

# The Angel of the Possible: Joyce's Spatial Forms of History

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I hear the ruin of all space, shattered glass and toppling masonry, and time one livid final flame.

STEPHEN DEDALUS, *ULYSSES* (1922)

History is past politics, and politics present history.

SIR JOHN ROBERT SEELEY, *THE GROWTH OF BRITISH POLITY* (1896)

According to Arnold Hauser, the new concept of time at the fin-de-siècle is marked by simultaneity and "the spatialization of the temporal element, [which] is expressed in no genre so impressively as in the youngest art." No modernist writer, Hauser argues, pushes this cinematic spatialization further than Joyce:

[Joyce] pushes the spatialization of time even further than Proust, and shows the inner happenings not only in longitudinal but also in cross-sections. The images, ideas, brainwaves and memories stand side by side with sudden absolute abruptness: hardly any consideration is paid to their origins, all the emphasis to their contiguity, their simultaneity. The spatialization of time goes so far in Joyce, that one can begin the reading of *Ulysses* where one likes, with only a rough knowledge of the context.<sup>1</sup>

1 Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art*, vol. 4 (London, 1972), 255. Quoted in Luke Gibbons, "Spaces of Time through Times of Space: Joyce, Ireland and Colonial Modernity," *Field Day Review*, Vol. 1 (2005), pp. 71-86.

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Hauser's claim that Joyce spatializes time continues in the tradition of Joseph Frank's classic essay, "Spatial Form in Modern Literature" (1945) in which he claims that Joyce and Proust "force the reader to juxtapose disparate images of [their] characters [...] in a moment of time [...] that is to say, space."<sup>2</sup> The modern novel, Frank argues, mirrors the layout and composition of a newspaper in which events are related not in a linear progression of a grand narrative but in the juxtaposed space of a day. That Joyce's epic can be consigned to a single day suggests an alternative perceptual model. If the narrative of *Ulysses*, with its emphasis on simultaneity and use of montage, is cinematic, then the perceptual basis for understanding the novel should be considered in terms of the emergence of the material conditions that accompanied the cinema. This paper aims to consider how these conditions underpin the novel's spatial forms of perception, how these are made manifest in the novel, and how the novel offers alternative models for perceiving history.

About a third of the way into "Ithaca," Joyce presents what Walter Benjamin might call a "flash of recognition," as Stephen's earlier reflections on Bloom's Jewish identity resurfaces:

What were Stephen's and Bloom's quasismultaneous volitional quasisensations of concealed identities?

Visually, Stephen's: The traditional figure of hypostasis, depicted by Johannes Damascenus, Lentulus Romanus and Epiphanius Monachus as leucodermic, sesquipedalian with winedark hair.

Auditively, Bloom's: The traditional accent of the ecstasy of catastrophe.<sup>3</sup>

Bloom's unfinished attempt at writing his identity into the sand in "Nausicaa"<sup>4</sup> is revisited and completed in Stephen's vision of Christ's Incarnation, grounded in a list of writers and historians of the physical body of Jesus. Interestingly, this vision is wholly divorced from the body: unlike the historians' claims about Christ, Bloom is neither six feet tall nor light skinned, nor does he have auburn hair. This curious vision recalls a moment in the earliest extant version of "Proteus" (1917), where Joyce

Gibbons' is a model study in considering Joyce's spatialization of Dublin as unique among modernist spatial forms.

2 Joseph Frank, "Spatial Form in Modern Literature," *The Sewanee Review*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (Spring, 1945), 239.

3 James Joyce, *Ulysses* (New York: Vintage, 1986), 565.

4 "Mr Bloom with his stick gently vexed the thick sand at his foot. Write a message for her. Might remain. What? I. [...] AM. A. No room. Let it go." Ibid. 312.

writes that Stephen's "eyes do not see it: they think it rather than see."<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, this exchange of sensations is a reversal of previously established phenomenological registers: elsewhere the novel stages Stephen as the auditive counterpoint to the visual Bloom.<sup>6</sup> In the cosmically distant narrative of what Joyce called the "mathematical catechism" of "Ithaca," we are finally privy to these characters' concealed identities, identities revealed only within the depths of their impressions of one another. But why are these characters' preferred modes of perception, so rigorously established elsewhere in the novel, reversed at this moment of simultaneous epiphany?

This reversal and its consequences for the novel's spatial perceptions of history can be traced first in "Nestor," whose art, according to the Gilbert and Linati schema, is history.<sup>7</sup> The Gilbert schema, made in conjunction with Joyce, suggests a parallel between "Nestor" and "Ithaca," both sharing a "technic" labeled "catechism," the former described as "personal," the latter "impersonal." "Nestor" opens with Stephen catechizing a history lesson to a group of inattentive students. His mind wanders in familiar fashion to what Gilbert describes as the "ifs" of history, where he ponders the Aristotelian definition of movement:

Had Pyrrhus not fallen by a beldam's hand in Argos or Julius Caesar not been knifed to death. They are not to be thought away. Time has branded them and fettered they are lodged in the room of the infinite possibilities they have ousted. But can those have been possible seeing that they never were? Or was that only possible which came to pass? Weave, weaver of the wind [...] It must be a movement then, an actuality of the possible as possible."<sup>8</sup>

Stephen's reflection on the limits of the possible echoes the schema's pairing of art and history, one that recalls Aristotle's distinction between the historian and the poet:

the poet's function is to describe, not the thing that has happened, i.e. what is possible as being probable or necessary. The distinction between

5 Quoted in Maud Ellmann, "Joyce's Noises," *Modernism/modernity* Vol. 16, No. 2 (April 2009), 384, from "Draft of the 'Proteus' episode of *Ulysses* (1917), ed. Jon Barger at <<http://www.robotwisdom.com/jaj/ulysses/proteus0.html>>

6 See Ellmann for a thorough mapping of such instances and especially the "Proteus" episode of *Ulysses*, where Stephen is said to "get along nicely in the dark" (31).

7 Stuart Gilbert, *James Joyce's Ulysses*, (New York: Vintage, 1955)

8 *Ulysses*, 21.

historian and poet [...] consists really in this, that the one describes the thing that has been, and the other a kind of thing that might be.<sup>9</sup>

This invocation is underlined in the declaration ("It must be a movement"), where Stephen again alludes to Aristotle. In the *Physics* 3:1, he writes, "The fulfillment of what exists potentially, is motion—namely, of what is alterable qua alterable, alteration."<sup>10</sup> Stephen's vision of alternative histories invites reflection on the potentials obfuscated in the actualities of motion. Like Benjamin's Angel of History, an emblem of the German cultural critic's critique of historicism, Stephen's reflections on the past are suffused with the desire to, "awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed."<sup>11</sup> Stephen envisions what never was as what was once possible. Joyce poses this model of enlivening the past, awaking the dead, as an alternative to the historicism of the school master, Mr. Deasy, who asserts later in the episode that "All human history moves toward one great goal, the manifestation of God." In response, Stephen

jerked his thumb towards the window, saying:

—That is God.

Hooray! Ay! Whrrrwheel!

—What? Mr Deasy asked.

— A shout in the street, Stephen answered, shrugging his shoulders.<sup>12</sup>

Robert Spoo cleverly summarizes this retort as the completion of the "syllogism for which Deasy has unwittingly provided the first term: One, history is the manifestation of God. Two, a shout in the street is part of history. Three, therefore, a shout in the street is a manifestation of God."<sup>13</sup> Stephen's response to Deasy that "God is a shout in the street" seems to recall Joyce's 1902 essay on James Clarence Mangan,<sup>14</sup> in which he determines poetry to be "at war with its age, so it makes no account of history, which is fabled by the daughter's of memory," the last phrase of which is

9 Aristotle, *The Rhetoric and the Poetics* (New York: Random House, 1984), 234-5.

10 Quoted in Don Gifford, *Ulysses Annotated: Notes for James Joyce's Ulysses* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 32.

11 Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History," *Selected Writings*, Vol. 4 (1938-40), eds. Howard Eiland and Michael Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott, et al (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2003), 392. 12 *Ulysses*, 28.

13 Robert Spoo, "Teleology, Monocausality and Marriage in *Ulysses*," *ELH*, Vol. 56, No. 2 (Summer 1989), 442.

14 James Joyce, "James Clarence Mangan (1902)," *Occasional, Critical, and Political Writing*, ed. Kevin Barry (New York: Oxford UP, 2008), 59. Here on referred to as *Writings*.

repeated in the opening lines of "Nestor."<sup>15</sup> In Aristotelian terms, such poetics privilege "a kind of thing that might be" over "the thing that has been." In his 1907 revision of the Mangan essay, Joyce ascribes "simple intuitions" as the "tests of reality," and takes poetry to be a means of escape from a history that occludes the real: "Poetry takes little account of many of the idols of the market-place, the succession of the ages, the spirit of the age, the mission of the race. The essential effort of the poet is to liberate himself from the unpropitious influences of such idols which corrupt him from the inside and out."<sup>16</sup> Less than a decade later, he would write in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1914) that the personality of the artist

at first a cry or a cadence or a mood and then a fluid and lambent narrative, finally refines itself out of existence, impersonalises itself, so to speak [...] The artist, like the God of the creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails.

Impersonality frames the medium as its own end and often leads to the boilerplate critique of modernism's art-for-art's sake. But in these instances, Joyce frames art as an escape from history's continuum that is altogether different from an escape from history. In writing a poetics of possibility over actuality, Joyce is establishing a phenomenological basis for alternatives to the historical narratives that feed the likes of Deasy's racialiographical Unionist politics.

Elsewhere, Stephen pits an aesthetic of "silence, exile, and cunning" as his only "arms" against "nationality, language, and religion."<sup>17</sup> But as James Fairhall, Seamus Deane, and Enda Duffy, among others have carefully noted, Joyce's novel is wholly engaged with the politics and histories of Irish nationalism.<sup>18</sup> If god and history can be a shout in the street, Irish nationalism can be like poetry: a thing that

<sup>15</sup> *Ulysses*, 20. According to Gifford, p. 30, the line derives from William Blake's *A Vision of the Last Judgment* (1810): "Fable or Allegory is Form's by the daughters of Memory. Imagination is surrounded by the daughters of Inspiration, who in the aggregate are call's Jerusalem." This is the first of Nestor's many allusions to Blake, one of which comes shortly after, which is the first epigraph to this paper. As Gifford notes, "Blake repeatedly predicts 'the world ... consumed in Fire.'" Blake's apocalyptic visions have significant recourse as a model of history. Gifford continues: "if, as Blake predicts in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, the moment of transformation is 'the livid final flame,' then will 'the whole creation ... be consumed and appear infinite and holy, whereas it now appears finite and corrupt?'"

<sup>16</sup> "James Clarence Mangan (1907)," *Writings*, 135.

<sup>17</sup> James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1915), ed. Seamus Deane (New York: Penguin, 1992), 269.

<sup>18</sup> See especially James Fairhall, *James Joyce and the Question of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993).

might be. Instead of an outright escape, the episode proposes a reconstitution of history around a shout in the street, a sensory flash that mirrors Stephen's epiphanic vision in auditive terms. As I noted earlier, we might consider these moments through Benjamin as instances of a "flash of recognition," or a dialectical image. This notion is captured in Convoluted N of the *Arcades Project*, where Benjamin proposes a dialectical model of history: "It's not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words, image is dialectics at a standstill."<sup>19</sup> This is, I believe, an avenue into critically unfolding the moment of "Ithaca" that I began with, where a messianic image extracted from past and present blast Bloom out of the continuum of a day that has seen him racially belittled and cuckolded.

The aesthetic Stephen begins crafting in *A Portrait* is an attempted escape from the continuum of universal history that Deasy subscribes to; this is the "nightmare" from which Stephen is "trying to awake."<sup>20</sup> As numerous critics have noted, Deasy's is a particularly Hegelian historicism. Consider Ernst Cassirer's account of Hegel's concept of history, which illustrates a philosophy of substitution: "Even previous philosophical or teleological thinkers as for instance St. Augustine, Vico, or Herder had spoken of history as a divine revelation. But in the Hegelian system history is no mere appearance of God, but his reality: God not only 'has' history, he is history,"<sup>21</sup> and is therefore part of rather than above history. Where Deasy sees history as progress toward manifestation, Stephen replies with the sheer auditive contingency of a "shout in the street." The reflections on the "ifs" of the histories of Caesar and Pyrrhus rub against Deasy's historicist grain. In the nineteenth century, this Hegelian model of history was practiced by the likes of German historian Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886) and Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-92). Tennyson's *In Memoriam* (1850), for instance, closes with the image of "one far-off divine event, / To which the whole creation moves."<sup>22</sup> Ranke, the pioneer of "scientific" history, sought to "know the past as it really happened."<sup>23</sup> We see a similar "positivistic regard for historical facts"<sup>24</sup> in Deasy's claim that Ireland "has the honour of being the

<sup>19</sup> Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1999), 462.

<sup>20</sup> "History," Stephen says in "Nestor," "is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake." *Ulysses*, 28.

<sup>21</sup> Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1946), 262.

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Gifford, 39.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Fairhall, 2 and Benjamin, *SW* Vol. 4, 391.

<sup>24</sup> Karen Lang, *Chaos and Cosmos: On the Image in Aesthetics and Art History* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2006), 175.

only country which never persecuted the jews...because she never let them in."<sup>25</sup> Of course, the facts aren't always facts, but statements that feed a Unionist politics rooted in a narrative of racial and economic "progress." Deasy's historicism, which empathizes with the victor, is an approach that, as Benjamin claims, "invariably benefits the current rulers," creating an empty, homogenous historical narrative of "overcoming" rather than of true "remembrance."<sup>26</sup> Stephen's counter-method is, as Seamus Deane observes, "hostile to fact, to what has happened, to the restriction which the past has placed upon possibility,"<sup>27</sup> to a history written by the victors. As Benjamin would argue, to articulate the past historically "does not mean recognizing it 'the way it really was.' It means appropriating a memory as it flashes up in a moment of danger."<sup>28</sup> The past is not a static space of recollection. Rather, "the true image of the past flits by" and can only be "seized as an image that flashes up at the moment of its recognizability, and is never seen again."<sup>29</sup> The "true" image of the past is as ephemeral in *Ulysses* as a shout in the street. The task for Benjamin, as it is for Stephen, will be to extract a truth from the past by returning to what the present has left behind, to what Karen Lang describes in her reading of Benjamin's critique as the "bodies, objects, feelings and memories left behind in the sanctioned narratives of history." But to do so, we must likewise return to the material conditions of the production of such images.<sup>30</sup>

The material conditions of the late nineteenth-century narrative of historicism as progress are rooted in the technological and economy-driven methods of instrumental rationalization, what Joyce shrewdly terms "the idols of the marketplace." The increasing reification, standardization, and rationalization of time developed in accord with the rise of urbanization and global capitalism at the end of the nineteenth century. Time became particularly reified in Germany, with the importation of 12 million watches for a German population of 52 million in the 1890s, as noted by the German historian Karl Lamprecht.<sup>31</sup> In 1903, the German sociologist George Simmel saw this "universal diffusion of pocket watches" as exemplary of an economic and social reality that forces the individual into an antagonistic relationship with "the external culture and technique of life."<sup>32</sup> Accompanying

<sup>25</sup> *Ulysses*, 31.

<sup>26</sup> Benjamin, "On the Concept of History," 391.

<sup>27</sup> Seamus Deane, "Retrospective Review," *James Joyce Broadsheet* 4 (February 1981), 1.

<sup>28</sup> Benjamin, "On the Concept of History," 391.

<sup>29</sup> Benjamin, "On the Concept of History," 390.

<sup>30</sup> Lang, 177.

<sup>31</sup> Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983), 110.

<sup>32</sup> Georg Simmel, "the Metropolis and Mental Life," *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* (New York: Free Press, 1976), 11.

this wearing of public time, or time as prosthetic device, was the railroad companies' standardization (or homogenization) of time zones in England and the United States in 1880 and 1883, respectively; Germany followed suit in 1893. The rise of the telegraph came to bear on the morning of July 1, 1913, when the Eiffel Tower sent the first time signal around the Western world, effectively establishing an electronic network that made a global time standard.<sup>33</sup> As Mary Ann Doane claims, such methods of standardization can be traced to the rationalization and organization of industrialized labor at the turn of the century, with the emergence of the punch-card machine in 1890 and the subsequent rise of Taylorism, which was rooted in the study of human labor motions. Fordism simply extended these practices into a more highly developed mechanization of human labor.<sup>34</sup>

These methods of instrumental rationalization, felt both in the temporal operations mentioned above as well as in urban spatial reorganizations, such as Haussmann's Second Empire Reforms of Paris, characterize an infrastructure of uniformity and homogeneity that dominated technological progress at the turn of the century. As Doane notes, forms of recording and measuring time labor, such as Taylor's use of stop watches and Frank B. Gilbreth's cyclographs (which used curves of light to represent labor movements abstracted from the workers themselves) created an "epistemological conundrum" around issues of the representability of time. This dilemma is exemplified in the vacillating uses of graphic inscription and chronophotography by physiologist Etienne-Jules Marey, who alternately sought the continuous movements and the decomposition of static states of bodies in time. As Anson Rabinbach explains, Marey's studies were intended to unlock the secrets of human labor power much like Gilbreth's cyclographs.<sup>35</sup> The obsession with representing and reifying time and movement at the close of the century was always-already linked to economic interests in labor efficiency. Thus, the image of Benjamin's "flash of recognition" is not only a form of aesthetic resistance to historicism, but like Stephen's refusal of Deasy's racialized Unionism, it is also a method of political resistance.

For Benjamin, the historicist narrative exemplified in such deterministic methods of "technological progress" is synonymous with the idealization of Marx's

<sup>33</sup> Kern, 14-15.

<sup>34</sup> See Mary Ann Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive* (Cambridge, Harvard UP, 2002), 6-7 and David Harvey's chapters on Fordism and flexible accumulation in *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

<sup>35</sup> Anson Rabinbach, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 84.



secularized "messianic time," the end of which would be a classless society. For rationalism, as Siegfried Gideon explains, has linked the "advance of science with social progress and the perfectibility of man" since the eighteenth century. By the late nineteenth century, faith in progress is replaced by a belief in production.<sup>36</sup> Rather than equating these terms (progress and production), Benjamin understands them dialectically. He claims that once Germany's Social Democratic party defined the Marxist endgame as an "infinite task, the empty and homogenous time was transformed into an anteroom...in which one could wait for the emergence of the revolutionary situation with more or less equanimity."<sup>37</sup> The implicit movement toward the possible in revolution was effectively replaced with the static image of a waiting room. Instead of a historical model of "overcoming," which always privileges the victors, Benjamin calls for a method that would envision each past moment as imbued with "revolutionary chance." The potential of the dialectical image, which he defines in 1940 as the "involuntary memory of a redeemed humanity," is one envisioned in its movement and ephemeral appearance through history's gaps and fissures. As he writes in the "Paralipomena to 'On the Concept of History'" (1940):

Marx says that revolutions are the locomotive of world history. But perhaps it is quite otherwise. Perhaps revolutions are an attempt by the passengers on this train—namely, the human race—to activate the emergency brake.<sup>38</sup>

The gaps, fissures, and disruptions that Benjamin saw as essential in imbuing the past and present with their real, historical revolutionary potential share an affinity with the recorded gaps of chronophotography, whose practitioners—from Marey to Eadward Muybridge—sought to understand movement by its decomposition much like Benjamin sought to understand history by giving dates their physiognomy.<sup>39</sup> Although capitalists used chronophotography to evaluate labor efficiency, the politics of such optical studies are not so categorical.

In his "Little History of Photography" (1931), Benjamin connects his familiar interrogation of time with those of movement when he writes:

While it is impossible to give an account of how people walk, if only in

36 Siegfried Giedion, *Mechanization Takes Command: A Contribution to Anonymous History* (New York: Norton, 1948), 31.

37 Benjamin, "Paralipomena to 'On the Concept of History,'" *SW* Vol. 4, 402.

38 Ibid. 402-3.

39 "To write history means giving calendar dates their physiognomy." Benjamin, "Central Park," *SW* Vol. 4, 165.

the most inexact way, all the same we know nothing definite of the positions involved in the fraction of a second when a step is taken.<sup>40</sup>

As Michael Jennings claims, the essay refers silently to the motion studies of Muybridge, whose chronophotographic projects produce a quite different effect from Marey's.<sup>41</sup> Whereas Marey's graphic inscriptions reveal an interest in the "representability of the unknowable instant,"<sup>42</sup> Muybridge's separately framed images highlight the time lapses between frames, what Benjamin calls "the optical unconscious." Unlike Muybridge, Marey used a single camera to pose his subjects within a single frame. To draw ever nearer to the unknowable instant, Marey's chronophotographs, unlike Muybridge's, blur and superimpose multiple images of the same subject within a single frame. Where Muybridge presented solid and opaque figures in juxtaposition, Marey turned to increasingly abstract methods of representation to illustrate abstract movements divorced from the details of the body.<sup>43</sup> His turn to geometric chronophotography in the mid-1880s produced lines and curves of light against a black background, much like those produced by Gilbreth's labor studies. Marey's investment in the ever reducible representation of movement corresponded with his disinterest in the synthesis of movement, as is demonstrated by his cutting up of moving film stills into fixed chronophotographic plates. Cinematography is of course predicated on the illusory absence of temporal gaps or continuity. Marey's interest in the study of movement and its decomposition is, unlike the cinema, predicated on those interstices between windows in the disk shutter. He acknowledged that technology would be required to approach the true form of a movement through space, which "escapes the eye."<sup>44</sup> In this sense, his studies speak to the constitutive futility of the project to represent the unknowable gaps that make time legible at all, the gaps that go unacknowledged in the linear narrative of historicist time.

Hauser's claim might then undergo a revision: Joyce's spatialization of

40 Quoted in Doane, 46.

41 Michael W. Jennings, "Photography," *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, eds. Michael W. Jennings, Brigit Doherty, and Thomas Levin, trans. Edmund Jephcott, Rodney, et al. (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2008), 264-5.

42 Doane, 9.

43 On the differences between Muybridge and Marey, as well as their influences on modernist painting, see Tom Gunning, "Never Seen This Picture Before: Muybridge in Multiplicity," from Philip Prodigious, *Muybridge and the Instantaneous Photography Movement* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003), 222-258 and Marta Braun, *Picturing Time: The Work of Etienne-Jules Marey (1830-1904)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

44 Giedion, 21. See also Marta Braun, *Picturing Time: The Work of Etienne-Jules Marey (1830-1904)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

time is not so much cinematic as it is chronophotographic. Following Benjamin's claim that we hardly know what "really goes on between hand and metal," he notes that "the camera intervenes with resources of its lowerings and liftings, its interruptions and isolations, its extensions and accelerations, its enlargement and reductions. The camera introduces us to unconscious optics as does psychoanalysis to unconscious impulses."<sup>45</sup> Benjamin would later comment on the magical dialectic between the precision of portrait photography and its depthlessness, its ability pass on the image or person photographed.<sup>46</sup> His analysis is of course largely informed by Siegfried Kracauer's influential 1927 essay on photography. Kracauer's analysis begins with the observation that "historicism thinking emerged at about the same time as did modern photographic technology," as surfaces supplanted deep engagement with its subjects in both fields. In an oft-quoted metaphor, Kracauer writes, "the flood of photographs sweeps away the dam of memories": the constitutive reproduction and mass dissemination of the photograph replaces the meaningful fragments of memory with a "jumble...of garbage."<sup>47</sup> Representation is, for the first time, predicated on a nearly intentionless process of "an unthought and mechanical recording."<sup>48</sup> We see this unselective framing of contingency in Marey's work to inform us not of the subject, but of its motions abstracted from the individual self. As a reaction to the reconstitution of time and space under the models of historical and technological progress at the turn of the century, such methods of abstraction return us to the impersonal narrative of "Ithaca," at which this paper began and will conclude.

The question posed in "Ithaca" of Stephen's "auditive sensation" is introduced in the oft-cited philosophical experiment of "Proteus." Wondering whether the world will carry on if he makes himself blind to it, Stephen shuts his eyes only to encounter the "ineluctable modality of the audible," the field of hearing through which the visible subsides. As Maud Ellmann has recently noted, the "crackling" beneath Stephen's boots in "Proteus" stages the visible and audible as "rival modalities competing for supremacy." Critics often point to the Aristotelian overtones of the passage to demonstrate the gap between the substance of Stephen's perceived world and the "coloured bodies," the forms and colors of the perceptual images, or the "signatures" of spiritual identities, as the German mystic Jakob Boehme would have it. Joyce's allusion to Boehme's separation between modalities and "true sub-

45 Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zorn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 237.

46 Benjamin, "Little History of Photography," *The Work of Art*, 274-298.

47 Siegfried Kracauer, "Photography," trans. Thomas Levin, *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Spring 1993), 421-36.

48 Doane, 63.

stances" represents a gap between Stephen's world perceived and the outer "world without end." The rejection of sight staged in "Proteus" dramatizes this gap, only to give way to the secondary sense of hearing so as to see what is unperceivable by the eye, a sort of supplement to the novel's optical unconscious. As Aristotle argues in *On Sense and the Sensible*, the ear "participates in (and thus can modify) the substance of what it hears, but the eye does not." While Stephen emphasizes the physicality of the concrete outer world, the earliest extant version of "Proteus" underlines the notion of "thought through my eyes" through a rejection of vision proper: "My eyes do not see it: they think it rather than see."<sup>49</sup> To come into contact with the noumenal, as Marey had so hoped, Stephen recognizes the necessity of blindness, the rejection of eyesight for the sake of vision, an alternative model of perception for an alternative temporality.

When Bloom finally arrives home, the "ineluctable modalities" of vision and hearing collapse into the omniscience of a narrator out of time, the voice of "Ithaca." In a letter to Frank Budgen, Joyce referred to the episode as the "ugly duckling of Ulysses" for its technical, pseudo-scientific style.<sup>50</sup> As Karen Lawrence describes it, "Ithaca" is "an anatomy of a chapter: it offers us an outline of events. Instead of the suspense of a linear plot, it advances direct questions and answers; instead of the human voice of a narrative persona, it offers a catalogue of cold, hard facts."<sup>51</sup> The episode's "retrospective arrangement" follows Joyce's promise that the episode would allow the reader to resolve all events into "their cosmic, physical, psychical etc. equivalents" and know "everything and know it in the baldest and coldest way." This filling-in of the novel's many gaps is certainly an ironic one, for the episode presents a catechistic exchange predicated on a sort of chronophotographic, paratactic narrative that threatens to go on forever. It tellingly closes with an unanswered question: "Where?" Bloom's physical location and trajectory is left open, as is the location of the reader. If, as Lawrence claims, the hero of Joyce's epic is the reader for traversing the vast and rocky terrain of stylistic experimentation and fragmented narrative, "Where?" asks us to situate ourselves in a an episode that "amasses facts with no regard for normal conventions of significance and relevance."<sup>52</sup> The absence of a prioritizing structure in "Ithaca" has led numer-

49 Quoted in Ellmann, 384, Draft of the "Proteus" episode of *Ulysses* (1917), ed. Jorn Barger, at (cont. below) <http://www.robotwisdom.com/jaj/ulysses/proteus0.html>.

50 Quoted in Frank Budgen, *James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses*, 1934 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1960), 258. As Karen Lawrence notes, Joyce told Budgen that "Ithaca" was his favorite episode (see citation below, 180).

51 Karen Lawrence, *The Odyssey of Style in Ulysses* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1981), 181.

52 Ibid.

ous critics to consider the novel as a precursor to postmodernism:<sup>53</sup> questions on the advantages of shaving at night stand on equal footing with those concerning Bloom's dead son. It seems as if the "impersonalisation" of the artist comes to its logical conclusion in the cosmically distant voice of "Ithaca." But in its closing question, "Ithaca" also aims to recover what it enacts: namely, the receding of the individual in the face of a world of endless "facts."

To seize the epiphanic moment of "Ithaca" is to blast the individual out of this sprawling, fragmented continuum. What is telling in the reversal of phenomenological registers is that this moment of identification is rooted in each character's respective modal terms, as if to grant them agency in the moment they receive each other's gaze, as if only a sort of cosmic aesthetic distance could guard them against categories of nation and race embodied in identity formation. Stephen's vision stages a dialectical model of time, one where Bloom can say earnestly, as he does in "Circe," that "Christ was a Jew like me."<sup>54</sup> This form of vision disregards linear time to create an image out of a dialectic of past and present, "wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation."<sup>55</sup> Quasisimultaneity is staged here as a mode of resistance to the chronological and historical division of past and present, as Stephen's sublimated Roman Catholic rearing resurfaces to see the messiah not in the distant past nor in a promised future, but in the "now of recognizability."<sup>56</sup> Counter to the historicist and cinematographic staging of excess contingency critiqued by Benjamin and Kracauer, respectively, here memory is illumined in a flash in which meaning is located amid an episode whose form is rather contiguous with what Virginia Woolf might call the "orts, scraps, and fragments" of modernity.<sup>57</sup>

Joyce cannot re-stage history altogether, but he can silence his characters to hear their impressions, and he can turn the lights out to see them again. For as Bloom enters bed toward the end of "Ithaca," he does not see but feels: "a human form, female, hers, the imprint of a human form, male, not his, some crumbs, some flakes of potted meat, recooked, which he removed." Darkness sets the stage for the hypothetical: "If he had smiled why would he have smiled?"<sup>58</sup> In the end, our

53 See Lawrence, as well as Kevin Dettmar, *The Illicit Joyce of Postmodernism: Reading Against the Grain* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1996).

54 *Ulysses*, 280.

55 Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 462.

56 Benjamin, "Paralipomena to 'On the Concept of History,'" *SW* Vol. 4, 405.

57 Virginia Woolf, *Between the Acts*, 1941 (New York: Harvest, 1970), 186, 187, 190, 213.

58 *Ulysses*, 601.

eyes and ears are shut to experience the "actuality of the possible as possible."<sup>59</sup>

59 *Ibid.* 21.