the images produced by Clement Hurd are uncanny, by which I mean that they do not make *sense*, if 'sense' is defined as perception that is considered to be (narratively) ordered before experience — 'straight time.[13]' These images create a milieu from which to activate experience that, like Deligny and Manning's *chevêtres*, are a kind of cartographic expression which launches *Goodnight Moon's* open-ended storying capacity. As with the problem with slow noticing, it is impossible to trace all of the work's edges exhaustively, because the multiplicity architected by these *chevêtres* and their edges can

[13] Of Margaret Wise Brown's own relation to time, it is notable that Hurd said that Brown was "always skeptical of what she called 'mysterious clock time'" in relation to her own creative forces (Hurd 1983, 560).

never be accounted for as a discreet totality. These errant lines, and the consistency that they have gained in this architecting operation, Manning continues, "are not without direction. They have momentum, and they are made of constraints. They emerge in the decisiveness of a context, in a situation. In this way, they are both absolutely singular *and* they carry the inheritances of worlds already in the making" (ibid., 5). So, in pursuit of the errant lines, the methodology that this spiral will employ will be allied to the valuation of *chevêtres* forged by a thick *inscription,* and by the decisiveness of this storybook's worlding operation.

2. Breaking up with "the romanticism of connection"

Goodnight Moon has many aspects to it that carry near-mythological histories: The green paint of the walls represents a 'Spanish scheme' that Wise Brown saw in a friend's house, and had painted in her own. The shape and appearance of the fireplace replicates one that was in Wise Brown's own home, Cobble Court, a ramshackle clapboard house in the courtyard of another building in New York City's upper east side, where Hurd first drafted the images for the book. Elements throughout might have been sourced from earlier artist's studies of objects in a room, or from Clement Hurd's own domicile.

While anybody might enjoy the simple pleasure of resemblance, Stein reminds us, "[t]he relation between the oil painting and the thing painted [is] really nobody's business. It could be the oil painting's business but actually for the purpose of the oil painting after the oil painting was painted it was not the oil painting's business and so it was nobody's business" (ibid., 237). This is the "life of and for itself of the oil painting" (ibid., 237). Perhaps these domestic items and flourishes, though they might possess narrative interest, remain "nobody's business." In her lecture "Pictures," Gertrude Stein uses the example of oil painting to explore how an image is made, and how that image is separate from the environment from which it was produced. She speaks of how oil paintings hold her attention more than any other form of artwork. She asks how a thing represented, which does not look like its source material, gives her pleasure, noting that regardless of the artist's *intent*, and whether or not that intent is successful, to represent a person, object, or place faithfully is of little importance to her; to the contrary, the relation between the artist's 'intent' and the final artwork "really makes no difference, the fact remains that for me it has achieved an existence in and for itself, it exists on as being an oil painting on a flat surface and it has its own life and like it or not there it is and I can look at it and it does hold my attention" (Stein 1998, 225). In its presence, the painting shrugs off actual objects in order to *diagram* a specious present*,* and with it, the capacity to affect and be affected.

What is a diagram, and what is meant by the suggestion that a painting can 'diagram the specious present'? How might we understand the images which comprise *Goodnight Moon* as diagrammatic, both as the pages turn and also as a collective whole? Stein's position is that the work does not justify itself by citing its connections; for source objects, images, or concepts do not explain the artfulness of the work. It is its diagrams that give force to their form. As a form-giving force, how might we account for the use of a diagram as something that might be deployed

in multiplicity, due to the fact of these images' seriality? A problem that we will continue to encounter throughout this chapter is that the work — the text and images, the performance and recitation of *Goodnight Moon* — is *serial.* What I mean is that not only are the images represented within the book's pages not 'original' in the sense that they are reproductions; they are also a result of a series of preparatory studies, mockups, revisions and negotiations. These data points are its inheritances; they are real and so they *matter.* But so, too, are they an artificial isolation from a larger milieu, mere strata in a broader event-context.

In this spiral, I will work with two definitions of a diagram: I will start by introducing Deleuze's definition, as developed in his lectures from the Spring of 1981 on the subject of painting at the Experimental University of Saint-Denis, and in his monograph on the artist Francis Bacon (1981/2002) as an orientation of the forces of creative chaos into a singular work of art. As this survey of the images of *Goodnight Moon* continues to rove, I will also work with Brian Massumi's concept of a "technique of existence" as a meta-modelling of forces of potential, developed and expanded from Deleuze's, in his book *Semblance and Event* (2011).

Throughout this thesis, I have been at pains to withhold an evaluation of the success of *Goodnight Moon* from the formal fields of study, taste, authorization, or the notion that an 'educated eye' might knowingly shed light on the work's ongoing success. As with Deleuze and his prolonged encounter with Francis Bacon, the aim is not to authorize an already exemplary work, but to encounter this specific work with curiosity, sidling alongside its storying-worlding operation in order to understand what makes the work *work*. In the remainder of this spiralling foray into the pictorial facts that compose *Goodnight Moon*, I will explore Susanne Langer's concept of the production of a semblance in the work of art. How is semblance brought to the fore of an artwork as it worlds? Here, Massumi's diagram — as a "technique of existence" — builds upon Deleuze's notion that a diagram is, in essence, the modulation of analogous forces aiming toward the production of a Figure. "A diagram is the matrix of modulation. It's the modulator just as code is the matrix of articulation" (Deleuze 2025, 137).

The aim of building and deploying a definition of a diagram is several-fold. The concept of the diagram is a way to think about how an artwork exists in experience for itself, and within the local relations of its worlding operation. In turn, thinking about how a diagram expresses itself in a work of art is a way to account for the work outside of biography or as an event of composition as a material and phenomenological exercise. Here, by emphasizing the diagram rather than compositional technique, we might come to understand how *Goodnight Moon*, as with any great work of art, is a modulation of a field of (given) forces, channelled into an expressive event, thereby challenging the notion that what an artwork accomplishes is a mere 'representation' of its subject.

Perhaps most importantly, the diagram provides a means to *value* a work as a processual event. Taken as a processual event, the valuation of a work is not beholden to the discursive fields of its contemporaneous or contemporary concerns, so much as it is afforded the possibility to self-

account in a manner that is generative and expansive, rather than reducible to categorical form or discipline. In other words, a diagram takes a work of art and its milieu with a hypothetical sympathy; by which I mean that this mode of study takes a work of art as a worlding operation that is generative of *more world*. It eschews the 'romanticism of connection,' the second-order event which I describe in Spiral One as the "narrative simplification and overlay of a complex processual event coming-to-expression, without the mass of tensions, contradictions, deaths and births of a process in-formation," in order to ingather the propositional force of the *otherwise*.

3. Sweeping away the clichés

For Deleuze, the diagram is the second of three stages establishing, in the case of a painter (or artistic process more generally) the third stage: the 'pictorial fact.' The first stage in the construction of an image has begun before the vehicle for expression (paint) has met framing device (canvas, paper, or any other device meant to hold the work of art). This phase is then ignited by a catastrophe or germinal chaos where, according to Deleuze, the initial task of the diagram is to enter this chaos and sweep away all possibility of cliché: the 'pictorial givens.' This 'chaos-catastrophe' is the moment when the world is wide open and absolute potential reigns, before a work has even begun. Thus, the first role of the diagram — named and dated, as in, the "Hurd 1946-7 Diagram" — is to "intervene," to "scramble, erase, or wash away the cliché so that the painting might emerge" (Deleuze and Lapoujade 2025, 40).

What are the clichés that the *Goodnight Moon* diagram swept away in the making of the Great Green Room? It is not the aim of this thesis to project the mind's eye back to the time of its creation, in order to identify aesthetic trends and images that his work differentiates itself from; but in Deleuze's citation of Bacon's 'two dangers' in painting, we might gain some insight into what makes *Goodnight Moon* exemplary of a successful diagramming operation *outside* of historical situation. For Deleuze, and in accordance with Baudelaire, the dangers that he identifies in painting are as follows: "one danger is illustration, and the other, even worse, is narration" (ibid., 45). Narration and illustration, he writes, are both forms of figuration. To put it in my own words, figuration in art tells *about* itself, rather than *acquainting* the work with its world, pace James. "The struggle against cliché," Deleuze continues, "is the struggle against any narrative and figurative reference" (ibid.).

The role of the diagram is to "establish a locus of forces such that the form will emerge from it as a pictorial fact, that is, as a deformed form, in relation to a force. Henceforth, deformation of the pictorial form will make the nonvisible force visible" (ibid., 49). At this point, the reader might fairly protest that if a cliché is to be measured by the figurative givens in an artist's work, then a storybook for children might be the last place where one might identify evidence of a diagrammatic operation generating a work of art: the painter enters into a compositional relation. If operational, the diagram works to sweep away the clichés in the artworking-milieu, revealing the invisible whilst opening its force-to-form to the outside.

Perhaps Hurd's struggle against the clichés of the fairytale is evidenced by the diagram at work *in* his work. According to Leonard Marcus, Hurd worked on the illustrations for *Goodnight Moon* for the better part of a year. In keeping with the Bank Street's seen-and-heard pedagogy, he wrote to Margaret Wise Brown and her publisher Ursula Nordstrom about his progress with the work in March of 1947, having struggled with whether to depict both the 'old lady whispering hush' and the young ward sitting in the bed as human or animal (in one case study, the young bunny is as a Black child, unusual for the time). Settling on bunnies at the two women's insistence, Hurd reported, "[t]he bunny is younger and the old lady is lovable if not 'fairy story,'" — and significantly — that "[o]ne reason I can't get the fairy story feeling is because I don't really like [fairy tales] and think of all of the old ladies [in them] as witches" (Hurd quoted in Marcus 1997, 20).

No witches, or old ladies, or pictures of children, then. Beyond the absence of the figurative representation by way of pictorial givens, how do we think-feel the existence of the diagrammatic operation of *Goodnight Moon's* images? Beyond the general consensus that this work is a masterpiece of children's literature, I advance two preliminary, but interrelated pieces of evidence: first, *Goodnight Moon*'s sales were sluggish compared to Wise Brown's other works in the first five years of its publication, but since then, it has experienced an exponential growth exceeding any of her other titles (in the neighbourhood of 50 million copies today). This suggests that the book eschewed faddish clichés in the world of children's book publishing, which would be marked by bombastic sales (considering its near-celebrity author) followed by a precipitous drop: a flash-in-the-pan sales event, should the flash happen at all. Second, *Goodnight Moon* is polarizing. Many people find the work creepy, especially when introduced to it as adults, outside of established rituals or the wonder of a child. I believe that unease is evidence of the catastrophe — the "locus of forces" — pushing insistently toward a pictorial fact. The relation between these forces coming-to-expression are the preliminary *chevêtres* of this spiral's tracings, harnessed by the book's storying operation. The result of the diagramming operation, The Hurd 1946-7 diagram, is a deformed and singular expression: the pictorial fact itself.

4. Immanent Critique and the Valuation of a Picture

A measure of a master-piece is its capacity to act as an ongoing lure for feeling. Under Wise Brown's wing, Marcus humorously recounts Clement Hurd's first encounters with children-as-critics. The publisher Scott, an upstart publishing house that grew out of the Bank Street School and its experiments, with whom Wise Brown worked as an editorial eye as well as author, produced their first collaborative project, *Bumble Bugs and Elephants* in 1938. As such, "[t]he artist soon learned that illustrating picture books, at least a picture book for Scott, involved more than producing a sequence of paintings in one's studio. The art, like the text, had to be tested on actual children" (Marcus 1999, 92). What ensued was a form of immanent critique that is innate to the world as experienced by *a* child.

> The classroom teacher instructed the visitor to arrange his paintings on the floor and step back while the children examined them. The waiting period that followed was unnerving. When the children finally dispersed with what seemed like a killing indifference to the work laid before them, Hurd's heart sank. The teacher's cheerful verdict soon revived him. 'Congratulations!' she said. 'You have held their attention for five minutes! I timed them with my watch.' Here was a novel measure of artistic achievement, one for which neither Yale nor Paris had prepared him. Hurd modestly accepted the accolade, collected his pictures and his hat, and strode out the door (Marcus 1999, 92).

I suspect that what the young test audience detected in Hurd's work was not merely 'pictures,' but great works of art expressing a *becoming-child of the world.* Not yet acculturated in the practice of critique and its distancing operation, nor the separation of the senses that this operation requires, their sustained encounter with the work was a valuation by way of an immanent critique. It is from the idea of holding that immanent critique — engaging with the work from *within* the work — that this cleaves. To this end, perhaps Louise Seaman Bechtel put it best when, describing Margaret Wise Brown's most frequent collaborators, she wrote that Hurd had "the power to make the present world both real and touched with magic," possessing a "special understanding of small children" (Bechtel 1958, 182).

Evidence of a generative diagramming operation — the emergence of a pictorial fact in excess of a mere figuration or figurative reference — is also a key component of Stein's theory of what makes a Picture successful. In her lecture it becomes clear that an artwork's capacity to "hold attention" is paramount to its success as a work, regardless of whether it is figural or abstract, or "high" or "low" art (from masterpieces to sign paintings)… as long, in her case, as it was painted in oil — the medium for her that best expressed "vitality" (Stein 1998, 226).[14] A picture, as with *Man with a Hoe* by Millet (1860-1862), provokes expression: Stein shows that a painting is often so powerful as to dwarf the emotional response of the "real thing." Her encounters in paintings with quotidian and epic scenes alike — men farming in fields with hoes, and depictions of the Battle of Waterloo — dwarf later experiences of those same objects and environments "in real life." The object of these paintings, and her appreciation of them, is clearly their *capacity to communicate life in excess of representation*. For this reason, the artists' (hypothetical) desire for exactitude through representational form is of little importance for her; in fact, in cases where the effort at representation has been too "real," as with the work of Velaquez or Cazin, and verisimilitude has been so *achieved,* the work loses its capacity to delight. In Cazin, she found that the fields of wheat presented were so lifelike that she had difficulty discerning which was more

[14] This aspect of Stein's argument requires some historical context: Acrylic paints, developed in the 1930s in Germany, were not taken up by artists until the 1950s. Stein was likely contrasting an artist's use of oil to the use of watercolour or ink. (https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/a/acrylic-paint).

"real": the field depicted, or the painting. Similarly, Italian flowers in Botticelli's rendering are so lifelike as to become "artificial" (ibid., 231). The beholder becomes discouraged, she writes, because though at first they have been "confirmed in [their] feeling about a field of wheat" — or Italian countryside — "blowing in the wind and then gradually one is less pleased and at last one is discouraged. One does not like to be mixed in one's mind as to which looks most like something at which one is looking the thing or the painting" (ibid., 229-230). In other words, facsimile is not the aim of a painting. There is a careful distinction here between that which exists as mere likeness, even approaching the life-like, and that which carries a vitality expressing the singularity of experience of and for itself.

When Margaret Wise Brown sent her copy of the *Goodnight Moon* manuscript to Clement Hurd, she attached to it a "reproduction of Goya's *Boy in Red* [1787-1788] pasted on the cover for inspiration" (Marcus 1997, 17). The oil painting, otherwise known as *Manuel Osorio Manrique de Zúñiga,* is of a young boy with blunt bangs and curly hair, wearing a red jumper with a white frilled collar and luminescent silver sash. He is holding a white string that falls to attach to a black magpie on the ground in front of him, appearing to pick up a note (Goya's calling card) in its beak. Behind the bird crouch three cats, transfixed; while to the boy's left rests a sage-coloured birdcage filled with smaller finches. Along with it exist lesser-remarked portraits by the same artist of immediate members of the Altamira family.

What about Goya's painting inspired Wise Brown to affix a copy of it to her manuscript, to be delivered to Hurd? Formally, it is a striking image: The boy's gaze is directed at the viewer, soft but wide-eyed, wondering. The background is muddled, indistinct; literally foregrounding and separating out the subjects of the painting. The red pops, immediately luring the eye, which meet those of the young prince, beseeching. The menagerie of pets is charming and amusing. The painting possesses a feeling of *vitality* unmatched by the other (albeit) striking images in the series. It also, as this description suggests, has a similar degree of colour saturation, and with it, visual immediacy.

Perhaps Deleuze's own take on Velazquez might help us to understand what connects *Boy in Red* with the Great Green Room. Unlike Stein, who finds that the degree of verisimilitude depicted in Velazquez to be so off-putting as to render the work "artificial" or confusing, Deleuze identifies in the same artist, as well as in the work of Michelangelo and Francis Bacon (amongst others), a Mannerist style where the figures might be read as so expressive as to be considered "effeminate" or "homosexual." This inference, however, he says is a misattribution of the artwork's "artificial character of attitudes and postures," which are themselves "tiny provocations of the painter" whose aim is to get "rid of representation to cause *presence* to emerge" (Deleuze in Lapoujade 2025, 80-81, emphasis added). Here, where Stein sees facsimile, Deleuze sees presence. Far from denying the sexuality of the creator, or even the presence of a certain sexualized hand in the resulting work, this "tiny provocation" serves to say "this is not what you think" of the narrative content of the work (ibid.).

Though Michelangelo and Bacon were both famously (what we would now call) queer, this argument should not be mistaken for identifying the other artists mentioned as queer themselves — from Velazquez down to Hurd. What *is* being suggested here is that each of these artists employs a diagram that sweeps away the givens of cliché, narrative form, and any other apparent fact of pictorial conduct in order to produce a pictorial fact through the imposition of a flourish, a *manner* of presentation that suggests an extra-presence (what Massumi will call an 'extra-being'). The work itself bears the trace of the diagrammatic operation of wresting singularity in the form of pictorial fact from the chaos-catastrophe, bringing forces that have the power to deform the pictorial given to light. And, a certain *manner* in the figural elements of the works, a manner that makes the forces in the decomposition of stable form evident, is in evidence across these examples.

The excess of representation that Stein speaks of that makes a picture *interesting*, then, really is not so far from Deleuze's pictorial fact. What I am suggesting is that when Margaret Wise Brown affixed a copy of Goya's *Boy in Red* to the manuscript of *Goodnight Moon*, it was as a guidance toward the production of a series of images that would express a vitality in excess of the clichés and pictorial givens contained in most picture books for children. What she was asking Hurd to accomplish in the accompaniment of her words was to throw the figural given to the wayside, in the creation of an exemplary childing-worlding event.

5. The Force in the Figure

Returning to Stein and paintings: The simple appearance of the "real" is not what is merely at stake, here: so too is whether the *feeling* of the work cleaves too close to the original form. The 'real' is a difficult word to activate in the context of process vocabulary: for example, the virtual is real but not actual. In the case of William James' radical empiricism, "everything that is experienced is real in some way and […] everything real is in some way experienced" (Massumi 2011, 4). In the case of Stein's use of the term, whose thinking, as I have shown, is closely allied to James and Whitehead, one can assume that she shared their understanding; Meyer illustrates the point well: "As Stein observed in a notebook entry written around the time she completed *The Making of Americans,* the 'only way to unconventionalize is by the power of experiencing'; and the only way to *realize* the conjunctive relations of her liquid writing is to approach it in the spirit of radical empiricism in which it was composed (Stein Notebook M, p. 26)" (Meyer 2001, 28).

Stein's use of the term 'real' here can then be understood to be separate from reality composed of conjunctive and disjunctive relations; 'real' used as a pejorative would be closer to a description of an art object as overdetermined, thereby ossifying its capacity for relation — in a way, making the work *less* real in its abstract potential. In process philosophy, "[c]onjunctive and disjunctive relations both concern change. For [James'] radical empiricism, they are both real and immediately experienced" (Massumi 2011, 4). In Whitehead, as I have discussed in the previous chapter, the world of 'Appearance' is a mode of perception unique to complex organisms, that selects-out certain aspects of experience from 'Reality' for self-presentation. "For Whitehead," Manning writes, "Reality is the welter of experience unparsed. Appearance is what stands out. The call is to

always think these together and to attune to how their togetherness resonates in contrast" (Manning 2020, 103). Another way to put this might be to suggest that Stein's use of the term 'real,' used as a pejorative, is allied to Whitehead's 'fallacy of misplaced concreteness,' the misattribution of abstract potential onto a concrete object. In the "'fallacy of misplaced concreteness,' the sense of concreteness that actually inheres in the experience is falsely attributed to the abstractions derived from it, *consciousness* and *content*" (Whitehead 1963, p. 74-75, in Meyer 2001, 27).

Of the first picture that Stein bought by an American painter named Shilling, of an American landscape, she expresses eventual disillusionment. In it, she sought a sense of "movement," being as it was a painting of American landscape and American life; but her growing disappointment with the work came with the recognition that, without quite naming it, in fact her *nostalgia* for the feeling of movement, which she associates with an American mode of being, has been represented by the work so faithfully that she has trouble distinguishing what came first, that which is being represented or the representation itself:

> […] I wanted [the painting] because it looked like any piece of American country and the sky was high and there was a cloud and it looked like something in movement and I remember very well what it was like, and then again it bothered me because after all which did I like most the thing seen or the thing painted and what was a thing in movement. I began to be almost consciously bothered (Stein 1998, 230).

Mistrusting her own motivations for her initial attraction to the work, what Stein is identifying here is her attraction to a simple figuration, rather than the singularity of the work itself. Later, she will note that "[a] resemblance is always a pleasurable sensation and so a resemblance is almost always there"; but it is always only "historical," looking backwards to established events and facts (Stein 1998, 237).

Appearance and Reality are not in the human, by Whitehead's account: they are in the event. "Whitehead emphasizes that what *makes* sense are not the sensa themselves but *how* Appearance and Reality co-compose to activate a felt influx of otherness of experience. This felt influx is *in the relation*: otherness is not the subject external to the occasion of experience but the way the experience becomes what it is" (Manning 2020, 106, emphasis in original). What Stein is identifying as missing, here, is the experience of *contrast* as defined by the work's capacity to lure its outside, carrying Reality along with it. "Events as they unfold carry the germs of what cam before through the intensity of this force, gauging their capacity to make a difference in the world based on the degree to which contrast expresses itself" (Manning 2020, 107). Lacking a processual charge, Stein's 'real' is dead on arrival.

Like Deleuze, what Stein is *not* arguing against is the figur*al* in favour of a false dichotomy between so-called abstraction and realism: the difference being that the figural represents for Deleuze a 'middle path' between expressionist art, where the diagram (might) overtake the work, and in doing so drag the chaos-catastrophe into it; or Abstract art, where the applied *code* of the artist eliminates the germ of expression emerging from the chaos-catastrophe altogether, stifling

the diagram. In the middle path, what emerges from the diagrammatic process is a Figure, "not a reproduction, it's an image without resemblance" (Deleuze and Lapoujade 2025, 90).

It would be a mistake to equate the emergence of the Figure in art as a matter of veracity of representation. The "unreal" is a consideration for Stein, as well: "I liked Titians because they did not move at all and as they did not move they were noble. The Velasquez bothered me as I say because like the Cazins of my youth they were too real and yet they were not real enough to be real and not unreal enough to be unreal" (Stein 1998, 233). The delight of the unreal, for Stein, can be found in the *trompe l'oeil* created by painted columns in Rome, where she became fixated on marble and granite columns, of which every other was real stone, and in the interval, every other painted so as to *appear* to be real. Here, an initial dislike of marble thought to be 'real' becomes a pleasurable experience upon the discovery that some columns were 'unreal;' the resulting play with deception leading to a "contentment of the eye" (ibid., 232). It is not the real or unreal, or depictions of movement or stillness which Stein ultimately prizes; but the experience of a painting being *really* there, *really all there is*. A Figure; as in, The Great Green Room.

There is an absence, here, in the *as-if* acting as a tool to hold the compossibility of actual and virtual, here and there, together: a concept explored in the first spiral which again has purchase in Stein's problem of the making of an image. In order for the forces in the making of a work to congregate and express through a 'work of art,' the diagram must be deployed and activated. "It is as if, in the midst of the figurative and probabilistic givens, a *catastrophe* overcame the canvas" (Deleuze 2003, 82, emphasis in original).

When approaching a work of Cézanne, the first of her exemplary artists, Stein relates that it takes time to bring her whole body to the work. She will go on to note that 'familiarity' with the medium is a practice that allows one to see *through* the medium. "The landscape looked like a landscape that is to say what is yellow in the landscape looked yellow in the oil painting, and what was blue in the landscape looked blue in the oil painting and if it not there still was the oil painting, the oil painting by Cézanne" (Stein 1998, 235). Whether apples, people, chairs, or landscapes looked like themselves, "it all had nothing to do with anything because if they did not look like apples or chairs or landscape or people they *were* apples and chairs and landscape and people" (ibid., emphasis added).

Again, 'verisimilitude,' by which I mean reproduction with the aim of merely 'reporting' the 'real' should not be the aim of the painter. Of these subjects as they exist in the artwork itself, Stein continues,

> They were so entirely these things that they were not an oil painting and yet that is just what the Cézannes were they were an oil painting. They were so entirely an oil painting that it was all there whether they were finished, the paintings, or whether they were not finished. Finished or unfinished it always was what it looked like the very essence of an oil painting because everything was always there, really there (Stein 1998, 235).

Everything is in a painting by Cézanne, from the Figure of an apple outward, by the insistence of the *necessity* applied by his diagrammatic operation. Deleuze comes to a similar conclusion to

the one that Stein reaches: Of Cézanne's multiple versions of *The Bathers*, he writes that the painter "managed to make several figures coexist on the canvas *necessarily*, without telling any story;" and further, if Cézanne were *only* to paint as-if he were painting apples, then the "appleyness" that traverses his body of work is in and of itself a genuinely successful diagrammatic operation (Deleuze and Lapoujade 2025, 46). For Deleuze, the necessity of the deformation of the pictorial form at the base of the diagrammatic operation is its function of "mak[ing] the nonvisible force visible;" as such, "it is not incorrect to say that Cézanne's comprehension of apples would pretty much be the guiding light of his entire life's work" (ibid., 49).

In a picture book, the encounter between writer and artist is pronounced and unique. What Stein calls the painter's 'literary idea,' Deleuze would call the diagram. Of the artist's 'literary idea,' Stein writes that their object is to *express* movement through their work; not produce it in and of itself.

> A painter's literary idea always consists not in the action but in the *distortion of the form*. That could never be a writer's literary idea. Then a painter's idea of action always has to do with something else moving rather than the centre of the picture. This is quite the opposite of the writer's idea, everything else can be quiet, except the central thing which has to move. And because of all this a painter cannot really write and a writer cannot really paint, even fairly badly (Stein 1998, 243, emphasis added).

In Hurd's Great Green Room the objects hailed are brought to life, by both the skill of his diagrammatic operation and the interwoven nature of the call-and-response by their activation and encounter during their hailing, in the recitation/repetition during the nighttime ritual. For Stein, regardless of whether a lemon is the lemon depicted, regardless of whether the painting of a lemon is finished or unfinished, the mark of whether a work of art is working is whether it is *really there*, irrespective of its referents, it is both-and: *really* an oil painting; *really* a (-n apple-)lemon. Really there, there. *That* (apple-)lemon. *This* one. Thisness. "The bunny has real fuzziness." *Really there, really all there is.*

6. To Frame or Not to Frame

That the "bunny has real fuzziness" in *Goodnight Moon* is undoubtable. The softness is not merely a product of its unjoined and occasionally jumping lines; the feeling expressive of fuzziness results from Hurd's harnessing of the chaos-catastrophe to a something-extra effect. Nevertheless, the answer to the question of how *Goodnight Moon*'s diagram operates remains incomplete: it is not the bunny who gives force to the image's diagrammatic form, or the end result of his literary idea. As I have said, Stein's 'literary idea' is Deleuze's third way, the aim of which is to manage and deform the pictorial idea or cliché, and with it figuration, thereby producing a Figure through which the diagramming operation comes to expression. The Figure in question, here, is the Great Green Room.

In Cézanne, Deleuze connects the painter's *motif* to the diagram, arguing that they are essentially the same thing: each is made up of sensation and a frame. The diagram the "intertwining"

of these elements, he writes, buttressing one and other. "A sensation, or a point of view, is not enough to make a motif: the sensation, even a colouring sensation, is ephemeral and confused, lacking duration and clarity […] But the frame suffices even less: it is abstract. The geometry must be concrete or felt, and at the same time the sensation must be given duration and clarity" (Deleuze 2003, 92). After the sweeping away of the pictorial givens, the chaos-catastrophe has given rise to a "stubborn geometry" or "geologic lines;" in turn, the geometry of the frame that has been constituted immediately reenters the chaos-catastrophe "in order for colours" or colouring-sensation "to arise, for the earth to rise towards the sun" (ibid., 91).

Clement Hurd had a novel way to address the problem of how the framing of the storybook format stills the successful production of the Figure (in this case, of the Great Green Room) and its expression of the ever *of-itself* of the world's potential, ongoing. The initial concept of the storybook's layout — to confine all of the activities in the story to a single space, a "fabulous room" — was relayed to Hurd by Ursula Nordstrom, Harper Brothers' editor. Initial studies for the work exchanged by the artist, author, and publisher resulted in the *mere* serial repetition of the panoramic Figure of the Great Green Room, the room repeated one page after the next. However, it was Hurd, Marcus notes, who chose to modulate the perspectives in the Great Green Room, creating a "cinematic effect" that "subtly var[ied] the field of vision and scale from page to page, thereby gently but firmly guiding the reader through the great green room" (Marcus 1997, 20).

Rather than reject the idea of the frame, or sensation for its own sake, Deleuze is arguing that for an artist to produce an artwork— or in the (modified) words of Stein, get at the ever *of-itself* of the world's potential, ongoing — the work must harness the abstract nature of the frame *and* the colouring sensation in the passage beginning with the sweeping away of pictorial givens concluding in the establishment of a Figure. In this diagramming operation, the geometric frame, consisting of lines, volumes, textures and forms; and sensation, consisting of colour, temperature, and affects, are all alloyed to create enough heterogenetic resistance to their immediate collapse into entropy. In other words, the alloying diagrammatic operation generates a work that provides consistency to the ephemeral nature of a passing sensation, and commanding form to an abstract idea otherwise lacking material purchase. In the best case, the diagram or motif might buttress experience enough for the birth of a novel rhythmic refrain to take hold…

Deleuze argues (circa 1981) that contemporary artists are motivated by the rejection of the easel. Their diagrams and codes are direct responses to the problem of the figure/ground relationship that is bound up in that figurative/representational convention. With the removal of the frame, Mondrian, for example, will create a work that is "architectonic," creating a mural painting that will "become a division of its own surface, which must create its own relations with the divisions of the 'room' in which it will be hung" (Deleuze 2003, 88). Pollock and the like will create an 'all-over' diagram that extends beyond the frame as well, but will "centre the power of mechanical repetition elevated to intuition" (ibid.).

Stein will also problematize the frame, calling it a "troubling thing." Tied to resemblance — a simple pleasure that even a painter might find enjoyment in — her contention is that a work's relation to the frame bounds it to the frame. In turn, the work of art engages in an existential struggle to escape its binding, and only has a possible margin of success when it eschews resemblance, avoiding, as with Deleuze, the symbolic coding of the figurative, which presumably, the frame supercharges. To this end, an ornate frame at the Louvre is as perturbing to Stein as the pomp and circumstance of the Louvre itself: its gilt of authorization, read as "elegance," leads to a conflation of the work's decorative fenestration and the artwork itself. Her frustration at this conflation, she recounts, would lead to her dismissal (for a time) of painting altogether (Stein 1998, 233). In this setting, she finds that the gilt frame has stilled the work, trapping it. "The first hope a painter who really feels hopeful about painting is the hope that the painting will move, and that it will live outside the frame" (ibid., 241).

Stein argues that beyond representation, the subject of an oil painting is itself; and when it begins to refer to things outside of itself, it creates annoyance in the percipient. The frame exacerbates this by insisting on its differentiation from a context of its own making. "There it is the oil painting, in its frame, a thing in itself" (ibid., 242). In this way, whether it be a classical painting or a work of modern art, the *actual* conflict that the work experiences with the frame is one that happens on a virtual plane; for Stein reminds us that, even though a work of modern art aspires to never be in the frame; and a work from antiquity worships its frame; both escape their fram*ing* from time-to-time. Of a work of art, "[i]t must have its own life. And yet it may not move nor imitate movement, not really, nor must it stay still. It must not only be in its frame but it must not, only, be in its frame" (ibid., 242).

The result of Hurd's choice to vary the frame cannot be understated, because although tied to vision, vision itself is belated in the field of experience generated by the storying-wording operation of the turning pages of the book. By varying the field of experience as the pages turn, that same field dances along with the roving apperception of the prehending event, affording a quickening of the Figure through the variation of the architecting frame. In essence, this novel framing — the slight shifting of perspectival focus, the foregrounding and backgrounding between different objects and subjects between one plate and the next — are an essential aspect of *Goodnight Moon*'s *chevêtres,* which architect the Figure into a living event via the storybook's errant lines. *Like any great work of art, the frame can no longer be separated out. It is part of the milieu.*

7. Figural Rhythm

Nearly 50 years apart — and with significant artistic movements in between — Stein and Deleuze both struggle with how to account for the harnessing of a chaos-catastrophe in contemporary artistic work, whilst avoiding the pitfalls of representative and figurative capture by the myriad codes of artistic convention. Bacon's (and by way of Bacon, Deleuze's) solution to this problem is the technique of "uniting-separating" the Figure (initially) through the physical form of the

triptych, a technique which he subsequently deploys in the creation of individual works. This technique reigns-in the diagram without killing it, allowing singular "matters of fact" to express themselves without narrativizing, flattening, or romanticizing relations between them. How does Bacon achieve this? By harnessing the polyrhythms of figural expression in the service of the creation of a *series*. The triptych, in Bacon's paintings, is a "union that separates," the result of a diagrammatic process whereby the forces culminating in a figuration (the pictorial givens) are initially isolated and deformed.

Following this initial separating-out, the figurations are submitted to a *melodic "*force of coupling." The third movement, the triptych, is "is the separation of bodies in universal light and universal colour, which becomes the common fact of the Figures, their rhythmic being, the second 'matter of fact' or *the union that separates*" (Deleuze 2003, 70, emphasis added). In the separating-out (singularization) and re-establishing of relations *across* the figural forms, a final Figure emerges.

Isolation and deformation; Melodic coupling and reconstitution; Figural singularization and expression. *Goodnight Moon* can be read as a series in many ways, but to begin, its rhythms find purchase in Deleuze's triptych: the first element is in the book-form (*one book selected from the broader milieu*); the second diptych is in the dividing line between every open spread of pages (making *15 spreads* or 30 *single pages, architecting the environment*); and third, in a proliferation of series *further out and further in* from (*a book* plus *two pages* per spread multiplied by *15* spreads): a *storying-worlding event*.

Overlaid upon the first, a second and more significant polyrhythm in the formal presentation of the object that is the book *Goodnight Moon,* which is in fact an insistence upon the third triptych just described. Not a 'mere' book, *Goodnight Moon* is the relation between reader(s), author and illustrator, and environment: the superstructure of its overlayed ecologies. To return to the beginning of this spiral, these polyrhythms supersede the distancing operation that is a formal analysis of the images themselves, namely, the Figure which emerges in and from the images that is/are *Goodnight Moon* as a work of art.

To further explain: Deleuze identifies in the triptych three rhythms that co-compose to make a Figure. The Figure, then, is actually the product of the force-to-form produced by these polyrhythmic interweavings, which proliferate in series across the milieus of language, art, performance, etc. This seriality within an image or series of images offers a way to understand how Hurd's images work *across Goodnight Moon,* and despite their multiplicity, might nevertheless be read as *one* Figure comprised of a series of pictorial facts. The uniting-separating of these pictorial facts into one Figure creates a "distributive unity" which supersedes discreet pictorial events. In other words, the Great Green Room is the Figure of the work *Goodnight Moon,* and is enacted by a diagramming operation that amalgamates the pages of the storybook in its rhythmic procession of images, from text, to full colour, to black and white, and back again.

Barbara Bader, an important scholar of children's literature, wrote that Hurd's characteristic way of making images was to "set down the idea of things." In a manner similar to arguments advanced in previous spirals regarding the sometimes pejorative reception of Gertrude Stein's writing, Bader rejects the notion that to refer to a work as 'child-like' is a disparagement of a work or its author.

> Using flat forms and broad generalized outline, composing over a large area, hanging loose, Hurd worked then the way children think of working, setting down how things seem, the idea of things. Those who thought to discredit much modernist art by noting its resemblance to the work of children were right in their perception if wrong in their conclusion: the expressionists and fauves, particularly, borrowed the techniques of children's art deliberately, to recapture their spontaneity and oneness with the world. "Art does not reproduce the visible, it makes visible," said Klee. *But such work is analogous rather than imitative; and this is true of Hurd* although, later, it will not always be true of others (Bader 1976, 222, emphasis added, Klee quotation corrected).

Here, Bader is extolling the value of Hurd's images in the realm of children's literature as being expressive rather than imitative, and like this project, she is taking the work seriously in its capacity to create a Figural reality, deploying key devices used by the greats of modern art.

At this point, I would be remiss by not addressing the fact that Clement Hurd, having studied with the famed cubist, Fauvist, and 'grandfather of Pop Art' Fernand Léger, was undoubtedly influenced by the diagrams operational in the elder artist's work, with Hurd himself noting that the result of this tutelage was that his "colours were bold and simple" (Hurd 1983, 555). It is evident that there are many shared formal characteristics between the master and his pupil, though over a decade will pass between Hurd's study in Paris and the creation of the images of *Goodnight Moon.* In the intervening years, Hurd produced significant works, including with Gertrude Stein, for whom he illustrated *The World is Round* (1939). During his first collaboration with Wise Brown, *Bumble Bugs and Elephants* (1938), was when Hurd had his first encounter with young children and immanent critique, as described above; and *Runaway Bunny* (1942). The collaboration with Stein was the only piece of children's literature she published during her lifetime, and was the product of a match made by Margaret Wise Brown. In total, Margaret Wise Brown and Clement Hurd would collaborate on eight picture books, including two after Wise Brown's passing in 1953.

The question remains, however: what is the animating force of Hurd's diagram in *Goodnight Moon*, and how can it be evidenced? Rather than focus on Léger's aesthetic influences on Hurd, however, I am interested in reading Hurd's work alongside Stein and Deleuze's diagram as expressed uniquely in *Goodnight Moon.* Nevertheless, there is one additional biographical fact that might illuminate Hurd's unique diagram as a 'painter' (which all friends and colleagues referred to him as): In addition to making a living as a scenic painter in his earlier years, during the Second World War, Hurd was stationed in the South Pacific painting camouflage. How does his practice of painting camouflage bear upon *Goodnight Moon*'s diagramming operation?

It is interesting to think about how Hurd's training in scenic arts as much as his training under Léger might have informed his compositional technique in the creation of *Goodnight Moon,* not merely as a representation of Wise Brown's words, but as a sidling alongside her atmospheric poetics. It's uncanny that like Clement Hurd, before achieving success as a painter himself, Francis

Bacon made a living in interior design and window display, architecting environments in a similar manner. As with Stein's columns, and with other well-known artists — notably, Andy Warhol — both Hurd and Bacon honed their craft of both drafting *chevêtres* in their architectural surrounds, acknowledging the grounding of foreground and background, in the *really all there is* of the specious present.

8. Painting Analogies

"Painting is the analogical art par excellence. It is even the form through which analogy becomes a language, or finds its own language: by passing through the diagram" (Deleuze 2003, 95).

What is an analogous language expressed through painting, and what does it have do with the emergence of a Figure in a diagrammatic process? In order to answer this question, we must first understand what is meant by the term 'analogy': Deleuze writes that in art, an analogy can be either digital or analogue, corresponding to the code and the diagram. Digital analogy can be found in the form of analogy by similitude (isomorphic comparison), and analogy by likeness (as in, resemblance in the form of simile). It is important to note, here, that what Deleuze is *not* referring to is the 'digital' in terms of ones and zeros, or specifically to technology. In making the distinction between the analogue and the digital, what he is identifying in the digital is "the finger that counts. 'Digits' are the units that drop together visually the terms of opposition […] from this is derived a conception of binary choice that is opposed to random choice" (ibid., 84-85).

In digital analogy (and its subsets of analogy by similitude and analogy by likeness), what is *not* being created in the diagrammatic operation is a true and authored 'language' of painting, but the iteration of a pre-existing code, a passage through generalization. The examples he uses for analogy by code are illustration and telling stories (Deleuze 2025, 124-126).

On the other hand, *Analogue analogy* is analogy by way of resemblance, though it too can also be parsed into two categories, which are characterized by whether the resemblance is the producer, or the product of the analogy. In the former instance, resemblance "is the producer when the relations between the elements of one thing pass directly into the elements of another thing, which then becomes the image of the first, for example, the photograph, which captures the relations of light" (Deleuze 2003, 95). The resemblance reproduced in a photograph, Deleuze argues, is both codified and figurative, and as a result, it is difficult for the photograph to exceed its representational role; though the subject of a photograph may be transformed in many ways in its process of re-presentation, the resemblance nevertheless maintains the figuration of the original subject.

Aesthetic analogy is the ultimate form of analogy, and it is from this that painting becomes the "analogical art par excellence." Again, in the former kind of analogue analogy (analogy by resemblance), the relations of light between subject and photograph are "already coded" and therefor limited in their potential by the formal apparatus. Aesthetic analogy comes to being without formal resemblance: "in the absence of any code, the relations to be reproduced are instead

produced directly by completely different relations, creating a resemblance through nonresembling means" (Deleuze 2003, 94). This aesthetic resemblance is produced "'sensually,' through sensation" — and more specifically, through *modulation*. Writes Deleuze, "*it is perhaps the notion of modulation in general (and not similitude)* that will enable us to understand the nature of analogical language or the diagram" (ibid., 95, emphasis in original).

I return here to my argument that The Great Green Room is an expression of a successful diagramming operation. By shifting perceptual focus throughout the Great Green Room as the pages of the book turn, the Figure is architected by the *chevêtres* of the ever-so-slight variations in the field of perception. Here, the modulation is in full effect, shifting the perspectival orientation of the room, and on every other page, selecting out those objects (in black and white) in vignettes which act as ghostly projections — as-if they were dancing Figures on reflected, perpendicular surfaces, in the way that light shimmers off the surface of a pool of water at night, casting forms that dance to their own apparent rhythm across the volumes of surrounding trees.

The aesthetic analogies that are being produced by the modulation of perspectival focus as objects in the room shift with the frame, alongside the nearly imperceptible variation embodied by the quivering artist's hand, are elements that contribute to the force of Hurd's diagram. So, too, are those objects and entities within the room that vary deliberately from one frame to the next: kittens, the mouse, the old lady whispering 'hush,' the rolling fire, the passing moon, the hands on the clock shifting, the restless bunny on his bed, the dimming of the lights…

Before concluding with Stein and Deleuze, there remains a thread to pull to tie these questions together: What *else* is being modulated by the analogical force of Hurd's diagram? The aesthetic analogy is not necessarily only creative in its expression; it is also, at times, destructive, a participant in clearing the path of figurations and clichés in order to get to the Figure and the painting or artwork itself. Deleuze writes:

> As an analogical language, painting has three dimensions: the *planes*, the connection or junction of planes (primarily of the vertical plane and the horizontal plane), which replaces perspective; *colour*, the modulation of colour, which tends to suppress relations of value, chiaroscuro, and the contrast of shadow and light; and the *body*, the mass and declination of the body, which exceeds the organism and destroys the form-background relationship. There is a triple liberation here — of the body, of the planes, and of colour (for what enslaves colour is not only the contour but also the contrast of values). (Deleuze 2003, 96, emphasis in original).

It's hard to argue that the green walls and tomato-red floor of the Great Green Room eschew perspective altogether. The analogical language of the room's architecture is intact in a form, but for the fact that its architectonics explode the fourth wall occupied instead by the reader's gaze. Neither the ceiling (nor its colour) are ever revealed — they do not exist. Instead, the room is a stage, a launch-pad for a performance that is initiated once and initiated again with each turn of the page. Perspective, then, is superseded by the theatrical, the excess-over-itself of what would otherwise be an analogy of representation. Planes, here, are geometric colourfields and the virtual

continuation and interruption into the space of the 'real world' that appends itself to the storying operation of the book and its images. Similar aesthetic analogical architectures are notable in Bacon's paintings, where blocks of colour edge on to each other as meetings of perspectival force, more than form.

Colour modulates between full-colour and no-colour, technicoloured excess and disconnected grey-field. The impossible folding of the Great Green Room's architecture into two-dimensional pages — recto-verso — adds to the superimposition of values exceeding what can be represented through facsimile. Significantly, colour itself modulates in the objects and spaces depicted in *Goodnight Moon*: The Great Green Room shown on the front cover of the book is a *different* colour scheme than that which is contained within its pages (and those described above). The cover of the book shows an approximation of the same green walls and red floor as those shown within the book; but the characteristic yellow and green curtains are now orange and green; and here, the primary wall of the Great Green Room is shown (again) for the first and only time as if at an angle, rather than from a head-on, perspectively-impossible rectangular plane. Only the fireplace and its mantle offer any acknowledgement of contrast affected by light, their grey tones slightly darkened on the mantle's front and sides. (Two sides of the mantle: another impossibility, as the front of the fireplace remains unscathed by the darkening tones, implying an absence of direct light).

Finally, the body. There are many bodies here in various states of declination: the dramatically sloped back of the rocking chair, the crouching kitten about to pounce, the reclining bunny in his bed, the fire-rocker askew, the drying rack with legs crossed. The Great Green Room's body, the walls to the right and left of the picture plane spanning out (or leaning in) at impossible angles, shouldering the book's pages in sympathetic caress, as the book held is never itself completely flat. Against these walls, tables, chairs, bookcases, dollhouses, picture frames with pictures all leaning impossibly into the centre of the Great Green Room; which itself is held by a vertical visual line between the giant bullseye of a great circular grey rug, while the rug bounds the lower quadrant of the spread of the picture plane at the crosshairs of vertical and horizontal axes. The aesthetic analogy, the total creation of the form of the Great Green Room — the result of the Hurd 1947-48 diagram, the harnessing of forces through the storybook-worlding *chevêtres* or trusses of existence is finally beginning to emerge, here, in the spreading of the pages and the roving experiential feast that is the Great Green Room.

But one more element, alluded to above, remains to be explored. It is that same element that is the triple liberation of which Deleuze speaks: the liberation "of the body, of the planes, and of colour": the yellow and green curtains — sometimes orange and green — which flank the fireplace, with its blue clocks and blue urns, and gilded picture of the cow jumping over the moon.

Deleuze believes that Bacon, like Cézanne, was a master at elaborating painting as an analogical language. Although their differences are evident, both artists intuited that lines and colours might exist alongside one and other, because colour, as the tool of aesthetic analogy *par excellence*, creates room in the painting's milieu for even black and white to carry the *force* of

colour in its absence. What this means is that when Deleuze speaks of the body, planes, and colour of an aesthetic language reinventing the picture *in the transit from pictorial given to Figure*, colour plays an essential role in ferrying the process to fruition. Here, "the contour or outline can even have a separate existence, becoming the common limit of the armature and the body-mass, because the latter are no longer in a relationship of form to ground, but a relation of coexistence or proximity modulated by colour" (Deleuze 2003, 98).

The curtains in the Great Green Room, as with every other discreet object within it, are outlined in fine black lines, sometimes thicker, sometimes a little thinner, sometimes somewhat bulging a little, as-if the hand that made them had stuttered.

At each of the two window frames that flank the fireplace, clock, urns, and picture in a gilded frame within a picture, the curtains with their alternating green and yellow stripes gather, drape, and flow outward from their narrowest point in their near corners toward the outside of their respective frames. Here, triptychs abound: there are three main vertical pleats over three window planes; the curtains, as they fall to the floor and a final vertical (rather than diagonal) drape, bunch twice in their gathering and advance to the red floor. Though he is referring to the depth created in Cézanne's work by the artist's use of colours, when describing how Bacon achieves the same feat by different means he could well be referring to Clement Hurd:

> It is this type of depth that Bacon achieves, sometimes by joining the vertical and horizontal planes, […] and sometimes by merging them, as in the *malerish* period, where, for example, the verticals of the curtain cut through the horizontals of the blinds. In the same way [as with Cézanne], the treatment of colour not only passes through the modulated flat patches of colour (smooth planes [*méplats*]) that envelop the bodies, but also through the large surfaces or fields that imply axes, structures, or armatures that are perpendicular to the bodies: it is the whole modulation that changes nature (Deleuze 2003, 97).

The diagram is not a particular motif — a way of drawing bunnies that is characteristically Hurd — it is the modulation of the elements of the slanting of bodies, the meeting of planes, and the use of colour to shake off pictorial givens, in turn, creating new possibilities of fact. "Lines and colours are then able to constitute the Figure or the Fact, that is, to produce the new resemblance inside the visual whole, where the diagram must operate and be realized" (ibid., 98).

9. Further up and further in… Commanding Form

In the case of *Goodnight Moon* or any work of art meant to be experienced in seriality, which is nearly *all* art — with the reminder that experience is in the field — Susanne Langer's concept of how 'form' is defined and experienced in art is significant to this project. For Langer, a 'form' is not a stable object, but the shape of processes which continue to generate and secrete expression. For Langer, in the event of art, the "'commanding form' of the piece" is "its force of form across iterations" (Langer 1977 in Manning 2013, 139). The artwork co-composes a field of relations producing a "lure" for feeling, in its process of selecting itself out from the environmental surrounds for attention. The *commanding form* "is the virtual force of a composition's inherent

potential for recomposing. It is the intensive magnitude of the emergent co-expression of the composition in its serial reiteration" (ibid., 139).

Much like Gertrude Stein's ever *of-itself* of the world's potential, ongoing, Langer argues that (initially), "[i]t is not the percipient who discounts the surroundings, but the work of art which, if it is successful, detaches itself from the rest of the world; [the artist] merely sees it as it is presented to him" (Langer 1954, 45). For the commanding form of the work to activate, it cannot be overdetermined at its outset. The storying-worlding event of *Goodnight Moon* activates a hypothetical enjoyment of experience in the making. A work of art creates an "otherness from reality – the impression of an illusion enfolding the thing, action, statement, or flow of sound that constitutes the work" (ibid., 45): a semblance that does not determine itself in advance.

I think that Stein would have found much in Langer's philosophy of art to agree with, in her own belief that the subject of a work is its worlding operation. The worlding operation is not necessarily *comfortable*, but it is important. "Also that you do understand that what really annoys people that is anybody that is at all annoyed by an oil painting is not its being an oil painting, but the subject that is to say what it paints as an oil painting" (Stein 1998, 242). What the casual viewer finds 'annoying' is not the oil painting itself, which they accept as a general aesthetic category, nor the category of subject that the work depicts — whether the viewer has a preference for still lifes or abstract paintings or portraits — but by the fact that the subject of the painting is not one that they can reconcile with their general Categories of viewing (perception). Through its materiality, the painting asserts itself. If the diagram capacitates the deployment of a commanding form, it is likely to defy figurative expectation. This is because what is carried forward from an artwork is not its formal qualities or content, so much as how these elements act as *chevêtres* for further events expressive of feeling.

A way to illustrate this 'annoyance' is to consider the discomfort that one might feel when experiencing a work of art for the first time: the sense that something in the novel experiential event is unsettling. The body responds with a sense of unease, perhaps distaste, or tension — the feeling of wanting to look away, but being caught up in a web that one can't quite describe. Some will grow into the feeling's major form — inhabiting and becoming 'annoyed' — while others will 'stay with the trouble' (pace Haraway, 2016) to sidle alongside the feeling of initial friction. In the latter case, with that duration of occupying the specious present with experiential event, they will frictively come to generative co-constitution in the worlding operation underway. This feeling is the co-constitution of a new event of expression, architected by the commanding form of the work and the bodyings of subjects and worlds accompanying it for the ride.

I return to Stein's differentiation between the 'literary idea' of the artist and the 'literary idea of a writer: an artist's literary idea expresses movement from the art object's outside, whereas the writer focusses on the movement exhumed by the writing itself. For an artist, the idea is represented by the distortion of form. She notes that this distinction is more important for the audience of a work, than the artist themself. This distinction is important for "those who like to look at paintings and who like to know what an oil painting is and who like to know what bothers them in what an

oil painting is" (Stein 1998, 243). By situating the *importance* of the literary idea in the work as it worlds, Stein is sidestepping the notion that the 'idea' is in the mind of the artist, as opposed to that of its milieu. Similarly, Langer will argue that a mere concern to the aesthetic — an artist's 'literary idea' — "excit[es] us to nothing, a genuinely 'aesthetic' object, an experiential dead end, pure essence" (Langer 1954, 54). To the contrary, in Langer's theory of art, form is processual, a negotiation of many forces beyond the subjectivity of the artist.

Langer's distinction between the "aesthetic attitude" with which a work is apprehended from the "artistic value" of the work is similar to how Stein describes 'annoyance,' but this time, from the point of view of 'expertise.' Approaching a work of art, the informed appraisal of a privileged viewer – such as a connoisseur, curator, or otherwise-named expert – might correctly perceive a "rightness and necessity" contained in the work of art. On the other hand, a more naive (but no-less aware) spectator might perceive "only a peculiar air of 'otherness,' which has been variously described as 'strangeness,' 'semblance,' 'illusion,' 'transparency,' 'autonomy,' or 'self-sufficiency' (ibid., 45-46). The evaluation of 'good' or 'bad' taste as a result of knowledge (*-about*) might misdirect from a full apprehension of a work of art, and for its capacities of strangeness, or semblance, to operate. The reason for this is because the intuition of the latter viewer is less clouded by a self-identitification with 'expertise,' a distancing operation from the experience of the work's capacity to generate relation.

Every work of art, Langer argues, is an *image*; regardless of whether or not it also has a practical application (in the case of designed objects), or if its appearance derives from a prior form, as is the case in figurative or representational art; work that derives from a prior form *cannot* be the original, because a work of art is never a copy, reproduction, or even a re-creation of natures or objects.

Using the example of a painting of a vase of flowers — a form of masterwork that resides in every museum — the original bouquet from which the painting has been inspired cannot ever be truly *recreated*, as the original already exists in the world and has its own importance, whether or not it is a 'work of art.' "It would have to be destroyed to be re-created. Besides, a picture is neither a person nor a vase of flowers. It is an image, created for the first time out of things that are not imaginal, but quite realistic – canvas or paper, and paints or carbon and ink" (ibid., 46). Even devoid of material separation, an 'image' becomes such when its qualities are selected-out from its prior relational milieu. Departing from its pragmatic obligations, sometimes acquiring startling new contexts, "the true power of the image lies in the fact that it is *an abstraction, a symbol, the bearer of an idea*" (ibid., 47, emphasis added).

An image is an *abstraction* because its materiality departs from the source of its existence, including its "physical and causal order." As an abstraction, it functions as a *symbol* because its form begins to shift and forge new relations. As a symbol, it is the bearer of an *idea* because the image activates latent and novel pathways of *percept*, *affect*, and *concept*, inflecting them by its presence into worlds anew.

Margaret Wise Brown's own experience with a child in one of her writing labs at the Bank Street School, as observed by a journalist, demonstrates that a child can be an astute participant in event of artworlding. The young boy seems to have understood the *value* of the difference between mere critique and the immanent critique; it is with some canniness that Bruce Bliven Jr., writing for Life, understood in turn the value of an (undisciplined) child:

> Miss Brown also knows from experiment that many children are more appreciative of art than their sense-blunted parents. Children do not feel obliged to interpret or explain and destroy thereby a painting's emotional content. Once Miss Brown was testing a series of abstract paintings by showing reproductions to a class of 4-year-olds. The teacher, coming in suddenly, gazed in astonishment at a big bold abstraction and said, "My goodness, what's that?" To which one small boy, with characteristic progressive school manners, replied impatiently, "It's a picture you dope!" (Bliven Jr. 1946, 63).

When this young boy identified the picture being presented to him *as a picture*, he was immersing himself in the proposition of its lure. Much of the success of *Goodnight Moon*, then, might be attributed to the same mode of attunement reflected by the incredulity he gave to a question marked by an adult's artifice and condescension; an adult who might think themselves to 'know better.' To be undisciplined, here, is to (with wide-eyed wonderment) resist the artificial categorical separation between art and life, art and nature, good and bad taste, the disciplined and undisciplined, and discussions between the 'original' and the 'copy.' This refusal is a way to practice an immanent critique of the world as it is presented with categorical imperative overlaid upon it; to entertain whether in fact the picture in front of this particular engaged child is anything other than really, all there is.

10. Semblance of reality

Commanding forms do not exist within general aesthetic hierarchies; their value is emergent, evidenced when a work exceeds its figurative givens, generating movement in their coming-to-expression. Erin Manning and Brian Massumi develop the concepts of 'entrainment' and 'entertainment' in order to account for how perception is taken up by the perceiving subject; which correlate to the Whiteheadian concepts of 'causal efficacy' and 'presentational immediacy.' *Presentational immediacy*/*entertainment* is the felt vividness of immediate sense experience; *entrainment*/*causal efficacy* is the way that the pastness of experience structures experience in the fraction of a second before the immediate present. Critically, in order for an occasion of experience to be parsed from the welter of experience as a subjective form, a mixture of the two modes must be prehended by that occasion of experience. "[T]heir fusion yields a variety of mixed modes" which are normally thought of as "object perception"; Manning and Massumi's terms place further emphasis on the fact that "there is another mode that we are calling 'environmental'" [perception] (Manning and Massumi, 2014, 155).

It is important to clarify that while these concepts map onto the idea of 'seeing' a work, they do not reify vision as a phenomenological occurrence in advance of experience, because perception

is in the event. Seeing does not create an 'object.' All vision is abstraction, Massumi argues, and because of this, "[w]ith every sight we see we abstractly see potential, we implicitly see a life dynamic, we virtually live relation. It's just a shorthand to call it an object. It's an *event*. An object's appearance is an event, full of all sorts of virtual movement" (Massumi 2011, 43, emphasis in original). In the event of seeing, the feeling of 'likeness' of an object is what gives it the sense of the uncanny or déjà-vu. This uncanniness often passes unremarked, in the blink of an eye, in the event of perceptive use-value; a version of the "relational aliveness that slips into the living" (ibid., 44). Massumi calls the moment of 'likeness' — perceptive doubling — a "qualitative fringe, or aura […], that betokens a moreness to life" (ibid., 44). Manning will call this qualitative fringe, following Marcel Duchamp, the infrathin, "the potentiation of a relational field that includes what cannot quite be articulated but is nonetheless felt. Infrathin: the thisness, the haecceity of an experience that cannot be reduced to the sum of its parts" (Manning 2020, 16).

That qualitative fringe is the more-than of the dance of attention of entrainment and entertainment vying for stability, the creation of an 'object' to be taken up in the perceptive event. In the perceptive event of a semblance, a sense of 'likeness' is the vitality affect which comes to the fore when "pure appearances, self-abstracting perceptions, thinking-feelings" occur in so-called natural perception (Massumi 2011, 44). The *otherwise* that is charged in the event of a semblance carries its own form of novel experience, abstracting content in its singular-generic striving. "A semblance isn't just like a force. Its 'likeness' *is* a force, an abstract force of life" (ibid., 57). The artwork, its commanding form — imagistic event — semblance — supercharges the as-if of the ever *of-itself* of the world's potential, ongoing, to something-extra-effect.

Semblance occurs when "the body is capacitated, but the capacity has nowhere else to go. It's in suspense" (ibid., 43). It is in evidence when the abstract qualities of a form — its vitality affect — double the lived sense-relation to the *nth* degree of abstraction, such that the body must take the abstraction as given in and for itself: really real. "A semblance takes the abstraction inherent to object perception and carries it to a higher power. It does this by suspending the potentials presented. Suspending the potentials makes them all the more *apparent* by holding them to visual form" (ibid., 43-44, emphasis in original). It is the sign that an object has been doubled, and is abstracting itself out from its referent, in the present, whilst suggesting the relations to come. This, Massumi writes, is why it is "a kind of immediate, lived abstraction" (ibid., 49). Without specific aim toward its future iterations, a likeness also maintains a form of "generic halo;" because "the thing is both itself and a placeholder in life's process for others like it. The semblance is the leading edge, in the present, of future variation, and at the same time a doppler from variations past" (ibid., 49).

Shorn from actual concerns — the force of relation that can't be held by the actual: the virtual — semblance carries the more-than of the *as-if*, unfolding the propositional nature of the work of art from the (falsely pragmatically) determinate question of what *is.* Abstracting forms, objects, and ideas from their context offers them up to the unreal, enticing play with Langer's named attributes of *importance*, *emphasis*, and *rhythm*. These, amongst other modulations, become the

building blocks for the production of semblances in the fabric of reality of which art plays an important part. A semblance has a "direct aesthetic quality;" which "among the husky substantial realities of the natural world, is a strange guest. Strangeness, separateness, otherness – call it what you will – is its obvious lot"; 'mere' forms made for the imagination (Langer 1954, 50).

This otherwise 'strange' quality evidences that a *shimmer* of speculative possibility is afoot. *Goodnight Moon* shimmers with events of semblance, moments of possibility. Like the infrathin, the shimmer is "[b]eyond capture"; it is a qualifier, not a noun. "[T]he infrathin is a grasping at the singularity of an interval too thin to define as such and yet thick with the texture of lived relation" (Manning 2020, 17).

An image is an abstraction from experience; its semblant effect is a propositional architecting of an environment. An image lives in the world, and does not stand for itself. When Langer calls an image a form of "virtual object," she means that it exists virtually and thus can only be interpreted by the effects and impressions it creates — regardless of medium. As a virtual object, an image is an abstraction, a symbol, a bearer of an idea. Langer suggests that 'semblance,' following Jung, might be a better term to use than 'image' to describe the work of art — or more precisely, the "virtual character of so-called 'aesthetic objects'" (Langer 1954, 48). A semblance is important for art because "it liberates perception — and with it, the power of conception — from all practical purposes, and lets the mind dwell on the sheer appearance of things," instead affording our attention to "appearance *as such*" (ibid., 49, emphasis added). Perhaps confusingly, when Langer says that the semblance allows the mind to dwell on the 'sheer appearance of things,' what she does *not* mean is that the semblance announces itself to vision as a stable object for perception. Before the entraining function of Categorizing and ascribing use value to a commanding form, the semblance functions as an infrathinning edge onto the entertainment of the field of perception — it is "overseen," the 'generic halo' that Massumi writes of. Singular to each occasion of experience, "[t]he infrathin cannot be generalized: it is what makes experience singularly what it is, *here*, *now*. Between the event and the account of its retelling, an infrathin resides that will never be quite captured" (Manning 2020, 16, emphasis in original).

What I am driving at in making the distinction between an 'image' as a figural artefact and a 'semblance' as that which is generated by the commanding form and emergence of a Figure, is that — as the example that weaves through this text — *Goodnight Moon* manages to retrospectively diagrammatically activate a self-and-world-entertainment of the welter of experience that it operates within. *Goodnight Moon'*s storying-worlding operation is *not* simply through the pictures, but within the infrathin more-than that is activated in the event of its being taken up across a serial deployment of experiential events: bedtime. A semblance is evidence of the intensity of the really real, really all there is; it gives lie to the idea the world could be comprised of mere dumb matter. A semblance is the vibrational excess-over-itself of an artwork-worlding. Of course, in the case of this storybook, there is a series of art objects *there*, but, in the case of pointing to, picking up and holding, and turning the pages of the book, "[t]he reason that we're

directly seeing an object and not just a surface is because we can't not see what we're seeing without also experiencing voluminous*ness* and weighti*ness* — the object's invisible *qualities.* Seeing an object is seeing through its qualities" (Massumi 2011, 42, emphasis in original). To not see these qualities in a double vision is to not see the object itself. Semblance super-charges the perceptive event. In other words, to only see the concrete without the abstract is to see the world in one dimension — a world without movement.

When Langer is describing the abstracting of forms in service of the production of a semblance, she is, I believe, describing the process that will result in a Figure (the result of the modulating force of a diagram). What is being modulated in the Bacon diagram (light, planes, and colour), here, is importance, emphasis, and rhythm in the service of the production of a new resemblance by nonresembling means, by way of aesthetic analogy: The Great Green Room.

For Brian Massumi (with Etienne Souriau) the question of *how* to harness the abstractive forces in the chaotic field of the production of a work of art is a matter of modulating *techniques of existence*. A technique of existence is

> a technique that takes as its "object" process itself, as the speculative-pragmatic production of oriented events of change. Techniques of existence are dedicated to ontogenesis as such. They operate immediately qualitatively-relationally. They make no gesture of claiming "objectivity," nor do they pride themselves on their grasp of common sense. At the same time, they reject being characterized as "merely" subjective. They are *inventive* of subjective forms in the activist sense: dynamic unities of events unfolding. So implicated are they with the politicality of event-formation that they qualify whatever domain in which their creativity is operative as an *occurrent art* (Massumi 2011, 14, emphasis in original).

A technique of existence, as a diagramming operation, creatively abstracts the (processual) materiality of an occasion of experience in order to redeploy it anew. Following Deleuze and Pierce, Massumi writes that "[t]o abstract in this fuller sense is a technique for extracting the relational-qualitative arc of one occasion of experience — its subjective form — and systematically depositing it in the world for the next occasion to find, and to potentially take up into its own formation" (Massumi 2011, 14-15). It bears repeating that what is passed on in this transmutation is not an object, but *beings of relation.* "What we call objects, considered in the ontogenetic fullness of a process, are lived relations between the subjective forms of occasions *abstractly* nesting themselves in each other as passed-on potentials" (ibid., 16, emphasis added). It is these carried-forward, modulated, proliferated and varied potentials that are the heterogenetic underpinnings of the passage created by the diagram, as it moves through quasi-chaos into the production of the Figure.

When the bunny is described as having "real sleepiness," then, what is being thought-felt in the outburst of verbal expression is a direct, non-sensuous perception of the event of semblance *and,* in the rough linework delineating a small bunny in his bed, the invisible qualities of sleepiness and fuzziness over-fill the signifying forms of horizontal bodily orientation and dimming colour palette. These qualities entertain against the entraining function of the Good (space) night that the

storybook is meant to employ. These qualities reach out and co-compose a quality of transition from day to night *with* the individuals and environment in which the story is being read, in joyful co-composition with the storying-worlding event underway. Elements — "beings of relation"— are intrinsically related, "activity on in the others, mutually inflecting, modulating, resonating, rhythming, in any number of potential ways, harmonious or discordant, or both at the same time, expressible in aesthetic frights or joys" (Massumi 2024, 211).

11. A useless work of art

Through this chapter, I have been circling the argument that although it may seem that the images in *Goodnight Moon* are representations or illustrations, in actual fact, there is not a break between the images, text, and ritualized recitation and performance of the work as it deploys its storying-worlding operation. This means that there must be *another* key to meaning in the work's commanding form, one that cannot be caught up in any one category of abstraction.

An aesthetic quality of the otherwise — a semblance — is an architecting in-act of the work's worlding potential, not reducible to the art object itself. The art object is only recognized by experience retrospectively, as in, "*oh, so* that's *what that was!*" The retrospection is the admission of that experience as an entraining function. "The function of 'semblance' is to give forms a new embodiment in purely qualitative, unreal instances, setting them free from their normal embodiment in real things so that they may be recognized in their own right, and freely conceived and composed in the interest of the artist's ultimate aim — significance, or logical expression" (Langer 1954, 50). It is because all artistic expression *begins* with techniques of existence which may produce events of semblance that Langer claims that all art, from the point of view of its *content*, is abstract, regardless of the work's adherence to *formal* abstraction or realism, alike. In other words, art is fundamentally and foundationally abstracted from the surrounds at its genesis; it is always already a novel and propositional materiality in the form of a spark of content; not as a means to an end (simple abstraction), but with the aim of being "put to new uses" (ibid., 51).

The concept of 'semblance' can help us to reside in a conception of the virtual powers of a work of art, outside of concerns of materiality or a particular mode of artistic expression. *"Semblance* is another way of saying 'the experience of a virtual reality.' Which is to say: 'the experiential reality of the virtual.' The virtual is abstract event potential. Semblance is the manner in which the virtual *actually appears*. It is the being of the virtual as lived abstraction" (Massumi 2011, 15-16, emphasis in original). The concept of abstraction as lived experience, outside of formal or discursive capture is allied to the figural. The event of semblance capacitates the virtual artfully toward a novel experiential event. Might this aesthetic quality of the otherwise, incapable of removing itself from the concerns of the world worlding, also be called a *shimmer*?

Throughout this thesis, I have been at pains to differentiate *a* child from *the* child, not only because the former is allied to the immanent critique with which *any* artistic expression might be encountered, but also because by using *Goodnight Moon* as an example, I am staging the argument

that the assessment or evaluation of art can never be productive within the bounds of the categorization of identification proceedings or formal distancing operations. In rejecting discursive connections to the original form, a semblance is the remainder of what cannot be made use-of — displaying causal efficacy or entrainment — in the immediate event of experience. The commanding form of a work makes some wiggle room in the universe for the infrathinning something-extra of the overfull presentational immediacy or entertainment to shimmer at the cusp of the actual. A semblance is nevertheless purely virtual, returning to perception *as such in the amodal*: "Semblances, by whatever name — pure appearances, self-abstracting perceptions, thinking-feelings — occur in so-called natural perception" (Massumi 2011, 44). Semblance accompanies the dynamic form of any artful event of expression, however, as the "qualitative dimension" of experience, semblances are often backgrounded by sense-making; "the sense of relational aliveness disappears into the utility" (ibid., 44). Left to proliferate, semblance foregrounds the relational aliveness, reminding us in the noticing of existence's relational pole. "The lesson of the semblance is that lived reality of what is happening is so much more, qualitatively" (ibid., 46).

In the end, I am proposing that the harsh greens, yellows, reds, and blues depicted by Clement Hurd in *Goodnight Moon* managed, against sense-making, to create a lived abstraction in the form of an artistic symbol, while also harnessing the entraining form of the ritual bedtime story. As a leading of edge of future variation, the "again, again!" of this evergreen work of art is evidence the event of semblance.

> In an interview with *Publishers Weekly*, 1966, Hurd said that the field of children's book illustration "is related to painting and graphics, but is specialized in that the artist must keep the ultimate audience more firmly in mind than the 'pure' painter who primarily tries to satisfy himself." This audience, he added, "an ever new and wide-eyed group, responds freely to what interests it, and turns away from what does not"[15]

Alongside Margaret Wise Brown, Hurd danced between the generic form of the children's book and the novel commanding form of an experiential event. The *chevêtres* of *Goodnight Moon* infrathinly generated, through the semblance, a singular Figure: The Great Green Room, creating an ongoing singular-generic event (ritual) of the bedtime story.

A particular likeness is "singular-generic" because while a series of likenesses, virtually felt in the present, have not taken on singular dynamic form of and for themselves, they nevertheless are singular *to* themselves in each rhythmic iteration: no two likenesses, despite sharing the same semblant event, are exactly the same. No two bedtimes are the same. "Each repetition will be different to a degree, because there will be at least micro variations that give it its own singular experiential quality and make it an objective interpretation of the generic motif" (ibid., 50). As a

[15] (https://gallery.lib.umn.edu/exhibits/show/techniquesandmedia/painting/tempera)

style — a motif — a semblance marks an event of perception of a "life *style"*; a "pattern of varied repetitions" (ibid., 50).

Every time *Goodnight Moon* is read, the work is created, each time anew. In that moment, it is really real, really all there is.

12. *Further up, and further in…* (outro)

> All arts are *occurent arts*. That's another phrase from Susanne Langer (1953, 121.) All arts are occurrent arts because any and every perception, artificial or 'natural,' is just that, an experiential event. It's an event both in the sense that it is a happening, and in the sense that when it happens something new transpires. There is eventfulness in art, just as there is artfulness in nature. And there is creativity across the board. Because every event is utterly singular, a one-off, event though with and through its one-offness 'likeness' is necessarily thought-felt to a whole population of other events with which it forms an endless series of repeated variations. Langer has probably gone further than any other aesthetic philosopher toward analyzing art-forms not as 'media' but according to the type of experiential event they effect" (Massumi 2011, 82-83).

"Art brings back out the fact that all form is a full-spectrum *dynamic form* of life. There really is no such thing as fixed form — which is another way of saying that the object of vision is virtual. Art is the technique for making that necessary but normally unperceived fact perceptible, in a qualitative perception that is as much about life itself as it is about the things we live by. Art is the technique of living life *in* — experiencing the virtuality of it more fully. Living it more intensely. Technique of existence" (Massumi 2011, 45, emphasis in original). Art as technique — techne, pace Manning — for living life, better. Foreshadowing Manning 2022, a marker of art is that it elides use-value, instead residing in *event-value*. "Art claims the right to have no manifest utility, no use-value, and in many cases no exchange-value" (ibid., 53).

> [A]rt practice is a technique of composing potentials of existence, inventing experiential styles, coaxing new forms of life to emerge across polar differentials. Art is inventive, literally creative of a vitality affect. I said earlier that it was a technique of existence, and I do mean 'technique.' To achieve any affective-effective composition requires the same kind of care, minute attention to detail, and obsessive experimentation in how the situation is set up or framed… (Massumi 2011, 74).

Might *Goodnight Moon* be a form of vitally affective encouragement of the actual child-parent relation accompanied by the virtual fielding of experience, and its orientation to the otherwise? Producing an aesthetic effect, Massumi writes, occurs when the experience of a work folds back on itself to produce virtually *more-than* what actual experience affords. "Make a vanishing point appear, where the interaction turns back in on its own potential, and where that potential appears for itself. That could be a definition of producing an aesthetic effect" (ibid., 49). "A semblance," he continues, "could be a definition of aesthetic effect."

> "There is an artfulness to everyday experience. Art and everyday perception are in continuity with one another. But in everyday experience, the emphasis is different. It is all a question of emphasis, an economy of foregrounding and backgrounding of dimensions of experience that always occur together and absolutely need

each other. Art foregrounds the relational pole. Everyday experience foregrounds the object-oriented, action-reaction, instrumental pole" (Massumi 2011, 45).

The idea of the "aim" of life striving toward a permanent form is strongly Whiteheadian; for of the notion of 'permanence,' Langer states that "permanence" is both the aim and moment-to-moment achievement of life-living. Permanence is not so much a goal but the process of continuous change, an intention charged with life. "But 'living' itself is a process, a continuous change; if it stands still the form disintegrates — for *the permanence is a pattern of changes"* (Langer 1954, 66, emphasis in original). Life's aim to permanence, in other words, is the time of living, and living better (to paraphrase Whitehead). "Nothing, therefore, is as fundamental in the fabric of our feeling as the sense of permanence and change and their intimate unity" (ibid., 66). A feeling of change in art is often felt as "motion," a perceptive event that Langer notes is "not necessarily change of place, but is *change made perceivable*, i.e. *imaginable*, in any way whatever" (ibid., 66). This is what we intuit to be the "dynamic element" in a work of art, is part of the "vital feeling" expressed by the work. As with growth, the given form of vital feeling is that which gives the "sense of life" in even the most physically static of scenarios: "This duality of motion-in-permanence is, indeed, what effects the abstraction of pure dynamism and creates the semblance of life, or activity maintaining its form" (ibid., 67).

'Expression' in the logical sense — presentation of an idea through an articulate symbol — is the ruling power and purpose of art. And the symbol is, from first to last, something created. The illusion, which constitutes the work of art, is not a mere arrangement of given materials in anaesthetically pleasing pattern; it is what results from the arrangement, and is literally something the artist makes, not something he finds. It comes with his work and passes away in its destruction (Langer 1954, 67).

Once the form of the work has been abstracted in service of semblance, Langer argues, it is given "plastic freedom" so that it may have free reign of conceptual figuration, and thus expressiveness. Finally, by rendering the surface of the work "transparent" (devoid of original local relations) in the service of its "expression," that symbol may provide propositional insight via its worlding operation. A work must "become 'transparent' — which it does when insight into the reality to be expressed, the *Gestalt* of living experience, guides its author in creating it" (ibid., 60).

Spiral Four, By Way of a Conclusion: *Goodnight Moon: a Rhythm, a Tempo* (Exhibition)

Speculative pragmatism always includes an aspect of discovery. The *what else* pushes the work toward an expression of its potential, activating what moves infrathinly through it. For the work is all of this: the way it appears here-now, the spiral of time that moves through it, the way it morphs into constellation. Speculatively pragmatic interpretation is the practice of feeling-with a work's coming to be in the singular instance of its appearing again, now" (Manning 2020, 112).

As a way to describe the languaging operation that this thesis embarks upon, I have named each chapter a 'spiral,' in order to convey a mode of thinking-feeling that eludes a knowledge Categorization that aligns itself to the concept of 'rigour.' Against the grain of so-called 'traditional' academic presentation, which I understand to be neurotypically and disciplinarily coded in academic contexts, this thesis has provided me with the opportunity to meander alongside the master-piece *Goodnight Moon*: further up, and further in; spiralling.

The phrase "further up, and further in" is borrowed from the final pages of C.S. Lewis's *Narnia* series. At its conclusion, the plot follows the young protagonists as they adventure further into the land of Narnia, a place that lives (mythically) alongside their own earthly existence in postwar London, veining the city, I would argue, with magic. The line — further up, and further in — is an invitation to the young adventurers to travel deeper into a world where (a certain version of) the wide-eyed wonderment of *a* child (which they have grown out of in post-WWII London) persists.

While this refrain has always enticed me toward a spirit of adventure and curiosity that also exists in other literature — including *Through the Looking Glass* by Lewis Carroll — upon cursory inspection C.S. Lewis's magic begins to fall apart: most obviously for the fact that the series is well-known to be a parable for Christian morality, and for the fact that the eldest sister of the Pevensie clan, Susan, is denied access to the 'ever after' of Narnia's story by the books's author. It is relayed that Susan, the only one of the four children to avoid a catastrophic train crash that leads to her three siblings' death and return to Narnia, is not invited to return because she has become interested in "nylons and lipstick and invitations" rather than this distant land. She has transitioned, in the author's eyes, from having a child-like belief in the world, to carrying an adult cynicism as expressed through sexual interest.

As magical as *Narnia* may be, this narrative superimposition of the Categories of the Adult and the Child, further delineated and reinforced by the introduction of sexuality as the destroyer of 'innocence,' is precisely *not* what this thesis is about. Instead, I have shown throughout this document that the singular expressive events which produce novelty in art and identity — *Life* — are stymied when the Categorial form is imposed from 'on-high.' *Goodnight Moon*, I have shown, employs a different form of magic: the wonderment engendered by the scintillation of amodal perception, before the stilling of form and function to stable artifice and artifact. *Goodnight Moon* is exemplary of the shimmer dancing to attention, in the world as it worlds. It is a storying-worlding operation where the way one can be excluded from the process is to lose faith in the world itself.

A spiral is a way to describe a thinking-feeling process that escapes the line of reason and self-authorization. A spiral is a wild pathfinding operation that allies itself to knowledge's outside. Formally, it functions as a *chevêtre,* a trussing of experience that opens the event of the thesis document to what is irreducible to its formal apparatus.

Throughout, I have attempted to spiral the document's thinking cartographically, by allowing the structure of the text's *actual* forwardly-moving thinking-feeling to sidle alongside the *virtual* movement that accompanies it, a movement which is itself more roving and speculative. Accompanying the repetition and insistence of certain concepts and phraseologies, variation-alongside this modulation is both implicit and explicit: terms from one spiral to the next will, it is hoped, carry resonances and overlappings; and some will fall off, feeding-forward their intensity as force more than resolved form.

This pattern of variations, intrinsic to the document, is what Langer calls a work's *vital rhythm*, a basic "grammar of artistic vision" which develops a "plastic form" (Langer 1954, 62). These minor variations are what give the commanding form "life." Artistic vision, and the apprehension of 'vital rhythms,' is not logical. For Langer, even the decorative arts contain a vital feeling that mathematical explanation lacks. Describing the simple motif of an illustrated vine in the domestic environment (as a border along a page, wallpaper, or dish, for example), she argues that even this small flourish can express "motion and rest, rhythmic unity, wholeness. Instead of mathematical form, the design has — or rather it *is* — 'living' form, though it need not represent anything living, not even vines or periwinkles" (Langer 1954, 63).

I have been at pains to show that creative expression is not hierarchical, both within the format of this thesis as well as with the storying-worlding event that is the core of its study. Against the cool calculation of 'simple' logical operation, even domestic decoration expresses *life*, in adverbial advance: lines that "emanate," "similar or congruent elements 'repeat' each other, colours 'balance' each other, though they have no physical weight, etc. […] these terms denote relationships that belong to the virtual object, the created illusion, and they are just as applicable to the simplest design on a paddle or an apron, if the design is artistically good, as to an easel picture or a wall painting" (Langer 1954, 63). In other words, terms speak to the virtual effect of semblance, the 'seeming' movement, as-if the line is dancing upon the page. Here, in this text, the virtual movement is in the service of the as-if: as-if the work might propel an understanding of how artfulness escapes the line *in spite of* the categories which seek to entrain it toward simple illustration — what I have described as 'the figural.'

Of the impression of 'growth' in the development of a border, the semblance of growth is "rhythm, the semblance of life […] *All motion in art is growth* — not growth of something pictured, like a tree, but of lines and spaces" (Langer 1954, 64, emphasis in original). Rather than a "sensation of" movement in an image — which would be an optical illusion — such designs are examples of a diagrammatic event "which abstracts continuity, directedness, and energy of motion, and conveys the idea of those abstracted characters " into the production of a Figure (Langer 1954,

64-65). Massumi puts Langer's example in simple terms: in her example of the *motif,* "we don't see spirals, we see spiral*ing*. We see a *movement* that flows *through* the design" (Massumi 2011, 41). A thesis, like the motif of a vine, should strive to be a vital form that combines the real document with the abstract movement that its tracings energize. We're seeing (or reading) double, in Massumi's words. This double vision is "essence of life — incessant change, or process, articulating a permanent form" (Langer 1954, 65).

Entering into the work, not by how it functions as an artwork, but as an architecting of an environment.

Among the fan letters that Clement Hurd received over the years was one from the mother of a nineteen-month-old who had been asking for *Goodnight Moon* every night for the past week or so. The previous evening, as his mother watched, the child pressed his right foot down onto one of the pictures of the great green room, saying, 'Walk, Walk!' He then tried his left foot. Then he burst into tears. The child had wanted to climb inside the great green room, a place for him as real as it was magical.

Be glad for that child — and for *any* child lucky enough, as Margaret Wise Brown once said, to be 'lift[ed]… for a few minutes from his own problems of shoelaces that won't tie and busy parents and mysterious clock-time … [into] the timeless world of the story'" (Marcus 1997, 29-30).

What makes an exhibition an event? What makes a storybook a singularity? How does a simple (commercial, pedagogical, physical) publication transition from the status of being an uncomplicated enterprise to an event that carries the 'something extra' of a storying-worlding operation underway? What lures lie nascent deep in the commanding form of a work that will elicit a sustained interaction, and which might, one day, lead to the completion of a (nearly) ten-year thesis?

…and then some?

This starts with a conflict: A. was an artist that I had fundamental differences of personality with, and with whom I lived and collaborated in a 20-person art collective. She lent me a book in 2011. The book was *Goodnight Moon*, of course, and over the next eleven years I would try many times to enact a simple intuition: That I needed to build the book, turn it to a version of what Erin Manning and others have called a 'book room' — or a room from a book — in order to reverse-engineer and then reconstitute the work in such a manner that I might be able to figure out what makes it 'tick.' I wanted to figure out what made a space 'queer.'

This starts last month. My father, having recently absconded his fatherly duties by decamping to Central America, wrote on WhatsApp: "We had that book, it was a favourite." I hadn't known.

This starts… well, I'm not sure of when it starts. But, I know that one(!) answer to the question is 42: 42, the year of the high-kick. 42, how old I am now, and how I

old I will be when I hit ‘submit.’ I want to figure out what makes a work ‘work,’ and what ‘art’ and ‘identity’ have in common, when they escape Categorical form.

—

A graphic bubbles on the left side of a store’s picture window, framed by baby blue paint in thick layers, a thin transom bisecting the top third of the image, in two panes. The building is capped by a peaked roof that sits handsomely on top of the second floor: a triangle sitting on top of a rectangle. It is two stories, with white shiplap siding framed by accents of blue and red paint. A red, slightly recessed wooden double door provides a central entrance.

Raised gold letters spell out “Sunbury Shores Arts & Nature Centre” across the width of the building’s facade between the windows of the first floor and the three classic sashed windows on the second. Framing the entrance door on either side of it are two large plate glass windows. Vinyl lettering marches along the bottom of the plated glass. Cracked with age, in two blocks of two words per block, in white serifed caps the letters read: ART GALLERY; and, after a pause marked by the entranceway, NATURE CENTRE. To the left of the entrance, the view into the interior of the building is largely obstructed by an image applied to the glass. To the right of the entrance, little blocks the curious onlooker’s gaze to an exhibition space and a plywood wall.

From the street, the building itself is grounded by four planters — two below each window — which also function as the ends of benches. Each planter-bench is comprised of two large wooden cubes containing slightly anemic plants. Wooden planks strung between the boxes, made of three two-by-fours placed side-by-side to create a seating surface. They are weathered with age, and, as I discovered when I needed to move one of them, rotting at the joints in such a way that it is clear they are in their final years.

The vinyl image on the window to the left of the entrance that obstructs an undirected view into the interior of the building extends to all corners of the plate glass. Created in Adobe Illustrator, the image is made of outlined colour-blocked shapes in primary yellow; a secondary yellow with a slight tone to it; emerald green; royal blue; orange (again, with a slight tone to it); and a cherry red. The red matches that of the building; and the blue is somewhat darker, but of a similar colour temperature. Shapes are outlined by black lines, which upon close inspection have the illustrative conceit of the mark of a graphite pencil. At one-half inch thick, the lines trace out the colour blocks of the image, enclosing and delineating the coloured shapes, comprising a complete illustration.

The image depicted is of three window frames, and three sets of accompanying curtains, layered within each other, which are in turn layered within the window of Sunbury Shore’s frame:

1. The first and largest image of a window is of a yellow curtain, with an orange window frame divided into twenty panes. The yellow curtain has five bustles along the top windows, which are doubled on either side to frame the image. The bustles and pleats, which descend from the bustles, are depicted by black lines, which are traced with a shaded watermark to indicate dimension and volume.

2. The second curtain is striped yellow and green, and is more ornate than the first: it appears as if there is enough folded fabric for a double drape on each side, and the yellow and green stripes appear to enhance the effect of bunching and pleating. These curtains frame a red window, in five vertical panes, which (perhaps curiously) descend only halfway down the window frame.

3. The final curtain is a curvaceous green, with a single part in the centre, and three pleats per vertical panel. It frames a blue window frame, which is ajar and appears to open 'in' to the space beyond. These windows have three panes each, horizontally stacked.

The overall image has cutouts, voids, both in each of the window panes depicted, as well in the space between the multiple curtains and frames. In the spaces where orange transom does not overlap red transom, which does not overlap blue transom; and where yellow curtain does not overlap and shade striped yellow and green curtain, which mostly overlaps green curtain (the green curtain does reach out and overlap yellow and green curtained orange transom in the bottom left corner); the negative space created by the absence of image is cut out, so that standing in front of the image, the onlooker may peer through the layered windows into the gallery space beyond, most readily in the evening or at night, when the gallery is illuminated from within and the window becomes most transparent. Conversely, when observing the image from the street on a bright day, those parts of the gallery window that are not covered by the vinyl image become mirror-like, as windows do, and the outside world (including viewer, and passing pedestrians and vehicular traffic) is reflected between the many windows upon windows, in the pane to the left of the red double-doored gallery entrance.

The windows illustrated and overlaid upon one and other are from two books, each written by Margaret Wise Brown and illustrated by Clement Hurd. They can be found, in order of appearance on the plate glass window at Sunbury Shores Arts & Nature Centre in St Andrews-by-the-Sea, New Brunswick, in: *My World* (1949) (yellow curtains with orange frame); *Goodnight Moon* (1947) (yellow and green curtains, with red frame); and again in *My World* (green curtains, with an alteration of the frame colour from brown to blue).

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Entering into the gallery space through the red doors (and then another set of wooden doors, demarcating a vestibule), one encounters a wall, askew, tilting away, within four feet.

> (Beaverbrook) *Entering into the central hallway of the formal exhibition spaces, after ascending a long ramp, through heavy metal and glass doors which emit a loud, protesting screech, past a security guard who insists that you may not bring coffee or bags into the museum, you have three directional choices: Turn left, through a large archway into a series of rooms, at the end of which is hung a large painting of vertical stripes in bright, primary and secondary colours; walk straight ahead, through a series of vitrines with*

contemporary handmade metal jewelry, following which is another vaulted room with further art objects; or to the right, into a cavernous empty room, with painted walls in a mid-tone earth colour, with one substantial illuminated object tilted away from you, a single wooden bench placed in front of it in a soft pool of light. A hallway beyond it with maroon walls and arched vaulted ceiling, and gilt-framed figurative paintings of various dimensions are hung on its long walls.

(The Rooms) Entering into the grand atrium of the stacked houses on top of a hill, climbing labyrinthine granite stairs to the top of 'The Rock.' Pause in the climb near the second level, to a vitrine encased in grand sandstone, glass on two planes. Hanging, a mobile structure with cutouts in primary and secondary colours, hanging green yarn attached to oversized green knitting needles as horizontal booms. The forms, held in the balance, are in the shapes of objects found in *Goodnight Moon*— black telephone outlines, roof lines, a red ballon, the individual panes of windows (blue bordered in red), pink mittens, blue leaping cow shape, yellow picture frames… A large standing giraffe holds yarn in its mouth, from which another series of green needles balance further cutout shapes. Unfamiliar forms accompany those that have become recognizable in this study: the half-crescent cutout pink archway found in Matthew-Robin Nye's apartment; a red roof line mimicking that of the museum we are presently standing in. The yarn is affixed to the cutouts with metal hardware: pulleys from sailing equipment.

Continuing through heavy glass doors, an expansive exhibition: *Erica Rutherford: Her Lives and Works*. Dozens of paintings of landscapes, portraits, still lifes in a hard-edged graphic style reminiscent of the fauvist movements nascent in Hurd's *Goodnight Moon* images.

Further up and further in: An archway handsomely framed in blond wood, flanked by Ruthorford's paintings, one of which features a bunny in the clouds. A broad primary yellow band of paint runs horizontally along the museum wall.

Through the archway, a blackened space from which a stud wall looms, tilted away from visitor as they walk in.

—

A lone placard, with the words *FURTHER UP AND FURTHER IN* printed on white computer paper, stands in front of a wooden stud wall.

A lone placard, with the words FURTHER UP AND FURTHER IN
PLUS HAUT ET PLUS LOIN
printed on white computer paper, stands in front of a wooden stud wall.

A lone placard, with the words *FURTHER UP AND FURTHER IN* printed on white board, stands in front of a wooden stud wall. To the left, and exhibition text.

—

Further up, and further in:

If the object in front of you were a person, it would be turning away from you, presenting the back of its left shoulder. It is a wall — a stage flat — softly lit from all angles, opening up and enveloping a space beyond. It is made of wood, and one wall is sectioned into three softwood frames with plywood backing, three equally divided studs arranged horizontally for stability. Additional structure is provided by roughly-cut triangular particle board corners in each frame, and a series of triangular buttresses perpendicularly mounted against the temporary wall. The flats (or walls) sit on wood risers six inches off of the floor.

(*removed in favour of drilling directly into the floor*).

(reinforced from above).

If you walk to the right (though the inclination is to the left, to open space and pooled light), the walls continue: The next, central plane has a number of boxed out forms, with black cords extruding from them; the farthest is a repetition of the first, forming a mirrored flank.

Beyond the third, you hit a white wall.

Beyond the third, you hit a dark cream wall that you can squeeze through, and a mobile P.A. System that has been packed up… but why would you?

The third wall butts against the black painted wall of the darkened gallery space.

—

The object looks like this:


EXIT

—

So here we have an event, that of *Goodnight Moon: a Rhythm, a Tempo.* Brian Massumi writes:

> "An experience determinately knows what it's been only as it peaks — which is also the instant of its 'perishing' (Whitehead 1978, 29; Whitehead 1967a, 1977). The only subject there is in the competed sense is a 'superject': the 'final characterization of the unity of the feeling' at an experiences's peaking (Whitehead 1978, 166). The 'creative advance into novelty' runs from the objective vagueness of the quasi-chaos of activity already going on, to a terminal definiteness of an experience subjectively 'satisfying' its enjoyment of itself in a final fulfillment knowingly felt" (Massumi 2011, 9).

Preceding the defence and deposit of this thesis document by several weeks, the process-led exhibition *Goodnight Moon: a Rhythm, a Tempo* concluded its final cycle at The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery, in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. The exhibition, I hope, will have afterlives and derivatives, feeding forward to incoming events of expression; but at present, its commanding form enjoyed its final act on The Rock.

The artful experience that the work has attempted to diagram, in the language of a philosophy of the event, could be called its 'superject.' A superject is an event's process of self-enjoyment; "the 'final characterization of the unity of feeling' at an experience's peaking' (Whitehead 1978, 166)" (Massumi 2011, 9). The experiential event, here, is not my own. It is an 'occurrent event,' neither object nor subject, but an interplay of the two (Massumi 2011, 6). The work the work is doing is to the extended duration of *this* event, with its inheritances and afterlives: architecting prehensions and "successive takings," what Massumi calls a "durational span;" Whitehead, a "qualitative duration — a dynamic mutual inclusion of phases of process in each other, composing a 'span' of becoming," or what James calls a "specious present" (Massumi 2011, 8-9).

I continue to reflect on the superject of *Goodnight Moon: a Rhythm, a Tempo*, asking: what was the exhibition *doing*? Where in the welter of activity that encompassed technology, negotiations (verbal and written, contractual), grant applications, hurt feelings, repaired feelings, relations personal and impersonal, material exploration and expression; image analysis, textual play and interplay, friendship fostered and strained… does the artwork, or more precisely, artfulness of the exhibition live?

Goodnight Moon: a Rhythm, a Tempo opened at Sunbury Shores Arts and Nature Centre on Friday, October 7th, 2022. Much of the town came out, it felt. A companion group exhibition composed of regional artists, called *Stars, Air, Noises Everywhere*, curated by New Brunswick-based curator Amy Ash, opened simultaneously in a smaller back room. The 'local gay' — (there are many in St-Andrews by-the-Sea, but only one drove a vintage Jaguar) — got drunk and walked out with a delicate sculpture, causing a minor diplomatic crisis. k.g. Guttman, Montreal-based artist and collaborator, demonstrated her 'techniques for haptic viewing' with devices that were concurrently on view in a group show at Dazibao, in Montreal. I gave a short speech, and a brief interview

outside of the exhibition space, with Vicki Hogarth from the local television news channel CHCO TV. Angela McLean, the Operations Director of Sunbury Shores Arts and Nature Centre, gave a moving introduction to the exhibition. My partner Marc was present (and helped with the installation). I picked up another local man a week prior to the exhibition, sitting on a park bench walking my dog. I still like him quite a bit. He led a nude drawing class on the *Goodnight Moon* stage several weeks later.

The opening night of the exhibition was the formal kickoff of the event, but the event was already well-underway. I was invited by Joel Mason, who I had previously interpolated into my own process-led curatorial activities, and with whom I share a deep and easy complicity, to activate a proposition in the space. He asked me to bring an integrative, process-philosophical proposition to Sunbury Shore's 60 year-old themes of 'nature and ecology.' The cultural landscape that Joel described to me was interesting, complex. I had never been to New Brunswick before, but I knew that it had a 'working class' economy and culture. I'd heard it described as 'boring.' St. Andrews, however, was different. Like my experiences of some of the cultural complexity of Oka, Quebec – a village outside of Montréal where I lived, for a time. I knew that it had an active arts and culture scene; I later learned that as it was picturesquely situated on one of the two points of the Bay of Fundy. It also was the vacation seat of many wealthy Canadian families, once directly connected to Montreal and Maine by rail. The Van Hornes, a Montreal rail-baron family, had once owned an island with a small castle, just off the coast. It was connected to the mainland by a land bridge, only accessible during low tide. The Van Horne museum lent me an antique telephone of the same period as the one drawn by Clement Hurd. The town was charming, similar to many one might find in Maine (just across the bay). Homes belonging to members of the McCain family were dotted throughout. The real estate bubble, which on my first visit in May 2022 was at its peak, saw prices nearing those of Montreal's. Locals — those who lived in St. Andrews year-round — bemoaned the summer season and the hordes of tourists. Public buildings, like schools and gymnasiums, were named after wealthy donors.

> Goodnight Moon: a Rhythm, a Tempo *opened at the Beaverbrook Provincial Art Gallery in Fredericton, New Brunswick at the beginning of November, 2022. I was not in attendance. The museum's curator had visited the work while it was up at Sunbury Shores. He delayed the opening of another exhibition by one month. It became very clear that the work was considered an art object for kids by the institution. Nevertheless, Jordan Arseneault reprised a performance that he made specifically in order to activate the work, titled "The Dance of the Tide and The Moon." It was well received. My lecture about the histories of the book and my own artistic process was difficult to hear over restless kids and families, who clearly expected something different. In hindsight, I was dazzled by the institutional recognition afforded me and my work – as a result, I think that I was captured in the creation of a stable 'I' and did*

not afford the work the care it required by carefully attending to the conditions of its deployment.

> *Goodnight Moon: a Rhythm, a Tempo* opened on November 21st, 2025, at The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery and Museum in St. John's, Newfoundland. The museum was packed, as the show opened alongside the travelling exhibition of trans* artist Erica Rutherford, entitled *Erica Rutherford: Her Lives and Works*, and a project exhibition by Nasim Makaremi Nia, entitled *Entangled*. The project was a careful negotiation with Curator Mireille Eagan and Exhibitions Manager Angela Noseworthy, over the course of a year. Artists who added their techniques for visiting the work included senior conceptual and land-based artist Marlene Creates (November 29th and January 21st); conceptual artist and care-worker Annette Manning (February 1st); and transdisciplinary poet, artist, and trans* sex-worker advocate Daze Jeffries (February 28th). Once the artist's interventions were concluded, they were invited to leave an anarchival 'trace' of their intervention/performance in a vignette on the facing wall. Additional programming included an artist talk on November 23rd which was well-attended; and a walk-though lecture of the exhibition alongside that of Erica Rutherword, by Daze Jeffries and Rhea Rollmann entitled "Queer and Trans Worldmaking/Wonder" on February 11th, 2026.
>
> The exhibition proved to be immensely popular, and many thousands of visitors experienced it by the time of its closing on March 11th, 2026.

—

Goodnight Moon: a Rhythm, a Tempo, is a *procedural architecture*. A procedural architecture, according to architect/painter/poet duo Arakawa and Madeline Gins, is a way to think about how to create a proposition for renewing the body in an ecology — particularly, its processes of subjectivation — in order to produce *more life*. Artfully, a procedural architecture might produce a semblance — that is, a virtual image that doubles the actual *with a twist.* This proposition for bodily and environmental renewal is for persons who "need to be rescued from self-certainty, but they also need to put their tentativeness in precise order in relation to works of architecture" (Arakawa and Gins 2002, 50). *Goodnight Moon: a Rhythm a Tempo*, is a dramaturgical score for space — or spatial poetics — as one such possibility for those who needed to be rescued from self-certainty.

The event of architecture, as much as that of the biosphere or the making of a person, is defined by the duo as "*a tentative constructing toward a holding in place.*" Here, the "tentativeness" of their definition becomes an operative principle in how an environment and a work of architecture (temporarily, tentatively) come together (Arakawa and Gins 2002, 48-49, emphasis in original).

Every environment, tentative constructing toward a holding in place, requires the invention of new procedural architectures in order to save the stable 'I' from itself.

As a *proposition,* a procedural architecture takes seriously the singular needs for attunement in an event co-constituted by both the percipient (a "person") and the site (or surrounds/ "surroundings"). The meeting of two or more in a *tentative constructing of a holding in place* then becomes the event from which a *sited awareness* blossoms. "Recognize, this supposition urges, that awareness sites itself all over the place at once; or better, that a person positions herself within her surroundings by taking her surroundings up as her sited awareness. Sites of sited awareness are, of course, landing sites of the moment" (Arakawa and Gins 2002, 51). A procedural architecture operates from a place that acknowledges that these 'landing sites' are the locus of a more complete awareness of how body and environment dance in a temporary, tentative action of co-composition. Procedural architecture is another way to not take for granted the inseparability of mind from environment. It "announces the indivisibility of seemingly separable fields" of the ecology, made up as it is by "a person and an architectural surround. The two together give procedural architecture its basic unit of study, the architectural body" (ibid, 51).

In her essay reflecting on multiple visits to the exhibition at The Rooms for *The Independent,* Rhea Rollmann wrote of her first visit:

> Adults lined the walls, looking on, while about a dozen children clambered all over the set. Several children were simply running back and forth, or in circles, in a seemingly aimless manner. One child, who kept attempting to rally the others to produce a play, periodically turned to address the adults, announcing the forthcoming production. But it was purely aspirational; the scene remained chaotic and the play never emerged. It's hard to tell what the children thought of it all; their haphazard dashing to and fro suggested they saw it as a massive, unorthodox playground they hadn't expected to stumble into on a Friday night at an art gallery (Rollmann 2026).

At the exhibition opening, Rollmann's account is of the work being overtaken by a frantic social energy on the part of *all* attendees; the conditions for care-full entry are overridden by the sheer scale of the architectural surrounds. Adults, she writes, "lined the walls, almost defensively standing as far from the exhibit as possible while their children swarmed it. They periodically turned to each other, even strangers, for conversation, as though affirming a common identity distinguished from that of their kids" (Rollman 2026). Here, the sited awareness (such as it is) is heavily tilted to the interpersonal. Adults distance themselves from the world of the child, as if to say, *this work is not for me*.

On her next visit with a friend, Rollman carries forward the impression that the exhibition is a site of 'play,' and the self-identified 'adults' continue to distance themselves when encountering the work. This time, a single child with their grandfather, "about 7 or 8," is "moving with an entirely different rhythm from the frenzied, hyperactive kids on opening night" – bodying a different procedural architecture in a different surrounds. Rollman continues,

> The child paced from one end of the exhibit to the other with a sort of graceful reverence, eyes wide and mouth ajar, as though astonished to find themselves inside a beloved storybook. They sat on the bed, picked up a book, peered at the painted-on window and the cow jumping over the moon.
>
> When we entered the exhibit, the kid addressed us as peers. "This is my favourite book in the world," they said simply, slowly, with a sense of awe. We nodded. The kid pointed out the various components of the set to us: the telephone, the bed, the window. Their grandfather—that quiet, easygoing Newfoundland type—sat on a bench in a corner, smiling awkwardly, ticking his head periodically while observing everything with a bemused expression. The kid continued expositing the set for us, eager to share their appreciation for it. They pointed out the miniature of the set in a corner, something neither of us had noticed on opening night. The child instructed us to remove our shoes, ascend the platform and peer inside.
>
> While the effusive energy of the children on opening night radiated "play," this child's energy radiated something entirely different — *wonder*.

What this kid modeled for Rollmann and her friend was a practice of immediation in the commanding form of the Figure of the Great Green Room, by way of a procedural architecture in an institutional Museum setting. By interpolating Rollmann and her friend as 'peers,' denying the Categorical separation of Adult and Child, they collectively caught an incline to a slanted *I* as it worked its way through the event of experience of and for itself. "Architecture will only come into its own when it becomes thoroughly associated and aligned with the body, that active other *tentative constructing toward a holding in place*, the ever-on-the-move body. The tense of architecture should be not that of 'This is this' or 'Here is this' but instead 'What's going on?'" – in other words, a transindividual development of a knowledge *about* (Arakawa and Gins 2002, emphasis in original).

"Procedures do and do not walk up to one to introduce themselves as existing," Arakawa and Gins write (ibid 53). Consider the phrases, "If you *really* knew me…" or "this is who I *am,*" and how many habitual patterns of activity an organism that persons must carry in order to reify, with such insistence, the stable "I" that underpins that insistent 'me.' I hope that through its daily presentation and punctual programming, the exhibition *Goodnight Moon: a Rhythm a Tempo* diagrams a novel grain of experience, with an infrathin shimmering of the neutral, which ever-so-slightly shifts existing practices of personing within its architectural surrounds.

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