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Recovering the Common Sense of High Modernism: Embodied Cognition and the Novels of Joyce, Faulkner, and Woolf

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ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that the popular characterization of high modernist fiction as esoteric, elitist, uncommunicative, and far too difficult for the common reader obscures the democratic principles at the heart of modernist experimentation and its poetics of difficulty. Recent theories of embodied cognition when applied to representative examples of high modernist novels help dispel the myth of inaccessibility and reveal the many ways in which these works actually accommodate the common reader. Once the stigma of inaccessibility is removed from the study of modernist novels, it becomes possible to see how their formal experiments with language as well as the themes and issues they contain operate for readers and writers alike as a means of exploring everyday cognitive activities and responses. To this end, the concept of cognitive dissonance provides a heuristic device for understanding what lies behind the motivations of writers who aestheticise experiences of dissonance in their texts and the responses of readers who confront these texts. This cognitive approach to modern literature challenges assumptions about high modernism's "uncompromising intellectuality" and replaces them with a view of modernism that is more accessible and inclusive without diminishing its radical difficulty. It also paves the way for new readings of highly canonical modernist fiction. For instance, I examine how James Joyce places "inscribed" readers into *Ulysses* to guide actual readers through some of the difficulties of the novel. I then read William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* as a novel that both thematises and formally resists the modern threat of behaviouristic human conditioning. Finally, I look at how the theme and form of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* reinforce the embodied equation of dissonance with illness and incompletion.

Cette thèse propose que la caractérisation populaire de la fiction moderne avancée, ésotérique, élitiste, incommunicative, est bien trop difficile pour le "lecteur commun." En effet, elle cache les principes démocratiques qui sont au coeur de l'expérimentation moderniste et de sa difficulté poétique. Des théories récentes de cognition interne, quand elles sont appliquées à des exemples qui sont représentatifs des romans du modernisme avancé, aident à faire dissiper le mythe de leurs inaccessibilités et facilitent la lecture de ces oeuvres au lecteur commun. Au moment ou le stigma de l'inaccessibilité est enlevé de l'étude des romans modernistes, il devient possible de voir comment leurs expérimentations soignées de la langue, de même que les thèmes et questions contenus dans ces romans, fonctionnent comme un moyen d'explorer les activités et les réactions ordinaires pour le lecteur et l'écrivain. A ce point, le concept de dissonance cognitive

fournit un mécanisme heuristique afin d'expliquer les motivations des écrivains qui esthétisent les expériences de dissonance dans leurs textes et ce, pour faire comprendre les réactions des lecteurs. Cette proposition cognitive pour la littérature moderniste défie les suppositions de "l'intellectualité intransigeante" de modernisme avancé et les remplace avec un point de vue qui est plus accessible et global sans diminuer pour autant sa difficulté radicale. Ainsi, cette proposition cognitive prépare le chemin pour des lectures diverses de cette littérature moderne hautement canonique. Par exemple, dans ma thèse, j'examine comment James Joyce y mets des lecteurs "internes" dans *Ulysses* pour guider les lecteurs actuels et pour les aider avec les difficultés du roman. Ensuite, je discute comment le roman *The Sound and the Fury* de William Faulkner résiste, et en même temps, utilise comme thème le menace moderne du conditionnement humaine. Et enfin, j'explore la manière que le thème et la forme de *Mrs. Dalloway* de Virginia Woolf renforce l'équation incorporée de dissonance avec la maladie et l'inachèvement.

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For Jennifer (the one who knows)

We two will rise, and sit, and walk together,
Under the roof of blue Ionian weather,
And wander in the meadows, or ascend
The mossy mountains, where the blue heavens bend
With the lightest winds, to touch their paramour,
Or linger, where the pebble-paven shore,
Under the quick faint kisses of the sea
Trembles and sparkles as with ecstasy,--
Possessing and possest by all that is
Within that calm circumference of bliss,
And by each other, till to love and live
Be one (6.6.99)

CONTENTS

Yes, because to be treated as a boy was to be taken on the old footing. I had become a new person; and those who knew the old person laughed at me. The only man who behaved sensibly was my tailor: he took my measure anew every time he saw me, whilst all the rest went on with their old measurements and expected them to fit me. (Bernard Shaw, *Man and Superman*)

Introduction

One way to distinguish between the authentic prophet or saint from the fanatic or charlatan is this: the authentic prophet feels the anxiety about his role and the charlatan does not. (Rollo May, *Freedom and Destiny*)

Modernism is the literary movement that defined culture and the way we understand the modern world in the twentieth century. In 1923, T. S. Eliot wrote that *Ulysses* "is a book to which we are all indebted, and from which none of us can escape." Without question, *Ulysses* and other high modernist literary works produced in a ten-year period (ca.1920-1930) have come to define what we now know as literary modernism. Consequently, it would not be an overstatement to claim that the period of literary high modernism was and continues to be the benchmark of twentieth-century literature.[1] It seems peculiar, then, that the fiction and poetry of such an influential literary movement should be characterised as esoteric, elitist, uncommunicative, and far too difficult for the common reader.[2] I argue, on the other hand, that these widespread assumptions about modernism falsely obscure the democratic principles at the heart of modernist experimentation and its poetics of difficulty. In the chapters that follow, I will attempt to show how recent theories of embodied cognition when applied to representative examples of high modernist novels help dispel the myth of inaccessibility and reveal the many ways in which these works actually accommodate the common reader. This cognitive approach also paves the way for new readings of highly canonical modernist fiction. I am especially interested in exploring how high modernist poetics anticipate cognitive science's response to psychological behaviourism and how the theories of cognitive science can thus be applied to high modernist works to provide new methodologies for studying literary modernism.

Once the stigma of inaccessibility is removed from the study of modernist novels, it becomes possible to see how their formal experiments with language as well as the themes and issues they contain operate for readers and writers alike as a means of exploring everyday cognitive activities and responses. I focus in particular on how disturbing poetics--which consciously problematise reception--derive significance from a background of automatic and conventional perception and linguistic practices that most readers bring to the text. To this end, the concept of cognitive dissonance provides a heuristic device for understanding what lies behind both the motivations of writers who aestheticise experiences of dissonance in their texts and the responses of readers who confront these texts. This cognitive approach to modernist literature challenges assumptions about high

modernism's "uncompromising intellectuality" and replaces them with a view of modernism that is more accessible and inclusive without diminishing its radical difficulty.

In "Part One: Cartography," I map out the central issues and problems that my project addresses as well as the methodological commitments and influences that inform my work. The first chapter introduces and defines key concepts such as the idea of cognitive "readiness" and "cognitive dissonance," and subsequently relates these to similar theoretical approaches to modernist effects like Brechtian alienation and Formalist defamiliarisation. I argue that modernist aesthetics are essentially an aesthetics of cognitive dissonance designed to disturb conventional reading practices and force readers to attend to cognitive operations that are taken for granted in their day-to-day routines. That modernist works are designed to break conditioned habits is not a new idea; however, the concept of cognitive dissonance and what it theoretically entails provides a richer explanation of how this aesthetic disruption actually works. I argue that experimental modern texts not only make readers consciously aware of their interpretive strategies and problematise their rote habits of perception, but that they reinvest habits with increased flexibility. Rather than destroy and replace worn-out habits, then, modernist difficulty dialogically challenges, temporarily subverts, and reinforces old habits in new, more consciously attuned and flexible ways. In this way I hope to temper the radical rhetoric that continues to mischaracterise literary modernism.

I then offer a brief review of the history and development of cognitive science as well as a detailed analysis of the branch of cognitive science that theorises embodied cognition. I discuss its main proponents and the central arguments of their research in a way that suggestively anticipates how a theory of cognitive embodiment can open up literary modernism to new readers and new insights while providing substantive support for already existing views of modernism. Finally, I establish links between embodied cognition and some of the foundational assumptions about modern literature. The chapter ends with a discussion of phantom limb sensation and the experience of parallax--examples which show how embodied cognitive processes perform compensatory functions that unite the physiological body with human cognitive operations. Both examples confirm the human mind's predisposition toward homeostasis and achieving equilibrium when confronted with cognitively dissonant experiences. Locating these responses in the "normal" everyday functioning of the human body helps to establish the origin of an embodied sense of cognition and see how the management of gaps in physiological experience provides an explanatory model for our desire to fill in gaps in cognitive experience.

In my second chapter, I introduce the idea of modernist difficulty and create a genealogy of reception and influence of specific defining characteristics of modernism that have contributed to the idea of modernism's inaccessibility and elitism. I locate the roots of this mischaracterisation in early responses to modernist aesthetics and a forgotten debate which took place in 1929 between writers from the journals *transition* and *The Modern Quarterly*. Then I situate my work within the field of reader response criticism and reception aesthetics. The difficulty of high modernist literature transfers much of the burden of textual signification to readers and in doing so intentionally foregrounds their roles in the process of literary communication. I provide a summary of audience-oriented scholarship, focusing on the ways in which certain practitioners and their methodologies have influenced my own approach to literary reception.

I also propose that the theory of embodied cognition is an effective means of pushing reader response criticism past the practical impasses that have threatened to undermine its value as an explanatory tool since its inception. Moreover, I argue against the belief that the desire to fill in interpretive gaps and supplement indeterminate literary experiences is culturally defined or based on conventional institutional practices. Instead, picking up where the previous chapter left off, I claim that the desire to complete is an embodied response based on instinctual impulses for biological survival that have been adapted from nonaesthetic physiological purposes to conceptual acts of aesthetic interpretation. Human homeostasis, then, provides the analogic model for the cognitive desire to achieve harmony in the face of dissonant experiences. The argument that interpretive reading is motivated by an embodied predilection for completion is unabashedly humanistic in its tone and universalising in its scope. To lend credence to the claim of universality, I review examples taken from the history of literary criticism and other related disciplines that express similar compulsions to read holistically.

The remainder of the chapter recounts the rise of American behaviourist psychology in the first half of the twentieth century. I argue that the behaviourist attempt to reduce all human activity to stimulus-response formulae without concern for the role of consciousness posed a distinct threat to modern society and culture. The manifestation of the behaviourist threat in popular culture precipitated, at least in part, innovations in the modernist aesthetics of the 1920s, just as the reductive threat of behaviourism's psychological counterpart led to the development of cognitive neuroscience. The modernist aesthetics of cognitive dissonance provided resistance against the reductive interpretations of human behaviour characterised by the psychological behaviourism because the disruptive energy of dissonance forced conscious awareness back into habitual responses. I also note, however, that behaviourism provided these same

modernists with a theoretical model to help them predict and thereby exploit readers' responses to their experimental aesthetics. Behaviourism, then, was both a resource and threat.

In "Part Two: Periplum," I undertake readings of representative modernist novels by James Joyce, William Faulkner, and Virginia Woolf. The title of this half of my dissertation announces the shift in focus to the practical application of theoretical positions mapped out in Part One.[3] In the chapter on James Joyce's *Ulysses*, I begin by explaining how many of the novel's dissonance-causing aesthetics prove much more accessible than previously thought because they rely on the common sense reading practices that they appear to challenge and subvert. I also suggest the three central characters of *Ulysses*--Leopold Bloom, Stephen Dedalus, and Molly Bloom--function as inscribed readers whose interpretive practices on 16 June 1904 provide actual readers with potential reading strategies for negotiating the difficulties of Joyce's experimental novel. I then turn to a representative example of difficulty--Joyce's enigmatic "U.P.:up" postcard--and examine it using insights derived from inscribed readers. I argue that Joyce exploited the conditioned script for postcard use so that the one Denis Breen receives would challenge the interpretive practices of readers. I provide a detailed history of postcard use to establish the common, everyday context relied on by the "U.P.:up" postcard for its dissonant effects. In the end, I show how confrontations with this mysterious missive throw into relief the hermeneutic challenge to readers occasioned by high modernist aesthetics and confirm the basis of such aesthetics in "common sense" reading practices.

In the chapter that follows, I explore the influence of behaviourism on William Faulkner's themes, characters, and narrative forms in *The Sound and the Fury*. I claim that Faulkner's novel and the creative processes that went into its realisation were animated by both the perceived threat of a behaviouristic world and attempts to work through experiences of cognitive dissonance. I analyse each of the novel's four sections and argue that the novel presents three central characters who are conditioned in a variety of ways and who have trouble dealing with experiences of cognitive dissonance that challenge their conditioning. Each Compson brother exhibits different signs of compulsive, automatic behaviour which idiosyncratically affects his narrative point of view and forces readers to adjust their own reading habits to negotiate these disorienting perspectives. Benjy is a completely conditioned being who lacks the mental wherewithal to understand his automatic responses; in contrast, Quentin is painstakingly aware of his compulsive behaviour. His obsession with his sister is so strong that every stimulus he experiences

invokes the cognitive script for her as a response; and Jason is a resentful, controlling presence who is compelled to maintain a personal equilibrium in his life seemingly at all costs. The aestheticised cognitive dissonance within each section and among them forces readers to recognise their own conditioned interpretive reading practices while providing them with opportunities to break free of conditioned routine--something none of Faulkner's characters is finally able to do.

In the last chapter, I shift my attention to Virginia Woolf. I analyse a cross-section of her unsystematic, often impressionistic, critical essays and her autobiographical memoir, "A Sketch of Life," to show how a predisposition for experiential closure and holistic interpretation underpins much of her nonfictional work. In most of these same works, however, Woolf recognises that the desire for wholeness can never be fully satisfied or completely eliminated--a realisation with which the characters in her novels as well as her readers are forced to struggle. I also locate within the pages of "A Sketch" what appears to be the embodied basis not only for Woolf's philosophy of life, but also for her philosophy of experimental aesthetics: namely cognitive dissonance. I follow that with a reading of Woolf's novel, *Jacob's Room*, in which the predisposition for wholeness becomes thematised and aesthetically exploited to frustrate readers in their habitualised interpretive practices. In this novel, Woolf's narrator repeatedly offers only glimpses of characters and events claiming that these fragments are all we have out of which to construct impressions. Finally, I analyse how the narrative of *Mrs. Dalloway* pits social conformity against individual expression to create a form of cognitive dissonance that is emblematic of the high modernist struggle to develop an aesthetics of dissonance that remains accessible to the common reader. I contend that the novel's main characters, Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Smith, represent two conflicting responses to the experience of dissonance in daily life--both of which are found wanting. The dissonance Woolf's characters experience is given form in the novel thereby forcing readers to experience it as they encounter Woolf's narrative experimentation. In the end, *Mrs. Dalloway* reveals that all personal actions and social conventions--including interpretive reading--are motivated by the embodied desire to reconcile cognitive dissonance which manifests itself in the novel as illness and incompletion.

A Note on Common Sense

Common sense is a strange thing. We all claim to have it or at least are credited with having it, but what does it really mean? According to the *OED*, common sense is a minimum standard: "The endowment of natural intelligence possessed by rational beings;

ordinary, normal or average understanding; the plain wisdom which is everyone's inheritance." Moreover, it is also a necessity for daily living: "Good sound practical sense; combined tact and readiness in dealing with the every-day affairs of life; general sagacity" (*OED*). Colloquially, then, common sense is just ordinary, practical good judgment, but this definition is vague and fails to say anything about what common sense is based on or how one comes to have it. The assumption seems to be that because we all have it, we know what it is and general definitions will suffice. The title of this project is "Recovering the Common Sense of High Modernism," and its principle goal is to show how common sense is the very thing that modernist difficulty, in the form of cognitive dissonance, works against and ultimately depends upon to generate aesthetic effects. Because the popular belief that high modernist fiction is far too difficult for common readers has mischaracterised literary modernism as elitist, common sense dictates that everyday readers should ignore high modernist novels and not even bother trying to read them: close the book and forget about it. This response highlights a common sensical desire to avoid the cognitive dissonance of modernist aesthetics. Common sense says that the mental struggle to understand what was intentionally made difficult is just not worth the expenditure of cognitive energy. Where is the payoff for reading difficult modernist fiction? What is the interpretive yield of frustration and uncertainty?

I have called my dissertation a recovery because it foregrounds the necessity of bringing to bear on high modernist novels the common sense used to negotiate the everyday world because it is the starting point of all aesthetic dissonance. It is no coincidence that the novels I have chosen to study--James Joyce's *Ulysses*, William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*--already recommend such an approach because each situates its protagonists and their experiences in the exigencies of the everyday. These day-in-the-life backgrounds, therefore, anchor such texts and the reading strategies needed to negotiate their challenging poetics in the domain of common sense and effectively prefigure cognitive science's return to the quotidian as a theoretical focal point. For the purposes of this project, I take common sense to mean the shared cognitive embodiment that allows individuals to think conceptually and analogically project their own experiences onto new experiences in order to understand them. The idea of common embodiment is a belief that human cognitive operations are fundamentally body-based, that is, that conceptual thinking has evolved from sensorimotor experiences and an instinctual knowledge of the human body's physiological functions. Thus the biological body is the substrate of all cognitive operations and it is what provides us with our common sense. Modernist aesthetics exploit this common frame of reference as the only way to communicate between writers

and readers who are physically absent from each other at the respective moments of creation and reception.

The shared embodiment of common sense unites individuals in a type of imagined community where members "will never know most of their fellow members or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (15).[4] This imagined community of common sense provides the basis for successful communication especially when it is textually mediated. Because it is common to all, it is the foundation upon which community is built and it moderates decision-making and attempts to reach consensus. Modernist writers, for instance, possess a common sense of how their readers will respond to their experiments and this imagined anticipation of reception is what moderates aesthetic communication. Often common sense manifests itself in the habits and routines of everyday life below the level of conscious awareness and it is closely tied up with knowledge of how things will characteristically behave.[5] The cognitive dissonance of literary modernism forces readers to confront their own common sense, that which is unconscious and taken for granted; in doing so, readers reinvest their cognitive habits with conscious awareness and a flexibility thus permitting them to adapt more easily to novel experiences. I will argue, then, that the shared need to construct harmonious reading experiences through interpretation is a clear indication of the embodied basis of common sense, and one that modernist aesthetics intentionally exploit.

I began this discussion with two typical definitions of common sense which I then modified so that common sense came to stand for the unconscious embodied cognitive abilities that all well-developed individuals possess.[6] In trying to explain common sense cognitively, I discovered that I had inadvertently returned to an obsolete definition which underpins not only our vaguer definitions, but also our folk understanding of common sense. It also has affinities with more recent notions of embodied cognition. Originally common sense was a phrase used to describe "An 'internal' sense which was regarded as the common bond or centre of the five senses, in which various impressions received were reduced to the unity of a common consciousness" (*OED*). This early definition of common sense posits it as a form of embodied ("internal") consciousness that exists in close relation to the other bodily senses from which it derives its functional capacity.

According to this definition, common sense makes it possible to question the modernist myth of inaccessibility and the accompanying rhetoric of exclusivity. Common sense implies a shared frame of reference that makes manageable the difficult aesthetics of high modernism. Ultimately, I am arguing that embodied knowledge is what makes experiences shareable in an age of uncertainty. It is a form of the most basic competence,

the common denominator on top of which rests all the more specialised competences allowing for sophisticated readings of modernist texts and difference of opinion in interpretation. From this critical perspective, high modernist novels of reputed difficulty are as open to well-developed common readers as they are to "hyper-educated" specialists.[7] Granted there will always be a spectrum of readers for novels like Joyce's *Ulysses*, just not one that excludes the common sense reader. Instead, high modernism practices an aesthetic of alienation that challenges our tolerance levels for cognitive dissonance. Simply put, high modernist aesthetics of cognitive dissonance do not prevent anyone from reading, they just make it relatively difficult to do so.

In his "Letter on Humanism," Martin Heidegger repeats a story about Heraclitus--the ancient philosopher of flux--that first appeared in Aristotle's writings and which effectively illustrates the type of common sense I am describing.[8] A group of strangers--knowing of Heraclitus's reputation as the great thinker who asserted that true wisdom and insight could only be achieved by "searching ourselves"--decide to pay a visit to him at his home to see the genius at work. When they arrive at the thinker's home, they find him standing before a stove trying to stay warm. Taken aback the group stops and stares blankly at this common sight. Heraclitus, recognising the reason for this stunned pause, addresses the group with the words, "For here too there are Gods present" (qtd. in Heidegger 237). Heidegger's gloss on this anecdote reveals what is at stake in the encounter:

> The group of unknown visitors in its inquisitive curiosity about the thinker is disappointed and puzzled at first by his abode. It believes that it must find the thinker in conditions which, contrary to man's usual way of living, show everywhere traits of the exceptional and the rare, and, therefore, the sensational. The group hopes to find through its visit with the thinker things which, at least for a time, will provide material for entertaining small talk. The strangers who wish to visit the thinker hope to see him perhaps precisely at the moment when, sunk in profound meditation, he is thinking. (237)

Instead of finding Heraclitus rapt in deep philosophical contemplation when they approach, the strangers find him warming himself before his stove.

Heidegger points out that Heraclitus isn't even baking bread or doing anything interesting with the stove except trying to keep his body warm. The image is not sensational, but commonplace: "The ordinary dull event of someone cold and standing by the stove one can find any time in his own home" (238). But herein lies the profound significance of this anecdote. Heraclitus's claim that in the everyday Gods are present

helps to locate the roots of genius in day-to-day survival. Without his body and knowledge of its needs and responses, Heraclitus cannot think his great thoughts. Survival at the biological level (trying to keep warm), then, provides the foundation for cognitive operations because of the embodied nature of conceptual thinking. In seeing the great thinker situated in the everyday, the strangers think they see the commonplace but as my dissertation argues this is the base for creating and understanding the uncommon. The anecdote would seem to suggest, what later cognitive research confirms, that in order to comprehend the innovative and original it is necessary to return to common sense, to return to the body.

NOTES

[1] For keen readers who diligently read dissertation endnotes, I need to confess that while I was drafting the first four sentences of this introduction, I had the opening sequence of Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) in mind. T. S. Eliot's quotation is from "*Ulysses*, Order, and Myth" in *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (London: Faber, 1975): 175.

[2] By common reader, I mean someone who reads using their common sense of cognitive embodiment, something we all share as a lowest common denominator for conceptual thinking.

[3] Ezra Pound used the nautical term to mean the actual geography encountered by men out sailing, rather than the way the land appears on maps or in geography primers. See Ezra Pound, "Canto LIX," *The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (New York: New Directions, 1973): 324; Ezra Pound, *ABC of Reading* (1934; New York: New Directions, 1960): 44.

[4] See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

[5] In this sense, behaviourism is an attempt to establish an empirical basis for common sense.

[6] I recognise the potential inflammatory nature of using such universalising claims and I am wary of their pernicious implications. At the same time, I also feel the need to explore what is common about the cognitive capacities of readers and how these capacities allow us to share experiences.

[7] This is a phrase suggested by Dr. Miranda Hickman to describe the type of reader for whom it is incorrectly assumed modernist literature was designed.

[8] Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," trans. Edgar Lohner, *The Existentialist Tradition*, ed. Nino Languilini (1947; Garden City, N Y: Doubleday, 1971): 204-45.

PART ONE: CARTOGRAPHY

Chapter One: Cognitive Science and Literary Modernism

As the births of living creatures at first are ill-shapen, so are all innovations, which are the births of time. . . . It is true, that what is settled by custom, though it be not good, yet at least it is fit; and those things which have long gone together are as it were confederate within themselves; whereas new things piece not so well; but though they help by their utility, yet they trouble by their inconformity. (Francis Bacan "Of Innovations" *Essays*)

Understanding the unusual is simple--a slight extension of understanding the obvious. (Mark Turner, *Reading Minds*)

I. The State of Readiness

"The readiness is all," Hamlet tells Horatio, and what he says about his particular circumstances equally applies to the reception of high modernist fiction. In the face of uncertainty, the unfamiliar, and quite possibly the unknowable, Hamlet expresses a self-confident conviction that he is cognitively prepared to respond effectively and assertively to any situation. Specifically, he reconciles himself to the inevitability of death: "It if be now, 'tis / not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it / be not now, yet it will come" (5.2.218-220). Hamlet lets Horatio know that he is prepared for death and will not be taken by surprise by it--he stoically accepts that his fate is beyond his control.[1] With that in mind he can act without concern for the consequences: quite simply, it is either his time to die or it isn't. And since he cannot avoid what is every human's ultimate fate, he is determined to embrace it and act in a manner that transcends the dissonance which accompanies the fear of death.

Hamlet's statement indicates that he has reached a state of cognitive readiness where even death--the final interruption of routine--cannot deter him. It is this readiness that cognitive scientists describe as the key to a balanced state of mind and the survival of the species.[2] Cognitive readiness is the product of probability and expectation, oriented by

the likelihood that an event will occur. Readiness is a preparation for anticipated stimuli and this preparation involves making accessible the cognitive scripts which contain options for response. In turn, this readiness effectively minimises the surprise or dissonance experienced by an organism when confronted by unfamiliar situations or contradictory thoughts. Readiness is essential to smooth adjustments and the maintenance of a functional state of equilibrium. Habitual activities of daily life, for instance, such as walking, talking, and reading are, often unconsciously, in a constant state of readiness because the cognitive scripts for these operations are frequently called into action and must be immediately accessible when they are needed.[3]

For Hamlet, his readiness marks a significant shift in attitude. He will not be caught off guard or paralysed into inaction by the contingencies of life. His readiness-for-action amounts to a marshalling of the cognitive scripts he anticipates he will need in order to avoid the shock of dissonance and deal with any succession of events no matter how harmful to his person. In terms of cognitive studies, Hamlet displays what each of us enacts everyday in the course of our daily lives. Readiness is an ability to adapt and retool responses according to a repertoire of analogous and easily accessible alternatives. One of the reasons why Hamlet has been unable to act is because the situations in which he finds himself do not fit the conditioned formulae that he feels are necessary for agency. For instance, the dumb play does not catch the king's conscience and prove his guilt with enough certainty to act, nor can Hamlet kill the King while he is at prayer for fear of sending Claudius to heaven. Instead he postpones acting, waiting for an opportunity that is not qualified by the subjectivity of interpretation (reading Claudius's physiognomy in response to the play-within-the-play) or coloured by the possibility of redemption. His assertion of readiness is his break from the constraints of finding the perfect moment to act and it is also a break with the supposed reliability of behaviourist conditioning.

None of Hamlet's past experiences has prepared him for the present situation. If he wants to act he must adapt his knowledge and conditioning by translating it metaphorically and conceptually to apply to novel and unexpected situations so that "the readiness" does indeed become "all." What Hamlet needs to avoid at all costs is moments of hesitation caused by indecision. Any dissonance where there is a threat to cognitive consistency or comprehension which then cannot be easily resolved threatens not only his agency, but his life. Up until this point, the dissonance of the conflicting imperatives of a retributive warrior ethos and the enlightened rationalism of his Wittenburg education has prevented him from avenging his father's murder. Readiness provides Hamlet with

the confidence to handle whatever dreams may or may not come "When we have shuffled off this mortal coil" (3.1.66-68).

Before taking leave of the Prince of Denmark, I want to focus on the lines "the thousand natural shocks / That flesh is heir to" (3.1.63-64). Hamlet is describing the multiple experiences of dissonance that we are forced to negotiate in our everyday activities:

> the whips and scorns of time,
> Th' oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
> The pangs of disprized love, the law's delay,
> The insolence of office, and the spurns
> That patient merit of th' unworthy takes
> (3.1.71-75)

Hamlet calls dissonance the "natural shocks" that all humans are "heir to." His observation resonates with current cognitive research and also blurs the distinction between everyday dissonance and life-threatening dissonance--something that has profound implications for identifying the relationship between literary dissonance and survival strategies. Hamlet seems on the verge of recognizing that our bodies and minds work in tandem to reduce and eliminate all forms of dissonance that threaten everyday biological and mental functioning. These daily struggles of survival, I argue, inform our analyses of literature and language because all are, theoretically speaking, "acts of a human brain in a human body in a human environment which that brain must make intelligible if it is to survive" (vii-viii).[4] In other words, our survival depends upon reconciling imbalance and we are hard-wired by default mechanisms to do just that, whether the imbalance takes the form of injured flesh or mental confusion. Hamlet's assertion of readiness brings to conscious attention the operations that ordinarily function unconsciously.

The type of readiness-for-action that Hamlet articulates depends on the accessibility of cognitive scripts considered relevant to the situation at hand. Scripts are stored clusters of knowledge derived from lived experience and conceptual understanding that, when evoked, provide contextual frames of reference that make decisions and responses more economical and less cognitively burdensome. The relations among items within a script and the general information that a script provides are conceptually transferable and applicable to novel or analogous contexts. These relations, I will argue, are also strongly metonymic--a feature modernist poetics successfully exploit for aesthetic effect. Scripts generate "entailments" or inferential consequences which help constrain responses and

potential meanings to novel stimuli (15-18).[5] In other words, scripts provide a form of readiness where the slight mention of a characteristic feature or situation cognitively prepares the script to reduce processing time and speed up reaction time to the situation at hand.

This responsiveness is essential to the survival of the species. An easily recognizable visual signifier, for instance, can cue the body to ready itself for quick response. Imagine you are standing in line at a bank, mid-afternoon, on a hot July day, and a man walks in wearing a bulky, oversized trench coat. This is an innocent enough image, but one does not need to have frequent paranoid delusions to start processing the script for bank robbery alongside the script for strange fashion choice for the middle of the summer. The peculiarity of this image both physically and mentally orients your attention. You watch the man, searching his mannerisms, his movements, and his facial expressions for any additional sign to confirm one of the scripts that his appearance has elicited. In this way you are preparing yourself for your next move, trying to anticipate the actions that will be needed to respond to the confirmation of either script. What you are doing, like Hamlet in the example above, is eliminating as much as possible the element of surprise which potentially threatens to paralyse you even momentarily.

Surprises can be both threatening and thrilling, and they initiate the release of adrenalin to prepare the body for fight or flight. Surprises can cost you your life or interrupt the successful completion of a task you have set for yourself. As such, we try to eliminate surprises from our daily activities because they are cognitively dissonant. In fiction, writers aestheticise the dissonance of surprise, but at most what is threatened in the quasi-autonomous space of literature is clear communication. But the same principles that hold in life hold in art because both have a basis in bodily perception and sensorimotor activity. Scripts provide us with expectations and help structure anticipatory responses to stimuli in our environment. In this sense they are future oriented and derived from the experiential past; or, in the language of phenomenology, scripts are the sources of experiential protension and retension. In "Tradition and the Individual Talent," T. S. Eliot describes the introduction of novel works into the literary canon in terms analogous to how cognitive scripts function:

> The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new. (38-39)[6]

Each time a script is used it becomes modified by its application and every new situation then transfers new associations and features to that script. In this way a script's elements are constantly adapting to new potentially dissonant situations and simultaneously being adapted by those same situations for future use.

For my purposes, I have adopted Schank and Abelson's term "scripts" to refer to the organised yet malleable frameworks of stored knowledge that others have elsewhere called frames, scenarios, categories, clusters, and schemas.[7] Cognitive scripts are the means by which we store and organise knowledge that is easily accessible through metonymic cues and adaptable for use in other experience domains through metaphorical mappings. Common scripts are shared to the extent that they represent typical situations and objects. They are conventionally or socially fixed, but also modifiable. A cognitive script can be composed of many different items nuanced according to individual experience, but the more general and recognizable attributes, characters, and actions contained within or associated with a script need to be commonly shared because they are the very things which define a particular script and make it relevant in specific situations.

The notion of a cognitive script that I am using combines the key ideas contained within the following two definitions. According to Perry Thorndyke, a schema is

> a cluster of knowledge representing a particular generic procedure, object, percept, event, sequence of events, or social situation. This cluster provides a skeleton structure for a concept that can be "instantiated," or filled out, with the detailed properties of the particular instance being represented. (qtd. in Johnson 19)

The idea of instantiation is important because I want to argue that calling into action of specific scripts works metonymically so that reference to one or more of the definitive qualities or features of a script will ready it and call it to mindfulness. Typical scripts consist of both parts and relations. The parts can include entities such as people, props, descriptive object features, events, sources, and goals, while the relations can be causal, functional, part-whole, temporal, and spatial (Johnson 28).

Scripts provide filler for gaps and often supply background context and detail to foregrounded references. The relationship of background script to foregrounded detail is that of unconscious thought to conscious thought. For Schank and Abelson,

> [a] script is a structure that describes appropriate sequences of events in a particular context. A script is made up of slots and requirements about what can fill those slots. The structure is an interconnected whole, and what is in one slot affects what can be in another. Scripts handle stylized everyday

> situations. They are not subject to much change, nor do they provide the apparatus for handling totally novel situations. Thus, a script is a predetermined, stereotyped sequence of actions that defines a well-known situation. (41)

Schank and Abelson restrict the flexibility of cognitive scripts more than I would like; however, they do point to the conventional entrenchment of common scripts. The idea of slotting information is too rigid for the way the mind functions as it suggests a type of inflexible conditioning. Instead, cognitive scripts need to be seen as dynamic processes of interacting information on a variety of levels. There is a dynamic of interchangeability and cross-referencing among script elements that the type of round peg-round hole slotting Schank and Abelson propose cannot accommodate. Their definition of a script seems closer to the rigidity of a template which is eternally fixed, whereas I've been suggesting that cognitive scripts, as shared communal apparatuses, provide a flexible stability for guiding cognitive responses based on conventional use.

Although it is possible to ignore a script, it is next to impossible to block a script from readying itself in the mind. Once it has been automatically triggered its associative pathways and connections remain ready to supply information. Scripts then can act as vast fields of background knowledge that are accessed only indirectly, but still give significance to what is focused on, just as gestaltic figure-ground relations coexist in a dialogic relationship. Often we are not even aware of the presence of an informing script. If it is not used it simply subsides and is replaced by scripts more relevant to the demands of specific cognitive operations. Following Mark Johnson's work on schemata, I conceive of cognitive scripts as "*structures for organizing* our experience and comprehension" (29) and in this sense they strongly resemble interpretive methodologies. Scripts make it possible to understand various new phenomena because they are figuratively extendable and adaptable at the same time as being capable of constraining inferences and orienting understanding.

II. Cognitive Dissonance

Since the concept of cognitive dissonance is so central to my arguments, I want to turn briefly to its origins. In the late 1950s, there appeared in the field of psychology a number of theories of cognitive consistency developed to help explain human behaviour. These theories "were proposed under various names, such as balance, congruity, symmetry, dissonance, but all had in common the notion that the person behaves in a

way that maximizes the internal consistency of his cognitive system" (Newcomb xv).[8] The basic assumption behind most of these studies is that contradictory or inconsistent cognitions cause individuals discomfort and produce tension, which in turn stimulates responses designed to restore balance. From this it is clear that these consistency theories were based on the biological concept of homeostasis.

Homeostasis is the human body's ability to maintain an internal state of equilibrium through the organisation of coordinated responses and a network of feedback mechanisms. An organism's continued survival depends on homeostatic adjustments to compensate for disruptive environmental changes. When a body is cold, for instance, it involuntarily shivers to generate heat, and reduces the blood flow to the extremities and body surfaces to conserve heat. Increases in heat that fall outside the normal range for body temperature cause sweating and an increase of blood flow to the extremities and surfaces to cool the body. This integrated communications system of negative feedback ensures the relative stability of an optimal state in which the body's tissues and organs can function. The human body constantly changes its temperature, its blood pressure, and the coordination of its muscular contractions in response to internal and external changes. These internal feedback mechanisms work automatically and unconsciously to keep the body's systems balanced and operational in what is effectively a constant state of readiness. Cognitive consistency theories simply took the idea of homeostasis as it applies to physiological functions and mapped it onto mental operations. Observations of this type led later cognitive theorists to conclude that in the case of interpretive reading "cognitive devices developed for survival in a nonaesthetic environment are turned to aesthetic ends" (Tsur 26).[9]

Leon Festinger is credited with coining the phrase "cognitive dissonance" and developing it into a theoretical explanation of human behaviour as an alternative to traditional behaviourism. His 1957 landmark study *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* concludes with the following claim: "If treated as precisely and specifically as possible, I believe the theory of cognitive dissonance will prove a useful explanatory and predictive device" (279).[10] The central hypothesis of his theory is that "The presence of dissonance gives rise to pressures to reduce that dissonance" and that the human organism is naturally disposed to establish internal harmony, consistency, or congruity among inconsistent or contradictory cognitions and the actions that proceed from them (263, 260). Festinger's general theory is useful for explaining the effects of modernist literature and the development of an aesthetic that challenges reception and actively engages readers through dissonant poetics. One of my main arguments is that modernist writers exploit

the "explanatory and predictive" potentials of cognitive dissonance theory and even aestheticise cognitive dissonance in the development of a uniquely modernist aesthetic.

Festinger defines cognitive dissonance broadly as "the existence of nonfitting relations among cognitions" (3). Instances of cognitive dissonance manifest themselves as mental inconsistencies and psychological discomfort. As a result, "[t]he existence of dissonance, being psychologically uncomfortable, will motivate the person to try to reduce the dissonance and achieve consonance" (3). Put simply, individuals experiencing cognitive dissonance will actively try to avoid situations and information which contribute to dissonance and search out situations and information that will help reconcile it. This helps to explain the general lack of popularity of modernist novels which are rich in cognitive dissonance; but, it also partially explains how and why critical methodologies that have contributed to the current characterisation of modernism developed. As I have said, in the physiological make-up of the human body there exists a natural inclination to avoid and reduce all types of dissonance which disrupt the smooth functioning of the organism. In this sense cognitive dissonance is not unlike physiological dissonance as it manifests itself as "hunger," "frustration," and more general experiences of "disequilibrium." The natural orientation towards greater consonance functions both mentally and physically as a habitualised response that has been reinforced through continued survival.

Festinger's research, however, is based on a very rudimentary conception of cognition as the established knowledge which informs decision-making and thinking in general: "By the term *cognition* . . . I mean any knowledge, opinion, or belief about the environment, about oneself, or about one's behaviour" (3). Festinger's definition of cognition is representative of notions of the concept prior to the cognitive revolution which began in the 1960s. Before 1970 or thereabouts, cognition was a generic term for all thinking, but lacked full and detailed explication. This lack of consideration for the complexities of human cognition is clearly the result of behaviourism's dominance. Today cognition is still used broadly to describe "any mental operations and structures that are involved in language, meaning, perception, conceptual systems, and reason" (*Philosophy* 12). However, since the 1970s the term cognition has come to include complex mental operations like comprehension and "psychological processes involved in the acquisition, organization, and use of knowledge" (Tsur 1). Cognitive science is now concerned with identifying and explaining complex mental operations, rather than burying them in the behaviourist's "black box" under the general rubric of thinking.

This discussion of terminology provides a convenient segue into the history of cognitive science, but first I want to consider two important theoretical positions which

use the concept of cognitive dissonance in literary criticism. Festinger's idea of cognitive dissonance has strong conceptual parallels with Victor Shklovsky's aesthetics of defamiliarisation and Bertolt Brecht's alienation effects. According to Festinger, cognitive inconsistencies arrest our attention "because they stand out in sharp contrast against a background of consistency" (Festinger 1). His account of how experiences of cognitive dissonance force individuals to become aware of their mental operations and question unconscious habits bears a strong resemblance to both Formalist and Brechtian theories of aesthetic estrangement.

Shklovsky defends literary defamiliarisation as a tool to bring habitualised responses to conscious appreciation.[11] The richness of his observation necessitates quoting him at length:

> The process of "algebrization," the over-automatization of an object, permits the greatest economy of perceptive effort. Either objects are assigned only one proper feature--a number, for example--or else they function as though by formula and do not even appear in cognition. . . . Habitualization devours works, clothes, furniture, one's wife, and the fear of war. "If the whole complex lives of many people go on unconsciously, then such lives are as if they had never been." And art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone *stony*. The purpose of art is to impart the sensations of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects "unfamiliar," to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. (12)

For Shklovsky, thoughtfulness--the very thing, as we will see, that behaviourists ignore in their study of human behaviour--is what restores "the sensation of life" to unthinking and habitualised actions. If consciousness does not accompany responses, then it is as if those responses never occurred.[12] The means by which to break habitualised routines and the "algebrization" of experience is through the dissonance of defamiliarisation.

Shklovsky's idea of algebrization to economise on cognitive energy parallels the concept of cognitive categorisation or script-formation that I will discuss later; however, Shklovsky's description paints a picture of everyday human life which makes it seem mechanical and thoughtless. Without question he is responding to the fear of conditioning that Ivan Pavlov's work and American behavourism promoted and made real, the relationship of which to literary modernism I explore in the next chapter. Only an aestheticised form of cognitive dissonance, one that forces individuals to stop and think

(or think differently) about the common objects and activities that have dissolved into the unperceived background of their daily routine, can recover experiences of daily life from oblivion. Shklovsky finds potential for defamiliarisation wherever conventionalised form is found or wherever repeated activities have hardened into the unconscious habit of stimulus-response. The paradox of defamiliarisation, however, is that it depends on the very thing that it attempts to undermine for its effectiveness.

Bertolt Brecht's modern theory of dramatic reception employs a mode of cognitive dissonance that he would call the dialectical tension between identification and demonstration. Brecht's source for his conception of theatrical alienation effects (*Verfremdungseffekt*) was Shklovsky's 1917 work on defamiliarisation (*ostranenie*: literally, making strange). Brecht took what Shklovsky had conceived of as an explanation for aesthetic effects in literature and developed the idea of aesthetic estrangement to promote social change. Brechtian theatre disrupts expectations and creates an arresting sense of heightened consciousness through dissonance. Brecht's experiments are, for the most part, formal; however, his aesthetics were tied up with his Socialist beliefs, and modernist experimentation simply provided Brecht with the perfect opportunity to serve his dual commitments of artistic innovation and social revolution.

He created plays based on an aesthetics of disruption and estrangement. As it is well known, Brecht's theory insisted on forcing audiences to engage critically with the performances they were watching. By removing events and people from expected contexts, Brecht "made strange" the ordinary and prevented automatic reception. Accordingly, he reasoned, "Certain events in the play--by means of inscriptions, interpolations of music and noise, and the technique of the actor--should be elevated (alienated) out of the realm of the ordinary, natural, or expected, and function as scenes complete in themselves."[13] Brecht wanted to destroy the illusion of reality that drama attempted to create and in doing so he self-consciously revealed the artificiality of performance. He purposefully exposed lighting sources to the audience, displayed the constructedness of stage properties, and advised actors to maintain an estranged distance between themselves and the characters they played.

In theory, alienation distances audience members from the performance by subverting convention and preventing them from empathizing too strongly with characters and events. Alienation, therefore, actively prompts audiences to adopt critical attitudes towards the plays they watch and the larger social conditions which are being addressed in the performance. For instance, Brecht wanted audiences who saw *Mother Courage*, written (1939) and first performed (1941) during the Second World War, to draw parallels

with the contemporary situation in Europe, but he purposefully set the play during the Thirty Years' War (1616-48) to maintain critical distance. By alienating the historical context of *Mother Courage*, Brecht tried to reduce the empathetic responses of audiences to characters which potentially stood in the way of their making the necessary critical comparisons between their lives and the performance. Brecht hoped that his work would stop Hitler's progress and act as a warning to the Allies who appeased Hitler after his invasion of the Sudetenland: "While writing I imagined that the playwright's admonitory voice would be audible in the theatres of various great cities, warning that if you sup with the devil, you need a long spoon." In practice, however, Brecht's intentions--like attempts to apply his theories of alienated acting--did not always produce the desired effects.[14]

Despite the difficulties of practical application, Brecht's theories of alienation provide an early articulation of the modernist aesthetics of cognitive dissonance and make a strong claim for their potential contribution to social change. Brecht argues that alienation is necessary to bring critical consciousness to bear on habitual forms of social life: "When something seems 'the most obvious thing in the world' it means that any attempt to understand the world has been given up."[15] Alienation causes individuals to question the accuracy of their default assumptions as well as the automatic responses which are based on these assumptions by calling them forth to conscious attention. If cognition does in fact take place according to mental scripts which provide frames of reference and associations for easy processing, then alienation disrupts the smooth flow of these scripted mental operations.

Brecht's example of the Inuit description of a car as "a wingless aircraft that crawls along the ground" serves to alienate the common idea of a car by providing a context in which it can no longer be taken for granted. Just by drawing cognitive attention to the idea of what a car is and how you would describe it to someone who had never seen one, it becomes alienated from its habitual context. Even the most banal descriptions of a car as "a motorized vehicle with wheels, used to transport people and objects from one place to another" defamiliarises what most late twentieth-century urban dwellers encounter on a daily basis without more than casual notice. Alienation is curative, it is a mental tune-up which reinvigorates conventionalised forms that have become automatic and unthinking. This conscious registering of automatic and habitual cognitive processes gives the familiar the force of being surprising, thus making it reveal the cognitive processes involved in perception and understanding.

When cognition becomes a simple reflex act along the lines of behaviourist stimulus-response experiments, it becomes as much of a threat as it is a defensive survival mechanism that conserves mental energy. Brecht sought to resist such conditioning through the dialectical tensions of alternatives using a technique he called "fixing the 'not . . . but . . .'" He explained this dialectical method of acting as follows: "Whatever he [the actor] doesn't do must be contained and conserved in what he does."[16] Brecht was trying to do what novel readers and performance spectators do when they are confronted with alienation effects. They interpret what is represented in terms of what it is, but also in terms of the possible alternatives that this representation has excluded. Cognitive dissonance is based on the principle of "fixing the 'not . . . but . . .'" such that every choice of gesture, action, word, or prop, implicitly evokes the range of possible alternatives to supply significance to the choice: "People's activity must simultaneously be so and be capable of being different."[17]

The theories of defamiliarisation and alienation are both forms of aestheticised cognitive dissonance. Had their proponents had the access to cognitive theory that I have, they would have found both empirical support for their ideas and been able to explore the complex cognitive operations which form the basis for disrupting expectations. It is one thing to say that modernist aesthetics "make strange" through defamiliarisation and alienation; it is quite another to break down in cognitive terms just how this process works. Cognitive science permits a stage by stage analysis of the aesthetic principles underlying modernist experimentation by extending these concepts functionally to account for undeveloped and misunderstood aspects of modernism as well as to situate these effects more fully within early twentieth-century socio-historical contexts of cultural production. In revisiting articulations of aestheticised cognitive dissonance contemporaneous with literary modernism, my goal has been to show that an implicit knowledge of human cognition was at work in these theories before scientific research could fully explain them.[18]

III. *The Trial*

Franz Kafka's *The Trial* offers an illustrative example of how cognitive dissonance functions in a literary work and also effectively sets up my discussion of inscribed readers in modernist fiction.[19] Kafka's *The Trial* begins, "Someone must have made a false accusation against Josef K., for he was arrested one morning without having done anything wrong" (1). The opening sentence signals a departure from the normal, an

unconventional disruption of everyday life. A vague, unspecified "someone," becomes the subject of a hypothetical action, "must have made a false accusation," which provides the novel with its narrative impetus. The arrest breaks the unconscious rhythm of the expected: "The cook employed by his landlady Frau Grumach who brought him his breakfast every morning at about eight o'clock did not come this time. That had never happened before" (1). In addition, Josef K. notes that the woman living opposite is observing him this morning "with a curiosity quite unusual for her" (1). And his day begins with the appearance of a man whom "he had never seen before" who is wearing a close-fitting black suit which "one could not be quite sure what its purpose was" (1). Confused by these strange perceptions, K.'s first words are an attempt to remove some of the dissonance he experiences. "Who are you?" (1) he asks, and his question, which never receives an answer, establishes the novel's pervasive interrogative tone.

From the very first sentence, cognitive dissonance enters the novel, acts as the operating principle for its plot, and teleologically orients readers' interpretive strategies. Kafka places readers in virtually the same position as his protagonist, not knowing who has accused Josef K. or for what reasons. The next year of K.'s life is spent trying to answer these questions which seem all the more pressing because at every turn his expectations are repeatedly frustrated. As a result, Kafka's novel enacts thematically the very experiences which its formal design produces. *The Trial* itself becomes an allegory for reading and interpreting modernist texts which use cognitive dissonance as an aesthetic device. K. is an inscribed reader of the highest order because his quest for information and his attempts to understand textual circumstances parallel those of actual readers almost exactly. He acts as a paradigmatic reader whose frustrations over dealing with an unintelligible, invisible authority self-reflexively mimic that of readers: "He was annoyed that they had not given him more exact information about where the room was, they were really treating him with peculiar negligence or indifference" (28).

Josef K.'s arrest marks an obvious disruption of routine. The hidden authority of the novel arrests K. in two significant ways. He is arrested in terms of being charged with a crime and temporarily taken into custody, and at the same time the habitual routine of his life is arrested in terms of being interrupted. The shock of this second arrest serves to arrest K.'s conscious attention and direct it towards every last detail of his daily activities which he can no longer take for granted. The novel's title is misleading because no official courtroom trial ever takes place within the novel. Instead, the trial is a psychological one for both K. and readers in their quest for information that will make more manageable the cognitive dissonance of the unexplained arrest. The novel literally puts conventional reading habits on trial. One critic rightly claims that "Used to serving as judge, the reader

is, like Joseph K., being tried by what he or she usually claims to be sitting in judgment of" (Baldo 235).

The Trial is frustrating for readers because it ends virtually where it begins, on a dissonant note.[20] There is no restoration of cognitive consistency as one might expect to find in similar mystery genre-type novels.[21] K. is murdered, untried and unsentenced, in the rock quarry "Like a dog!" without ever knowing why. The novel's realistic and matter-of-fact descriptions increase the sense of dissonance readers experience. The third person narrative point of view implies the presence of an omniscient and objective narrator capable of overcoming the cognitive dissonance that both readers and K. experience. The narrator's perspective and understanding of events, however, is as limited as K.'s: "What sort of people were they? What were they talking about? To which authority did they belong? After all, K. lived in a country which enjoyed law and order; there was universal peace; all the laws were upheld; so who dared pounce on him in his own home?" (3). The narrative perspective misleadingly sets up expectations that conventional hermeneutic strategies will be effective, but it merely serves to cast the irrationality and meaninglessness of K.'s predicament into sharper relief.

Readers share in K.'s anxiety of not knowing, the fear that perhaps he's missed something, a word or a sentence which would help explain everything. Careful rereading confirms, however, that the epistemological crisis which the novel highlights is not a result of overlooking important details; rather, it derives from the calculated absence of information significant enough to make one interpretation more valid than another. The novel becomes like the "Parable of the Doorkeeper," capable of supporting many different interpretations, all of which are necessarily incomplete, while at the same time resisting any single definitive interpretation. Both reveal a phenomenological commitment to the poetics of indeterminacy and a questioning of the accuracy of any one perspective.[22] And both are disturbing experiences of extreme cognitive dissonance.

K.'s immediate response after hearing the parable is to blame the doorkeeper of deception in an effort to eliminate the confusion of the multivalent tale. The priest, however, warns him about forming opinions without first testing them and notes that "opinions are often only an expression of despair" (169).[23] Because K.'s interpretation assumes too much, the priest reprimands him: "You have insufficient respect for the written record and you are altering the narrative" (168). In an attempt to keep the range of interpretive possibilities open concerning the parable, the priest cites commentators who advise that the "Correct understanding of a matter and misunderstanding of the same matter do not exclude each other entirely" (169). Ultimately, the priest encourages K. to

find his own interpretations and not rely on the interpretations of others. K.'s response to the impossibility of interpreting the parable is, significantly, in full accord with Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance and captures the frustration of readers confronting the difficulties of high modernist novels: "He was too tired to follow all the deductions that could be drawn from the story; they led him into unaccustomed trains of thought, removed from reality and more suitable for academic discussion among court officials. The simple story had become perplexing, he wanted to be rid of it" (172).

Franz Kafka expressed in a 1904 letter to a friend (Oskar Pollak) what is a programmatic statement on the value of dissonant modernist literature. He writes,

> I think we ought to read only the kind of books that wound and stab us. If the book we're reading doesn't wake us up with a blow on the head, what are we reading it for? So that it will make us happy, as you write? Good Lord, we would be happy precisely if we had no books, and the kind of books that make us happy are the kind we could write ourselves if we had to. But we need the books that affect us like a disaster, that grieve us deeply, like the death of someone we loved more than ourselves, like being banished into the forests far from everyone, like a suicide. A book must be the axe for the frozen sea inside us. (16)[24]

His belief that novels worth reading should shock readers out of their somnambulism picks up on the idea of aestheticised cognitive dissonance articulated in the concepts of alienation and defamiliarisation. The types of books that are needed are those that affect readers in bodily ways, like stabs and wounds that strike them like a punch in the head and that break up the frozen seas of conditioned habit. Modernist writers understood the value of cognitive discomfort--although not in the same terms that we understand it--and they effectively manipulated it in their aesthetics of "organised violence against cognitive processes" (Tsur 4).

IV. A History of Cognitive Science

Cognitive science is the study of the mind and its functions. According to this basic definition, the history of cognitive science is the history of human life by virtue of the fact that humans are "self-interpreting animals."[25] The entire history of recorded thought, whether it be in the form of diaries, literature, religious or political tracts, etc.--basically any use of language in either written or oral communication--shows evidence of mental reflection. The very choice of which words to use is indicative of cognitive self-

interpretation on some level. On the other hand, cognitive science as a formal discipline for the study of the mind is a distinct product of the late twentieth century. The last forty years of theorising and research are commonly referred to as the "cognitive revolution." Cognitive science proper developed in the late 1960s, early 1970s as a response to behaviourism's explanatory dominance in the field of human behaviour.[26] As I will argue is the case with literary modernism, cognitive science opens up the "black box" purposely ignored by behaviourism: both seek to explore the cognitive processes which go on inside organisms who are capable of metacritically reflecting on their own mental operations. In spite of this, early theories of cognitive science are strongly reminiscent of behaviourist principles. Almost all were based on the computationalist-symbolic model which viewed information processing operations of the human mind as identical to the recognition, manipulation, and processing functions performed by computers.[27] However, this approach--based on encoding and decoding information according to symbols--differed very little from the behaviourist commitment to interpreting objective stimulus-response relationships: "The mind literally processes information in the sense that it manipulates discrete symbols according to sets of rules" (Petitot 5). The computationalist approach is therefore still highly mechanical in practise and the comparison between programmed artificial intelligence and human intelligence breaks down at exactly the points where complicated adaptability becomes an issue (i.e. inference, connotation). The computationalist-symbolic model is an oversimplification of complex mental activity and cannot account for cognitive responses to novel experiences (like high modernist literature, for example). In response to these limitations there emerged another approach to cognition in the late 1970s commonly identified as the connectionalist-dynamic approach.

According to this model, a system of associative networks replaces the system of rules and cognition becomes a dynamic activity rather than the rule-governed linear processing of individual symbols. The connectionalist-dynamic approach is able to account for more complex cognitive operations based on the concept of emergence. Emergence involves the development of high-level cognitive structures and activities based on the combined interaction of lower-level activities. In other words, basic cognitive operations are enacted simultaneously, combined, and adapted to perform more complex cognitive operations. The idea behind emergence is that sophisticated conceptual thinking and complex cognitive experiences are analysable because they evolve and are dynamically built up from simpler cognitive abilities: "Because they are purely functional in character, mental entities postulated at the upper level of explanation do not," it is argued, "have to be seen

as ontologically different from biological ones postulated at a lower level" (5). One of the weaknesses of the connectionalist-dynamic approach, which it shares with the computationalist approach, is a commitment to isomorphic representationalism whereby cognition depends on a correspondence between internal entities and external properties and events (6). Nevertheless, it is the concept of emergence which eventually paved the way for the concept of embodiment. The embodied view of cognition modifies the general concept of emergence to claim that the body's sensorimotor structures and functions provide the indispensable biological substrate for all human cognition no matter how complex or conceptually abstract.

The third model which attempts to explain human cognition--the model most important for my purposes--is the embodied-enactive view; "although it shares with connectionism a belief in the importance of dynamical mechanisms and emergence, [it] questions the relevance of representations as the explanatory device for cognition" (6). The embodied approach calls into question the logical necessity of representation and replaces it with a theory of embodied situatedness where the actions and experiences of individual agents provide an inseparable basis for human understanding and cognitive functioning. The basic premise of this approach is that all meaning is embodied meaning because all cognitive operations depend on "the kinds of experience that come from having a body with sensorimotor capacities."[28] Because cognitive operations mimic or enact the functioning of these capacities at a conceptual level, the embodied approach highlights the interdependence of human physiology and cognitive operations.

Current research on the embodied mind suggests that if the mind were to build onto its already existing structures from an evolutionary perspective it would build and develop new structures compatible with those already in existence. Biologically speaking, it makes sense that higher conceptual functions of the mind have grown out of basic sensory and motor systems (Lakoff, *Philosophy* 43). Since, as I am arguing after the likes of Mark Johnson, Mark Turner, and George Lakoff, the embodied mind is not independent of bodily capacities such as perception and movement, it stands to reason that by studying these basic systems a great deal can be learned about the organisation and function of more complex, higher-level cognitive operations. Cognitive theorists have replaced the metaphor of the man-made computer as an explanatory model for human cognition with the human body. According to Mark Johnson, "Since we are animals it is only natural that our inferential patterns would emerge from our activities at the embodied level" (*Body* 40). This theory of cognition is strongly experiential, but it is no longer strictly computational (input--logical mathematical symbol calculation--output). Instead,

thinking, understanding, and language use are said to be grounded in the physiological functioning of the body. This body-based view of cognition breaks down the Cartesian dualism that has continuously plagued and guided much cognitive research.

Philosophically, there is strong evidence to support embodied cognition, but it is through neuroscientific research that the presence of the body in the mind will be empirically substantiated.[29] Most advocates of cognitive embodiment believe that the day will come when proof of the embodied mind will find neural realisation in the brain. However, this is an issue for neuroscientists and like-minded scientific researchers, not for literary criticism. In this project, therefore, I am not concerned with neural pathways, brain architecture, or speculative theories that attempt to relate cognitive acts to physical brain functioning through thermal imaging. It is enough to prove that the embodied mind exists and succeeds in performing specific cognitive operations without worrying about neurobiological explanations of how this happens. By viewing the mind as embodied and thus under the direct influence of the sensorimotor body, the mind has once again become subject to empirically-based scientific inquiry. And it follows from this that by studying the body's constraints and functions, it is possible to analyse mental operations, especially those involved in responding to literature. I contend that modernist novels should be viewed as part of this philosophical inquiry because their disruptive aesthetic practices force readers to consciously attend to daily experiences and cognitive operations which ordinarily go unnoticed. Modernism opens up to critical self-reflection our conditioned responses to and rote understanding of individual words and specific literary forms. Through cognitive science it is possible to investigate just how modernist aesthetics cause this mindful contemplation of everyday routines, cognitive processes, and background assumptions: "What mindfulness disrupts is mindlessness--that is, being mindlessly involved without realizing that that is what one is doing."[30]

The main proponents of the embodied view of cognition all stress the unconscious role that common bodily experience plays in the construction and understanding of metaphors, as well as how embodiment helps "to structure and facilitate cognitive, linguistic, and literary activity" (Richardson 160). Cognition is situated and body-based, relying on physiological operations to provide models for cognition. Put another way, conceptual understanding, perception, and knowledge organisation are all cognitive activities firmly rooted in bodily experience. As my dissertation argues, literary interpretation also occurs via the human body and is therefore embodied. The body becomes, to borrow a phrase from Charles Taylor, an "inescapable framework" which serves to explain and universally link all acts of human cognition. One of the basic

premises of my research is that the drive behind interpretive reading is homeostatic--a body-based desire to achieve organised equilibrium that gets projected onto the literary work by readers. Interpretation, according to this view, is compensatory, serving to minimise cognitive dissonance by filling in gaps in our experiences of literature. Concepts such as containment, unity, balance, and wholeness are literally derived from the experience of having a human body.[31] They guide our interpretive efforts and their flexibility makes possible the figurative modes of understanding needed to read both critically and imaginatively.[32]

The governing principles behind Mark Turner's study of embodied "cognitive linguistics," for instance, can most effectively be summarised in his statement that "A human being has a human brain in a human body in a physical environment that it must make intelligible if it is to survive" (*Reading* 17). Contained within this one sentence is the embodied notion of the complex and necessary interdependence between lived bodily experience and human cognition. To say that it is a matter of survival is not to overstate the point either, since many of the cognitive operations employed when one reads and offers a cohesive interpretation of literature have their origins in the strategies and adaptations each human makes use of to ensure survival. Turner's work conveys just how crucial narrative construction (beginning, middle, end) is to human understanding and daily functioning. Through narratives "humans organise and negotiate the world, from the small spatial stories we use to frame learned procedural behaviours (like drinking from a cup) to the elaborate series of imaginative projections we deploy to entertain others' points of view" (Richardson 161). The narrativising impulse is directly related to body consciousness and it functions as an indispensable compensatory tool to eliminate much of the fragmented indeterminacy experienced in our daily encounters with the lifeworld. Narratives then become the means by which humans make organised, cohesive sense of the bombardment of everyday detail vying for cognitive attention. It is the best way to reduce potential dissonance and hierarchically arrange stimuli according to relevance for continued survival.[33]

In like fashion, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson begin their most recent book, *Philosophy in the Flesh*--a book that reinvestigates long-standing philosophical issues such as time, self, causation, and mind, and rethinks the history of philosophy in terms of cognitive science--by asserting the two fundamental orthodoxies of contemporary cognitive theory: that the mind is inherently embodied and that most thought is unconscious. They argue that human reason and day-to-day cognitive activities are not disembodied. Their position pointedly refutes the dualistic Cartesian mind-body split

where the mind functions in a transcendental manner completely divorced from the functioning of the body. Instead, they contend that all thinking--critical or otherwise--is body-based and depends on bodily experience to structure it and give it form. Because we all have bodies situated in very specific environments which impinge on those bodies, it is possible to make strong universal claims about the necessary negotiation that constantly takes place between the physiological body and the embodied mind. The capacity of the mind to think through body-based metaphors and the functions of the body is one which is shared by all human beings and therefore "our common embodiment allows for common, stable truths" (6).

The concept of embodiment helped to reorient cognitive science's theoretical focus. It shifted from computer analogies and the study of complex responses to the unexpected. to how we make sense of everyday life. This philosophical realignment also prompted researchers to investigate thought that operates below the level of conscious awareness. Many researchers hold that it is only the vast unconscious functioning of the mind which permits conscious awareness to take place. Lakoff and Johnson argue that unconscious thought is ninety-five percent of all thought and that it is what ultimately shapes and structures conscious thought. Unconscious thought involves not only our automatic cognitive operations, but all of our implicit knowledge and memory: "It constitutes our unreflective common sense" (*Philosophy* 13). As I have argued in the introduction, common sense is the result of a common experience of the body and the structuring role which that common experience plays in guiding unconscious and conscious thought. The tendency may be to see this commonality as a levelling of responses which turns humans into organic automatons devoid of individual reactions; however, each life is a collection of unique experiences and influences which only get processed in broadly similar ways through the body.

The nuancing of human experience is achieved through the idiosyncratic and often diverse metaphors and framings which help to shape these experiences in individualistic ways as well as individual judgments of relevance and inferential abilities. The dynamics of these relationships allow for difference within common processing mechanisms in response to the same stimuli. In terms that are reminiscently phenomenological, Lakoff and Johnson claim that "every understanding that we can have of the world, ourselves, and others can only be framed in terms of concepts shaped by our bodies" (555). This means that our bodies not only orient us within the world in relation to objects we confront physically, but that these physical relations also provide the structure and framing for our conceptual understanding. Furthermore, because these relations and our understanding of them are constantly changing, human nature must be characterised by

change and variation (557). There can be no essences, only common frames of reference for negotiating with the everchanging world. As a result, the human body provides this stable frame through which to interpret the world. Lakoff and Johnson warn, however, that change to automatic cognitive processes is both slow and difficult because they are unconscious and neurally fixed. Habituation is a key to survival, but as modernist writers feared, fueled by the popularity of American behaviourism, habit can also be a form of conditioning that destroys individual critical responses.

V. Rethinking Modernism Through Embodied Cognition

The tools of cognitive science shed light on how and why modernism has been mischaracterised over the years. Cognitive theories which focus on the embodiment of the mind, the cognitive unconscious, and metaphorical thought, are engaged in rethinking the ways we conceive of thought in general. I want to use some of these key insights to explain the impulses which motivate the activities of reading and literary interpretation, especially how it is that we come to read by "moving beyond the information given." I have purposefully chosen to test the applicability of these theories on high modernist novels written by male and female writers from different countries (Ireland, America, England) to give my study of modernism an international context. The universal implications of embodied mind theory allow for a cross-cultural examination of the diverse manifestations of modernism and modernist thought. It is my contention that the difficulties of modernism are ultimately grounded in shareable experiences that take as their frame of reference the lived human body. The very reason why novels like Kafka's *The Trial* are so effective, so difficult, and so frustrating is that they appeal to and exploit the embodied nature of cognitive processes. I maintain that one of the reasons why modernism works, however complexly, is because it manipulates the cognitive unconscious of common sense for its aesthetic effects and forces those processes into the spotlight of attentiveness.

A cognitive account of the production and reception of modernism will hopefully recover the democratic features implicit within literary high modernism by naturalising some of the obstacles that make it appear inaccessible. I will attempt to articulate a concept of modernism which throws into relief the celebratory and emancipatory impulses originally at the heart of the movement. The clouding of these impulses has led to definitions of modernism which emphasise instead its elitism, its anticommunicative obscurantism, its random experimentation, and its nihilistic difficulty. It is not my goal to suggest that modernist literature is not difficult, but to articulate the intentions behind

that difficulty and suggest that readers' experiences of difficulty reveal something about our reading habits and expectations which are the keys to understanding modernist literature. The best way to do this is to interface cognitive theories with literary modernism in order to show how there can be a place for all levels of readers of modernist texts.

Using cognitive theory I argue that interpretation--as a systematic and rational attempt to understand literary work--depends on rather than transcends bodily experience. In other words, our humanness and sense of our own bodies (perceptual capacities, sensorimotor abilities, and physiological functions) provide the base structure of patterning through which we experience the external world and bring language to bear on that experience. This phenomenologically inflected view of perception and understanding stands in stark contrast to what is called the Objectivist position which posits a knowable world independent of subjective experience. The literary analogue for this view is Victorian realist fiction with its conventional omniscient third-person narrator who describes the context-independent reality of the text from a "God's-Eye View." Modernist writers self-reflexively refute Victorian realist conventional representations of the world as given--objectively transparent and independently available to all readers through certain literary and linguistic symbolic correspondences.

The revolutionary shift from Victorian literature to high modernism involves a subjective turn, the experimentation with subjective forms of narrative like interior monologue, stream of consciousness, and alternating personalised and limited narrative points of view. Modernist fiction replaces the third-person objective accounts which predominate its predecessor fiction with embodied narrative perspectives. This shift away from the objective and impartial third-person point of view required by empirical sciences like behaviourism to a first-person phenomenological-cognitive viewpoint reveals the arbitrariness of conventional Victorian representation and how ideas of realism often get confused with convention and decorum.[34] Most critiques of modernist literature which call it "anti-realist" and "artificial" are based on this unacknowledged faulty assumption. To see objects, properties, and relations in the external world as "theory-neutral 'objective' data" is to mistake shared subjective perceptual capacities and arbitrary social conventions for a transparency that does not exist. As John Fiske points out, this is not to say that there is not an "objective, empiricist reality out there, but [that] there is no universal, objective way of perceiving and making sense of it" (134) except through a shared sense of embodied imagination.[35]

In addition, many approaches to literary high modernism tend to be solipsistic because they assume a distinction between analysing literary works and everyday uses of language. The very difficulty of reading dissonant modernist novels with their fragmented forms and unfamiliar allusions makes these works appear as if they are using a special type of language that only select initiates and specialists can comprehend. The very reason why readers stumble over defamiliarising "devices" is that reception practices attuned to the regularized uses of language cannot accommodate the types of aestheticised language found in modernist texts. Cognitive theory, however, helps to eliminate the false distinction between the laws of practical language and the laws of poetic language established by the Russian Formalists, developed further by Structuralist readers, and perpetuated in modernist criticism.[36] On the other hand, cognitive approaches to literature argue that the language of literary works is continuous with the language of the everyday because all language is body-based: "the tools of poetic thought not only exist in everyday thought but are indispensable and irreducible there" (Turner 20). The idiosyncratic nuancing of words, meanings, and concepts rely on the systematicity of language and conventional understanding: "Originality," as Mark Turner says, "far from being autonomous, is contingent at every point upon the unoriginal structures that inform it" (20). Turner suggests that the unconscious, unoriginal, and automatic aspects of everyday thought are much more complex and active than is assumed, but that through repeated use and habitualisation these features have become submerged within a background of routine we no longer notice: "We are designed as a species to notice in consciousness not the obvious and unoriginal but rather the novel and nuanced" (43).

It is part of Turner's central thesis that entrenched default concepts provide resistance to novelty and therefore supply the fixed background against which such novelty is highlighted and brought to conscious attention. The environment rewards resistance with survival and perpetuates certain automatic cognitive functions. Cognitive resistance to change is therefore the necessary basis for cognitive dissonance and the manipulation of readers' expectations: "if the cognitive elements involved had no resistance to change, the dissonance would immediately be eliminated" (Festinger 22). Turner's belief that "Our conscious mind lives in nuance" (44) similarly picks up on Michael Riffaterre's equation of unpredictability with poetic significance.[37] Riffaterre argues that "where predictability increases, so does the effect of an unpredicted element" (38). His statement reinforces Turner's position that "The original aspect of any thought is always embedded in a much larger and dominant unoriginal aspect and exists only as a slight exploitation of the unoriginal conceptual structures that inform it" (43). Placing Riffaterre beside Turner

highlights just how much the structure of aesthetic experience is part of daily life. The relationship between predictability and unpredictability is simply a structuralist account of how literary works oscillate between moments of decorum and novelty. Turner's cognitive approach grounds literary defamiliarisation within universal cognitive experiences and it effectively illustrates the contingency of originality without denying that literary texts are still autonomous in important ways.[38]

Turner's observations also return us to Festinger's account of cognitive dissonance. Cognitive inconsistencies, according to Festinger, arrest our attention "because they stand out in sharp contrast against a background of consistency" (1). As I have shown, cognitive dissonance is the subversion of logically, experientially, or culturally based expectations. This dissonance disrupts habitual functioning and draws conscious attention to this functioning. Equally important is the desire for reconciliation which such disruption generates. It is the bringing of effects to conscious attention and the demand for active response to work through this lack of harmony that are the impetuses behind modernist aesthetics. There is a natural drive toward consonance among cognitions. In the past, accounts of modernist disruptions of routine cognitive functions have not gone beyond saying that modernist works attempt to make us look at things in a different way or from a different perspective because they estrange the familiar.[39] Applying a cognitive approach to modernist literature makes it possible to explain in greater detail how the processes of alienation and defamiliarisation work. The cognitive approach also delineates the important role that literature, as it challenges reading practices and expectations, plays in honing critical faculties and mental processing.

As we can see, many cognitive hypotheses resonate with the modernist aesthetics of writers like Franz Kafka, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and William Faulkner, who all make a practice out of defamiliarising the everyday for its aesthetic potential. In the second chapter of *Reading Minds*, Turner claims unequivocally that poetic thought and language are ubiquitous in the everyday: "Poetic thought is part of everyday thought; poetic language is part of everyday language. What is poetic derives from what is everyday. To understand what is poetic, we must understand what is everyday" (49). Turner stresses the importance of this insight in what seems an overly repetitive manner because it is the cornerstone of his theory of cognition; however, long before cognitive theorists and postmodern aesthetics laid claim to the everyday as a resource for understanding and creativity, modernist writers exploited and aestheticised the daily routine and embodied cognition. Now that these other domains of interest have caught up to modernism, so to speak, we can use them and the methodological frames they provide

to work our way back through aspects of modernism which have remained unexplored or misunderstood for over seventy years.

Modernist form, far from being exclusionary, is still comprehensible form. Once this is realised, cognitive science allows us to understand the failed reception of modernist works, the intentions and decisions behind modernist aesthetics, the history of various modes of modernist reception, and the critical methodologies used to explain modernism. Because modernist aesthetics of fragmentation and disruption present readers with an increased surface area of potential signification, the narratives in these novels provide a surplus of detail similar to everyday experiences of the lifeworld. As readers of modernism and readers of the world, we cannot reasonably or safely attend to every last detail. A process of selection at the level of consciousness must guide our attention to determine what is relevant and necessary to focus on. It was Aldous Huxley who said that "the more you know, the more you see" and his observation rings particularly true with regards to modernist fiction and its encyclopedic referencing systems.[40] Seeing, however, differs from perception in that perception involves cognitive attentiveness whereas seeing is an automatic, purely functional process. Seeing occurs whenever stimulus from the outside world activates the nerve cells in the human eye and allows a person to see structures and shapes. What is clear from this mechanical description of seeing is that it does not include processes of selection and attentive focus which impart meaning and organise perceived objects according to relevance. Perception involves an effort to make sense of what is selected and it is this act of cognition that distinguishes it from mechanical observation. Modernist aesthetics force readers to be perceivers rather than just seers, and if Huxley is correct, cognitive theory is the knowledge which will allow modernist readers to be even more insightful perceivers.

VI. Modernism as Amputation, Reading as Phantom Limb

dolor membri amputati ("the pain that remains after amputation")

The experience of phantom limb phenomena (PLP) is the experience of high modernist aesthetics. I want to suggest that the disruptive experience of reading difficult modernist literature which aestheticises fragmentation, incompletion, and indeterminacy is akin to that of the psychophysiological interplay of absence and presence characterised by PLP. Both phantom limb sensation and modernist reading practices are compensatory responses to different types of cognitive dissonance. As such, phantom limb becomes an apt governing metaphor for the cognitive experience of modernist aesthetics and an

explanatory tool in discussing embodied reading strategies. As will soon be evident, connections between literature and PLP are not new to my research, nor is the use of the concept of phantom limb as an explanatory metaphor.[41]

Phantom limb emphasises the unconscious organicism of the human body and the embodied mind. It is at once a form of dissonance and a response to the dissonance of having an incomplete body. The dissonance of PLP defamiliarises routine bodily operations and attunes us to that which gets taken for granted. In *The Body in Pain*, Elaine Scarry argues from a similar position claiming that pain is a threat to both physiological body function and cognitive body image.[42] War and torture become "two events in which the ordinary assumptions of culture are suspended" (18). Any physical threat to the equilibriated body results in "the suspension of civilization" (21), and becomes simultaneously a threat to the habitual means by which we attend to the world because we do so via the body. Phantom limb sensation, or phantom pain as it is sometimes called, is a conscious reorientation and adjustment of unconscious, homeostatic bodily functions. The embodied nature of our entire lives becomes perceptible and accessible whenever the body is threatened by pain, disease, and even cognitive dissonance. John Dewey recounts that both Rousseau and Carlyle saw consciousness as a kind of disease "since we have no consciousness of bodily or mental organs as long as they work at ease in perfect health."[43] Because dissonant or abnormal conditions demand both bodily resources and conscious attention, they make us aware (often painfully) of the unconsciousness of "normal" bodily functions and the role of the body in everyday cognition.

Put simply, PL is the sensation of a limb presence which is no longer there: "The feeling that the part of the body that has been removed or desensitized is still present" and experienceable (97).[44] Early attempts to explain phantom limb sensation hypothesised that it was the result of a residual memory trace of the missing limb. On this account, nerves cut during amputation grew into node-like neuromas and continued to send neural impulses to the brain giving the impression of the presence of a limb. Scientists, however, now believe that phantom limb is a cognitive condition, and not solely the result of continued abnormal sensory input from the site of trauma.[45] Ronald Melzack concludes, after studying experiences of PL in cases of amputation, congenital limb deficiency, and complete spinal cord breaks without amputation, that PL is a form of cognitive dissonance confined to higher brain centers.[46] He developed the concept of the neuromatrix to explain the experience of PL in the absence of peripheral sensory input. According to Melzack, the neuromatrix is a "network of neurons that extends throughout

widespread areas of the brain, composing the anatomical substrate of the physical self" (91).[47] It is comprised of at least three major neural circuits or systems which function simultaneously in the brain to produce a pattern of impulses called the neurosignature as its basic output.

The neurosignature provides individuals with a genetically pre-wired sense of self and acts like a blueprint for the body as a whole, confirming that it is "intact and unequivocally one's own" (123).[48] In cases of amputation, congenital limb deficiency, and paraplegia, the neurosignature compensates for abnormal or absent sensory input by supplying input derived from its patterned blueprint of wholeness. The neurosignature is the integrated output of the neuromatrix, a survival-based defense mechanism that compensates for absent or improper sensory input to protect the body; it is responsible for the impression that amputated limbs are present when they are not. Melzack compares the neurosignature to the basic theme in a piece of orchestral music. This underlying theme shapes and structures the individual input of different instruments to provide continuity and a sense of wholeness to the work in spite of variations in its rendition (123-24). The neurosignature, then, provides humans with the sensation of a unified self. It becomes the foundation for our notions of organicity and compensates for what is fragmented and unfamiliar. In other words, the neurosignature is an automatic response within the body to complete or fill in gaps. It fleshes out through cognitive projection what is not, in and of itself, complete.

The persistent nature of the neurosignature in representing the body (image) as whole even in the absence of peripheral sensory input leads to PL phenomena. Because the brain continues to generate perceptual experience long after input has ceased, "We do not need a body to feel a body" (126). In this manner, the sensation of phantom limb can be a metaphor for the often fragmented experience of reading high modernism and the interpretive impulse that is generated from that encounter. The desire for completion, for wholeness, is genetically pre-wired and persists even in the absence of a limb because of the existence of an "innate neural substrate" or cognitive map.[49] The neurosignature is basically an image-schema or script for the body that generates expectations, establishes conditions of normalcy, and provides individuals with an integrated sense of "self" (90). According to Melzack, "the brain generates the experience of the body" which means that wholeness is an embodied concept and that it provides a structural model for interpretive reading.[50]

The metaphorics of phantom limb provide an illustrative example of the genetically determined predisposition of humans to want closure.[51] It provides another example of

the compensatory mechanisms of the human body. Any absence of limb or appendage which is the result of either an amputation or a congenital deficiency, prompts the human mind to compensate for this bodily lack. A missing finger requires one to hold a fork in such a way that the other fingers compensate for the missing finger. A missing limb changes the body's posture and forces the body to realign itself as it moves through space. Entering a doorway, climbing into a car, any movements through space, or just the occupation of space in an area elicits an automatic bodily adjustment which through habit becomes imperceptible. It is the idea of an imperceptible continuous balancing of the body that creates a link between amputation and phantom limb sensation and modernist aesthetics. As I will argue, a gap in a literary text functions like the absence of a body part.

After conceiving of modernist reception as akin to the experience of phantom limb, I soon discovered that I was by no means the first to use such a figure to illustrate my points.[52] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, for instance, offers the concept of phantom limb sensation as an "instance and illustration" of the law of association. In *Biographia Literaria*, he claims that Descartes was prompted to meditate on the subject of association after hearing the following story:

> A child who with his eyes bandaged had lost several of his fingers by amputation continued to complain for many days successively of pains, now in this joint and now in that, of the very fingers which had been cut off. (I:V 56)

This account of phantom limb sensation prompted Descartes to think about the uncertainty with which we identify pain and place. The residual pain felt in the absent fingers of the blindfolded child led to the conclusion that "contemporaneous impressions, whether images or sensations, recall each other mechanically" (56). This basic law of association, as conceived of by Descartes through Coleridge, prefigures twentieth-century behaviourism where co-existing stimuli become mutually associable and consequently become capable of recalling each other without the need of conscious awareness. Under the general law of association, "every partial representation awakes the total representation of which it had been a part" (59). This relationship between fragment and whole is fundamental to understanding modernist aesthetics of interruption and openness.

Coleridge, however, misquotes the source of Descartes' reference to phantom limb and mistakes the context of the example. Instead of *De Methodo*, this story is recounted in *Principia* and it is used, not as proof of the validity of the law of association, but as proof of the soul's relationship to the body.[53] In spite of Coleridge's creative misreading of Descartes, the reference reveals that not only were both thinkers familiar with the concept

of phantom limb in their respective ages, but both used the concept as a metaphorical model to explain responses to partial or non-existent stimuli. Another figure who uses the metaphorics of phantom limb in an illustrative manner is Maurice Merleau-Ponty.[54]

In *Phenomenology of Perception*, phantom limb is the means by which Merleau-Ponty attempts to reconcile physiological explanations of bodily experience with psychological ones and thereby prove that all human experience is embodied. In his investigation of PLP, Merleau-Ponty seeks out the common ground between the experiences of the human body as object and the human body as subjective consciousness:

> The phantom limb is not the mere outcome of objective causality; no more is it a *cogitatio*. It could be a mixture of the two only if we find a means of linking the "psychic" and the "physiological", the "for-itself" and the "in-itself", to each other to form an articulate whole, and to contrive some meeting-point between them: if the third person processes and the personal acts could be integrated into a common middle term. (77)[55]

Neither a strictly physiological account, nor an exclusively psychological account can adequately explain phantom limb. The common middle term he searches for is the sense of being in the world, a situatedness in which "we never experience anything but states of ourselves" by virtue of the fact that the human body mediates all experience and is the source of our embodied understanding of those experiences (xv).[56]

According to Merleau-Ponty, each of us experiences our own bodies in two different and inseparable ways: the "customary" or "habitual body" which is a "pre-personal" body-image of wholeness that continues to provide a horizon for experience even in the absence of limbs; and the actual body as it is subjectively experienced in a given moment in its physicality.[57] Phantom limb sensation is a form of dissonance between these two modes of understanding the body and it is this very paradox that serves to confirm the dialectical interconnectedness of body and mind which is "enacted at every instant in the movement of existence" (89). The example of phantom limb allows Merleau-Ponty to conclude that

> Psychological motives and bodily occasions may overlap because there is not a single impulse in a living body which is entirely fortuitous in relation to psychic intentions, not a single mental act which has not found at least its germ or its general outline in physiological tendencies. (88)

The dissonance of phantom limb undermines the basic harmony and fundamental unity of existence, and in doing so it reveals the compensatory modes of perception and the unconscious bodily knowledge underlying our everyday experiences of the world.

Merleau-Ponty is able to reassert both the body as locus of all experience and highlight the paradoxical nature of our understanding of the world which is inexhaustible and always in excess of what we can comprehend.

The history of PLP can be traced back to symbolic allusions found in medieval limb-restoration myths and limb-burial superstitions.[58] Even though folk knowledge of PL goes back to at least the tenth century, the first scientific reports of PLP did not appear until the middle of the sixteenth century. Ambrose Paré, a French military surgeon, offered the following medical account of PL sensation in his 1551 notes: "For the patients, long after the amputation is made, say they feel pain in the amputated part. Of this they complain strongly, a thing worthy of wonder and almost incredible to people who have not experienced this." [59] It is appropriate that the first medical account of PL was made by a military surgeon because periods of warfare stimulate discussion of and scholarly research into PLP. Amputation--the removal of a limb, appendage, or outgrowth of the body--is both the most common cause of PLP and a condition frequently associated with warfare.[60]

Prompted by the increase in occurrence of amputation during the American Civil War (1861-65), neurologist Silas Weir Mitchell first discussed PL in a short story called "The Case of George Dedlow" published in the *Atlantic Monthly* (1866).[61] His story recounts the experiences of a Civil War soldier who was unaware that both of his legs had been amputated and complained of a cramp in his left leg. Mitchell cleverly tested the waters for the reception of a theory of PLP in fiction before he offered it scientifically. He later established the concept of PL in a detailed medical account published in an 1871 edition of *Lippincott's Magazine of Popular Literature and Science*.[62] In his article entitled "Phantom Limbs," he describes the phenomena as "a postamputation sensory 'ghost'" (qtd. in Herman 76).

The connection between war and phantom limb resonates in the modernist period because the aesthetics of fragmentation and dislocation characteristic of high modernism are the aesthetics of wartime and post-war trauma. The shift in poetic concerns and the formal disruption of the later works of war poet Siegfried Sassoon are indicative of the effects of war on poetry. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and Joyce's *Ulysses* are symbolic reminders of the 100,000 amputees from all the armies of Europe who survived the "Great War" and tried to reintegrate their fragmented bodies and minds back into shell-shocked societies (May 8). The image of the amputee begging on the streets became a recognisable symbol of post-war dissonance in the works of Dada artists like Otto Dix and George Grosz, both of whom served in the German army in the first world war.

Moreover, amputation describes general feelings of loss and crisis that accompanied the socio-historical upheavals of the first four decades of the twentieth century.

As new technologies developed and materially extended the capabilities of the human body, they simultaneously dehumanised existence. According to anthropologist Edward T. Hall, "all man-made things can be treated as extensions of what man once did with his body or some specialized part of his body."[63] The telephone materially extends the human voice and forms of transportation like cars materially extend the human foot. The consequences of extending the functions of the human body through technologies results, according to Marshall McLuhan, in a loss of contact with the world. Inorganic, material objects intercede between humans and their experiences of reality. This distancing process, like the Marxist idea of alienation through commodification, substitutes an idea which is really an absence for a physical presence. For example, the telephone creates a disembodied presence (sound) to stand in place of an actual presence. Utterances become amputated from their contextualising source: the human body. While new technologies materially extend the human body in an attempt to make life easier and more efficient, these extensions also amputate human capacities. The increasing reliance on technologies threatens the body with atrophy and the potential loss of certain functions.

Plato made the same point about committing thoughts to written characters in *Phaedrus*.[64] Socrates tells Phaedrus the story about the invention of writing to illustrate how writing--touted as a means to improve both wisdom and memory--ends up serving the opposite function. Instead of extending memory and breadth of knowledge, writing amputates memory and wisdom: "Those who acquire it [the ability to write] will cease to exercise their memory and become forgetful; they will rely on writing to bring things to their remembrance by external signs instead of on their own internal resources" (96). Socrates' point is that while writing provides a material vehicle for human thought, it does not improve memory; rather, it promotes the deterioration of memory through a lack of use and a dependence on written characters. True, writing allows for the transmission and dissemination of ideas on a mass scale, but it does not necessarily promote thinking. In his 1964 *Understanding Media*, McLuhan echoes this dubious relationship between extension and amputation in a series of critical readings of modern media where he calls attention to the ways that new media reconfigure our social relations and organizations.[65]

In the twentieth-century "age of information," the ability to reflect critically on and select relevant material from the overwhelming diversity of available stimuli competing for conscious attention is an even greater necessity than it was in the past. Modernist writers responded to the amputation of critical thinking that an increasing mass culture

and its technologies encouraged and supported. In many respects, modernists adopted Plato's position in realising the inherent threat of a massified print culture (daily newspapers, magazines, and best-sellers, as well as popular forms of visual culture like photography and cinema) to the "internal resources." A cognitive approach to modernist literature refocuses conscious attention on these "internal resources" that are engaged by formal experimentation and reveals how modernist writers exploit the resources of language to communicate in unconventional ways, thereby breaking the amputative stranglehold of habit. While modernists commit language to writing as a form of communication they do so in such a way that it actually counters the amputation of the critical mind by reactivating it. In a world dominated by print culture and the technologies that support it, modernists attempt to fight the battle of the "widening middles" using the same technologies that have caused the amputation. The critiques of modernist literature that reduce it to nihilism and obscurantism are rebuffed when modernist texts are viewed as redeemers of the amputated critical faculty.

Interpretation as Prosthesis

My appeal to the body-based metaphors of amputation and phantom limb to help understand modernist aesthetics is based on the assumption that the interpretive impulse is fundamentally bio-mimetic. This means that our sense or understanding of a work of literature is strongly influenced by our sense of our own bodily functions. The same need for balance, equilibrium, and wholeness that is necessary for human survival simultaneously shapes our reading practices. The natural desire for closure is not determined by repeated experiences of fiction which emphasise unfragmented and neatly tied-up narratives and plotlines. On the contrary, this type of fiction caters to a natural inclination that all humans possess. The organicity of the literary work--encouraged by the Romantic poets and popularised in New Critical methodologies--does not amount to the same thing as reception modified by biological organicity. There is a big difference between treating all works of literature as organic wholes, complete in and of themselves, and being predisposed to interpret and analyse fiction (and other types of phenomena) according to an innate sense of wholeness for which our physiological bodies provide the normative example. High modernist novels intentionally disrupt our sense of wholeness, metaphorically thematising amputation and the compensatory responses that attempt to restore the loss of organic unity. The aesthetics of openness, interruption, indeterminacy, and fragmentation create dissonance by exploiting this biological imperative. Interpretive reading becomes the effort to reconcile dissonance, and as such it parallels the experience

of phantom limb sensation. Therefore, the image of phantom limb brings to conscious awareness the sense of completion which is part of our genetic make-up, and which informs our reading practices and all of our daily perceptions. It is central for modernist aesthetics that prompt a desire to complete by creating textual moments of cognitive dissonance. Phantom limb is a compensatory, natural, human filling-in process, much like "blind spot completion"[66] which I discuss in chapter three in relation to Joyce's dislocating aesthetics. The idea of holistic impulses in the field of literary interpretation are easiest to understand via such examples from the human body.

Many of the metaphors we use in literary criticism are also explicitly body-based. We refer to the "life" of a text, a "body" of literature, a "skeleton" key for a literary work, and we also talk about how literary texts "embody" or "incorporate" certain ideas. The very notion of "fleshing out" a description, a concept, or an argument reveals the extent to which our interpretive practices are tied to the corporeal body. In the profession of literary scholarship, to "flesh out" means to give bodily shape or more detailed form to an idea, to give a fuller account of an argument. The primary metaphor behind the common expression "flesh out" is "Understanding Is Wholeness" or "Explanation Is Completion." A primary metaphor pairs a subjective experience and judgment (Understanding) with a sensorimotor experience (Wholeness).[67] Primary metaphors structure complex metaphors and provide the automatic basis for conceptual understanding because they are derived from early and repeated experience. They are part of the cognitive unconscious, part of the floor plan or foundation for all thinking and understanding. "Understanding Is Wholeness" maps the source domain (vehicle) of bodily experience onto the target domain (tenor) of conceptual judgment. Body-based metaphors, like the example of "flesh out," make abstract knowledge possible and universally accessible.

* * * * *

In the "Lestrygonians" chapter of *Ulysses*, Leopold Bloom thinks about the word "parallax," and admits, "I never exactly understood" (*U* 194). Parallax is a concept that accounts for the apparent displacement of an object when it is viewed from different points of view. Bloom may not "exactly" understand it, but his body compensates for the visual experience of parallax whenever he looks at something with both of his eyes open. Each eye sees the object from a different perspective because of its relative position on the face, and each, therefore, sees a slightly different aspect of the object viewed. By focusing on an object and keeping one eye open and the other closed, then

quickly alternating which one is open, it is possible to experience the parallax that the human mind automatically eliminates from day to day perception. The object viewed through alternating eyelines appears to change position and inhabit a slightly different space. The concept of parallax offers another example of embodied human compensation. But it also is thematised in all high modernist novels which alternate narrators, their points of view, or different narrative styles. The dissonance these texts create is akin to the experience of parallax--the recognition of incompatible perceptions which generate experiential gaps. Parallax, then, is another way of conceiving of the experience of cognitive dissonance, and it becomes an aesthetic principle in the modernist novels I examine in chapters three, four, and five.

NOTES

[1] Hamlet's insight that "[t]he readiness is all" also ironically critiques his own failure to act with any real agency. Readiness is quite literally *all* that he has exhibited throughout the play. References to *Hamlet* are taken from *Four Tragedies*, ed. David Bevington (Toronto: Bantam, 1980).

[2] Coleridge describes Hamlet's mental state as an "overbalance in the mind," and his mind as "unseated from its healthy balance." See "The Character of Hamlet," *English Romantic Writers*, ed. David Perkins, 2nd. ed. (Toronto: Harcourt, 1995): 614.

[3] Jerome Bruner, "On Perceptual Readiness," *Beyond the Information Given: Studies in the Psychology of Knowing* (New York: Norton, 1973): 7-41.

[4] Mark Turner, *Reading Minds: The Study of English in the Age of Cognitive Science* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991).

[5] G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980).

[6] T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (London: Faber, 1975): 37-44.

[7] Many cognitive scientists and theorists refer to this organisation of knowledge as categorisation and develop hierarchies of categorical interaction from basic to specialised. Mark Turner's work on metaphors is a good example of this type of systematization. See Turner, *Reading Minds* esp. 121-50.

[8] See Theodore Newcomb, "Introduction," *Theories of Cognitive Consistency: A Sourcebook*, ed. Robert Abelson, et al. (Chicago: McNally, 1968): xv-xvii. This book is an invaluable resource which, although somewhat dated, debates in detail the possible applications and general viability of theories of cognitive dissonance.

[9] Reuven Tsur, *Toward a Theory of Cognitive Poetics* (New York: North-Holland, 1992).

[10] Festinger's research attempts to account for attitude-behaviour relations, especially how counterattitudinal behaviour causes alterations in beliefs. Many of his examples (the failure of religious sect prophecy, the spreading of rumours) address the role of cognitive dissonance in modifying group behaviour and interpersonal relations. For more detail, see Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Evanston: Row, 1957).

[11] Throughout the dissertation I appear to be using dissonance and defamiliarisation interchangeably, but I would mark a slight difference in that not all dissonance defamiliarises in the sense of making readers view things in a new light, but all defamiliarisation invokes feelings of dissonance. The consequence of this distinction is that not all experiences of dissonance pay off interpretively in ways that are as obvious as defamiliarisation.

[12] As proof of this theory he cites Tolstoy's account of cleaning a room and not being able to remember if he dusted his divan. Because the act was performed habitually and unconsciously--if it was in fact performed--he cannot recall completing it. And because the act of dusting never entered his consciousness, it is as if it never happened. To be sure that his divan gets dusted Tolstoy must do it consciously. See Victor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, trans. Lee Lemon and Marion Reis (1917; Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1965): 3-24.

[13] Brecht's theory of alienated or epic acting consists of actors simultaneously representing their characters on stage and somehow creating a distance between themselves as actors and the characters they represent. This distance supposedly allows actors to self-consciously comment on their representations and prevents the audience from identifying fully with the characters. The intention behind such a system of acting was to expose to critical scrutiny the contradictory tensions within characters and their actions. Brecht called this type of performance gestic: giving the meaning of action and providing an accompanying attitude towards it. In general, Brecht's epic theatre and acting techniques have as their goal the destruction of the illusion of dramatic realism. This involves removing the fourth wall and displaying, whenever possible and by whatever means, the machinery or constructedness of dramatic performance. Brecht's theory of acting, however, is difficult to apply practically. And yet Brecht maintained, all along, that this new technique of acting (alienated) "does not in any way demand an unnatural way of acting" ("Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting" 95). See also "Short Description of a New Technique of Acting which Produces the Alienation Effect"; "Theatre for Pleasure or Theatre for Instruction"; and "Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting" in Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre*, trans. and ed. John Willett (London: Methuen, 1965).

[14] Many critics argue that Brecht's theory is undermined by his practice. Martin Esslin, in his critical biography *Brecht: The Man and His Work*, claims that Brecht's theory is violated in the plays he wrote. Brecht "always succeeds in doing things he never intended . . . . The plays he had written as ice-cold intellectual exercises contain far more than he himself consciously put into them." See Martin Esslin, *Brecht, the Man and his Work* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor, 1961). See also Maarten Van Dijk, "Blocking Brecht," *Re-interpreting Brecht: His Influence on Contemporary Drama and Film*, ed. Pia Kleger and Colin Visser (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990): 117-134.

[15] "Theatre for Pleasure" 70.

[16] "Short Description" 136.

[17] "Theatre for Pleasure" 70.

[18] Roland Barthes's concept of *jouissance* also has particular affinities with the concept of cognitive dissonance as I am using it. In *The Pleasure of the Text* (1973), he establishes the erotics of reading based on a distinction between the aesthetic responses of *plaisir* and *jouissance*. According to Barthes's distinction, the experience of *plaisir* is akin to closure, the satisfaction of automatic completion, and in cognitive terms, to the continuation of mental consonance. In contrast, *jouissance* marks the moments where a text disrupts complacency, prevents closure, and reveals its breaks or gaps in logic, meaning, and form. *Jouissance* is quite simply a sexualised way of describing the experience of cognitive dissonance. The discomfort *jouissance* brings readers is, for Barthes, incommunicable. While I find Barthes to be a convenient source for discussing modernist aesthetics, his poststructuralist refusal to discuss the authorial design behind such moments of aesthetic dissonance remains an oversight in accounting for reception practices. Where he stops short out of apparent poststructuralist necessity, cognitive science allows us to push forward so that these supposedly incommunicable experiences of *jouissance* can be articulated and explained. See Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill, 1975).

[19] Franz Kafka, *The Trial*, trans. Idris Parry (1925; London: Penguin, 1994).

[20] Kafka's *The Trial* (1925) was published posthumously by Max Brod who was instructed by Kafka to destroy the incomplete novel after he died. As a result, the novel has been dismissed as "unfinished" and there is still some debate surrounding the sequence of chapters and their apparent interchangeability. In "*The Trial*: Its Structure," Herman Uyttersprot argues that there is a schematic rigidity to the novel which is traceable through close readings of the novel's chapters and miscellaneous fragments. Uyttersprot rearranges Max Brod's original sequence of the chapters and fragments according to descriptions which logically chart seasonal change (descriptions of months and the weather) and the progressive deterioration of Josef K.'s psychological state. Even the confused and fragmented publishing history of the novel has a

distinctively modernist aura about it. See Herman Uyttersprot, "*The Trial*: Its Structure," *Franz Kafka Today*, ed. Angel Flores and Homer Swander, (Madisson: U of Wisconsin P, 1958) 127-44.

[21] *The Trial* inverts the conventional detective fiction / mystery novel structure where instead of beginning with a committed crime and searching for the criminal, Kafka's narrative begins with a charged criminal and seeks to discover the crime.

[22] Kafka articulates his phenomenological perspective on interpretation in the following aphorism from "Reflections on Sin, Pain, Hope, and the True Way": "The diversity of ideas [views] which one can have, say, of an apple: the apple as it appears to the child who must stretch his neck so as barely to see it on the table, and the apple as it appears to the master of the house who picks it up and lordly hands it to his guest" See Franz Kafka, *The Great Wall of China: Stories and Reflections* (New York: Schocken, 1946): 280.

[23] The same criticism might be levelled at readings of *The Trial* which allegorically abstract out and universalise the details of the novel (i.e. K. as everyman, as punishment for original sin, the dehumanising experience of modern bureaucracies, etc.).

[24] Franz Kafka, *Letters to Friends, Family, and Editors*, trans. Richard Winston and Clara Winston (New York: Schocken, 1977).

[25] Charles Taylor, "Self-Interpreting Animals," in *Human Agency and Language: Philosophical Papers I* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985): 45-76.

[26] In the following chapter, I argue that modernist aesthetics offer a similar type of resistance to the threat of behaviourism's popularity and domination in the first half of the twentieth century. However, neither modernism, nor cognitive science denies the findings of behaviourism. Both, in fact, still rely on behavioural data as the means of apprehending mental activities and also the means (language) through which cognitive insights can be communicated and shared. Furthermore, each enriches behaviourist insights in very specific ways by looking into how consciousness and mental processes contribute to the study of human behaviour, especially cognitive behaviour. Cognitive scientists, recognizing the limitations of stimulus-response explanations of behaviour, try to explain how information (stimulus) gets received, evaluated, processed, and consequently organised into a recognisable response. Behind every observable behavioral response is a necessary cognitive response whether it is consciously attended or habitually unconscious.

[27] This brief history of cognitive science is summarised from many different sources, but the primary source is Jean Petitot, et al., ed., *Naturalizing Phenomenology* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1999): 1-80.

[28] Francisco Varela, *Ethical Know-How* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1999): 11-12.

[29] This argument is specifically George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's from *Philosophy in the Flesh*, but it is representative of the type of qualification found in most embodied approaches to cognition published in the last two decades. See George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic, 1999).

[30] Francisco Varela, et al., *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience* (Cambridge: MIT P, 1991): 32.

[31] Literary works only possess organic characteristics while they are the objects of human attention. Interpretation is a type of organisation, an attempt to create a systematic whole from mutually connected and dependent parts. It is worth noting that the words organisation, organicism, and organism all share the same etymological root *organum* (Latin) which in its Greek derivation means "that with which one works" (*OED*). To interpret, then, is to organise, "to render organic" (*OED*). M. H. Abrams defines literary organicism as "the philosophy whose major categories are derived metaphorically from the attributes of living and growing things" (168). My concern is not simply to identify instances where the organic model is applied in literary theory, but to analyse what the common use of such models says about human understanding and cognitive processes. The metaphorics of organicism indicate a reaching after something that is not there. The organic basis of interpretation is projected onto inanimate works and is not an intrinsic property of the work itself even though writers may endow their works with an organised structure paralleling organicism.

Critics who treat literary works as unified organic wholes are predisposed to that approach by their sense of themselves as organic wholes. The major literary organicists are Romantic poets like Coleridge and the New Critics, however, the belief that creative works have an inherent organic basis and explanation

dates as far back as Aristotle's *Poetics*. Aristotle describes his conception of unified organicity as a complete whole "which has a beginning, a middle, and an end" (VII: 65). Beautiful works of artistic creation, it follows, must have an orderly arrangement of parts such that all the parts form a harmonious composition which the human eye can take in all at once, otherwise "the unity and sense of the whole is lost for the spectator" (VII: 66). Aristotle insists that imitated actions / objects be complete, "the structural union of the parts being such that, if any one of them is displaced or removed, the whole will be disjointed and disturbed. For a thing whose presence or absence makes no visible difference, is not an organic part of the whole" (VIII: 67). Aristotle's *Poetics* privileges harmony and rhythm, correctly identifying these aesthetic qualities as instincts of our nature. He identifies the basis of holistic literary production and reception as being in some way instinctual, more specifically as a "natural bent" springing from causes "lying deep in our nature" as human beings (IV: 57, 55). His recognition that "displaced or removed" parts produce "disjointed and disturbed" wholes parallels what I have been calling the experience of cognitive dissonance. However, this is as close to locating a bodily source for projected aesthetic organicism as Aristotle's ideas allowed him to go.

Coleridge was perhaps the most influential of the organicists. He offered the concept of organicism as a means of determining Shakespeare's genius, and understanding human imagination. His concept of organic form also provided a persuasive methodological blueprint for the creation of Romantic poetry, as well as a theoretical framework for explaining its reception. Going beyond Aristotle's notion of organic form, Coleridge appreciated how a good poem could bring the coordinated functions of the human mind to bear on its reception. Such a text could provoke "the whole soul of man into activity," in the same way that those cognitive operations had been the source of its creation.

In "Mechanic and Organic Form," Coleridge identifies the will to order as a "necessity of the human mind." In this essay, Coleridge describes how the spirit of poetry is a living power that must be formally embodied so that it can reveal itself. The embodied form is to the spirit "as the bark is to the tree." Coleridge defines organic form as innate, something which "shapes as it develops itself from within, and the fullness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its form" (qtd. in Perkins 616). More than simply saying a poem is like a tree, by continuing to highlight the shared properties of living organisms and artistic works, Coleridge pushes the analogy to the point where it becomes a poetic principle: "a living body is of necessity an organized one,--and what is organization, but the connection of parts to a whole, so that each part is at once end and means!" (616). Coleridge implies that the same coordinated functions and feedback mechanisms that sustain equilibriated life in organisms operate in poetic works.

Coleridge, like Aristotle, seems to circle the issue without ever expressly recognizing that the ultimate source of his concept of literary organicism is derived from both intuitive and conscious experiences of his own body. He comes closest to articulating this idea in chapter fourteen of *Biographia Literaria* when he discusses the "gentle and unnoticed" synthetic imagination "which reveals itself in the balance and reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities" (570). Coleridge's view of mind function as a "completing power" is similar to the cognitive and bodily basis of understanding that I am suggesting is the implicit goal of and motivation behind interpretive reading, especially of difficult (dissonant) literature. He ascribes to art the "power of humanising nature, of infusing the thoughts and passions of man into every thing which is the object of his contemplation" (607). It is never clear from this abstract statement just how the "humanising" of nature occurs, but it resonates with more recent cognitive theories of the ways in which embodied cognition and bodily experience affect perception and interpretation. If art reconciles man and nature, as Coleridge claims, it does so by revealing to man that nature and art are both organised cognitively to alleviate dissonance--what Coleridge called "the rupture of association" (609)--and to form wholes.

The New Critics accept these principles and rearticulate them in terms of structure and unity of effect: texts are capable of housing and containing dissonant instances of paradox, irony, tension, and ambiguity. Literary works are examples of "harmonised chaos," as Coleridge would say, and they rely on a well-wrought urn to provide a sense of wholeness and overall coherence. The question is whether or not the harmonisation of chaos is inherent within the structures of the works themselves or whether the goal of harmonisation is a factor in reception anticipated by authors during creation and then projected onto the works by readers who engage with them. Like Coleridge, proponents of the New Criticism posit the living plant as the implicit model for the literary work of art--an aesthetic organism of complex structure capable of balancing opposing qualities and unifying individual parts into an integrated whole. Cleanth Brooks acknowledges the New Critical return to organic analogy when he writes that "One of the critical discoveries of our time--perhaps it is not a discovery but merely a recovery--is that the parts of a poem have

an organic relation to each other . . . . The parts of a poem are related as are the parts of a growing plant" (qtd. in Abrams 222). I have chosen Cleanth Brooks to represent the New Critical position on literary organicism because throughout his work, the concept of organic unity acts as a guiding principle for interpretative reading. He claims that all literary objects obey the same biological laws as plants, animals, and humans. For Brooks, "The beauty of a poem is the flowering of the whole plant, and needs the stalk, the leaf, and the hidden roots" ("Irony" 1042). According to this paradigm of organic unity, Brooks is able to reconcile a work's tensions and ambiguities into coherent wholes on higher thematic and semantic levels of organisation, as well as discover complexities and discordant moments in works where they have not previously been recognised without disturbing what he calls the "total pattern" ("Heresy" 194). The New Critical appeal to organicism is an appeal to the natural balance of conditions found in living entities, a balance that is indeed responsible for the continued survival of these entities.

The three important concepts of literary organicism that I have identified here all attempt to move from a felt intuition about the ontological basis of literary works to a practicable method and theoretical position. Philosophical organicism, then, is a response to cognitive dissonance based on the organisation of the body. The result has been the development of an evaluative system that finds fault with literary works whose parts are not modeled after the "complex inter-relation of living" that are those of organic entities (*OED*). See M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1953); Aristotle, *Poetics*, *Aristotle's* Poetics, trans. S. H. Butcher (New York: Hill, 1961); ed. David Perkins, *English Romantic Writers*, 2nd. ed. (Toronto: Harcourt, 1995); Cleanth Brooks, "The Heresy of Paraphrase," *The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* (New York: Harcourt, 1947): 192-214; Cleanth Brooks, "Irony as a Principle of Structure," *Critical Theory Since Plato*, ed. Hazard Adams (New York: Harcourt, 1971):1041-1048. For a more detailed and complete historical account of the intellectual development of organic theory see M. H. Abrams chpt. VIII. See also Frederick Burwick, ed., *Approaches to Organic Form: Permutations in Science and Culture* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1987).

[32] In *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1987), Mark Johnson argues that imagination is "essential to the structure of rationality," in addition to playing a significant role in discovery, invention, and creativity. According to Johnson, human imagination plays a central role "in all meaning, understanding, and reasoning" because it is an embodied form of cognition (ix).

[33] The determination of what is relevant from a multitude of stimuli (certain details or images) depends precisely on the role such elements play in the process of consistency-building: Relevance is measured functionally. What is often considered irrelevant is that which cannot be reconciled within the parameters of a synthesised reading, that is, whatever does not help to create completed wholes or reduce the experience of cognitive dissonance. Relevance theorists argue that all "human cognition is relevance-oriented" and that it attempts to economically minimise processing effort with maximum benefits (46). What one person considers relevant, however, may differ from that which another person considers relevant. Every act of communication sets up certain expectations of relevance because it is an implicit request for attention, and it is precisely this expectation of relevance that modernist writers exploit to generate experiences of cognitive dissonance. In the context of aestheticised cognitive dissonance, then, what is relevant is what most effectively reestablishes cognitive equilibrium; and, while it may not be possible to determine definitively what any reader will consider relevant in a specific communication situation, the principle of relevance provides writers with a means of predicting readers' responses to their work. Readers use the same knowledge to help them evaluate what is relevant in the reconstruction of writers' intentions from the cognitive disruptions in their texts. In *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*, Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson claim that there are two Principles of Relevance: "(1) Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximisation of relevance" and "(2) Every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance" (260). I have adapted these principles to dovetail with the theory of cognitive dissonance. For instance, Sperber and Wilson argue that "the greater the processing effort, the lower the relevance," which reveals a myopic balance-sheet mentality that ignores the value of cognitive dissonance in developing human cognitive abilities (124). See Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson, *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995).

[34] The third-person point of view and even the first-person point of view when they are used in Victorian fiction provide a consistent and reliable objective perspective not unlike those needed for behaviouristic analysis.

[35] John Fiske, "The Codes of Television," *Media Studies: A Reader*, ed. Paul Marris and Sue Thornham (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1997): 131-41.

[36] Shklovsky, "Art as Technique" 10.

[37] Michael Riffaterre, "Describing Poetic Structure: Two Approaches to Baudelaire's 'Les Chats,'" *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. Jane Tompkins (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1980): 26-40.

[38] Here I would argue that the autonomy of literary works should guarantee a separate space where writers are free to explore and create beyond the pernicious grasp of all types of censorship. Where the concept of autonomy itself becomes restrictive is in literary criticism that isolates the literary works from the lifeworld.

[39] See Victor Shklovsky's work on "defamiliarisation," and Bertolt Brecht's concept of "estrangement" discussed earlier in the chapter.

[40] The root etymology of the word aesthetics comes from the Greek *aistheta* which means "things perceptible by the senses" and *aisthetes* which denotes "one who perceives" (*OED*).

[41] In Melville's *Moby Dick*, Captain Ahab talks about experiencing phantom limb sensation, and in doing so he acknowledges the presence of PL in the popular imagination of nineteenth-century reading publics. Ahab asks the ship's carpenter if he can make him a new prosthetic leg that will prevent PL sensation. He experiences the nagging presence of "another leg in the same identical place" as the prosthesis: "that is, carpenter, my old lost leg; the flesh and blood one, I mean. Canst though not drive that old Adam away?" The carpenter, acting as an inscribed reader representative of the novel's readers, responds "Yes, I have heard something curious on that score, sir; how that a *dismasted* man never entirely loses the feeling of his old spar, but it will still be pricking him at times" (emphasis added 582). See Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, ed. Harold Beaver (London: Penguin, 1972); See also Joseph Herman, "Phantom Limb: From Medical Knowledge to Folk Wisdom and Back," *Annals of Internal Medicine* 128.1 (January 1998): 76-78.

[42] Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford UP, 1985). Scarry's approach is an embodied one: "for what is quite literally at stake in the body in pain is the making and unmaking of the world" (21).

[43] John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (New York: Holt, 1922): 178.

[44] Bella May, *Amputations and Prosthetics: A Case Study Approach* (Philadelphia: Davis, 1996).

[45] V. S. Ramachandran offers a dissenting view of the source of phantom limb sensation which is based on the Penfield homunculus, cortical remapping, and a complex form of reflexology. He argues that the plasticity of the human brain allows for stimulation in one part of the body (cheek) to be mistaken for stimulation in another part (phantom limb) because of adjacent reference fields in the brain. See V. S. Ramachandran, "What Neurological Syndromes Can Tell Us about Human Nature: Some Lessons from Phantom Limbs, Capgras Syndrome, and Anosognosia," *Cold Spring Harbor Symposia on Quantitative Biology* 61 (1996): 115-34.

[46] PL has also been called a form of cognitive dissonance because patients know there is no physical basis for the felt sensation, and yet they continue to experience it. In the 1920s, Henry Head--a modern investigator of phantom limb--first discussed PLP in terms of the presence of schemata in the brain which helps orient the body's posture, movement, and situatedness in the world.

[47] Ronald Melzack, "Phantom Limbs and the Concept of the Neuromatrix," *Trends in Neurosciences* 13.3 (1990): 88-92.

[48] Ronald Melzack, "Phantom Limbs," *Scientific American* 266.4 (April 1992): 120-26.

[49] Ronald Melzack, "Phantom Limbs and the Concept of the Neuromatrix" 90.

[50] Ronald Melzack, "Phantom Limbs" 126.

[51] My intention here is not to diminish or belittle either amputation or the cognitive trauma of PLP by comparing it to reading literature; rather, I want to show how both physical and psychological well-being rely on the same idea of holistic organicity.

[52] Nathaniel Mackey uses the figure of phantom limb to analyse poetry that reaches beyond its "phantom limits": "phantom limb is a felt recovery, a felt advance beyond severance and limitation which contends with and questions conventional reality, that it's a feeling for what's not there which reaches beyond as it calls into question what is" (91). See Nathaniel Mackey, "Sound and Sentiment, Sound and Symbol" in *The Politics of Poetic Form*, ed. Charles Bernstein. (New York: Roof, 1990): 87-118.

[53] George Watson points to this discrepancy in the footnotes of his edited version of *Biographia Literaria* (London: Dent, 1965) from which all page references are taken.

[54] Husserl, for example, calls the basic frame or schema of a concrete material object a "phantom" because it is an absence that projects a presence into the gaps of perception or understanding (232). It is an apparitional or fuzzy horizon which guides, but does not absolutely determine completion. Phantoms are immaterial entities which indicate embodiment derived from consciousness of completed form and are enriched in their projecting fulfillment by past experience (retention). See Edmund Husserl, "Horizons and the Genesis of Perception," *The Essential Husserl*, ed. Donn Welton, trans. Anthony J. Steinbock (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1999): 221-233. In *Gestalt Psychology*, David Katz discusses the gestaltic nature of phantom limb in terms of "body image" which he describes as "the spatial image of the self" (66). According to Katz, "The phantom limb may well make a major contribution to an understanding of how the body image develops" (68). See David Katz, *Gestalt Psychology: Its Nature and Significance*, trans. Robert Tyson. (New York: Ronald, 1950): 66-68.

[55] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith. (London: Routledge, 1962). For a chapter by chapter analysis of Merleau-Ponty's main arguments, see Monika Langer, *Merleau-Ponty's* Phenomenology of Perception*: A Guide and Commentary* (Tallahassee: Florida State UP, 1989).

[56] Merleau-Ponty also writes, "For we have the experience of ourselves, of that consciousness we are, and it is on the basis of this experience that all linguistic connotations are assessed, and precisely through it that language comes to have any meaning at all for us" (xv).

[57] Merleau-Ponty's explanation of phantom limb involves a mental recovery of past experiences with a complete body which cannot account for the presence of PLP in individuals who suffer from congenital limb deficiency.

[58] See Douglas Price, "Miraculous Restoration of Lost Body Parts" in *American Folk Medicine: A Symposium*, ed. Wayland D. Hand (Berkeley: U of California P, 1976): 49-71.

[59] Qtd. in Herman, "Phantom Limb" 76.

[60] Today phantom limb is experienced by two predominant groups in society war: veterans and elderly amputees who suffer from vascular disease (May, *Amputations* 10).

[61] In *Amputations and Prosthetics: A Case Study Approach*, Bella May claims that during the American Civil War there were 30,000 cases of amputation in Union Army alone (1).

[62] Silas Weir Mitchell, "Phantom Limbs," *Lippincott's Magazine of Popular Literature and Science* 8 (1871): 563-69.

[63] Qtd. in Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenburg Galaxy* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1962): 4.

[64] Plato, *Phaedrus and Letters VII & VIII*, trans. Walter Hamilton (London: Penguin, 1973).

[65] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1964).

[66] See Evan Thompson, et al., "Perceptual Completion: A Case Study in Phenomenology and Cognitive Science," *Naturalising Phenomenology*, ed. Jean Petitot, et al. (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1999): 161-195.

[67] For more on the theory of primary metaphors, see J. Grady, "Foundations of Meaning: Primary Metaphors and Primary Scenes" (Ph.D. dissertation, U of California, Berkeley, 1997) and as discussed in Lakoff and Johnson's *Philosophy in the Flesh.* For more on the theory of body-based metaphors, see G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980); G. Lakoff and M. Turner, *More Than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1989); M. Turner, *Reading Minds: The Study of English in the Age of Cognitive Science* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991); and G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh* (New York: Basic, 1999).

Chapter Two: Reading the Maps

Theory, which is expectation, always determines criticism, and never more than when it is unconscious. The reputed condition of no-theory in the critic's mind is illusory. (John Crowe Ransom)

The nature of the material sets the problem to be solved, and the solution is the ordering of the material. (Cleanth Brooks)

I. Ideas of Difficulty

One simply has to mention the word modernism and, for anyone familiar with the literary movement figures like James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, and Ezra Pound instantly come to mind--dead, white, Anglo-American, males who intentionally created some of the most complicated and demanding literary works the world has ever seen. This gut response generates a very limited view of modernism which has, in fact, been challenged in recent years by scholars interested in expanding the modernist canon to include "major" and "minor" female writers, writers who explore queer issues, African American and various other ethnic writers. Such revision has created a modernism that is considerably more diverse than its popular Anglo-American version, and research continues to reveal dimensions of high modernist works that have been ignored or neglected. Modernism's relationship to popular culture, the socio-materialist contexts of its production and reception, and the seismic historical events that were contemporaneous with the period further remap its contours. Today modernism consists of a much more political and ideologically committed body of literature than ever before. In addition, highly nuanced national modernisms have emerged through scholarship to enrich and qualify early impressions of a geographically isolated modernism. The current international character of modernist studies--the dialogue between diverse movements within literary modernism, and disciplines--even reproduces the complex exchange of ideas and shared influences that was possible during the formative years of literary modernism.[1]

Attempting to define modernism amidst such ongoing qualification can feel like an act of futility; to borrow a historically relevant metaphor, the effort is akin to rearranging deck chairs on the *Titanic*. To say definitively what modernism is would inevitably be reductive. We would be wise to follow Clarissa Dalloway's lead when she considers the impossibility of summing up complicated people with simple description: "She would not say of any one in the world that they were this or were that" (*MD* 9). Despite the diversity and complexity of modernism, the one thing that remains constant throughout

our evolving definitions of it is the idea of difficulty. To date, no research has been conducted which argues that modernist works are *not* difficult, and mine will not be the first to do so. Instead, I am concerned with what lies downstream of modernist difficulty, namely the widespread assumption that modernist texts are elitist, resistant, and uncommunicative. Helen Elam sheds some light on the conflation of difficulty and elitism when she argues that "American culture does not take well to the idea of difficulty" (73).[2] One of the consequences of this low threshold for the difficult is the belief "that anything difficult is elitist" by virtue of the fact "that democracy demands simplicity" (74). Moreover, modernist difficulty has also become synonymous with experimentation, and thus linked to both the rhetoric of the "clean break" with tradition and notions of aesthetic autonomy more generally.[3] The impression that modernism is the exclusive domain of field experts and coteries of select readers rather than that of common readers continues to stigmatise the reception of high modernist novels. A detailed historical account of this reception is well beyond the scope of my research, but shelf after shelf of books written on high modernism in any university library will confirm the way in which elitism has become a foundational assumption of modernist studies. Rather, I want to investigate the ways in which modernist works that aestheticise cognitive dissonance based on an implicit knowledge of embodiment provide a common frame of reference (i.e. the human body) within which readers can understand various modernist forms, themes, and issues. This shared frame allows readers to view literary modernism as much more democratic and much more accessible, not in spite of its difficulty, but because of it.

Entries for modernism in various encyclopedias, anthologies, glossaries, and surveys of literary terms consistently define modernism according to characteristics that highlight its difficulty. In *A Handbook to Literature* first published in 1936, for example, the "*modern temper*" is said to revel "in a dense and often unordered actuality as opposed to the practical and systematic" (325).[4] This supposed revelry at the expense of readers and traditional notions of coherence manifests itself as "a deliberate dislocation of parts, in which very diverse components are related by connections that are left to the reader to discover, or invent" (167).[5] Most of these definitions, and even those found in specialist works, begin with qualifying gestures about the elusiveness of defining a movement so rich in international influence and so diverse--even contradictory--in the trends and tendencies that constitute it.[6] Because of this elusiveness most definitions at best consist of a list of broadly-defined tendencies which stretch umbrella-like to cover the various manifestations of modernism in place of a definition. Consequently, literary modernism is almost always described as a radical or revolutionary break with tradition and

established orthodoxies marked by persistent experimentation in language, form, and subject matter. Modernist literature which self-consciously subverts its readers' conventional expectations is seen as separating itself from its literary predecessors, and creating a "specialized enclave" of "experimental, formally complex, [and] elliptical" literature discontinuous with any stabilised past.[7] Ezra Pound's rallying cry to "Make it new" has since become the call to arms of modernism's radical experimentation despite the fact that he issued it in 1931 after the peak years of high modernist experimentation in the 1920s were over.[8]

The implications of this revolutionary break have led many critics and readers to identify an adversarial, often nihilistic, streak running through modernist works that pits its supposedly radical poetics against common readers and their ordinary uses of language. *The Harper Handbook to Literature*, for instance, defines modernism concisely as "A movement characterized by inner individual perceptions, solipsism, NIHILISM, alienation, EXISTENTIALISM" (294).[9] This kind of definition emphasises what is considered elsewhere a key feature of modernism, that is, its often "pessimistic view of the modern world, a world seen as fragmented and decayed, in which communication between human beings is difficult or impossible."[10] Modernist writers responded to this sense of fragmentation and what they saw as the inescapably problematic nature of linguistic communication, perception, and representation by reflecting it in the literary forms with which they experimented. The metacritical way in which this was accomplished is part of the inward turn of modernist novels. Experiments in form were often accompanied by self-reflexive gestures that commented on a writer's struggle to find the *mot juste* or the most appropriate form in which to express an idea. Often writers represent these self-conscious moments through the inner workings of characters' minds. Formally this shift was marked by the frequent use of interior monologue and stream of consciousness modes of narrative that suggest the breakdown of a shared sense of reality and its replacement with subjective fictions. Difficulty and experimentation, then, seem to go hand in hand with the belief that high modernist literature is in many ways anticommunicative, solipsistic, and subjectively relative.

When all of these related tendencies are taken together modernist literature appears detached from the realities of everyday life, the socio-material conditions of its production and reception, and its authors' intentions. Norman Cantor, in his efforts to distinguish modernism from Victorian realism, points to modernism's "penchant for the fragmented, the fractured, and the discordant" which stands "in opposition to the Victorians who showed a predilection for the finished and the harmonious" (37).

Modernism's foregrounding of a central aesthetic principle based on the "unfinished" and the "broken off" aligns it with my notion of cognitive dissonance and links its difficulty with another aspect of modernism according to Cantor: elitism. For him, modernism is a "culture of the elite" requiring "sophistication, learning, intense application," and it is thus inaccessible to the "naive and unprepared . . . common man":

> Nineteenth-century scholars and writers believed that social science, philosophy and, above all, literature and art could be expressed in a way that was easily accessible by at least anyone with a high school education. Modernism, to the contrary, believed in complexity and difficulty. It addressed a narrow, highly selective, learned and professional audience. (38)

This dissertation sets out to investigate whether or not Cantor's view of modernism is an accurate one. The fact remains, however, that his characterisation of modernism as difficult and elitist is commonplace and representative of the folk understanding of the movement. The sheer number of supplemental secondary materials published to help explicate and introduce new readers to difficult high modernist texts supports this view--as do the existence of specialist organisations and their conferences, scholarly journals committed to explaining esoterica and offering idiosyncratic readings, and companion volumes of annotations and concordances which can only ever scratch the allusive surface of these texts.

Critics and modernist writers alike turned modernist difficulty and its apparent disregard for its readers into a badge of honour. Harry Levin claims that the "uncompromising intellectuality" of modernists and the serious demands they make on their readers necessarily precludes popularity and best-seller lists: "The aura of obscurity or unintelligibility which may still occasionally tinge these intellectuals, in some degree, emanates from their refusal to advertise themselves or to talk down to their audience in the hope of enlarging it" (326).[11] Pound's famous modernist dictum in Canto 96 similarly advocates elitism:

> Here, surely, is a refinement of language
>
> > *If we never write anything save what is already understood, the field of understanding will never be extended. One demands the right, now and again, to write for few people with special interests and whose curiosity reaches into greater detail.* (673)[12]

In recent years Lawrence Rainey has taken this idea of exclusivity the other way, arguing that modernism survived economically precisely because it maintained a "restricted group

of readers" (47).[13] According to Rainey, modernism is an example of "niche marketing" (51). Small magazine publication and limited or deluxe editions which restricted availability of modernist works effectively transformed those works into rare investment commodities that would appreciate with time. In other words, difficulty became a marketing strategy of high modernist works of art: "Modernism required not a mass of readers, but just such a corps of patron-collectors" (62). The exclusivity of modernism revived a concept of cultural patronage that everyone assumed had vanished long before the twentieth century. Rainey merely posits a different justification for modernist difficulty and elitism. In other words, that modernism is elitist because of its difficulty is never in doubt. When Pound says, "Artists are the antennae of the race [and] . . . the bullet-headed many will never learn to trust their great artists" because they are incapable of understanding them, he reinforces this view. The vicious rhetoric of Pound's repeated attacks on the common reader in *ABC of Reading* combined with the intentional difficulty of his poetry has cemented in many readers' minds an inaccurate image of modernism as created for the select few: "The secret of popular writing is never to put more on a given page than the common reader can lap off it with no strain WHATSOEVER on his habitually slack attention" (70).[14] Such is the common explanation of modernist difficulty, that its privileged discourse somehow preserves high culture against the growing encroachments of a "middling" mass culture.

At the same time that difficulty becomes a form of resistance it is also a reflection of "an age of disunity and lost wholeness."[15] The Great War, which brought back not only broken bodies and unbalanced minds, became a symbol for the pervasive dislocations of a social sensibility confronting new technologies and modern thought. T. S. Eliot announced in 1921 that

> We can only say that it appears likely that poets in our civilization, as it exists at present, must be *difficult*. Our civilization comprehends great variety and complexity, and this variety and complexity, playing upon a refined sensibility, must produce various and complex results. The poet must become more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate if necessary, language into meaning. (65)[16]

According to Eliot, the fragmentary experiences of modern life called for a poetics that would reflect it in all of its heterogeneity and at the same time resist the worn out conventions of the previous generation.

Because writers and critics depicted and continue to depict the idea of difficulty as central to modernist literature, difficulty has since become central to modernist studies

and the teaching of modernism in general. Lionel Trilling foregrounds modernist difficulty as the key pedagogical problem involved in teaching a course on modern literature.[17] The passage of time, which usually has the effect of "quieting" a work, domesticating it, and making its innovative complexities seem more accessible as they become objects of "habitual regard," does not have the same effect on works of modernism (66). The important distinction to be made between the difficulty found in modernist literature and the difficulty modern readers now find in the poetry of Keats or the fiction of Dickens, as Trilling argues, is that contemporary readers of these earlier works found them "as simply available as a plate of oysters on the half shell": "Modern literature, however, shows its difficulties, at first blush; they are literal as well as doctrinal difficulties, and they are to be dealt with by young men brought up with a lax secondary education and an abstract and generalised college education" (63). According to Trilling, "if our students are to know their modern literary heritage, surely they need all the help that a teacher can give" (63). A recent decision by a Professor at Simon Fraser University to teach a course entitled "The Practice of Difficulty" echoes this sentiment and responds to the students' need to discuss what they see as the central feature of literary modernism and the biggest hurdle to understanding it.[18] Simply put, difficulty is what accounts for the "specific cultural anxiety we call modernism" (125).[19] Richard Poirier, therefore, associates modernism with burden and "being unhappy." "Modernism," he writes, "can be measured by the degree of textual intimidation felt in the act of reading" (125). That modernism is closely connected to intimidation stems from its poetics of cognitive dissonance which continually foreground gaps in our experiences and understanding. As a result, Poirier describes modernist texts as dramas "wherein the culturally or biologically determined taste for structure or for structuring is continually being excited into activity, and just as continually being frustrated" (130). My research argues that the inclination to fill in gaps and provide additional structure is central not only to reading, but also to basic human survival; it is biological first and only becomes cultural by way of habit formation.

How modernism is received depends on how its various forms of difficulty are understood. Alan C. Purves believes, for instance, that difficulty is socially constructed and is not an intrinsic characteristic or an objective property of a literary work (2). Instead, "A text's difficulty depends upon the nature of the understanding expected" (167). Difficulty it would seem "is in the eye of the beholder": an "individual's estimate of the nature of the object and that individual's estimate of her or his capacity to deal with the object" (1). This suggests that modernist writers who intentionally created a poetics of difficulty did so with very specific effects in mind. They wrote for and against an idea

of a contemporary readership that would have to struggle with their texts. Far from being elitist, then, modernist works were written with the frustration of common readers in mind--not to exclude them from participation as is so often argued, but to make them view the world and their place in it from a different perspective, freed from the deadening forces of unconscious habit. While to a certain degree we can all accept the contingency of difficulty, and would not want to contest Hazard Adams's claim that difficulty is a relative concept that changes from age to age, the intentional production of difficulty by modernist writers surely deserves further consideration.[20]

In "On Difficulty," George Steiner gets around this issue of contingent difficulty by developing a ("rough, and preliminary") theory of difficulty based on broadly defined category types.[21] It should come as no surprise that he frequently returns to examples from high modernist texts to illustrate his classification of difficulty into four different orders: contingent; modal; tactical; and ontological. Contingent difficulty is simply something that is either unfamiliar or unknown to us and requires that we "look it up." These types of difficulty can include among other things archaic, foreign, or slang words, intertextual allusions, references to historical figures and geographical locales, and words which have multiple competing meanings. When it comes to high modernist texts like Joyce's *Ulysses*, Pound's *Cantos*, or Eliot's *The Wasteland*, this type of elucidation is potentially interminable--"there is always more 'to look up'" (26). According to Steiner, in the majority of cases when readers say "this is difficult" what they mean is that "this is a word, a phrase or a reference which I will have to look up" (27). In contrast, modal difficulties are the result of inhibited empathy between readers and characters. What is missing is genuine comprehension: the text and its characters, while understandable on one level, are alien and inaccessible on another. Modal difficulty cannot be eliminated by simply looking up a word's meaning. Critiques of modernism that highlight a text's excessive formalism and lack of realist transparency fall into this category. These critics find no one in the text to identify with or even a recognizable setting that allows them to immerse themselves in the fictional world.

The next order of difficulty is tactical, where "The poet may choose to be obscure in order to achieve certain specific stylistic effects" (33). This third mode of difficulty forms the basis of experimental modernist aesthetics. The "revolution of the word" movement is founded on this type of intentional difficulty; making it new requires experimentation and experimentation begets difficulty. Tactical difficulty involves "momentary shocks" and the "unsettling of expectation" such that reading requires concerted effort. Writers who employ tactical difficulty want their works to unfold in

meaning gradually, often upon rereading, and even then sometimes only in the most provisional ways (35). The fourth mode of difficulty is ontological and it completely dispenses with any "contract of intelligibility" between reader and writer or reader and word. This type of difficulty questions the very nature, role, and value of things like literary communication: "*Ontological* difficulties confront us with blank questions about the nature of human speech, about the status of significance, about the necessity and purpose of the construct which we have, with more or less rough and ready consensus, come to perceive as a poem" (41). If ontological difficulty prompts us to focus on issues that transcend the specifics of literary texts like the nature and motivation behind interpretive reading and the humanistic importance of texts that aestheticise cognitive dissonance, then the methodological goals of this dissertation are a response to this fourth type of difficulty in addition to being a means by which to explain aspects of the other three. Steiner's types of difficulty are not exclusive. Any given text may contain all four types of difficulty and thereby prompt readers to respond to multiple levels of difficulty.

The distinction Steiner makes between modes of difficulty that require library research and those that involve interpretive acts that go beyond simply looking something up correspond to the two modes of dialogic reading that modernist difficulty occasions.[22] I refer to these two modes as "finding out" and "filling in."[23] My distinction between "finding out" and "filling in" is adapted from cognitive research into perception. Both activities, however, are motivated by an embodied desire for completion. "Finding out," which is akin to "looking up," requires synthesising a combination of successive perspectives derived from direct experience. "Filling in," on the other hand, involves projecting completion onto a form from one vantage point. Both "filling in" and "finding out" rely on the retension of past experiences and the projection of them onto new situations and contexts, but with "filling in" the indeterminacy cannot be eliminated with the same degree of certainty as "finding out" provides. In terms of studying literary works, "finding out" would entail doing supplemental extra-literary research with author biographies, historical documents, dictionaries, and various secondary materials. "Filling in" corresponds to New Critical / Formalist close reading, for which the text is considered sacrosanct and self-sufficient so that all of its tensions and contradictions are reconcilable within a well-wrought urn of transcendent unity. High modernist novels require both "filling in" and "finding out"; however, "filling in," as I am arguing, is a natural impulse derived from physiological functions that modernist writers anticipate in their aesthetics of cognitive dissonance and incorporate thematically into their texts thereby accommodating and making things difficult for the common reader.

An Art For Artists And Not For The Masses

It is clear that much of what we now take for granted regarding the characterisation of high modernism was born of reactionary frustration and an acceptance of the rhetoric of the day. A good deal of what appears in more recent summary definitions found in literary glossaries and terminology dictionaries still echoes the language and tone of early responses to modernism. As early as 1931, Edmund Wilson criticised modernist works for their apparent antihumanism in *Axel's Castle*.[24] Modernist literature appeared to be designed for "infinite specialization," having "the status of an intellectual pastime like anagrams or chess" (297, 294). Through formal experimentation and a "literary shorthand," Wilson argues, modernist writers "endeavoured to discourage their readers" (296, 298). Reacting to the "revolution of the word" movement of the 1920s, Wilson's own Marxist politics lead him to conclude in 1931 that

> the time is at hand when these writers, who have largely dominated the literary world of the decade 1920-30, though we shall continue to admire them as masters, will no longer serve us as guides. Axel's world of the private imagination in isolation from the life of society seems to have been exploited and explored as far as for the present is possible. (292)

This ivory tower world was created in part by an extreme and radically new formalism in which experimentation quickly became synonymous with difficulty for unaccustomed readers. Wilson granted that modernism had effectively "broken out of the old mechanistic routine" of language and literature, but in doing so it had divorced itself from life and the common reader. In other words, experimentation had indeed "revealed to the imagination a new flexibility and freedom," creating possibilities for human thought and art, but it had achieved this at the expense of clear communication and social relevance (298).

Shortly after Wilson, Jose Ortega y Gasset also declared in no uncertain terms that the "unpopularity" of modernist works was a "sociological fact" (4).[25] "Modern art," according to Ortega, "will always have the masses against it":

> It is essentially unpopular; moreover, it is antipopular. Any of its works automatically produces a curious effect on the general public. It divides the public into two groups: one very small, formed by those who are favorably inclined towards it; another very large--the hostile majority. . . . Thus the work

> of art acts like a social agent which segregates from the shapeless mass of many two different castes of men. (5)

For Ortega and like-minded critics, modernism was inaccessible to the majority of people for whom "aesthetic pleasure means a state of mind which is essentially indistinguishable from their ordinary behavior" (8). The dislocating and difficult aesthetics of cognitive dissonance made appreciating, let alone understanding, modernist works virtually impossible for the average person. Their divergence from the ordinary and the recognisable led Ortega to identify in works of modernism the dehumanisation of art: "If the new art is not accessible to every man this implies that its impulses are not of a generically human kind. It is an art not for men in general but for a special class of men who may not be better but who evidently are different" (8).

The irony of all this is that modernist experimentation was a response to the mechanical stimulus-response positivism of late Victorian realist fiction; it very much saw its project as one of *re*humanising language conventions and the accompanying cognitive operations that had become automatised in an age already characterised by industrial mechanisation. In Ortega's view, the new artistic sensibility of modernism "divides the public into two classes, those who understand it and those who do not understand it" (12). As I've shown, the idea that modern art appeals to a minority audience pervades the history of modernist reception. Difficulty in its many forms, therefore, appears to establish shibbolethic boundaries. Modernist texts separate readers into insiders and outsiders, those who have the encyclopedic knowledge to comprehend rich allusiveness and have mastered the specialised hermeneutic practices supposedly needed to interpret modernist experiments in form, and those who do not.

Even though Ortega views modern art as being of no consequence socially, he cannot bring himself to condemn modern art outright. Instead, he sees dehumanized art as an inadequate or failed attempt to avoid treading again down the "beaten and wornout paths" of artistic creation (50). Ortega articulates in 1948 what has always threatened to undermine the reception of modernist fiction: the fear of not understanding--a fear of the new, and of change. These early perspectives on modernism, held by frustrated first-time readers of modernist difficulty, suggest that these readers are incapable of seeing the emancipatory possibilities of this alternative mode of human expression, one which simultaneously celebrates human limitations (perceptual, cognitive) and refuses, in an the all too human way, to accept those limitations.

In 1967 Irving Howe wrote an "Introduction" to a collection of essays in which he gives an account of modernism and highlights aspects that either contribute to or are

derived from its difficulty.[26] When he claims that "The [modernist] *avant-garde* scorns notions of 'responsibility' toward the audience; it raises the question of whether the audience exists--of whether it should exist" (24), he is using a reactionary tone characteristic of earlier Marxist-humanist criticism. He sees in modernism a "haughty authoritarianism" and "self-sufficiency" which severs art from "common life and experience" (25, 24, 27). Difficult works become "not merely autonomous but hermetic, and not merely hermetic but sometimes impenetrable" (28). For Howe, modernism's difficulty is an intentional affront to its audience which replaces it with a "coterie audience" (13). As he strongly puts it, "The *avant-garde* abandons the useful fiction of 'the common reader;' it demands instead the devotion of a cult" (23). In "The Idea of the Modern," Howe claims that the difficulty of modernist works accounts for their limited audiences, and moreover, that this is how the authors wanted it:

> The kind of literature called modern is almost always difficult to comprehend: that is a sign of its modernity. To the established guardians of culture, the modern writer seems willfully inaccessible. He works with unfamiliar forms; he chooses subjects that disturb the audience and threaten its most cherished sentiments; he provokes traditionalist critics to such epithets as "unwholesome," "coterie," and "decadent." (13)

Unfortunately, Howe's view of modernism is representative rather than unique.

Wilson's, Ortega's, and Howe's critiques of modernism highlighted its solipsistic difficulty, something that the Georg Lukacs-Bertolt Brecht debate of the 1930s picked up on. Lukacs saw modernist literature as uncommitted and representative of bourgeois decadence, but at the heart of his critique was a concern for modernism's anti-realism--which he considered an intentional affront to common readers. Difficulty, although not discussed in such terms, was the foremost problem with modernist literature. This new literature couldn't contribute to a proletarian revolution or provide exemplary models for the exploited masses if the majority of the proletariat couldn't understand its experimental forms and abstract representation.

II. The Debates

> **Modernism has not, nor has it ever had, anything to do with the creation of 'prophetic figures' or with the genuine anticipation of future developments. (Georg Lukacs, "Realism in the Balance")**

In essays like "The Ideology of Modernism," Lukacs attacks works of modernist literature (Joyce's, Kafka's, Faulkner's) on mimetic grounds and for their irrational, ahistorical preoccupation with form at the expense of socially valuable content; because they are not explicitly progressive or committed to social revolution, he condemns them as decadent.[27] For Lukacs, "'modernist' anti-realism" (basically unconventional formalism) negates history and offers readers characters who exist in isolated, arbitrary, and subjective worlds. The cities and settings of these modernist novels have no significance except as mere "backcloths." "Such a view of life," according to Lukacs, "cannot impart a sense of direction" (187-97). For him, the ideology of modernism is clearly anti-humanist: a static, anti-teleological rejection of the future. In denying modernism a role in social change, Lukacs condemns it as "the negation of art." As Lukacs pointedly concludes, "We see that modernism leads not only to the destruction of traditional literary forms; it leads to the destruction of literature as such" (209). Underlying Lukacs's criticism is a strong--almost blind--commitment to social realism as the only literary means capable of contributing to a Marxist revolution.

In contrast, modernism, like expressionism before it, is actually "a declamatory pseudoactivism" (17).[28] What Lukacs seems unable to see and what equally committed Marxists, such as Ernst Bloch, Bertolt Brecht, and, somewhat later, Theodor Adorno, have repeatedly pointed out is the potential revolutionary nature of modernist aesthetics. Too often Lukacs is set up by modernist scholars as a straw man whose critical statements are easily turned back on him in defense of modernism.[29] Lukacs sees in socially realist art a "critical realism" capable of demystifying the true forces at work in the social world, but it is a realism based on conventional modes of representation and narrative. He fails to see that modernism, with its experimentation in form and narrative point of view, strongly resists and challenges the very types of orthodoxies he thinks deceptively mask social relationships in a world of capitalist exploitation. Regardless of how one reads Lukacs today or how one read him when he first published his essays, it is clear that he has contributed to the mischaracterisation of modernist works as inaccessible, uncommunicative, and of little social value. Lukacs's bracketing of modernism as a chaotic distortion of objective reality--an idealized and holistic conception of reality which, as Bloch points out, is equally mediated, constructed and, therefore, illusory--allows him to privilege the standing tradition of nineteenth-century realism that he sees descending from Goethe to Balzac to Tolstoy to Thomas Mann in the twentieth century. Lukacs reads realism and modernism through a binary relationship where modernism is cast in negative opposition to realism because of its poetics of difficulty.

Realist writers appeal to readers from a broad cross-section of society because they do not call into question the habitual reading strategies that most readers possess from reading the daily newspaper. Their works are accessible precisely because they are not formally difficult. This is in stark contrast to the supposed impermeability of many modernist works: "The taxing struggle to understand the art of the 'avant-garde'. . . yields such subjectivist distortions and travesties that ordinary people who try to translate these atmospheric echoes of reality back into the language of their own experience, find the task quite beyond them" (56-57).[30] For Lukacs and many of modernism's early readers, conventional literary realism and accessibility go hand in hand while formal defamiliarisation is a form of difficulty which signals a contempt for the common reader.

I align myself more with the position Bertolt Brecht holds in this debate. Brecht takes issue with Lukacs's conflation of unrealistic art with formalism and develops an aesthetic theory which is socially engaged *because* it is innovative and difficult: "With the people struggling and changing reality before our eyes, we must not cling to 'tired' rules of narrative, venerable literary models, eternal aesthetic laws" (qtd. in Bloch 81). Progressive realism involves political and aesthetic demystification, not an adherence to habits and customs. Brecht sees himself embattled against the hereditary enemies which Lukacs venerates. For realism to be socially engaged and accurately represent the world, it needs to evolve:

> For time flows on . . . . Methods become exhausted; *stimuli* no longer work. New problems appear and demand new methods. Reality changes; in order to represent it, modes of representation must also change. Nothing comes from nothing; the new comes from the old, but that is why it is new. (emphasis added 82)

Brecht expresses the contingent nature of realism as a formal, philosophical, and practical concept. He acknowledges the necessary dialogue which exists between innovative formal representation and its predecessor forms. The new has meaning only in relation to the cognitive echo of the old which the new evokes dialogically whenever aesthetic defamiliarisation occurs. So while Brecht and Lukacs use divergent readings of Marxist philosophy to fight an ideological battle over modernist experimentation, at the heart of their dispute is an implicit claim about the communicability and difficulty of modernist forms for the "common reader."

Both Brecht and Lukacs interpret literature through Marx. And although their writings are haunted by spectres of Marx, each provides insights which are extractable without adopting a Marxist philosophy of artistic production and reception.

Accessibility and realism appear natural allies, but as Brecht stresses, in an age of dislocation even that which seemed natural was eventually called into question. Brecht believes that it is possible to have it both ways, and he advocates the social necessity of communicating revolutionary ideas through revolutionary aesthetics.[31] While most of the critiques of modernism that call it antihumanist, elitist, and inaccessible to the so-called common reader are mounted by leftist scholars, the roots of this view of modernism can be traced to earlier, less politically "committed" attempts at criticism. As we shall see, the same issues which fueled this argument first arose in a long-since forgotten debate about the practical limits of the "revolution of the word."

The Revolution of the Word

Eugene Jolas, co-founder of the Paris-based avant-garde review *transition*, declared in the June 1929 edition that "**THE REVOLUTION IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IS AN ACCOMPLISHED FACT**."[32] His published manifesto, entitled "The Revolution of the Word," became a modernist rallying cry for experimental literary works published after 1929, but it also came to refer to all modernist works that challenged the "hegemony of the banal word" prior to Jolas's proclamation. Today the "revolution of the word" is synonymous with literary modernism in general, even though it highlights the linguistic experimentation that accounted for only a certain class of literary works, albeit among the most important of the period. Jolas views avant-garde modernism as a project of creative emancipation. He declares the imagination "autonomous and unconfined," sees narrative as the means to perform "a metamorphosis of reality," and claims that such literary experiments were "not concerned with the propagation of sociological ideas." Literary creators, according to Jolas and those who signed his proclamation, have the right to use invented words or words given new meanings, disregarding all laws of syntax and grammar as well as the constraints imposed by dictionaries and textbooks. The last two statements of Jolas's proclamation celebrate what I argue is the greatest stumbling block to modernist reception--the belief that modernist writers were not interested in communicating to common readers. In the penultimate statement, Jolas claims, "The writer expresses. He does not communicate," and in the final one he pronounces, "The plain reader be damned" (12). With these two statements, Jolas helps establish the main paradox of literary modernism which this dissertation attempts to clarify: that the emancipation of the creative individual from restrictive systems of language use is restricted to a cultural elite. By damning the plain reader and claiming that modernist

literature is not written to communicate messages, Jolas unwittingly aligned himself with sociai realist critics like Lukacs, who, as we've seen, condemned avant-garde modernism outright as decadent bourgeois abstraction. The major difference between the two is that Lukacs condemns modernism for what he sees as its anarchistic tendencies--an extreme opposition to realism--while Jolas celebrates the anarchistic freeing of the artist and the reader from the social constraints placed on creative expression. In the service of two very different mandates, then, Lukacs and Jolas both manage to characterise modernism as cultic and completely autonomous, having little or no social and communicative value. Together they helped to cast a shadow over literary modernism from which it has yet to fully emerge.

In an attempt to counter the aesthetic extremism suggested in Jolas's "Proclamation," the editor of *The Modern Quarterly* asked the question that still seems to be on everyone's mind:

> Is the *word* insufficient as it now is to convey the ideas and emotions of the contemporary literary artist; is it in the form that it now stands unable to communicate the subtler movements of personality and the inner cerebrations of character? (270)[33]

The fall 1929 issue of *The Modern Quarterly* committed almost forty pages to what has been a virtually ignored intellectual debate on the nature of experimentation in modernist prose and poetry. Unfortunately, this debate made little impact at the time, and, as far as I can tell, has subsequently been forgotten. The "general debate," as it was called, consisted of seven short position articles all on the theme of the revolution of the word. In them, a group of writers from the American host journal pit themselves against the "revolution-in-the-wordists" from the Paris-based journal *transition*.[34] *The Modern Quarterly*'s editor, V. F. Calverton, admitted that the whole Western world was in a state of revolutionary chaos, change was the "dominant note of the day," and everywhere experimentation was "rife" (270). This revolutionary impulse of experimentation was now being played out at the level of the word in literary aesthetics. The debate, however, was an attempt by *The Modern Quarterly* to establish the practiceable parameters of the "revolution." As it reads today, the whole debate revolves around the nature and limits of literary experimentation. Both sides shared the belief that there was a need to represent the changed conditions of modern life and the aspects of consciousness discovered by the new psychologies of the day in fresh and innovative ways (271).[35] The main questions Calverton's group posed were:

> Must we revolutionize the word in order to do this? or can we use the word as it now stands, adding to it new values, enriching its present connotations, and enlivening it with new contexts, without having to so revolutionize it that it becomes meaningless to all but its revolutionaries? (271)

Essentially the debate came down to the two related issues which have plagued the practice and reception of modernism from day one. The first issue involves the perceived function of experimental modern works and the affiliated concept of literary autonomy legacied to modernist writers by nineteenth-century aestheticism: does modernist literature communicate from author to reader or does it simply express the author's subjective response in an overtly idiosyncratic and elitist manner inaccessible to all but experts and initiates? The second issue concerns the nature of revolutionary aesthetic practices and the lasting effects of their accompanying rhetoric: did the revolution of the word really entail damning the "common reader" as well as a total break with linguistic conventions and the social function of language? If so, then perhaps the revolution was simply an impulsive artistic stage which had lost sight of the true function of literature which is to communicate experiences.

In a series of short articles, advocates who supported the revolution of the word characterised Calverton's followers as reactionary traditionalists, either too lazy or too habitualised to engage with the new forms of expression. The revolution, as conceived of in the pages of *transition* and rearticulated in *The Modern Quarterly*, provided a bulwark against "the present-day banalisation of the written word" and "a vast collectivistic triteness" triggered by the commercial exploitation of realism most prominently in contemporary newspapers, best sellers, and film (273). In response, Calverton and his followers, who likewise felt that a "new world demanded a new art" (276), considered the revolution-in-the-wordists cultic extremists. Calverton and company refuted the revolution-in-the-wordists' claim that language could serve a non-utilitarian function and they stressed that words were social forms, not individual ones.[36] So while both sides shared the conviction that writers should be able to experiment with their medium, controversy emerged over the nature of this experimentation and whether it should be limited or left completely unrestrained.

For Calverton, the purpose of entering into this debate was to clarify what exactly the revolution of the word meant. He sought to temper the extreme rhetoric of its revolutionary call to arms with an appeal to the social nature of language: "We are for revolt in literature, and revolution in form--but with one qualification that the revolt or revolution have a communicable character" (279). Even revolutions in the individual word

were acceptable as long as the revolution made that word a more precise and clarifying form of social expression (277). Calverton and his associates reacted most to claims that writers somehow "expressed" without regard for communication. They also bristled at the idea that writers thought they could use words as they liked, esoterically and irresponsibly, without appreciating the "residuum of culture" and "the congealed thought of centuries" that inhered in them (281-82). Calverton made it very clear that an absolute break with tradition--whether literary, semantic, or otherwise--was virtually impossible, and any radical literary experimentation which attempted such a break would inevitably result in idiosyncratic works which only had meaning for the those who created them.

Calverton's commonsensical intervention amounted to little more than an ignored qualification that the necessary revolt should take place not in the word itself, but in the use of the word (278). Today it is difficult to find mention, let alone critical accounts, of the supposedly controversial debate which took place between the covers of the fall 1929 issue of *The Modern Quarterly*. In the issue that followed the debate, there is no mention of the heated repartee of articles--not even a letter to the editor. The debate over the limits of experimentation, which at the time seemed so important to the future of literary expression, seems to have faded just as it began. Either the journal's readership didn't appreciate the magnitude of the apparent controversy or they simply didn't care. The debate does, however, reveal the problematic nature of modernist experimentation. Of the two positions represented within the pages of *The Modern Quarterly*, the one which called modernist experimentation non-communicative and damned the common reader continues to this day to have a pervasive influence on the reception of literary modernism. One of the primary reasons for this lasting influence is the relationship that modernist writers like Gertrude Stein and James Joyce established with *transition*.

Arguably, Joyce's work is better characterised by the position of Calverton and his fellow writers from *The Modern Quarterly* than by those writers who supported *transition*. However, because Joyce's "Work in Progress" first appeared in *transition*, he and his work were "intimately associated with the Revolution of the Word--physically and ideologically" (52).[37] Interpretations of this association vary. For example, Richard Ellmann observes that "Jolas found in *Finnegans Wake* the principle text for his revolution of the word," and concludes that Joyce was content to allow his work to be associated with the movement because of the sustained "advocacy" he received from the review in particular through published essays on his work (589).[38] Michael Finney, writing from a different perspective, argues that the association of Joyce's "Work in Progress" with Jolas's "nihilistic linguistic philosophy" accounts for the rejection of

Joyce's work by contemporary critics and for many of the naive and simplistic approaches to the text which still persist among common readers and professional critics today (52-53). I would extend Finney's line of argument to include the reception of all of Joyce's work from *Dubliners* to *Ulysses*, as well as works of literary modernism more generally--which continue to be read in contexts of the revolution of the word and its constraining provisions.

Even though Joyce did not sign or publicly endorse the revolution of the word manifesto, his silence on the matter is perceived as support for Jolas's project. Joyce's "Work in Progress" was constantly cited in the scholarly defenses of the revolution of the word as exemplary of the revolution in practice, and Joyce was further implicated by essays like Jolas's "The Revolution of Language and James Joyce" which explicitly aligned author and movement.[39] The double-billing of Joyce and what was to become the revolution of the word in the essay's title has helped construct the impression of modernist literature as elitist and non-communicative that has been with scholars and readers since. More importantly, however, Joyce's perceived endorsement of the revolution of the word meant that an opposition to the revolution amounted in effect to an opposition to Joyce, who, by 1929, had already secured his reputation as the spokesperson for literary modernism.

As I mentioned earlier, *The Modern Quarterly-transition* debate consisted of seven short articles, four of which, however, were written by original signatories of the revolution of the word "Proclamation." Initially it seems strange that *The Modern Quarterly* would disproportionately stack the deck against themselves until one reads the final, and by far the longest, of these essays, written by Harold Salemson. The expectation was that Salemson, as a revolution of the wordist, would support the *transition* position, but his contribution to the debate expresses a concern about the tenability of the revolution of the word itself as it had first been articulated. In "James Joyce and the New Word," Salemson surprisingly questions the success of Joyce's attempt to revolutionise the word in "Work in Progress," and argues that scholars who hail it as a modern masterpiece have succumbed to the affective power of Joyce's reputation. Salemson's article marks a significant break in the revolution of the wordists' solidarity. He challenges the claim made by many of his fellow "revolution-in-the-wordists" that our present language is inadequate and needs to be replaced by a new one. Instead, Salemson argues that there are vast resources still to be explored and with which to be experimented within ordinary parlance (305). He calls attempts to read the fragments of "Work in Progress," published in *transition*, "nothing more than a game" and

claims that Joyce's work can have interest only to "scholars of language-formation" (295-97).

Moreover, Salemson believes that because Joyce's first books proved him an excellent writer, his admirers have given the author "the benefit of too many doubts" in their readings of "Work in Progress." Joyce's status as a legend, according to Salemson, has led scholars to judge him as "preconceivedly capable and destined to do unheard-of things" regardless of what he actually accomplishes in "Work in Progress"; and more to the point, "expecting such great things from him and stating blindly they received them 'just because he is Mr. Joyce,' his commentators have lost their sense of moderation in literary criticism" (310-11). Salemson accurately identifies what might be called the "reverential fallacy," the means by which an author's reputation--and especially authors like Joyce who are accorded the status of literary genius--can disproportionately influence and distort the reception and evaluation of her or his work. Salemson argues that Joyce's reputation, rather than the content of his writing (which he finds wanting), has become the basis for judging the literary value of "Work in Progress." Salemson reconsidered the extreme rhetoric of "The Revolution of the Word," questioned the uncritical, deferential view of Joyce's "Work in Progress," and in doing so helped to bring the theory of modernist experimentation more in line with actual practice.[40]

The rhetoric of the revolution of the word never affected the practice of artistic creation to the same degree that it has provided an interpretive frame of reference that has constrained the reception of modernism. Modernism's "great break" with the past, with ordinary language use, and with the historical and social consequences of literature is a myth. But that same myth has impacted the preconceived ideas that readers bring to modernist texts. Folk characterisations of literary modernism have come to represent only one side of this now forgotten debate. While the positions of the Paris-based *transition* and the Baltimore-based *Modern Quarterly* may reflect differences in the respective political climates of Continental Europe and the United States, the debate was less about socialist revolution and more about the social limits of language experimentation despite the politically charged vocabulary that was used. The debate offers a more balanced view of the high modernist period, as well as providing an alternative perspective on the nature and assessment of modernist aesthetics to that of the oft-cited Brecht-Lukacs exchange which took place in the 1930s.

> **The reader naturally looks for certain land-marks in the poem before he can begin to enjoy it . . . . Modernist poets have removed the well-known land-marks and the reader is likewise bothered. The reasons given for this removal are that land-marks tend to make paths, that paths grow to roads, that roads soon mean walls and railings, and that the pedestrian or motorist, who must keep to the roads, never sees any new scenery. (Laura Riding and Robert Graves, *A Survey of Modern Poetry*)**

Throughout the *Modern Quarterly-transition* debate, a concern for common readers is almost entirely absent with the exception of Calverton's appeal to the social dimensions of language use. Not so in Laura Riding and Robert Graves's *A Survey of Modern Poetry* (1927), in which they argue that the very thing distinguishing modern poetry from traditional poetry is the former's withdrawal from the "plain reader" through the use of formal experiments.[41] The central thesis of their work is that contemporary poetry divorces itself from the "common-sense standards of ordinary intelligence," and insults that intelligence by barring it access to the poetic experience expressed by the poem (9). As poets themselves, Riding and Graves acknowledge the necessity of linguistic innovation to evoke fresh responses in readers; changes in experience necessitate changes in form. However, they are also wary of the effects that innovative forms--what they call "new surprises"--have on reception, because they encourage readers to discover many things that (in anticipation of New Criticism) were "not consciously intended *by the poem*" (emphasis added 17, 25, 26). Riding and Graves grant that language needs to be used in a fresh way to disturb the stock-feelings and situations perpetuated by traditional poetry, but they also warn of the reading public's desire for clarity and poetry that can be understood "at a glance" (84). They argue that

> The chief condition the [plain] reader makes about the poetry he reads is that it shall not be difficult. For if it is difficult it means that he must think in unaccustomed ways, and thinking to the plain reader, beyond the range necessary for the practical purposes of living, is unsettling and dangerous; he is afraid of his own mind. (108)

Throughout *A Survey of Modernist Poetry*, Riding and Graves are conflicted because they want to defend modernist poetry and support the idea of innovation, but they also hold modernist innovation responsible for abandoning the plain reader. They do not appreciate that cognitive dissonance *is* "necessary for the practical purposes of living."

At one point Riding and Graves perform a reading of an ee cummings poem that has the potential to reveal the cognitive dissonance that modernist disruptions of form

occasion. In order to understand the poem, Riding and Graves commit a type of heresy of paraphrase by placing it "into ordinary prose with conventional typography" in an attempt to show how the use of "unconventional typography improves the accuracy of the description" (85). This is the poem in its original form:

> Among
> these
> red pieces of
> day (against which and
> quite silently hills
> made of blueandgreen paper
> scorchbend ingthem
> --selves--U
> pcurv E, into:
> anguish (clim
> b)ing
> s-p-i-r-a-
> l
> and, disappear)
> Satanic and blase
> a black goat lookingly wanders
> There is nothing left of the world but
> into this noth
> ing il trene per
> Roma si-gnori?
> jerk.
> ilyr, ushes.

Their rewritten prose version effectively neutralises the poem's formal dissonance and provides a normative benchmark against which to measure cummings's creative experimentation:

> Among these red pieces of day (against which--and quite silently--hills made of blue and green paper, scorch-bending themselves, upcurve into anguish, climbing spiral, and disappear), satanic and blase, a black goat lookingly wanders. There is nothing left of the world; but into this nothing "il trene per Roma si-gnori?" jerkily rushes. (85)

Riding and Graves seem to be on the verge of a critical breakthrough, revealing how the disruptive complexity of experimental form reinforces, mingles with, and intensifies the

poem's content. By rewriting the poem in conventional prose, they perform on paper one of the necessary cognitive operations that readers automatically perform when they are confronted with innovative literary forms: they reconstruct a conventional background against which to measure the dissonant forms.[42] Riding and Graves, however, pejoratively call this necessary act of literary criticism a "levelling service" for plain readers, and claim that such criticism reduces readers to "critical imbecility" (87).

Riding and Graves's reading has potentially far-reaching implications but they don't develop them. As critics, they are torn between offering "expansions" of difficult poems and heralding the way that innovative modern poetry breaks readers free from "the stock feelings and situations with which traditional poetry has continually fed popular sentiments" without the aid of common-sense prose summaries (87). The dilemma Riding and Graves experience is one which a theory of cognitive aesthetics can resolve by highlighting and explaining how common sense cognitive activities adapt to accommodate aesthetic innovations. "Levelling services" are not the exclusive domain of literary specialists; rather, they are embodied responses that all humans perform unconsciously every day. A cognitive approach to modernist literature will make use of common readers' responses and their conventional reading strategies to account for aesthetic defamiliarisation and to help reconstruct authorial intention.

Riding and Graves begin their conclusion insightfully and rather self-reflexively by complaining that modernist poetry is being subjected to criticism that is not proper to its aesthetics (258). They recognise that modernism demands a new way of reading and a critical understanding that is capable of addressing the experimental nature of the movement; however, their own contemporary situatedness, as well as their conflicted feelings about the value of modernism and the abilities of plain readers, prevent them from developing such a critical methodology. The methodology that Riding and Graves were unable to provide emerged in the subsequent three decades and developed under the rubric of the New Criticism. The New Critical stress on *closed* formalist readings of texts that were treated as autonomous and organically self-sufficient helped not only to domesticate a great deal of modernist difficulty, but also to lend credence to the popular image of modernism as divorced from everyday life and common readers. The New Criticism paradoxically was the best and worst thing that could have happened to modernist literature. Developed in part as a corrective to scholarly work which over-emphasised biographical, historical, psychological, and moral readings of literary texts, the New Criticism simultaneously responded to the crisis in reception caused by high modernism.[43] On the one hand, here was a critical methodology designed perfectly to

respond to modernist difficulty. It adopted the very structural principles that characterised modernist experimental literature and transformed them into critical catchwords: "ambiguity," "irony," "tension," and "paradox." Advocates of the New Criticism declared the encyclopedic and esoteric knowledge and the sprawling allusiveness contained within novels like *Ulysses* irrelevant to understanding the text. They maintained that there was no cause to seek out extra-literary canons of knowledge to help explicate literary works, no need to go beyond what the autonomous text already offered. According to this view, dissonant and incompatible textual elements were reconcilable within a conception of "total effect"--a type of transcendent thematic unity that equilibriated everything it encompassed. New Criticism, therefore, neutralised a great deal of modernist difficulty by shrinking the parameters of valid interpretation. This in turn helped to make modernism much more accessible to a wider range of readers and led to the institutionalisation of modernist literature as a teachable subject within university curriculums. One of the very reasons why New Critical-style readings of modernism remain current and informative today is because of their ahistorical methodological commitments which tend to stand the test of time better than more fashionable readings that rely on extra-literary bodies of knowledge to inform them. But the procrustean bed of New Critical methodology, which initially helped guide readers through the difficulties of modernism, became a confining template that still haunts modernist reception and subsequently threatens any reappraisal of modernist aesthetics as accessible to the common reader in and of themselves.[44]

One of the goals of my dissertation research is the redrawing of literary modernism's image. In the face of systematically reinforced modes of receiving modernism (New Criticism and Formalism), I offer a more fully articulated picture of experimental modernism through cognitive poetics and an investigation of socio-material factors that continue to condition responses to modernist works of art. Part of the way I attempt to do this is by bringing the insights of recent cognitive theory to bear on reader response criticism and reception aesthetics in an attempt to extend their explanatory range and overcome some of the inherent problems involved in trying to discuss subjective response in an objective way. In what follows, I outline some of these reader response methodologies which undergird and help situate my own work within a broader field of literary inquiry.

III. Responding to Readers

"I do not know how I learnt to read. I only remember my first books and their effect upon me; it is from my earliest reading that I date the unbroken consciousness of my own existence." (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Confessions*)

"The human understanding, from its particular nature, easily supposes a greater degree of order and equality in things than it really finds" (Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum*).

All forms of cognitive dissonance, whether they occur as semantic ambiguity, incoherence, typographical mistakes, or the subversion of readers' expectations, transfer the burden of a text's intelligibility from authors to readers. Reader response criticism acknowledges this burden by focusing critical attention on the reader. This dissertation, therefore, because of its methodological commitments, its objectives, and its potential theoretical scope, falls within the category of reader response criticism. More specifically, it is a reception-based approach to literary high modernism which utilises cognitive science to further develop the insights of reader response criticism in order to account for the historical reception of modernism and to offer new readings of canonical works. The following survey of audience-oriented criticism situates my own research within the main debates of reader response criticism and acknowledges the degree to which my theoretical framework has been influenced by some of its key practitioners.

Reader response criticism (a.k.a. reception aesthetics in its European manifestations), which reached its apex in the mid- to late 1970s and early 1980s, is a critical approach that privileges reception and reading practices, thereby focusing on the roles readers play in the realisation of literary texts.[45] Despite the plethora of diverse methodologies housed under this rubric, in general reader response theory sets out to challenge text-oriented approaches (i.e. Formalism and New Criticism) which claim that "meaning adheres completely and exclusively in the literary text" (Tompkins 201). Even within this common opposition to the objectivity of the text, however, there is great divergence among theorists and their proposals for reorienting literary criticism. Where these various approaches differ most strikingly is in theorising how and by what readers' responses are guided and constrained.

Two basic schools of thought emerge which posit contradictory roles for readers as active participants in the production of literary works. One claims that meaning adheres in the text independent of readers who merely actualise what is already objectively there,

while the other suggests that meaning originates independent of the text in the subjective responses of readers and their quasi-institutionalised strategies for reading. According to Susan Suleiman, it is possible to go a step further and classify the varieties of audience-oriented criticism into six more specific, but still vague categories: rhetorical; semiotic and structuralist; phenomenological; subjective and psychoanalytic; sociological and historical; and hermeneutic. There is much overlap between these categorisations in terms of theory and practice; nevertheless, Elizabeth Freund claims that there is an "inconclusiveness . . . intrinsic to [all of] these projects" (153).

Her survey of reader response criticism reveals "an insurmountable rift between theory and practice." No matter how hard critics work to eliminate distinctions between the objective and subjective in theories of reading--"between the literary fact (or the author's text) and the interpretive act (or the reader's construction)"--the repressed distinction always returns in application. The "irreducible dichotomy" between text and reader, object and subject, generates resistance, fuzzy indeterminacy, and what Geoffrey Hartman calls "negative heremeneutics"--a belief that universally valid interpretations are untenable.[46] In full accord, Jacques Derrida's theory of textual deconstruction demonstrates how textual unity is always already a myth of the "metaphysics of presence." Instead of reading for unity, this new practice and orientation in reading advocates reading for the endless play of signification and identifies the moments of resistance and discrepancy that prevent the construction of complete and comprehensive interpretations.

For Freund, because of the inherent contradictions between its theory and practice, reader response criticism naturally leads to deconstruction and poststructuralism. She finds in figures like Geoffrey Hartman, J. Hillis Miller, and Paul de Man representative spokespersons for "reading beyond reader response criticism" (156). Paul de Man, after Derrida, argues that "deconstruction is not something we have added to the text but it constituted the text in the first place," and Miller adds, "Deconstruction is not a dismantling of the structure of a text but a demonstration that it has already dismantled itself. Its apparently solid ground is no rock but thin air."[47]

What these critics consistently point to is the "unreadability" of literary texts, the "undecidability . . . intrinsic to language," and the impossibility of producing consistent and cohesive interpretations that do not already contain the seeds of their own deconstruction. In terms of cognitive dissonance, Miller identifies "unreadability" as the "discomfort" caused by a text's "perpetual lack of closure": the way texts generate a desire for consistency and completion ("possession of the *logos*") and simultaneously frustrate

this desire.[48] Geoffrey Hartman equates this sense of indeterminacy with Keats's "negative capability," not simply a suspenseful delay in the determination of meaning, but a lasting state of warring contradiction.[49] Such textual moments are, for Hartman, moments of "thoughtfulness" and self-reflection where humans realise their own natural limitations and the inescapable constraints on their attempts to communicate.

Poststructuralism is content to identify and celebrate these breaches, but does very little to help move past them or even try to explain the need to do so felt by many readers. At the level of textual analysis, practitioners appear to be simply pointing out the obvious: that every human act of perception and comprehension is problematic because it is incomplete. What they don't recognise is the fact that the human body along with its embodied cognitive capacities is specifically designed to compensate for indeterminacy. Phenomenological investigations confirm that "negative capability" is indeed an unavoidable condition of human experience; however, it is also an unnatural state for continued human survival.[50]

What seems to negatively characterise most reader-oriented approaches is the very thing that poststructuralist poetics celebrate: the absence of a stable and shareable ground upon which to rest interpretation. E. D. Hirsh attempts to locate that stability in the recoverable intentions of the author, while the New Critics and Russian Formalists find stability in the objective autonomy of the text. Both Stanley Fish and Jonathan Culler attempt to stabilise reading practices through an appeal to shared conventions and interpretive strategies in their respective notions of "interpretive communities" and "literary competence." This endeavour still amounts to a search for reliable accounts of uniform tendencies in reading practices and struggles to maintain a humanistic belief in the possibility and value of communicating knowledge through experiences of written texts. Compared to the nihilistic undercurrents of poststructuralism, such aims reconfirm literary communication's status as a viable social activity.

All communication may be subject to certain semiotic pitfalls. However, a humanistic return to reading is not only warranted, but imperative if literature is going to continue to function as a space in which to exercise survival-based mental faculties. Human survival is predicated on the body's ability to adjust to new environments and maintain the steady functioning of physiological systems through a process of coordinated adaptation and compensation. On a strictly conceptual level, survival means continually filling in gaps in our experience and reconciling dissonant situations which threaten to paralyse our ability to make choices and respond efficiently. Interpretive activities performed while reading

literature keep honed those skills needed to deal with experiences of cognitive dissonance and maintain cognitive consistency.

My point here is that "undecidability" or the unavoidable encounter with a text's indeterminacy does not necessarily lead to deconstruction and other types of poststructuralist reading. Most humans could not exist for any period of time in a physiological state akin to "negative capability." Cognitively speaking, while it is possible to exist "in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason," it is a psychological state of great discomfort which humans seek to avoid completely or eliminate as quickly as possible.[51] As I argued in the previous chapter, human cognition emerges out of sensorimotor functions. Because of this intimate evolutionary connection between the body's processes and those of the mind, it stands to reason that what threatens the survival of the biological body is perceived as a threat to cognitive operations. The progressive evolution of reader response criticism cannot be in the direction of poststructural "negative capability," as Freund would have it, rather its future is via cognitive science. In other words, many of the principle concerns of reader response criticism find a natural extension and empirical support in much of the recent work in cognitive psychology. At the same time, an embodied cognitive approach to literature provides a means of escaping the paralysing dualisms (objective vs. subjective readings and sources of meaning, universal approaches vs. idiosyncratic ones) which are so problematic for reader-oriented theories.

It becomes next to impossible to delineate the tacit knowledge shared by readers and authors, and the inability to do so has consistently plagued reader response approaches. Cognitive science, however, offers an alternative to determining literary and linguistics "competence"--something that experimental modernist aesthetics intentionally threaten to undermine--by offering instead universally shared knowledge of the human body and the embodied mind as common ground for interpretation. Cognitive theorists in particular dismiss all poststructuralist claims about the existence of the decentered subject capable of relativistically making all meaning arbitrary. On the contrary, they argue that both meaning and thought processes are firmly "grounded in and through the body" (Lakoff, *Philosophy* 6).

This dissertation merges the insights of reader response criticism with cognitive science and brings the merger to bear on the difficulties and occlusions of modernist literature. I want to sketch in some details of the pathways that lead to this intellectual relationship by juxtaposing Harold Bloom's theory of misreading with the reception aesthetics of Wolfgang Iser.[52] The main difference between Wolfgang Iser's belief in

multiple readings or "actualisations" of a literary work and Harold Bloom's belief that every reading is necessarily a misreading is in the positive and negative valences that these theoretical positions sustain. Both critics admit that a literary text will always exceed its interpreter's grasp and that as a result reading involves the unavoidable production of incomplete and inaccurate interpretations. Whereas Iser is committed to delimiting, as much as possible, the freedoms and constraints implicit in a text's possible interpretations, Bloom's poststructuralist disposition revels in the openness of creative misreadings which he argues are the cornerstones of successor literary production.

Every reading, according to Bloom, is a misreading and metamorphosis, a false interpretive modification of a text. In this sense, Bloom is an obvious proponent of the poststructural conviction that all texts are unreadable; however, he manages to theorise misreading as a creative act on the part of authors that actually produces another "complete" text. His ultimate and well-known concern is with detailing "revisionary ratios," or the relationships of influence between poetic predecessors and successors. His theory of misreading, though, suggests that he has a covert desire to avoid the cognitive dissonance associated with incomplete readings. The notion of misreading allows Bloom to celebrate the frequently acknowledged undecidability of literary texts and their inherent instability. There can be no interpretive limits on misreading since it is predicated on the infinite possibilities of continuous misprision. Through the production of complete readings based on the inability to read accurately, Bloom attempts to have it both ways. He successfully acknowledges the limits of human interpretation on the one hand, while avoiding the frustrating dissonance of elusive texts on the other.

Iser approaches this dilemma from an alternative perspective. He too recognises the inability of readers to comprehend any text in its entirety, but for him interpretation is not an open enterprise.[53] Each reading is one of many possible realisations of the text. Bloom's focus is more clearly on writers whose creative works are misreadings of their literary predecessors, and Iser sees reading as the production of textual realisations by readers which are no less creative. The comparison of these two positions demonstrates how the distinction between reading and writing is blurred when both activities are predicated on the interpretive practice of avoiding cognitive dissonance.

The comparison of Bloom's work with Iser's serves not only to juxtapose two different solutions to the phenomenological problem of incomplete perception, but also provides me with an opportunity to introduce a more detailed account of how Iser's phenomenological approach to literary analysis informs my research. In his preface to *The Act of Reading*, Iser writes that "it is virtually impossible to describe the response

without also analyzing the reading process" (ix). Iser carefully draws attention to the strategies, adaptations, and motivations which lie behind interpretive positions. He knows that reading is a dynamic process: the necessary adjustments of expectations and inferences, the gestaltic dialogue between figure and ground as a text unfolds; the ultimate reversibility of this relationship with new perspectives; and the constant manipulation of what readers consider relevant to understanding the text through disclosure. The reading process can be generalised as the negotiation between readers' expectations derived from other literary and extra-literary experiences and contextualising backgrounds supplied by the structure of the text and what has already been read. Each new unexpected textual event forces readers to readjust the gestaltic relationship that exists between expectations and backgrounds to maintain interpretive consistency. Iser argues throughout his criticism that not only is a text's meaning held *in potentia*, but the work itself remains *in potentia* awaiting a reader who will complete it by filling in its blanks, vacancies, gaps, spots of indeterminacy,[54] and lacunae with projections.[55] His work investigates the dialogic interaction between a text's schematic structure and any number of readers' realisations.[56] This relationship is what accounts for a literary work's virtual status, which is not identical with the material object of the text and exceeds all individual actualisations.

The reading process, then, is a constitutive enterprise in which readers negotiate the potential effects of a literary text and produce a consistent interpretation of the text by filling in gaps. Writers regulate readers' interactions and gap-filling activities through textual situations and conventions designed to anticipate and guide reader responses. Categorically speaking, gaps are inducements to activity--both interpretive and communicative (if these activities are even separable). Gaps provide the "life" of the literary text because they are the sites where readers enter into interpretive dialogue with the objective schematic structures of both the text and the author who has designed these structures. According to Iser's methodological predecessor Roman Ingarden, it is through such gaps that "the work of art stimulates the consumer to pass from looking to that phase of aesthetic experience in which the apprehending subject moves beyond the schematic work of art itself and in a creative way completes it" through interpretive acts ("Phenomenological Aesthetics"189).

Iser unconsciously adopts the metaphorics of the body when he describes gaps as "the fundamental asymmetry between reader and text" ("Interaction" 109). According to this description, our perception of asymmetry coupled with our unconscious knowledge of body symmetry, initiates and guides interpretation. Experience of symmetry is "a

fundamental fact of having a human body in a human environment" (Turner 69). It is this fundamental fact which accounts for the generic concept (script) for symmetry that we, as humans, all share. The schematic understanding of symmetry is therefore an embodied concept which is universal and capable of wide application through metaphorical projection. As this project confirms, one of these applications is literary interpretation, especially where the schema for bilateral symmetry becomes a prototype for the schema of balance.[57]

Iser's choice of words reveals a metaphorical projection of body-based concepts of wholeness onto literary works. Such instances suggestively mark the points where reader response criticism makes unconscious use of the embodied knowledge which cognitive science claims is the source of all conceptual thinking. Filling in gaps removes imbalance and restores a sense of equilibrium to the reading process and the literary text. Where Iser's work runs into difficulty is in clearly outlining the means by which a text limits interpretative freedom. He purposely avoids the structuralist appeal to codes, but does admit that authors make use of repertoires of prevailing cultural and social norms shared by readers to help guide their constitutive activities. However, these norms are subsumed mysteriously into gestaltic backgrounds where they provide texture and aid interpretative negotiations rather than act as identifiable prescriptive codes which impose a design on the text from without. According to Iser, an "unseen structure" in the schematic text somehow sets the terms for filling in gaps. As a result, the play between the implicit and the explicit and between the revealed and the concealed of a text is self-regulating and anything but arbitrary. Each gap exists in a contingent referential field between all that precedes it and what directly follows it, and this helps to constrain "the angle from which a selective interpretation is to be made" (118). In this way each gap is a "structured gap" and the constitutive act of filling in a gap consequently alters the referential field of organisation and causes a gestaltic shift to occur between what is considered figure and what ground.

Reading is, according to Iser, a constant renegotiation of gestaltic pattern formations that act upon and transform each other in accordance with the sequential fluctuations of the reading process across the text's schematic structures. Iser describes this process of shifting viewpoints in terms of thematisation: "The segment on which the viewpoint focuses in each particular moment becomes the theme. The theme of one moment becomes the background against which the next segment takes on its actuality, and so on" (115). By logically extending this successive process of foregrounding and marginalising what is relevant, it follows that a cohesive interpretation of the completed text is quite

simply a preferred realisation taken from one of the many gestaltic patterns experienced over the course of reading. The whole work is never realisable "during the act of comprehension" and this condition necessitates and prompts "consistency-building" (*Act* 17). "Consistency-building" is a compensatory response which serves to allay feelings of cognitive dissonance through partial acts of literary completion. This process is based on and given legitimacy by what Iser calls the "classical norms of interpretation": "totality, harmony, and symmetry of the parts with which the particular interpretation is dealing" (17). In what follows shortly, I will argue that these same "classical norms of interpretation" are embodied concepts shared by all readers regardless of their reading experience.

In Iser's criticism, "gaps" remain abstract entities until they are given specificity in a particular reading. He claims that these "gaps in our experience" are the pivots upon which the whole reader-text relationship hinges (*Act* 165-69). Without losing the flexibility of Iser's vague conception of gaps, I will attempt in the sections of the dissertation where close reading occurs to go beyond his definition to specify the types of gaps common to high modernist novels. What I find most important about Iser's work is that it provides a model of reader response criticism centered around the belief that literary works are fundamentally incomplete as they appear in their material form and require readers to perform constitutive functions to try to complete them.

To explicate his methodology, Iser cites authors who explicitly acknowledge and aestheticise the necessary process of filling in gaps. In *Tristram Shandy*, as Iser shows, Laurence Sterne claims that "no author, who understands the just boundaries of decorum and good breeding, would presume to think all: The truest respect which you can pay to a reader's understanding, is to halve this matter amicably, and leave him something to imagine, in his turn, as well as yourself" (qtd. in Iser, "Reading" 51). Sterne's view that the reader is a co-producer of the text clearly anticipates literary modernism and the aesthetics of cognitive dissonance. Iser also cites Virginia Woolf's review of Jane Austen in *The Common Reader* in which she portrays Austen as a calculating modernist:

> Jane Austen is thus mistress of much deeper emotion than appears upon the surface. She stimulates us to supply what is not there. What she offers is, apparently, a trifle, yet is composed of something that expands in the reader's mind and endows with the most enduring form of life scenes which are outwardly trivial. . . . Here, indeed, in this unfinished and in the main inferior story, are all the elements of Jane Austen's greatness. (qtd. in Iser, "Reading" 51)

These examples suggest that many pre-modernist writers intentionally produced works that required readers to fill in gaps left open in their aesthetic creations. Iser makes an

important distinction between what he calls "traditional" and "modernist" texts. The filling-in process and awareness of the general dynamics of reading in experiences of "traditional" texts occurs in a "more or less unconscious" manner, whereas "modernist" texts deliberately exploit the process and force readers into conscious awareness of the reading dynamics: "They [modernist texts] are often so fragmentary that one's attention is almost exclusively with the search for connections between the fragments" ("Reading" 55). In this way, modernist texts make readers aware of the cognitive operations necessary to "complete" them.

Exploring the role played by natural inclinations in the practice of reading is not, of course, the exclusive domain of literary modernists. In much modern criticism, we can also find attempts to account for unified experiences of fictional works (with the obvious exceptions of deconstructionist and poststructuralist approaches). Though not conscious of the bodily basis for this desire for unity, many literary critics feel an innate human need to create coherent interpretations. One of the central paradigms of modernism, for instance, is "the rage for order." This view of modernism identifies modernist art as the only reliable ordering principle left in "the shattered order of modern reality."[58] And yet, most high modernist novels make use of various types of disruptive poetics based on cognitive dissonance which generate the very fragmentation, uncertainty, and indeterminacy that problematise the search for textual unity. Therefore, the modernist "rage for order" is not so much a specific goal in the creation of literary works, but more accurately, a mode of literary reception. The "rage for order" as a general reading practice is not particular to modernism--to some extent all reading involves ordering enterprises. As I have shown, modernism's aestheticisation of cognitive dissonance both intentionally exploits readers' predispositions to organise readings into coherent wholes and forces readers to consciously attend to these predispositions. Often cognitive dissonance not only becomes foregrounded in a text's formal properties in other words, but it is also self-reflexively thematised in the subject matter and character experiences.

Interpretive responses to the calculated resistance of unity found in many high modernist novels reveal as much about human nature and the particular dispositions of the critics who author them than they do about the specific texts in question. T. S. Eliot, for example, when confronted by the unruliness and novelty of Joyce's *Ulysses*, was forced to choose one aspect of the book to interpret from the "indefinite" number of aspects he claimed it contained.[59] His "*Ulysses*, Order, and Myth" is an attempt to assert interpretive order onto a text whose excesses of cognitive dissonance led Richard Aldington to treat "Mr. Joyce as a prophet of chaos" and to call the novel "a flood of

Dadaism" (175). In response, Eliot identifies a "mythological method" at work which serves as a structural foundation for the new novel: "It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history" (177). The novel, however, does not provide salvation from "futility and anarchy;" rather, it is the source. Eliot's interpretation, on the other hand, successfully provides Joyce's disruptive and fragmented novel with a sense of stability and unity.[60]

Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis* offers one of the best articulations of the predisposition to read for coherence and consistency. In it, he advances what I consider to be the embryology of an embodied approach to interpretive readings of modernist fiction. He claims that modernist writers' "exploitation of random everyday events" enables them to offer a complete and "unpruned" vision of life that avoids arbitrarily isolating details and occurrences in the process (484). What these writers represent is "the order and the interpretation of life which arise[s] from life itself." Auerbach thus locates our notion of completeness in lived human experience, which becomes the model upon which writers create their fictions and characters: "For there is always going on within us a process of formulation and interpretation whose subject matter is our own self" (485).

His description of our natural inclination towards completion and how modern writers manipulate this inclination is worth quoting at length because it illustrates a fundamental component of literary production and reception:

> We are all constantly endeavouring to give meaning and order to our lives in the past, the present, and the future, to our surroundings, the world in which we live; with the result that our lives appear in our own conception as total entities . . . . Those are the forms of order and interpretation which the modern writers here under discussion attempt to grasp in the random moment--not one order or interpretation, but many, which may either be those of different persons or of the same person at different times; so that overlapping, complementing, and contradiction yield something we might call a synthesised cosmic view or at least a challenge to the reader's will to interpretive synthesis. (485)

In this passage, Auerbach comes close to acknowledging the bodily basis for textual unity, but without the insights of recent cognitive theory all he can do is identify the impulse to order as a natural one. He tries to argue that all literary works organise their fragmented parts and multiple perspectives into "synthesised cosmic view[s]," but he is unable to let that claim stand unconditionally without considering that the perceived fragmentation and

contradictoriness of modernist novels might also be an intentional attempt by writers to frustrate and thereby exploit their readers' predispositions for interpretive closure.

The intentional cognitive dissonance of a text's "overlapping, complementing," and contradictory interpretations challenges "the reader's will to interpretive synthesis." In his final words, Auerbach inadvertently acknowledges what has been implicit throughout his discussion of modern writers--that readers also participate in the synthesis of literary texts through interpretation and that they are inclined to do so because of their phenomenological experiences of themselves and the lifeworld.

The belief that literary texts have an inherent unity is difficult, if not impossible, to prove because a reader only has access to interpretive aspects of unity, and not to that unity itself: "What the reader normally wants is not closure as such but only the imaginative possibility of closure" (Calinescu 33).[61] This practical view of interpretive reading is the basis of Frank Kermode's *The Sense of an Ending*, in which he argues that if literary texts do not provide an ending or at least the idea of an ending, readers will create one.[62] He claims that humans have an insistent need to find structured wholes in their fiction and parts of their lives to compensate for their inability to know how their own lives will end: "Men in the middest make considerable imaginative investments in coherent patterns which, by provision of an end, make possible a satisfying consonance with the origins and the middle" (17).

Endings are important because they harmonise origins and middles into coherent and meaningful relations. Form is, according Kermode, the "humanly needed order" which provides consolation against the "existential anguish" of not being able to view our lives as wholes (123, 144). His famous ticking clock example is still the best means of "making sense of the ways we make sense of our own lives" (3).[63] Kermode's basic argument is that humans "need fictive concords with origins and ends, such as give meaning to lives and to poems" in order to make sense of their own lives (7). His recognition of the human need to experience the "concordance of beginning, middle, and end which is the essence our explanatory fictions" is what makes novels like *Ulysses*--which intentionally use "*tock-tick*" plots to upset readers' expectations--so frustrating (35-36, 45).

Kermode sees literature as providing the coherent structure that life lacks--because humans inhabit the middle of it with only a vague sense of origins and an even vaguer sense of an ending. Readers find consolation in fiction by imaginatively projecting a holistic pattern onto the works they read: "fictions are themselves models of the human design on the world" (88). Although I share Kermode's belief that the realisation of a text's form is a type of projected humanisation, we differ over the source of and

motivation for this sense-making projection. For Kermode, humans project structure onto fictional works to compensate for the incomplete sense they have of their own lives. I see interpretive reading as a projection of homeostatic wholeness onto literary works that is derived from the experience of having a functional human body. Reading for wholeness is simply the modification of compensatory survival strategies fundamental to all living organisms. It follows that because our cognitive abilities are body-based then so too are our interpretive practices.

Kenneth Burke seems to have understood this intimate connection between form and psychology, even if he didn't have cognitive science to confirm what he derived from his own intuition and experience. In "Psychology and Form," he argues that form is the psychology of the audience, the "creation of an appetite in the mind of the auditor, and the adequate satisfying of that appetite."[64] Burke, however, notes that the satisfaction of that appetite sometimes involves "a temporary set of frustrations" (cognitive dissonance) which produces an even more intense and more involved fulfillment. Form, for Burke, is the means by which to generate a bodily desire for completion in readers, but he admits that he doesn't exactly know how this works--"so complicated is the human mechanism" which is involved (31). The psychology of form is most apparent in music where "Every dissonant chord cries for its solution, and whether the musician resolves or refuses to resolve this dissonance into the chord which the body cries for, he is dealing with human appetites" (34). Literary and linguistic forms also prompt an embodied crying out for fulfillment which is a type of human appetite. Appetites, it is worth noting, are commonly defined as desires to satisfy bodily cravings and it is in this sense that Burke offers a theory of aesthetic effects which prefigures my own cognitive reassessment of modernist reading.

The Gestaltic Law of *Pragnanz* is essentially the belief that no matter how random and inconsistent the stimuli, human beings are predisposed to organise phenomenological data into consistently meaningful wholes.[65] This disposition, I argue, is the governing principle behind all human acts of reception and understanding. Literary response is predicated on this principle and writers incorporate anticipation of its function into the design of their works. Modernist writers in particular draw awareness to this automatic synthesising process through fragmented and unconventional forms which challenge the easy creation of gestalts as well as the thematisation of parallel acts of cognitive synthesis performed by their characters.

Any act that requires individuals to go beyond the information given is an interpretive act. Therefore perception and conceptual understanding all participate in various

interpretive practices such as filling in, inference, analogous projection, anticipation, and cognitive adaptation. As I have argued, because the human body exists in a state of self-adjusting equilibrium which controls and directs all physiological functioning, by extension there exists an embodied sense of equilibrium which similarly guides and constrains human cognition. Bodily homeostasis, therefore, becomes the shared model of balanced organisation upon which all thinking and acts of cognition are predicated. Phenomenology first drew attention to the gaps in human experience and attempted to find ways to reduce subjective experiences to the invariant essences to which everyone had transcendent access once the habits and assumptions of individual perception were stripped away. Phenomenology differs, however, from impressionism because it is grounded in a belief in fixed essences lying behind appearances which constrain subjective experiences and underpin a multiplicity of interpretive vantage points. As phenomenology evolved on a path from Edmund Husserl to Merleau-Ponty, the role that the human body and lived experience played in phenomenological research seemed to shift until the human body became the mediator of all human knowledge and understanding. When cognitive science entered the picture it replaced the phenomenological search for invariable essences with the concept of embodiment as the common ground for experience and interpretation.

Both the mission statements of cognitive science and the body of literature and philosophical research known as phenomenology are concerned with the study of consciousness as a specific mode of human cognition. Phenomenology, according to Husserl, is a philosophical discipline committed to the analysis of acts of consciousness. Like cognitive science's, its concern is more with describing the structure and function of consciousness than with establishing a genetic account of consciousness in terms of brain activity. The incorporation of the philosophical system of phenomenology and the domain of contemporary cognitive sciences is the subject of a 1999 anthology entitled *Naturalizing Phenomenology*, the main goal of which is to close the gap between "the sciences of nature and the sciences of the mind" (2).[66]

The naturalisation of phenomenology takes the practical shift from transcendental phenomenology (Husserl) to existential phenomenology (Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty) one step further; it attempts to "humanise" phenomenology by grounding its theories in scientifically verifiable physiological processes. The paradox of this enterprise is that the entire phenomenological project--as the search for transcendent essences--resists naturalisation. In fact, the very process of phenomenological reduction (*epoche*) is a form

of denaturalisation, a suspension of the natural world including all of its individual properties and the habitual beliefs derived from successive subjective experiences.[67]

How much of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology ultimately remains tenable after its encounter with cognitive science does not concern me. Neurobiological research and the development of cognitive science have exposed more and more weaknesses in Husserl's philosophy to the point that much of his claims are now either obsolete or problematic. What remains tenable, however, are the two basic premises of phenomenology: that every human experience is partial; and that humans habitually compensate for gaps in their experiences by cognitively filling them in. In the case of perception, Husserl states that objects "can be given only through adumbrations" (qtd. in *Naturalizing* 27). In other words, perceived objects are no more than a series of profiles which can only ever be partial. A different perspective produces another profile that is as incomplete and wanting as the previous profile. Changing perspectives only ever changes which aspects of an object are directly perceived and which ones are hidden.

Husserl claims that "External perception is a constant pretension to accomplish something that, by its very nature, it is not in a position to accomplish" ("Horizons" 221).[68] The appearance of unity is the product of both virtual extensions of aspects that are not seen based on those that are, as well as a continual synthesis of perspectival adumbrations. Put differently, what is seen provides an index of potential determinations that are needed to "fill-in" the emptiness of what is not perceptually available. Husserl offers the example of a table that is perceived from one particular side. He notes that the table possesses a non-visible back side and a variety of alternative other sides which cannot be seen from this original perspective, but which are nonetheless present to consciousness through a process of imaginative extension:

> Seeing the front side of the table, I am also conscious of the back side along with everything else that is non-visible, through an empty pointing ahead, even though it be rather indeterminate. But no matter how indeterminate it may be, it is still a pointing ahead to a bodily shape, to a bodily coloring, etc. (223)

The full table can never be perceived in its entirety from any single vantage point; however, "Viewing the front side of the table we can, whenever we like, orchestrate an intuitive presentational course, a reproductive course of aspects through which the non-visible side of the thing would be presented to us" (222). The side directly perceived contains within its exhibited "givenness" intuitive cues which point to a continuity beyond what is actually seen.[69]

Reading is an anticipatory function in much the same way that perception is. Both activities are motivated by a desire for the acquisition of knowledge, grounded in the struggle for survival, and oriented toward synthesising disparate elements into completed forms. Husserl's "table" is important because he analyses a familiar object that is associated with everyday experience to illustrate his point that "the object is never finished, never fixed completely" (227). The pursuit of unity, or at least the sense of unity, pervades human existence from daily acts of perception to the most complex conceptual problem-solving.

Husserl's attempt to reconcile multiple subjective perspectives of the same object through an appeal to transcendental essences is similar to the project of reader response critics who were for decades caught between individual, highly subjective readers' responses and the objective status of the literary text as object of contemplation. In more recent years, literary critics have abandoned the attempt to reconcile the subjective nature of phenomenological reading practices with objective standards. Instead, the trend has been to abandon humanism and all universal explanations of response because they apparently privilege Western society's traditionally dominant subject positions (white, male, middle-upper class). In the last twenty years, for instance, scholarship which focuses on race-, gender-, and class-based oppositional reading practices has attempted to redress this privileging.[70] These texts take issue with the all-inclusive reader constructs used by previous reader response critics to transcend the distinctive and diverse composition of a reading public that engages with each text.[71]

Censured by one critic as "undisguised Platonism," the following heuristic abstractions of a text's "appropriate" reader all exclude minority perspectives and abstract important differences out of the reading process: the "Superreader" (Riffaterre); the "Informed Reader" (Fish); the "Ideal Reader" (Culler); the "Model Reader" (Eco); the "Mock Reader" (Gibson); the "Implied Reader" (Booth, Iser, Chatman, Perry); the "Fictionalised Reader" (Ong); and the "Encoded Reader" (Brooke-Rose).[72] At the other end of the spectrum are thinkers like Norman Holland, David Bleich, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, and Stanley Fish, who advocate radically indeterminate types of literary criticism which "deny in theory the possibility of any model, ideal, or authorial reading" (Richardson 32). Within reader response criticism, then, two polar camps generally predominate scholarship: one reading practice is objective ("largely monistic, fairly prescriptive, and generally compatible with a formalist perspective") while the other is subjective ("personal, relativistic, and said to be more current and politically progressive")(31).

In his article "The Other Reader's Response: On Multiple, Divided and Oppositional Audiences," Brian Richardson calls for a non-dualistic approach to mediate between "monistic" and "relativistic" approaches--one that recognises the resisting reader who reads oppositionally, the divided reader who reads from multiple, contradictory positions, and multiple readers who experience texts alternatively from different marginalised positions.[73] Without question, it is important to study reception from many distinctive subject positions to find the moments in literary texts where readers can resist and read against specific universalising assumptions. In doing so, however, we should not abandon the struggle to explicate the shared impulses that motivate our reading practices and thereby explain the common concerns readers have while reading. Therefore, while it is indeed essential to encourage attempts to map alternative reception strategies and interpretive positions for the same work of fiction, it is equally productive and necessary to explore the emancipatory potential of reading from less relativistic (i.e. gay, black, female) and more inclusive-universalistic (embodied human cognition) subject positions. To say that in a basic way all human readers share a common ground (sense) is not to diminish or disregard our diversity.

Yet what began as a much-needed backlash against the pernicious universalising contained in fiction and literary criticism has now made it difficult to even breach the subject of shared experiences of fiction which effectively transcend social, economic, cultural, and gender differences. Aware of the potential risks and convinced of the value of the enterprise, I want to practice a type of enlightened universalising which would complement more personalised approaches. My argument is that if experiences of the human body do play a key role in cognitive practices then at a very fundamental level all human bodies share certain impulses to reduce and eliminate cognitive dissonance, whether it comes in the form of incomplete sentences, fragmented ideas, or unfamiliar cross-referencing and allusive intertextuality. To reiterate, this does not eliminate or in any way lessen the importance of class, gender, culture, and any number of other significant differences that motivate valuable individual reading practices.

I am concerned with how writers write for an audience that at best can only be imagined and projected with a high level of anticipated abstraction. To accommodate the diversity of readers that will come in contact with a literary work, it is important to recognise how authors try to share experiences with this composite picture of a generalised readership. The goal is to find the unifying level at which all or most readers will respond. And here I am not talking about specific responses like what a certain symbol means or how significant specific allusions are. Instead, I want to investigate the

motivations and impulses that lie behind the production of individualised interpretations of textual specifics. Ultimately, this project attempts to determine why and how readers read difficult literature that resists and frustrates conventional reading practices. Why are humans compelled either to close high modernist novels and never look at them again, or persistently struggle through the disruptions and dislocations anticipated by authors who designed their aesthetics to problematise reception? On one level, these works appeal to something we all share: an embodied sense of understanding. On other related levels, they may appeal more specifically to established literary conventions, literary histories, and expectations set up by previous experiences with a particular genre (i.e. the novel or poetry).

The brief survey I have offered of literary critics and thinkers from related disciplines is indicative of the pervasiveness of theories and observations which try to account for and explain diverse experiences of indeterminacy--from literary comprehension to everyday perception. Although each example differs slightly in its explanation of the motivations behind producing coherent interpretations of experienced phenomena and of the means by which this is accomplished, they all share the common conviction that this type of inquiry is fundamental to understanding human nature.[74] What remains long after the red flags of deconstruction and poststructuralism have faded is a tradition of interpretive reading which sees as its goal the production of unified interpretations of literary works. Even though every interpretation can only hope to be a partial account of a literary work, there remains a natural impulse to overcome this human limitation. Iser, however, warns writers that there are extremes beyond which readers will not go. He issues a tenet for literary production which prefigures the basic principle of aestheticised cognitive dissonance: "that boredom and overstrain form the boundaries beyond which the reader will leave the field of play" ("Reading" 51). At the one extreme, the complete absence of dissonance while reading generates boredom, and too much dissonance, at the other extreme, burdens readers to such a degree that they are unable to produce convincing compensatory gestalts during the reading process. Successful literature finds a balance between cognitive challenge and cognitive confusion. Through an intentional poetics of difficulty, modernist writers embrace what I see as the underlying aesthetic principle of experimental high modernist literature: the need to risk losing its readers to effect a change in them.

IV. The Paradox of Behaviourism

I am trying to dangle a stimulus in front of you, a verbal stimulus which if acted upon, will gradually change this universe. (J. B. Watson, *Behaviourism*)

***The significance of the pause is that the rigid chain of cause and effect is broken.* The pause momentarily suspends the billiard-ball system of Pavlov. In the person's life response no longer blindly follows stimulus. There intervenes between the two our human imaginings, reflections, considerations, ponderings. Pause is the prerequisite for wonder. (Rollo May, *Freedom and Destiny*)**

The crisis of reception initiated by modernist poetics of difficulty led critics to turn to the reader as a means of explaining highly dissonant formal experimentation. Modernist writers were not simply experimenting randomly for the sake of it, or solely to distinguish their work from that of their literary predecessors. The aestheticisation of cognitive dissonance was for many modernists their best and only defense against the stimulus-response conditioning and behaviourist mentality that posed the greatest threat to society and culture in the first half of the twentieth century.[75] One of the central claims of this project is that psychological behaviourism, with its objective explanations of human behaviour and its potential threat to create a completely behaviourist society, was a key animating force behind the development of modernist aesthetics. The close readings of central modernist novels in later chapters reveal the degree to which modernist writers were preoccupied with the pernicious side of stimulus-response behaviourism in a variety of forms.

To situate behaviourism in relation to literary modernism, it is helpful to briefly examine the history of the movement and its principle proponents. By all accounts, behaviourism was a prominent movement in experimental psychology from the early 1900s to about the mid-1970s. Its influence, however diminished in recent years, can still be felt in many domains from culture to psychology. Behaviourism came to prominence as a definable psychological system with John B. Watson's 1912-1913 university lectures on animal psychology at Johns Hopkins and Columbia. These lectures were soon followed by Watson's publication of his 1913 behaviourist manifesto, "Psychology as the Behaviorist Views It," and a more comprehensive version simply entitled *Behaviorism* which first appeared in 1924. In both publications, Watson outlines an objective alternative to the introspective psychology that had "completely dominated American

university psychological life" ("Behaviorism" 383).[76] Watson proposes in its stead what he calls behaviourism, a branch of psychology which takes as its theoretical goal "the prediction and control of behavior" ("Psychology" 187).

According to Watson, behaviourism is "a purely objective experimental branch of natural science" which completely excludes the investigation of mental states and all cognitive processes: "Introspection forms no essential part of its methods, nor is the scientific value of its data dependent upon the readiness with which they lend themselves to interpretation in terms of consciousness" (187). Behaviourism concerns itself with observable habit formation and habit integration in terms of stimulus-response conditioning and not with whether or not an experience is "introspectively verifiable." Watson found in behaviourism an empirically verifiable and completely "worked out" system of psychology where "given the response the stimuli can be predicted; [and] given the stimuli the response can be predicted" (193). Consciousness was "neither a definite nor a usable concept" and belief in it at all was, according to Watson, simply a return "to the ancient days of superstition and magic" ("Behaviorism" 384).[77]

Watson's approach is clearly indebted to Ivan Pavlov's research on reflex conditioning. Pavlov believed that individuals survive due to adaptive behaviour, and he set out to support his claim with practical research that reduced complex mental processing to a simple stimulus-response paradigm. Pavlov's work on the anticipatory responses of dogs to conditioned stimuli (bells, lights, clanging of bowls, etc.) had strong implications for human learning since he believed that the findings of these experiments could easily be extrapolated to humans. The conditioned reflex became both the basic unit of analysis and an objective method for predicting and controlling behaviour. In principle, behaviourism shares with cognitive theory a desire to understand human behaviour, but each approaches the solution to the problem of explanation from a very different perspective.

Watson, through behaviourism and like Pavlov, attempted to reduce all human behaviour to discrete stimulus-response units without concern for the brain, what he liked to call the "mystery box."[78] Because behaviourism maintains that everything about human nature can be understood in terms of observable habits, Watson proposes that "The rule, or measuring rod, which the behaviourist puts in front of him always is: Can I describe this bit of behavior I see in terms of 'stimulus and response'?" ("Behaviorism" 388). As long as behaviourism remained committed to determining what humans were doing and why they were doing it, it proved a valuable contribution to the study of human behaviour, predictability, and habit formation. Many held out hope that

behaviourism would provide the means of developing more successful learning strategies and pedagogical systems, and to a certain extent it did just that. But behaviourism had a dark side to it, and it was this dark side with which modernist writers took issue and to which they responded with their experimental aesthetics.

Behaviourism was always limited as a comprehensive explanatory discipline because it excludes cognition, but the seeds of its eventual destruction were sown in its oft-repeated mission statement: "It is the business of behaviouristic psychology to be able to predict and to control human activity" ("Behaviorism" 393). Prediction is one thing, but control is quite another. The question of behaviourism's merits came down to whether the information gathered from research into habit formation, learning methods, the effects of past habits on current responses, and the range of stimuli which evoke the same response, was going to be used to predict behaviour or to control it. Modernist writers exploited the predictive potential of behaviourist findings; what they revolted against was the controlling potential of those same findings. In one of the sections of *Behaviorism*, Watson argues that the basis for successful communal living is being able to predict "what our neighbor will do" ("Behaviorism" 395). The implication is that through mutual respect for each other's habits, neighbours can live in blissful harmony. In that same section, however, Watson appeals more directly to the controlling potential of behaviourist principles in a statement that now sounds disturbingly Orwellian: "You will find, on the other hand, that when you begin to study what your neighbor is doing, you will rapidly become proficient in giving a reason for his behavior and in setting situations (presenting stimuli) that will make him behave in a predictable manner" ("Behaviorism" 392).

Watson attempts to prove the practical applicability of behaviourism in the everyday world. He also suggests with these examples that behaviourism is something that the average person can "do" if they choose. Unfortunately, whether he knows it or not, Watson's statements show a genuine lack of respect for human individuality. As early as 1913, he claims that "The behaviourist, in his efforts to get a unitary scheme of animal response, recognizes no dividing line between man and brute" (187).[79] Besides blurring all distinctions between humans and animals, Watson also describes man as "an assembled organic machine ready to run" who, like an automobile, is good for certain kinds of duties. He goes on to claim that "It is part of the behaviourist's scientific job to be able to state what the human machine is good for and to render serviceable predictions about its future capacities whenever society needs such information" ("Personality" 400, 402). It is easy to see why some people were uncomfortable with Watsonian behaviourism and why they

might not have been as receptive when he published a child-rearing manual in which he claimed that if he was given a dozen well-formed, healthy infants he could randomly make each one of them either a doctor or a lawyer or a thief.[80]

The potentially negative social applications of Watsonsian behaviourism became glaringly apparent soon after 1920.[81] Watson's work as an advertising agent, after he was dismissed from Johns Hopkins for sexual indiscretions, clearly reveals behaviourism's pernicious dark side. In his new profession, Watson began using the findings of behaviourist psychology for commercial profit, to predict and manipulate the responses of consumers. What initially began as a branch of psychology concerned with explaining behaviour and developing theories for more effective learning, soon disintegrated into a tool used to control and exploit consumer buying habits. Epistemological motives were replaced by profit-driven ones, and what had earlier appeared as an implicit threat embedded in the project of behaviourism, now became realised in a practical application that affected every human being.

In 1920, Watson joined the burgeoning J. Walter Thompson advertising agency, a company concerned with predicting mass market trends. The advertising industry rose in response to industrial expansion and the need to distribute mass-produced products on a mass scale. Technological advances in production and transportation reoriented industries to target national, even global markets. This shift in production power and more efficient means to transport goods meant increased competition and the need for statistically accurate ways of predicting and controlling consumption. J. Walter Thompson's president at the time noted, "The chief economic problem today is no longer the production of goods but their distribution" (qtd. in Buckley 136). Advertising became a practical testing ground for Watsonian behaviourism. In a letter, Watson told Bertrand Russell that he wanted to test his experimental psychology research on the problems "connected with markets, salesmanship, public resistances, types of appeals, etc." [82]

Behaviourist psychology and advertising were not the strange bedfellows that they at first appeared. The perceived threat that mass-produced cultural products posed to many modernist writers and the reception of their work now included behaviourist psychology, which was concerned with mapping all habitualised responses, including those for the reception of popular cultural products like best-sellers, movies, daily tabloid newspapers, and magazines. Watson suggested that behaviourism be used to condition consumer habits: "To get hold of your consumer, or better, to make your consumer react, it is only necessary to confront him with either fundamental or conditioned emotional stimuli."[83] Watson's transcription of a behaviourist vocabulary and methodology into

the world of modern advertising marks a definitive moment in modernist culture. Behind this practical application was a belief that universally common human responses did exist and that designated stimuli were capable of prompting specific types of social behaviour.

Modernist writers since the beginning of the twentieth century had employed a version of behaviourist psychology to secure certain reactions from their audiences by creating cognitive dissonance through their experiential understanding of conventional or, to use behaviourist terminology, conditioned responses to specific formal stimuli. The early shock effects of modernist literature and the development of modern advertising techniques are given theoretical support by behaviourist research. Because consumption and aesthetic response are forms of behaviour, they are capable of being controlled and manipulated.[84] In perhaps one of her most frequently cited essays, Virginia Woolf claims, "On or about December 1910 human nature changed. . . . All human relations shifted--those between masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children. And when human relations change there is at the same time a change in religion, conduct, politics, and literature" ("Mr Bennett" 321).[85] Woolf's choice of 1910 as her *annus mirabilis* is often criticised as too specific and arbitrary, but her loose pinpointing of "On or about December 1910," coincides with the year that advertising in the United States (and presumably elsewhere) came under the influence of behavioural psychology.[86]

The belief in the advertising world until 1910 was that consumers purchased items through "common sense" reasoning. Advertisements, which targeted the general consuming public, were predominantly educative and informative, stressing a given product's usefulness and effectiveness. After 1910, however, advertisers consciously attempted to create and manipulate desires in consumers using an applied psychology along behaviourist principles (Buckley 138). Indirect forms of persuasion replaced appeals to reason as the economy shifted from a rural- to an urban-based one. Accompanying such a shift was also a shift in the conditions of production and consumption. Mass production encouraged values such as self-fulfillment rather than the self-denial associated with the previous "scarcity-based economy" where demand was a result of necessity and limited supply. Mass production eliminated sustained demand for manufactured goods so it became the job of advertisers, like J. B Watson, to mass produce consumers and habits of consumption.

Marketing strategies followed fundamental behaviourist principles of association helping to distinguish competing products from one another. Stylized product design created the illusion of novelty in products that were identical to their predecessors and competitors. Furthermore, by the 1920s, "testimonial advertising" had become a

mainstay of the advertising industry where celebrity endorsement helped associate certain products with recognisable figures whose very appearance served to cue customer desire. For behaviourist advertisers like Watson, the product advertised was less important than the ideas that were associated with it. The behavioural approach in advertising, like its scientific counterpart, dispenses with all concern for cognition, especially "the rationality or irrationality of the human mind," and in so doing repeatedly focuses on manipulating human behaviour (Buckley 139). By associating specific products with desired lifestyles and values, advertisers tried to promote impulsive consumption thus replicating in the public sphere the results of behaviourist stimulus-response experiments previously conducted in laboratories. The conditioning of consumer reflexes helped create and usher in the consumption-based culture which coincidentally threatened any unconventional literature or avant-garde art.

The specific benefits of behavioural psychology which Watson outlined in 1913--"the prediction and control of behaviour"--had by 1920 given way to commercial interests, and the balance between prediction and control had realigned to favour the latter. Watson's move from university researcher to advertising executive clearly revealed the threat to society which was inherent in behaviourism from the very beginning. The elimination of conscious cognitive processing from accounts of behaviour, which was manifested in the mass-oriented commercialism of the period, threatened to create a society of consumers who responded automatically and unconsciously to manipulative stimuli. In 1922, Watson described testing on humans for effective advertising stimulus in terms of a laboratory experiment on probed and vivisected amphibians: "the consumer is to the manufacturer, the department stores and the advertising agencies, what the green frog is to the physiologist."[87]

The dehumanising vision of Watson's advertising campaigns are indicative of the dehumanising nature of stimulus-response behavioural research findings that ignore cognitive operations. Modernist writers who perceived the ominous threat of a behaviourist society created an aesthetic which had as its main goal the breaking of habitual responses and the self-conscious activation of cognitive operations. Modernists like Woolf, Joyce, and Faulkner coupled the advances of behavioural psychology with a concern for introspective cognitive function and the result is a literary aesthetic which still challenges formulaic theories of response through its exploitation of common readers' reading habits.

The threat of behaviourism lies in the reduction of human interaction and belief systems to standardised formulae of stimulus-response conditioning, reconditioning, and

unconditioning. In a sense, the rise of behaviourism is a reactionary return to Victorian positivism in an age of modern experimentation and complexity. Modernist writers saw in behaviourist explanations of habitual response a threat to intellectual life and critical faculties. In their unorthodox aesthetics they sought to break the cycle of conditioning by forcing hidden cognitive processes into consciousness, thus replacing the image of pliable human automatons with actively engaged critical thinkers. The problem with behaviourism was that it promoted and lent empirical and theoretical support to an image of humans as empty organisms capable of being manipulated without their conscious knowledge. On a philosophical level, behaviourism articulated one of the central modernist fears: conditioned uniformity and mechanical dehumanisation. Therefore literary high modernism, which is often accused of being dehumanising and elitist itself, actually performs a humanistic function by reasserting--through reception practices--the mental operations which distinguish humans from most animals and by confirming the cognitive adaptability of our species.

By the 1920s in America and most other western countries, Ivan Pavlov's research on canine salivatory conditioning and John Watson's theoretical views on the benefits of behaviourism had grown increasingly more influential in cultural and social circles. Watson frequently published articles on behaviourism in various magazines such as *Harper's* (1927) and *Cosmopolitan* (1929) and as a result Kerry Buckley labels him a "popularizer" (159-60). Bertrand Russell made a similar observation in a 1931 letter when he wrote, "As for bahviourism, I have included it under Pavlov. Pavlov did the work which Watson has advertised" (303).[88] Today the behaviourist's oversimplified view of learning as strictly associative continues to be challenged and modified especially in the areas of language acquisition (Chomsky) and learning (embodied cognitive approaches). In the 1920s, the two strongest challenges to the domination of behaviourism in all aspects of life came from literary modernism and gestalt theories of perception.[89] I count, therefore, James Joyce, William Faulkner, and Virginia Woolf, as well as other high modernist writers, among the first practical cognitive scientists. Behaviourism, as a methodology which helped explain readers' responses to verbal stimuli, suited the modernists in their development of an aesthetics based on defamiliarising practices. Modernist defamiliarisation is based on the concept of cognitive dissonance which derives its disruptive force from the subversion of conditioned reading practices. In this way, modernism relies on behaviourism's insights at the same time that it problematises them. As we've seen, the implicit threat of conditioning as a means to control and manipulate human behaviour was already beginning to be discerned in the rise

of mass cultural products which most modernists believed catered to and reinforced passive, unthinking consumption.

The self-reflexive / subjective turn of modernist novels and their unconventional formal experimentation was a conspicuous response to the perceived threat of the widespread social and cultural application of behaviourist research. Self-reflexive rationalising is what distinguishes human response from that of animals. It is the very thing that cognitive science maps and modernist writers celebrate and explore in their works through the narrative styles of stream of consciousness and interior monologue. Experimental modernism undermines the threat of behaviourism by interfering with and interrupting automatic cognitive processes ignored in stimulus-response paradigms. High modernist novels effectively disrupt conditioned reading habits through cognitive dissonance and in doing so they force readers to critically recognise the habitualised arbitrariness of conventions like language referentiality and literary forms. Modernist aesthetic practices are designed to bring unconscious habits to conscious awareness, to temporarily challenge and undermine them, but they do not attempt to replace them. On the contrary, modernism rejuvenates conventional practices by returning consciousness to their functions, while it simultaneously reveals the adaptability of automatic, habitualised reading practices when confronting novel stimuli.

Modernism cannot break entirely with the conditioned past without undermining all expectations connected with literary communication and response. The systematization of stimulus-response conditioning, therefore, appealed to modernist writers to the extent that they could anticipate the reception of their experimentation and develop an aesthetic based around such predictions. In other words, modernists extended behaviourist principles into literary response and also investigated the related mental processes that accompany responsive behaviour. In doing so, they offered an early cognitivist challenge to the controlled, habitual responses, described by behaviourists. The practical knowledge of behaviourism met the practical knowledge of hermeneutics and reading adaptability of modernism head on. In the language of behaviourism, modernism did not attempt to uncondition conventional language stimulus-response units. Instead, what it accomplished was the production of cognitive dissonance which confirmed the mental operations involved in reading and responding through an aesthetic that was dependent on habitualised conventions and forms. Modernists, however, also recognised that there were variables in reception which could not be controlled and predicted with absolute certainty, but they incorporated these unforeseeable dimensions of reception into their conception of modernist aesthetics as well especially on the rhetorical level.

Behaviourism emerges as a discipline at approximately the same time as literary modernism. By the period of high modernism in the 1920s, behaviourism had entered the popular imagination and become established as an important resource for a variety of disciplines from advertising to pedagogy. It is my contention that the chronological overlapping of behaviourism and literary high modernism is more than just a coincidence. The implicit antagonistic relationship between the two movements is something that to date has received scant scholarly attention. One reason for this neglect is because the relationship between high modernism and behaviourism is complex, not a straightforward opposition between two polarised doctrines as it might first appear. To say that modernist aesthetics did not manipulate readers with the help of behaviourism's identification of the conditioned nature of language is to overlook behaviourism's contribution to language use and the role habitualised conventions play in predicting readers' responses. By the same token, individuals like B. F. Skinner preferred reading the very same modernist writers who most threatened the goals of prediction and control so central to behaviourism.[90] As an undergraduate Skinner studied literature and his postgraduate reading included the likes of Dostoevsky, Joyce, and Pound. He even subscribed to a variety of modernist periodicals: *The Dial*, *The American Mercury*, *Saturday Review of Literature*, and *Exile*.[91]

It is striking just how similar the rhetoric of behaviourism is to that of literary modernism. Both movements were oriented toward revolutionising their respective fields in light of recent world catastrophes (World War I), epistemological developments (Einsteinian relativism and Bergsonian introspective subjectivity), and advanced technological innovations (mass production and consumption); however, each--in its own particular ways--had set its sights on changing the lived experiences of daily life. The behaviourist commitment to objectivity threatened religion and other belief systems which were based on non-empirical evidence such as faith. In addition, behaviourism's frank handling of human sexuality presented a challenge to traditional social values. In these respects, the agenda of behaviourist psychology participated in the innovative, anti-traditional intellectual climate of the modernist period.

Watson viewed behaviourism as a distinctively modernist enterprise designed to replace outmoded psychological practices. In *Behaviorism*, he attacks the introspective psychology of William James for being "as much out of touch with modern psychology as the stage coach would be with modern New York's Fifth Avenue" (11).[92] Watson, sounding every bit the modernist iconoclast, saw behaviourism as the method through which to produce

> a universe unshackled by legendary folk lore of happenings thousands of years ago; unhampered by disgraceful political history; free of the foolish customs and conventions which have no significance in themselves, yet which hem the individual in like taut steel bands. ("Personality" 430)

Watson's behaviourism, as I have noted, contributed to a sense of determinism in its prediction and control of human behaviour. The steel bands that Watson claimed he was removing from the individual were being replaced by the invisible straps and harnesses of conditioning apparatus. In Watson's world, individuals had even less identity and free will than those who chose to believe in superstitions and the metaphysics of religion, and introspective mental processes.

While behaviourism's antitraditional rhetoric allied it to the modernist scorn for unconscious adherence to tradition, its strict objectivism counterpointed modernism's emancipatory exploration of mental operations and unconventional forms.[93] The iconoclastic rhetoric of behaviourism made it appear avant-garde at the time, but the limited range and flexibility of its research methodologies soon pointed to potential risks which greatly outweighed the perceived benefits. Behaviourism's implicit goals of social control and organization were also strongly anti-modernist. The reduction of human behaviour to unthinking learned responses repeatedly placed humans on a par with animals and machines. The research findings of behaviourists like Watson and Pavlov confirmed for modernists that a "revolution of the word" was necessary to break the stranglehold automatic responses had on language use and systems of communication in society. Control and order are often considered anathema to the modernist mind, yet they are the means by which prediction of response is possible and they provide the normalized background against which aesthetic defamiliarisation is measured. Therefore, while modernist aesthetics appear as a direct attack on the unconscious stimulus-response formula of the behaviourists, they also methodologically employ behaviourist research to create cognitive dissonance in readers.

The literary critic most clearly influenced by behaviourist psychology is I. A. Richards.[94] Like modernist writers, he recognised the dual nature of behaviourism, that is, the implicit threat to human individuality and the value of its explanatory power. He adopted the vocabulary of "stimulus-response" to account for linguistic referentiality and to describe the interaction between authorial text and readers: "in the arts, what are usually called the formal elements are the stimuli, simple or complex, which can be most depended on to produce uniform responses" (*Principles* 150). At the same time, however, he offered a cautionary warning about the dehumanising effects of highly

conditioned stock responses which prevented readers from actively engaging with the poems they read.

In *Principles of Literary Criticism*, Richards discusses language referentiality in terms of classical conditioning:

> On a number of occasions [a] word is heard in connection with objects of a certain kind. Later the word is heard in the absence of any such object. In accordance with one of the few fundamental laws known about mental process, something then happens in the mind which is like what would happen if such an object were actually present and engaging the attention. The word has become a sign of an object of that kind. (127)

This model of associative learning parallels Pavlov's conditioning experiments in Russia and stresses the arbitrariness of connections between linguistic signifiers and objects. In describing linguistic competence as a type of learned behaviour, Richards suggested that it could be unlearned, modified, and disrupted by dissonant aesthetics. He also used the model of stimulus-response conditioning to explain how contexts form the foundations for literary reception, especially situations of complex (dissonant) reception: "when a context has affected us in the past the recurrence of merely part of the context will cause us to re-act in the way in which we re-acted before. A sign is always a stimulus similar to some part of an original stimulus and sufficient to call up the engram formed by the stimulus" (*Meaning* 139-40).

Even though Richards made use of behaviourist research in his literary criticism, he never considered himself a behaviourist. In fact he openly debated J. B. Watson, and in 1926, he negatively reviewed Watson's *Behaviorism*[95]:

> We may not observe consciousness, but we have it or are it (in some as yet undetermined sense), and in fact, many of our observations of other things require it. In this respect the point of view of the behaviourist is not so much a point of view as a mistake. (qtd. in Russo 174)

This, however, did not stop John Crowe Ransom from labelling Richards "a sort of behaviourist or a psychologist or a scientist reporting poetry," or Allen Tate from claiming that poetry was "a kind of applied psychology" for Richards.[96] These impressions of Richards, derived mostly from his borrowed behaviourist vocabulary, ignore his genuine opposition to behaviourism and his desire to explore human cognition in the experiences of poetic works.

Instead of seeing Richards as a behaviourist trying to do literature, it is more valuable to view his use of behaviourist terminology as indicative of the pervasiveness of

behaviourism in the 1920s.[97] His problematic relationship with behaviourism is akin to that of the literary modernists who were his contemporaries. He sets out at the beginning *Practical Criticism* to reorient literary criticism away from its traditional focus on analysing what words means to analysing the mental operations behind the selection and reception of words. His work is essentially one of the first cognitive approaches to literature. He wanted to base the study of "mental operations" on "ordinary speech-situations," rather than the study of "aberrations" (6-7) which further links him to modernism and the preoccupation with revealing the extraordinary within the everyday. Because psychology was the "indispensable instrument for this inquiry" (9), Richards' literary criticism from the 1920s bears the imprint of popular contemporary schools of psychological thought like behaviourism. But, his concern over stock responses and the importance of cognition prove that Richards was anything but a behaviourist.

He calls stock responses "powerful enemies of poetry" (*Practical* 232), but he also admits the necessity of "ready-made" habitual responses to survival: "Few minds could prosper if they had to work out an original, 'made to measure' response to meet every situation that arose--their supplies of mental energy would be too soon exhausted and the wear and tear on the nervous systems would be too great" (228). The problem is that stock responses, although convenient, have a tendency to intervene automatically and exclude other responses that might be more appropriate or more advantageous. Richards recognised "how much of the value of existence is daily thrust from us by our stock response" because our habitual interpretations of the world step in too soon. For Richards, stock responses are both the necessary "substratum of stable and routine mental habits" and forms of "mental inertia," the means by which a population could be easily controlled through suggestion (295).

Richards claims that dissonant poetry is needed in order to rejuvenate minds which have "lost their capacity to reorganise themselves" because of the adverse effects of stock responses. If stock responses lead to standardisation and the levelling down of human mental capacities, then poetry is the artificial means of strengthening "our minds' capacity to order . . . . their thoughts, emotions, and desires" (301). Poetry is a means of "reorganising" ourselves in the face of excessive stimulus bombardment and contradictory impulses, all vying for cognitive attention. Richards believes that the experience of reading poetry, of organising and balancing dissonant impulses within a poem, helps generate mental conditions or states of mind needed to deal with similar conflicts and to solve problems in everyday life. This leads to his assertion that

> Nearly all good poetry is disconcerting, for a moment at least, when we first see it for what it is. Some dear habit has to be abandoned if we are to follow it. Going forward we are likely to find that other habitual responses, not directly concerned, seem less satisfactory. (240)

"Great poetry," according to Richards, "is not so safe a toy as the conventional view supposes" (240). Valuable aesthetic responses are ones where harmony is not easily achieved. This way the mind avoids a uni-directional orientation and employs more diversified cognitive operations in the process of trying to understand and interpret literary works.[98]

For Richards, literature is a training ground for critical thinking in the lifeworld because it teaches readers something about themselves through the cognitive processes involved in encountering it. He believes that in "the turmoil of disturbed routines . . . the mind's hold on actuality is tested," and in the process, humanity stands to improve itself (240). His notion of reading for "equilibrium" or the organised balance of contradictory impulses was an important source, along with Coleridge, for the organicism of the New Critics who were his successors;[99] however, Richards called this perceived organicism a delusion: "as though things possess qualities, when what we ought to say is that they cause effects in us of one kind or another, the fallacy of 'projecting' the effect and making it a quality of its cause tends to recur" (13). In Richards's view, literary works do not possess organic form, but the interpretive states of mind induced by reading experiences of these works embody the concept of organicism.

Richards, in effect, was the first modernist literary critic even though he rarely analysed specific high modernist works in his criticism. His theoretical positions, which were strongly informed by the aesthetics of literary modernism and issues of the day like behaviourism, helped to ensure a place for high modernist works in university curriculums. Revisiting Richards's literary criticism is an important exercise because he shared many concerns with modernist writers, and his work reveals much about the social, historical, and cultural climate of the day. In preparation to teach a contemporary novel course in 1919 at Cambridge, for instance, he called the Victorian novel "a diseased thing": "These damned 400 page novels take such a lot of time, and they are very rarely worth it" (qtd. in Russo 66). He also recognised the threat continued industrialisation and mass cultural products posed to human cognitive abilities:

> It is arguable that mechanical inventions, with their social effects, and a too sudden diffusion of indigestible ideas, are disturbing throughout the world the whole order of human mentality, that our minds are, as it were, becoming of an

> inferior shape--thin, brittle, patchy, rather than controllable and coherent. (*Practical* 301)

In Richards's writing there is a genuine sense of the ways in which the rise of best-sellers, journalism, film and radio technologies have caused an increase in the mental inertia of the general public. It is against this background that Richards makes his humanist claims for the therapeutic value of reading poetry which forces readers to organize complex thoughts and stimuli into a cohesive response.

Like his modernist contemporaries, Richards was a fledgling cognitivist and an advocate of revolutionary poetics. He too used behaviourist insights to undermine the threat of behaviourism. In *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924), he articulates what is for all intents and purposes a modernist manifesto exposing the motivations behind the aestheticisation of cognitive dissonance in high modernist literary works:

> The extent to which activity is conscious seems to depend very largely upon how complex and how novel it is. The primitive and in a sense natural outcome of stimulus is action; the more simple the situation with which the mind is engaged, the closer is the connection between stimulus and some overt response in action, and in general the less rich and full is the consciousness attendant. A man walking over uneven ground, for example, makes without reflection or emotion a continuous adjustment of his steps to his footing; but let the ground become precipitous and, unless he is used to such places, both reflection and emotion will appear. The increased complexity of the situation and the greater delicacy and appropriateness of the movements required for convenience and safety, call forth far more complicated goings on in the mind. Besides his perceptions of the nature of the ground, the thought may occur that a false move would be perilous and difficult to retrieve. This, when accompanied by emotion, is called a 'realisation' of his situation. The adjustment to one another of varied impulses--to go forward carefully, to lie down and grasp something with the hands, to go back, and so forth--and their co-ordination into useful behaviour alters the whole character of his experience. (109)

Richards recognises the importance of cognitive dissonance as an aesthetic principle, just as he recognises both the threat and benefit of behaviourism to understanding interpretive responses to literature. His adoption of a behaviourist vocabulary in tandem with a desire to avoid completely conditioned reading practices reveals a shared commitment with modernist writers who incorporated similarly duplicitous feelings about behaviourism into the formal designs, themes, and issues that appear in their literary works. As we will soon see: in *Ulysses*, Joyce exploits the conditioning of postcard exchange to create one of

his most infamous textual enigmas; in *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner embodies the threat of behaviourism in the character of Benjy; and in *Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf depicts a society's struggle to control aberrant behaviour.

NOTES

[1] Some critics will claim that the existence of the multiplicity of distinct national movements and submovements prevents us for speaking about an international modernism. I counter this argument, however, by pointing to the rapidly developing technologies which improved transportation and communication in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century and, as a result, allowed various manifestations of the modernist spirit to be shared across great distances. See Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983).

[2] Helen Elam, "The Difficulty of Reading," *The Idea of Difficulty*, ed. Alan C. Purves (Albany: State U of New York P, 1991): 73-92.

[3] By pitting themselves against an "idea" of Victorianism, modernist writers and theorists were able to define their own work. A similar thing is done today by postmodern critics who define the supposed literary successor to modernism against a reductive "idea" of literary modernism. These mischaracterised relations between literary movements continue to be used by scholars and students to help identify literary periods in historical overviews. The "clean break" rhetoric of modernism (and postmodernism) has, however, produced many important studies that connect modernist practices not only to its immediate Victorian predecessors, but also to its literary successor postmodernism. See Carol Christ, *Victorian and Modern Poetics* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984); Sanford Schwartz, "The Postmodernity of Modernism" in *The Future of Modernism*, ed. Hugh Witemeyer (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1997): 9-31.

[4] C. Hugh Holman (based on the 1936 original by William Thrall and Addison Hibbard), *A Handbook to Literature*, 3rd. ed. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1972).

[5] M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 7th ed. (New York: Harcourt, 1999). As I will argue later, modernist difficulty forces attention onto the role of the reader and, in effect, paved the way for the reader response criticism of the 1970s and 1980s.

[6] Michael Levenson, for instance, acknowledges the necessary vagueness of the term "modernism": "Anything more precise would exclude too much too soon" (vii). For Levenson it seems that the term "modernism" signifies not in spite of its vagueness, but because of it. For more nuanced accounts and definitions of modernism that are no less problematic, see Michael Levenson, *A Genealogy of Modernism: A Study of English Literary Doctrine, 1908-1922* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1984); Monique Chefidor, Ricardo Quinones, and Albert Watchel, ed., *Modernism: Challenges and Perspectives* (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1986); Peter Faulkner, *Modernism* (London: Methuen, 1977); Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane, eds., *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature 1890-1930* (London: Penguin, 1991); Astradur Eysteinsson, *The Concept of Modernism* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990); Peter Nicholls, *Modernisms: A Literary Guide* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1995).

[7] Roger Fowler, ed. *A Dictionary of Modern Critical Terms* (London: Routledge, 1973): 117.

[8] As the words themselves indicate, Pound's famous tenet to "Make it new" does not imply a clean break, but rather a reshaping of what already exists into a novel form.

[9] Northrop Frye, et al., *The Harper Handbook to Literature* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985).

[10] Jeremy Hawthorn, *A Concise Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory* (New York: Arnold, 1992): 108.

[11] Harry Levin, "What Was Modernism?", *Varieties of Literary Experience*, ed. Stanley Burnshaw (1960; New York: New York UP, 1962): 307-329.

[12] Ezra Pound, *The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (New York: New Directions, 1970).

[13] Lawrence Rainey, "The Cultural Economy of Modernism" in *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*, ed. Michael Levenson (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999): 33-69.

[14] Ezra Pound, *ABC of Reading* (1934; New York: New Directions, 1960).

[15] Malcolm Bradbury, *The Modern World* (New York: Viking, 1988): 7.

[16] T. S. Eliot, "The Metaphysical Poets," *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (London: Faber, 1975): 59-67.

[17] Lionel Trilling, "On the Modern Element in Modern Literature," *The Idea of the Modern*, ed. Irving Howe (New York: Horizon, 1967): 59-82.

[18] The course description for English 340 "Twentieth-Century British Literature to 1945" reads as follows:

> Why are the central texts of literary modernism so difficult? This course will examine a selection of them in order to come to terms with this phenomena. What are the causes and consequences of difficulty as it affected and affects both writers and readers of modernist texts? Our investigation will involve us in a number of approaches and considerations: for example, we will see that although difficulty appears to a superficial view to be essentially a matter of form--a matter, that is, of radical technical innovation, of a heightened reliance upon complex allusiveness, or of the exploitation of structures based on fragmentation and juxtaposition--a closer look reveals it to be at least as much a matter of content and context: of a complex new sense of subject matter, of the writer's historical situation and relation to audience. (T. Grieve)

See <http://www.sfu.ca/english/courses2000/340.htm>

[19] Richard Poirier, "The Difficulties of Modernism and the Modernism of Difficulty," *Images and Ideas in American Culture*, ed. Arthur Edelstein. (New Hampshire: UP of New England, 1979): 123-40.

[20] Hazard Adams, "The Difficulty of Difficulty," *The Idea of Difficulty in Literature*, ed. Alan C. Purves (Albany: State U of New York P, 1991): 23-50. Adams's central thesis is that the concept of literary difficulty has its origins in two very different types of ancient hermeneutical practice: "first, the establishment of mystery in a holy text to be guarded and regulated by a special class of priestly initiates and, second, the desire to defend by recourse to hidden meaning secular works of fiction against those who would identify fictions with untruth" (23-24).

[21] George Steiner, "On Difficulty," *On Difficulty and Other Essays* (New York: Oxford UP, 1978): 18-47.

[22] The authors of "Making Sense of Reading" describe dialogic reading as point-driven reading and contrast it to information-driven and story-driven reading. Dialogic reading is essentially interpretive reading which forces readers to go beyond the information given in a text in order to "construct . . . plausible meanings" (113). This mode of reading is based on the idea that interpretive reading requires constant adaptation and renegotiation--similar to a conversation--between readers and the texts they read. In contrast, the goal of information-driven reading is to acquire factual information and examples of this type of reading include "studying for an exam, following a recipe, checking a fact in a dictionary or encyclopedia, or reading the label on a medicine bottle" (112). The third mode of reading is story-driven reading which "operates as though the text were a plain glass window on the storyworld [realistic transparency]" (112). Readers are able to immerse themselves in a story-world of familiar "settings, characters, and events" (121) so that they can imaginatively experience what characters experience. See Douglas Vipond, et. al., "Making Sense of Reading," *Developing Discourse Practices in Adolescence and Adulthood*, eds. Richard Beach and Susan Hynds, vol. 39 (Norwood, N. J.: Ablex, 1990): 110-135.

[23] While "finding out" and "filling in" are conceptually distinct, in practice they both involve interpretive "filling in." This is a mistake George Steiner makes when he doesn't acknowledge the practical necessity of interpreting "looked up" information so that it has relevance to our comprehension of difficult texts.

[24] Edmund Wilson, *Axel's Castle: A Study in the Imaginative Literature of 1870-1930* (New York: Scribner's, 1931).

[25] Jose Ortega y Gasset, "The Dehumanization of Art," *The Dehumanization of Art and Other Writings on Art and Culture* (1948; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1956): 4-50.

[26] Irving Howe, "The Idea of the Modern," *The Idea of the Modern*, ed. Irving Howe (New York: Horizon, 1967): 11-40.

[27] Georg Lukacs, "The Ideology of Modernism," *The Lukacs Reader*, ed. Arpad Kadarkay (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995): 187-209.

[28] See Ernst Bloch, et al., *Aesthetics and Politics*, trans. Ronald Taylor (London: Verso, 1980).

[29] See Ernst Bloch, et al., *Aesthetics and Politics*, trans. Ronald Taylor (London: Verso, 1980), esp. "Reconciliation Under Duress," where Theodor Adorno deconstructs, among other things, Lukacs's concept of literary realism and his critique of modernism as uncommitted and anti-realist. Also, in "The Ideology of Modernism," Lukacs compares the technique of interior monologue used in Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) with the same technique used in Mann's *Lotte in Weimar* (1951). Whereas Joyce's use of the stylistic device is absolute, "the formative principle governing the narrative pattern and presentation of character," Mann's use is simply instrumental as a technical device that allows him to explore beyond "momentary sense-impressions." In a reading which erroneously labels Joyce's interior monologue "aimless," "sensational," and "static," in contrast to the "dynamic and developmental" nature of Mann's, Lukacs repeatedly betrays his bias for realism. This false contrast is most obvious in Lukacs's description of the function of interior monologue in *Lotte in Weimar* where he could just as easily be discussing *Ulysses* if the authors' and characters' names were transposed (187-88).

[30] Georg Lukacs, "Realism in the Balance," *Aesthetics and Politics*, Ernst Bloch, et al., trans. Ronald Taylor (London: Verso, 1980): 28-59.

[31] Brecht's position appears more tolerant, less reactionary, and obviously much more sympathetic to the experimental nature of high modernism. All of this is in spite of the fact that he encountered considerable difficulty putting into practice the revolutionary aesthetics that he so strongly advocated.

[32] Eugene Jolas, "Revolution of the Word," *transition* 16-17 (June 1929): 11-12.

[33] V. F. Calverton, "The Pulse of Modernity," *The Modern Quarterly* 5.3 (Fall 1929): 269-272.

[34] It is perhaps important to note that Eugene Jolas and his fellow signatories signed the manifesto entitled "The Revolution of the Word" and yet Calverton--I presume intentionally--repeatedly refers to the movement as "revolution *in* the word" (emphasis added 271). Contributors to this debate included Eugene Jolas, V. F. Calverton, Stuart Gilbert, Pierre Loving, Robert Sage, Herbert Gorman, and Harold Salemson. Salemson, in spite of the fact that he signed the "Revolution of the Word" Manifesto, questions the success of "Work in Progress."

[35] Mostly the work of Sigmund Freud and William James, which became the key targets of the behaviourists who labelled them the "introspectionists."

[36] According to Calverton, the "verbal solipsism" advocated by the revolution-in-the-wordists was characteristic of schizophrenia and those victimized by a maniacal compulsion (276, 280).

[37] Michael Finney, "Eugene Jolas, *transition*, and the Revolution of the Word," *Tri-Quarterly* 38 (1977): 39-53.

[38] Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce*, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford UP, 1982).

[39] Eugene Jolas, "The Revolution of Language and James Joyce," *transition* 11 (February 1928): 109-116. The practice of intimately associating Joyce with the revolution of the word continues today. See among others Colin MacCabe, *James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word* (London: MacMillan, 1978); Cordell Yee, *The Word according to James Joyce* (Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1997).

[40] Kevin Dettmar justifies ignoring Finnegans Wake in a book on Joyce and postmodernism, and supports his own dislike for the novel by citing Ezra Pound and Stanislaus Joyce. Both men hated the book and refused to read it because they are both not sure if the novel's "drivelling rigamorole . . . is written with the deliberate intention of pulling the reader's leg or not" (Stanilaus qtd. in Dettmar 212). Dettmar calls the novel "all text, no shadow," where "shadow" means "dominant ideology" and a benchmark of conventional representation and recognisable subject matter. See Kevin Dettmar, *The Illicit Joyce of Postmodernism: Reading against the Grain* (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1996): 209-217.

[41] Laura Riding and Robert Graves, *A Survey of Modern Poetry* (London: Heinemann, 1927).

[42] I contend that this is precisely the type of dialogic negotiation that James Joyce incorporates into the beginning of *Portrait* with Stephen Dedalus's childhood memory of the song "Lily Dale" which he remembers his father singing. Almost as an allegory of literary history or of reading disruptive experimental modernist forms, the version of the song as sung by Stephen's father appears first written out "O, the wild rose blossoms / On the little green place"--which in itself is a variant of the original H. S. Thompson song. Then Stephen's nonsensical version of the song follows, "O, the green wothe botheth" (3). The second version relies on the father's antecedent version to give it meaning, and only through this type of dialogical comparison are readers able to parse Stephen's nuanced and condensed version of the

song. In like fashion, most second language acquisition theories repeatedly stress that the speaker's first language always remains as a base to aid and guide the acquisition of the new language. The same is arguably true of literary works that experiment linguistically. See James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, ed. Seamus Deane (1916; New York: Penguin, 1993).

[43] See Gerald Graff, *Professing Literature: An Institutional History* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1987); Ewa Thompson, *Russian Formalism and Anglo-American New Criticism: A Comparative Study* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971); Naresh Chandra, *New Criticism: An Appraisal* (Delhi: Doaba, 1979).

[44] Without question, New Critical approaches have made the study of literature, in particular modernist literature, much more accessible to general readers. The measure of this democratic desire to open up literary study to a wider audience can be seen in the textbooks Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren produced which sought to guide the common reader through different types of literature. See Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, *Understanding Poetry* (New York: Holt, 1939); Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, *Understanding Fiction* (New York: Appleton, 1943); and Cleanth Brooks, *Understanding Drama* (New York: Holt, 1945).

[45] The seeds of reader response criticism can be found as far back as Aristotle who in his *Poetics* measured poetic creation based on its "vividness of impression" and whether or not it was "striking" (qtd. in Tompkins 203). The seeds can also be found in earlier twentieth-century scholarship like I. A. Richards's *Practical Criticism* (1929) where he systematically evaluated actual readers' responses to specific poems.

[46] For a poststructuralist critique of reader response criticism, see Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism After Structuralism* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1982).

[47] Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke and Proust* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1979): 17; J. Hillis Miller, "Stevens' Rock and Criticism as Cure, II," *The Georgia Review* 30 (Summer 1976): 341.

[48] J. Hillis Miller, "The Figure in the Carpet," *Poetics Today* 1.3 (1980): 113.

[49] Geoffrey Hartman, *Criticism in the Wilderness: The Study of Literature Today* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1980): 269-70

[50] Note how in readings of "Ode to a Nightingale," often celebrated as an enactment of Keats's idea of negative capability, the focus is almost always on death. Death is, of course, the complete elimination of cognitive dissonance.

[51] John Keats, "Letter to George and Thomas Keats, December 1817" in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, ed. M. H. Abrams, vol. 2, 5th ed. (New York: Norton: 1986): 863.

[52] Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence* (New York: Oxford UP, 1973).

[53] Roman Ingarden concludes his lecture, "Phenomenological Aesthetics: An Attempt at Defining Its Range," with the following statement: "Works of art have a right to expect to be properly apprehended by observers who are in communion with them and to have their special value justly treated" (196). Ingarden's strong implication that there are correct ways to "complete" a text was later modified by Iser's more flexible reception aesthetics and Hans Robert Jauss's conceptualistion of "horizons of reception" which change with time so that the aesthetic identity of a literary work is a continuously changing composite of many different "horizons." See Roman Ingarden, "Phenomenological Aesthetics: An Attempt at Defining Its Range," *Critical Theory Since 1965*, eds. Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle (Tallahassee: Florida State UP, 1986): 185-98; Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahti (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1982).

[54] "Spots of indeterminacy" is what Roman Ingarden first called textual gaps in 1931. He writes,

> spots of indeterminacy in principle cannot be entirely removed by any finite enrichment of the content of a nominal expression. If, instead of simply "man," we say "an old, experienced man," we do remove, by addition of these attributive expressions, certain spots of indeterminacy; but an infinite number still remains to be removed. (249)

Influenced no doubt by fragmented modernist novels published in the 1920s, Ingarden's 1931 *The Literary Work of Art* attempts to establish an ontology for literary texts that foregrounds the role readers play in fleshing out a work's potential structures through acts of interpretation. See Roman Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, trans. George Grabowicz (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1973).

[55] See Wolgang Iser's "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach," *New Literary History* 3 (1971): 279-99; *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1974); *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978); "Interaction between Text and Reader," Suleiman, Susan, and Inge Crosman, eds., *The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1980): 106-19. His most recent work, *The Range of Interpretation* (New York: Columbia UP, 2000) and a short article "Do I Write for an Audience?" *PMLA* 115.3 (May 2000): 310-514, both address similar issues of literary reception.

[56] Every text is, according to Ingarden, merely a skeleton or "schematic entity having certain potential elements," a set of general orientations that await actualisation by readers ("Phenomenological Aesthetics" 188).

[57] For more on bilateral symmetry and cognition, see Mark Turner, *Reading Minds: The Study of English in the Age of Cognitive Science* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991): 68-98. Turner is cautious, however, to equate symmetry with balance. He argues, after Mark Johnson, that physical balance can occur in the absence of bilateral symmetry, but something bilaterally symmetric is necessarily balanced (70).

[58] Astradur Eysteinsson, *The Concept of Modernism* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990): 9-12.

[59] T. S. Eliot, "*Ulysses*, Order, and Myth," *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (1923; London: Faber, 1975): 175-78.

[60] Joseph Frank's desire to apprehend high modernist works "spatially, in a moment of time, rather than a sequence" involves a similar strategy to Eliot's for overcoming the "insecurity, instability, the feeling of loss of control over the meaning and purpose of life" that modernist literature represents in its works (9, 55). He calls the concept of spatial form an "aesthetic expression," which implies he sees the spatial dimensions of literary works as something their authors developed as a new way to provide structure for a world in crisis (60) rather than as something that readers project onto these works. Eliot's and Frank's heuristic responses to modernist texts are types of "holistic enactment" which try to remove the psychological discomfort of cognitive dissonance. Joseph Frank, "Spatial Form in Modern Literature" (1945), in *The Widening Gyre: Crisis and Mastery in Modern Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1963): 3-62. The term "holistic enactment" comes from David Bordwell's *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1993): 186.

[61] Matei Calinescu, *Rereading* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1993).

[62] Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (New York: Oxford UP, 1967). See also Daniel Schwartz, "The Consolation of Form: The Theoretical and Historical Significance of Frank Kermode's *The Sense of an Ending*," *The Centennial Review* 28-29.4-1 (Fall-Winter 1984-1985): 29-47.

[63] Kermode says that in describing the sound a clock makes as "*tick-tock*" we humanise time by giving it form: "*tick* is our word for a physical beginning, *tock* our word for an end" (45-46). The interval between these two sounds is only perceivable because it has been organised within a completed whole.

[64] Kenneth Burke, "Psychology and Form," *Counter-Statement* (1931; Berkeley: U of California P, 1968): 29-44.

[65] This principle was vaguely articulated in 1914 by Max Wertheimer and quickly became one of the central theses of Gestalt psychology which like literary modernism developed into a school of thought in the 1920s in response to American behaviourism. See Mitchell Ash, *Gestalt Psychology in German Culture, 1890-1967: Holism and the Quest for Objectivity* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995).

[66] Jean Petitot et als, eds., *Naturalizing Phenomenology: Issues in Contemporary Phenomenology and Cognitive Science* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1999).

[67] The Husserlian phenomenological maxim, "To the things themselves!", issued in 1931 in *Cartesian Meditations* closely echoes Ezra Pound's 1913 Imagist call for the "Direct treatment of the 'thing.'" While both seem to orient critical attention to the study of material objects, each is more complexly about studying the experience of objects and the negotiated relationships between a subject and perceived objects. Husserlian phenomenology and Imagist aesthetics are ultimately concerned with reception, the former with accounting for it and the latter with allusively manipulating it. Each involves an attempt to take a direct and fresh look at phenomena, breaking down or bracketing, whichever the case may be, the unconscious

habitual attitudes toward everyday objects. Both phenomenology and Imagism are, broadly speaking, not concerned with "third-person objectification but a return to the world as it is experienced in its immediacy" (Petitot 73). Rather, both call on critical reflection to make everyday phenomena appear new by freeing them from habitual beliefs.

[68] Edmund Husserl, "Horizons and the Genesis of Perception," *The Essential Husserl*, ed. Donn Welton, trans. Anthony J. Steinbock (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1999): 221-33.

[69] Husserl refers to these cues as "manifold continua" within the object-moment which implicitly provide the extendable aspects which are not given.

[70] See Paul B. Armstrong, *Conflicting Readings: Variety and Validity in Interpretation* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1990); Paul Armstrong, *Conflicting Readings: Variety and Validity in Interpretation* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1990); Alan Kennedy, *Reading Resistance Value: Deconstructive Practice and the Politics of Literary Critical Encounters* (New York: St. Martin's, 1990); Ellen Spolsky, ed., *The Uses of Adversity: Failure and Accommodation in Reader Response* (Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1990).

[71] Brian Richardson calls any notion of an idealised reader "whose race, class, and sexual preference is immaterial. . . at best utopian and at worst a dangerous mystification" (44). See Brian Richardson "The Other Reader's Response," *Criticism* 39.1 (Winter 1997): 31-53.

[72] For more detailed explications of these positions and how they differ see specific accounts in Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London: Methuen, 1984); Elizabeth Freund, *The Return of the Reader: Reader Response Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1987); Wallace Martin, *Recent Theories of Narrative* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1986); Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978).

[73] See Peter J. Rabinowitz and Michael W. Smith, *Authorizing Readers: Resistance and Respect in the Teaching of Literature* (New York: Teachers College, 1998) for a study of pedagogical strategies which focuses on the issues of reading against and along with dominant perspectives embedded in literary works.

[74] In contrast, it is interesting to note that Terry Eagleton considers the impulse to integrate textual perspectives and meanings into harmonious wholes to be an "arbitrary prejudice" that has been naturalised in modern critics. He calls the inclination to read literary texts organically "a doctrinal predilection" without even considering that there is a more natural (embodied) explanation for this predisposition (81). Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1983).

[75] Ferdinand de Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* (1913) confirmed the behaviourist basis of language. If, as de Saussure argued, there existed an arbitrary relationship between signifier and signified ("the linguistic sign is arbitrary"), then linguistic signs and entire systems of language are products of conditioning or "collective habit." See Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Wade Baskin (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966).

[76] Watson's "What Is Behaviourism?" and "Personality" are from *Great Ideas in Psychology*, ed. Robert Marks (New York: Bantam, 1966): 383-99, 400-31.

[77] Later in his career, Watson drew a distinction between explicit and implicit responses. Implicit responses occur within the organism and are innate forms of behaviour. They include visceral movements, glandular secretions, and nerve impulses, but not cortical functioning.

[78] Duane P. Schultz, *A History of Modern Psychology* (New York: Academic, 1969): 202-03. Watson, for example, conceived of thinking as "sub-vocal talking" or "silent internal discourse" rather than as a form of conscious cognition. Later behaviourists, like B. F. Skinner, considered language verbal behaviour which could be studied objectively, according to strict response-stimulus criteria, like other forms of behaviour. See B. F. Skinner, *Verbal Behaviour* (New York: Appleton,1957).

[79] J. B. Watson, "Psychology as the Behaviourist Views It," in Schultz, *A History of Modern Psychology* 187-99.

[80] J. B. Watson, *Psychological Care of Infant and Child* (New York: Norton, 1928).

[81] For Watson's perspective on his own life, see J. B. Watson, "John Broadus Watson," in *A History of Psychology in Autobiography*, ed. Carl Murchison, vol. III, (Worcester: Clark UP, 1936): 271-81.

[82] Watson to Bertrand Russell, October 11, 1921, qtd. in Buckley 136.

[83] John B. Watson, "The Ideal Executive" (speech delivered 20 April 1922 to Macy's graduating class of executives) qtd. in Kerry W. Buckley, *Mechanical Man* (New York: Guilford, 1989): 137.

[84] For a more detailed account and analysis of Watson's work in advertising see Buckley, esp. chpt. 8.

[85] Virginia Woolf, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," *Collected Essays*, vol. 1 (New York: Harcourt, 1967): 319-37.

[86] This and what follows are part of Buckley's argument in *Mechanical Man*: 137-41.

[87] John B. Watson, "The Ideal Executive" (speech delivered 20 April 1922 to Macy's graduating class of executives) qtd. in Buckley 137.

[88] See Bertrand Russell, *The Autobiogrpahy of Bertrand Russell 1914-1944*, vol. 2 (Boston: Little, 1968). Elsewhere, Russell summarised his position on behaviourism as follows:

> This philosophy, of which the chief protagonist is Dr. John B. Watson, holds that everything that can be known about man is discoverable by the method of external observation, i.e. that none of our knowledge depends, essentially and necessarily, upon data in which the observer and the observed are the same person. I do not fundamentally agree with this view, but I think it contains much more truth than most people suppose, and I regard it as desirable to develop the behaviourist method to the fullest possible extent. I believe that the knowledge to be obtained by this method . . . is self-contained, and need not, at any point, appeal to data derived from introspection, i.e. from observations which a man can make upon himself but not upon anyone else. Nevertheless, I hold that there are such observations and that there is knowledge which depends upon introspection.

See Bertrand Russell, *Dictionary of Mind: Matter and Morals*, ed. Lester Denonn (New York: Philosophical Library, 1952): 17.

[89] Gestalt psychologists, Max Wertheimer, Wolfgang Kohler, and Kurt Koffka, recognised the scientific reductionism of behaviourism's appeal to stimulus-response paradigms to explain all behaviour:

> Meaning and significance could have no possible place in such a molecular system: Caesar's crossing the Rubicon; certain stimulus-response situations; Luther at Worms; so many others; Shakespeare writing "Hamlet"; Beethoven composing the Ninth Symphony; an Egyptian sculptor carving the bust of Nephretete, would all be reduced to the stimulus-response schema. (26)

Gestaltists saw what was at stake when certain forms of culturally significant behaviour is explained using the stimulus-response formula of behaviourism. Such a methodology grossly devalues the accomplishments of creative works like Shakespeare's *Hamlet* because their production and reception is read *only* in terms of physiological response. See Kurt Koffka, *Principles of Gestalt Psychology* (New York: Harbinger, 1935).

[90] In *About Behaviourism* (New York: Knopf, 1974), B. F. Skinner argued that "Survival may be said to be *contingent upon* certain kinds of behavior" (36-37). Skinner's modification of classical behaviourism (1930s-1970s), called radical behaviourism, resulted in a theory of operant conditioning where the consequences of a response (punishments or rewards) were what reinforced or diminished conditioning. His experiments were mostly conducted on rats and sometimes pigeons, who were placed in a specially designed box (popularly referred to as the "Skinner box") and conditioned to press down on bars to release food. He was also a committed defender of behaviourism, especially against charges of dehumanisation: "Man is not made into a machine by analyzing his behavior in mechanical terms." See *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (New York: Kompf, 1971): 202. See also B. F. Skinner, *Reflections on Behaviourism and Society* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1978).

[91] In "From Hamilton College to Walden Two: An Inquiry into B. F. Skinner's Early Social Philosophy," Nils Wiklander notes that Skinner studied and wrote a major article on Pound's work in college and subscribed to Pound's short-lived (1927-28) magazine, *Exile*, which included cultural critique and Pound's views on politics and commerce (87). See Nils Wiklander, "From Hamilton College to Walden Two: An Inquiry into B. F. Skinner's Early Social Philosophy," *B. F. Skinner and Behaviourism in American Culture*, eds. Laurence Smith and William Woodward (Bethlehem: Lehigh UP, 1996): 83-105.

[92] J. B. Watson, *Behaviourism* (New York: Norton, 1924).

[93] In terms of literary schools, behaviourism is more closely aligned with Victorian realism. Critiques of modernism's subjective abstraction (Lukacs, Lewis) show affinities to behaviourist principles in their calls for a more objectively realistic poetics.

[94] See I. A. Richards, *Principles of Literary Criticism*, 2nd. ed., (1924; London: Routledge, 1970); I. A. Richards, *Practical Criticism* (New York: Harcourt, 1929); I. A. Richards and C. K. Ogden, *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923; New York: Harcourt, 1930); I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1936).

[95] Richards's review appeared in *New Criterion* 4 (1926): 372-78.

[96] John Crowe Ransom, *A Collection of Critical Essays on* The Waste Land (1968): 146 and Allen Tate, *Essays of Four Decades* (1970): 203.

[97] Two publications which attest to this popularity are C. K. Ogden's (with I. A. Richards) *The Meaning of Psychology* (New York: Harper, 1926) and Everett Dean Martin's *Psychology and Its Uses* (Chicago: American Library, 1926). Ogden, with the help of I. A. Richards, sums up the doctrine of behaviourism in two sentences: "(1) That psychology deals only with what can be observed. (2) That 'consciousness' is a meaningless term" (162). For many people--including Ogden and Richards--the conditioned reflex theory of behaviourism had valuable insights to offer other disciplines like the study of linguistics and literary criticism. If, as a general rule, responses through repetition became quicker, smoother, and more accurate, as behaviourist experiments confirmed, and if part of the necessary stimulus could eventually be eliminated but still evoke the same response as in reflex conditioning, then these observations were indispensable for anyone trying to account for literary response or anyone seeking to manipulate literary response. In the sixth chapter of Martin's book, he recommends Watson's *Behaviourism* as a "classical" work in psychology which will help orient the "average reader" and introduce him / her to the divergent methods and schools of psychology.

[98] Although Richards almost exclusively discusses poetry, I extend his argument to all literary works--especially high modernist novels which I believe involve, to varying degrees, the poeticisation of prose.

[99] For Richards, the establishment of equilibrium was the all-important end product of reading good poetry, otherwise the poetry was not good. Poems which exercise readers' ordering abilities were privileged over those which simply played on stock responses and lacked depth. These latter poems did not contain complexity: multiple senses of words, irony, paradoxes, ambiguities, or tensions. In all of these cases Richards, like the New Critics, is able to reconcile opposing functions and disparate meanings of words by appealing to a notion of equilibrium. Richards's idea of "equilibrium" is grounded in Sir Charles Scott Sherrington's neurophysiological research published as *The Integrative Action of the Nervous System* (1906). Sherrington's work on neural integration provides a framework for explaining how diversely complicated phenomena, sometimes in strict opposition to each other, can be experienced simultaneously by an individual and still produce a unified and meaningful response (179-82). That is to say, Sherrington's work gave Richards a physiologically based explanation for the effects that "valuable" poetry had on readers. What Richards folk-diagnosed as an ordering impulse in human thinking, Sherrington revealed as a network of neurological pathways and connections that succeeded in organizing and prioritizing complex sensory input to produce a single unified output. See Paul Russo, *I. A. Richards: His Life and Work* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1989).

PART TWO: PERIPLUM

Chapter Three: Modernist Postcards

At the beginning of this chapter, I explore how many of the dissonant aspects of James Joyce's *Ulysses* (changing narrative styles, unfamiliar words, etc.) prove accessible because they rely on the very reading conventions that they appear to undermine. In what follows, I offer an analysis of inscribed readers in *Ulysses* whose reception practices anticipate those of actual readers and provide them with potential models and strategies for negotiating the dissonance of high modernism. I then turn to a representative example of difficulty--Joyce's enigmatic "U.P.:up" postcard--and examine it using insights derived from inscribed readers. This approach reveals how Joyce exploits conditioned scripts derived from a rich historical context of postcard culture to generate cognitive dissonance. In the process, I argue that Joyce throws into relief the hermeneutic challenge occasioned by high modernist aesthetics and confirms the basis of this aesthetic in "common sense" reading practices.

I. Groundwork

> **Every sentence rouses an expectation that is not fulfilled. . . . Nothing comes to meet the reader, everything turns away from him, leaving him gaping after it. . . . One should never rub the reader's nose into his own stupidity, but that is just what *Ulysses* does. (Carl Jung, "Ulysses": *A Monologue*)**
>
> **Prefect of Parisian police: The fact is, we have all been a good deal puzzled because the affair *is* so simple, and yet baffles us altogether. C. Auguste Dupin: Perhaps it is the very simplicity of the thing that puts you at fault. . . . Perhaps the mystery is a little *too* plain. . . . A little *too* self-evident. (Edgar Allan Poe, "The Purloined Letter")**

Ulysses is always described summarily as a difficult book about a day in the lives of three Dubliners, and as I will argue it is precisely the dialogue between the everyday and the difficult which makes the novel accessible to the common reader.[1] In its relationship between content and form, the novel both calculatingly depicts and thematises the ordinary as it intersects with the extraordinary. In its representation of the everyday through shifting narrative styles and experimental forms, *Ulysses* is a novel which boldly illustrates the functional process of modernist cognitive dissonance. In many ways high

modernism is rooted, as is cognitive theory, in the unconscious mental routines of the everyday. These routines supply the base against which variation is felt. And this variation is necessary to break the conditioning of habit and return conscious awareness to those everyday routines.

Part of the difficulty that *Ulysses* presents to readers is the shifting forms and modes of narration which occur from episode to episode especially in the second half of the novel. The diverse forms through which the narrative is told are accurately described as breaks in "narrative contracts" (Lawrence 6). Each episode, beginning with "Aeolus," is written in a radically different narrative form and this formal defamiliarisation problematises reception. In a letter to Harriet Weaver Shaw, after she had expressed concern about the difficulty of the "Sirens" episode, Joyce defended his experimentation, explaining it as not only calculated but necessary:

> I understand that you may begin to regard the various styles of the episodes with dismay and prefer the *initial style* much as the wanderer did who longed for the rock of Ithaca. But in the compass of one day to compress all these wanderings and clothe them in the form of this day is for me only possible by such variation which, I beg you to believe, is not capricious. (*Letters I* 129; emphasis added)

Critical scholarship, in an attempt to account for the novel's dislocating shifts in narrative styles, has adopted Joyce's terminology. Marilyn French claims that the "initial style"[2] of the first six episodes "sets the decorum of the novel" and each new episode style is experienced by readers as a "violation of decorum" (54). Because no new episode style is repeated, none is capable of replacing the relative decorum established by the first six episodes. Karen Lawrence calls the "initial style" the "narrative norm" which orients readers and provides them with stability and a "sense of the solidity of external reality" (43). The purpose of this "narrative norm," according to Lawrence, is to establish in readers contingent expectations which get frustrated as soon as Joyce abandons the "initial style" (6). As a caution to readers who want to divide *Ulysses* into a realistic half and a distorted or rhetorical half, Dermot Kelly argues that the "initial style" is not "a monolith of uniformity" (7). Instead, he suggests that the "initial style" is not, in fact, a consistent style and thus prepares readers for the later episodes where the shifts in narrative form and perspective are more striking. And yet at the same time, Kelly, like French and Lawrence, relies on the identifiable concept of the "initial style" as a regulatory benchmark against which to measure the experimentation in later episodes where Joyce is clearly "straining against the yoke of the initial style" (17).

The "initial style," however, plays another important role in the reception of *Ulysses*. First, it tempers the dissonance experienced by readers accustomed to the literary precedents of Victorian and contemporary realist novels. The combination of objective and subjectively experimental narrative forms generates a type of controlled defamiliarisation which provides readers with a relatively stable comfort zone at the beginning of the novel. The use of third-person and direct dialogue gives the impression of objectivity which offsets the subjectivity and dislocating poetics of characters' interior monologues. The interplay of these forms, then, simultaneously creates dissonance and neutralises it so that readers are not overcome by experimental forms that are so dissonant that they exclude all aspects of identifiable reality. Direct dialogue offers readers an objective view of characters' interactions with each other, while interior monologue provides the subjective responses of characters as they interact with their environments. The third-person narrative performs a similar function as the recorded dialogue: it provides objective descriptions of settings and thereby grounds the novel's content in the recognisable everyday lifeworld. However, this mode is problematised slightly by Joyce's use of free indirect discourse--the integration of third-person narrative distance with "the linguistic traits associated with the speech and thinking of specific characters into segments of the narrative" (Gillespie 215).

Third-person narrative which uses free indirect speech, then, effectively embodies the tension between the familiar and the dissonance that characterises the "intial style" because it describes the observable world from what appears to be an objective vantage point, but it does so using idiosyncratic vocabularies. As one narrative mode defamiliarises, then, another works to retain the quotidian basis of reality that underlies the formal experimentation. This narrative style both presents and defamiliarises the everyday that is conventionally associated with the objective third-person point of view to provide a type of narrative stability until readers become accustomed to what will develop into the novel's more experimental styles. Put differently, the "initial style" establishes the day-in-the-life topos of *Ulysses* and balances the generated dissonance with recognisable narrative forms which do not appear in later episodes. In those later episodes readers will have to cognitively supply those conventional forms and underlying scripts which contextualise Joyce's defamiliarising poetics.

The "intial style" is not only a benchmark against which to read the novel's later episodes, but also a type of training ground for readers. It functions as a how-to-read primer for *Ulysses*. The defamiliarisation within the "initial style" puts on display the interplay of conventional and experimental narrative forms necessary to create cognitive dissonance and therefore becomes a template for dissonance. But, it also reminds readers

that underlying all of Joyce's experimental aesthetics is the common everyday that still informs the experience of dissonance. The "initial style" itself becomes like the "rock of Ithaca" which symbolises the security, stability, and metaphorical safety of the known and the habitual. The experience of cognitive dissonance places readers of *Ulysses* in circumstances analogous to those of that eponymous mythological figure whose mission was to return to the comforts and familiarity of home.[3] Experimental modernist aesthetics subvert this metaphorical "rock of Ithaca," but ultimately, it is the rock upon which the foundations of modernism are built and from which they derive their signification.

Do all locks have different keys? . . . That's a lot of keys. *Millennium*

It is overwhelming to consider the sheer number of individual locks and their corresponding keys in use in Dublin on 16 June 1904: keys locking and unlocking all of Dublin, its houses, pubs, churches, brothels, and businesses; each Dubliner representing a specific key to a specific lock; each character metaphorically representing a potential interpretive key for readers of Joyce's novel. Such considerations temporarily convert the ordinary (the fact that everyone has used a key) into the remarkable, and by drawing conscious attention to what is remarkable about these facts, habitual routines are rejuvenated. The idea is reminiscent of the description of water circulation in "Ithaca" which traces the flow of water from Roundwood reservoir through the Dublin water works to 7 Eccles St. where it travels out of Bloom's tap and into his black iron kettle (782-83). Bloom's simple act of turning on his kitchen tap literally taps into a subterranean system that connects every Dublin household and place of business. In the course of daily life, this vast network of pipes remains unnoticed despite the number of times Bloom turns a tap. The Dublin water system, then, becomes an apt metaphor for habitual cognitive activities which function with efficiency and dependability below conscious levels of awareness. When it is revealed that Bloom admires the universality, the democratic equality, and the constancy of water made possible by Dublin's water system, his description applies equally to the mental operations which underly everyday activities. The cognitive pause caused by the apprehension of the extraordinary in the ordinary is capable of defamiliarising everyday life and bringing a new freshness to one's perception of it.

It has often been noted that on 16 June, both Bloom and Stephen are keyless Dubliners. Stephen has turned the key to Martello tower over to Buck Mulligan, and

Bloom has left his in the pocket of his other pants. The two individuals repeatedly cross paths throughout the day and meet at the end of it, a meeting symbolised by the crossed keys in the Keyes ad on which Bloom has been working. Just as these two keyless citizens feel locked out of aspects of Dublin life and their personal lives, many readers feel locked out of the novel because of its density and complexity: reading *Ulysses* is very much a search for interpretive keys.[4]

In his 1959 *Reader's Guide to James Joyce*, William Tindall begins his chapter on *Ulysses* with the observation that "[it] is too difficult for careless reading." Tindall highlights the density and complexity of the novel to claim that *Ulysses* needs to be read over and over again to be understood even in part: "After many readings of *Ulysses*, we should be ready to agree that many readings are insufficient" (123). Tindall takes his cue from Joyce's own description of the "enormous bulk and more than enormous complexity" of the novel (*Letters I* 146). It is not surprising to find the first sentence of the "Introduction" to the MLA *Approaches to Teaching* Ulysses (1993) echoing Tindall's and Joyce's concerns about the difficulty of the novel. "Because of its length and difficulty," the editors claim, "*Ulysses* cannot be easily assigned in a course without a significant time commitment by teachers and students" (17). I cite Tindall's reader's guide and Kathleen McCormick and Erwin Steinberg's teacher's guide to *Ulysses* because both begin by emphasizing the difficulty of the novel, inadvertantly intimidating readers confronting Joyce for the first time and perpetuating the myth that high modernism is inaccessible. It is not my intention to dispute the fact that *Ulysses* is a difficult read. I believe that scholarship which stresses the difficulties of reading modernist novels and thereby endorses the aura of elitism surrounding high modernist literary production and reception effectively masks the genuinely democratic dimensions of modernist aesthetics.

Without question, the difficulties modernist aesthetics present to readers by challenging their reading habits are not diminished by establishing this democratic foundation, nor should they be. Reading modernism involves effort. My goal is to counter the rhetoric of difficulty which prevents full explorations of the ways in which modernist novels are socially committed and designed with the common reader in mind. The democratic foundation of modernism (namely the social dimensions of language use and conventional reading practises) helps explain how modernist novels communicate in spite of their difficulty. Joyce built *Ulysses* upon this foundation and it is what he expected readers to bring to his text. The effort required to read formally experimental modernist novels involves a willingness to be frustrated and have your cognitive habits challenged.

Modernist literature and the history of its reception reveal that sustained experiences of cognitive dissonance are troubling and feel unnatural. By their very nature, humans are "incapable of remaining content with half knowledge,"[5] incapable of sustaining a state akin to Keatsian "negative capability" (863). Modernist writers like Joyce exploit this desire to reduce or eliminate cognitive dissonance in their uniquely modernist aesthetic. Pace Tindall, "careless reading" is exactly what is required when reading *Ulysses*. By "careless reading," I mean a type of automatic reading based on behaviouristic stimulus-response principles and the expectations which ground such reading practices. *Ulysses* is about reader disorientation and the creation of dissonance between what is expected and what is received in terms of conventional reading practices. Defamiliarisation, a kind of catch-all term for the effects of modernist experimentation, relies on "careless reading," or reading according to and against a stable background of habitually formed expectations supplied by readers and anticipated by Joyce. The perpetuated assumption that reading modernism requires a highly specialised type of reading is a false one. Habitual reading practices and their natural adaptability, coupled with a little patience and effort, are all that is needed. Encyclopedic knowledge bases are undeniably useful, but not absolutely necessary, and, in fact, they can contribute to the excessive complication of the novel and the reading experience. There is simply too much detail and implicature contained in *Ulysses* for one reader to grasp in its entirety. To read *Ulysses* successfully is to delineate the limits of relevance as the overwhelming accumulation of fact and allusion threatens to undermine the attempt.

In 1959, Tindall raises a question about *Ulysses* which has yet to be adequately answered: if Joyce's creation is not a private place, then what are its "public relations"? Tindall follows this question with a more precise one: "If *Ulysses* communicates at all, to whom, how much, when, and what?" (133). It is imperative that interpretation begin with the belief that modernist works, however difficult, can and do communicate. I believe that the answers to the above questions involve the questioner to degrees that can only be understood by using a cognitive approach to reading practices and the reception of modernism.

I have tried to suggest how the Keyes ad in itself provides a metaphoric key to reading *Ulysses*. The image of overlapping keys is suggestive of the synthesis of approaches necessary to read the novel. But crossed keys also represent the Manx parliament: "The idea, Mr Bloom said, is the house of keys. You know, councillor, the Manx parliament. Innuendo of home rule" (153). Bloom's concern in designing the ad is to produce something that "Catches the eye," his all-important condition for successful

advertisements. The "Innuendo of home rule" does just that. The crossed keys remind viewers of the slight autonomy from Britain that the Isle of Man government possesses--the same autonomy Ireland was unable to secure through Charles Stewart Parnell and the Home Rule movement. The crossed keys also play off the automatic association of Alexander Keyes's name with actual keys: "Keyes you see. He wants two keys at the top" (152). The concept for the ad design is not very creative or original, but Bloom, like Keyes, recognises that the iconic association of Keyes with keys is one which, when exploited through the visuals of the ad, can--according to the logic of behaviourism--work as a stimulus to trigger the connection between the everyday use of actual keys and Keyes the wine merchant. The additional association of Keyes with Irish independence provides an even richer association and further potential stimulus for the advertisement. It is hoped, somewhat idealistically, that using your keys everyday will mneumonically trigger thoughts about the wine merchant, perhaps prompting consumers to buy a bottle.

II. Enigmas

Local colour. Work in all you know. Make them accomplices. (*Ulysses*)

Most Joyce scholars are by now familiar with the author's alleged claim about the intentional complexity of *Ulysses*. According to Jacques Benoist-Mechin, Joyce had boasted that he "put in so many enigmas and puzzles that it will keep the professors busy for centuries arguing over what [he] meant, and that's the only way of insuring one's immortality" (Ellmann 521). Don Gifford's use of this quotation as an epigraph to his Ulysses *Annotated* has further supported the view of Joyce's fiction as a collection of conundrums, not to mention legitimized his own project of esoteric explication. Joyce's comment is often considered rather tongue-in-cheek because of the reference to "insuring one's immortality"; however, this has not prevented this quotation, whether uttered by Joyce or not, to remain prescriptive in the reception of Joyce's works since its discovery in the 1950s. Richard Ellmann gives as the source for this statement his interview with Jacques Benoist-Mechin in 1956, thirty-five years after Joyce supposedly uttered it in French. This is enough to call into question the complete authenticity of the statement on many levels. To complicate matters, Ellmann also reports that Joyce gave a similar answer regarding the composition of *Finnegans Wake*, "To keep the critics busy for three hundred years" (Ellmann 703). Again, the source for this statement is an interview, this time with Jacob Schwartz in 1956, some twenty-nine years after the utterance was supposedly made.

Joyce made similar statements throughout his life. In a letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver, he writes, "My brain reels, but that is nothing compared with the reeling of my readers' brains" (*Letters I* 168). Because of Joyce's personality there is every reason to believe that he uttered something along the lines of the "enigmas" statement and, most likely, on several different occasions with slight variation; it is something that Joyce would have said knowing the high regard with which he held himself, his incisive wit, and, of course, the nature of his work. Questions of accurate translation and precise recollection are less important than the overwhelming authority that is derived from a statement recalled in substance from one source and confirmed by a second.[6]

Without question, the "enigmas" statement has helped canonize Joyce as a literary puzzler of genius proportion. It has spawned a whole industry that rises to its challenge and engages with Joyce's fiction by searching for and finding difficulty in everything from *Dubliners* to *Finnegans Wake*. The Joyce industry has raised the author to the status of an icon where the mere mention of his name or reference to his works, even among those who have never read Joyce, is enough to invoke notions of genius, esoteric difficulty, and high culture.[7] And yet, curiously enough, Joyce has not been subject to Wimsatt and Beardsley's intentional fallacy caveat in spite of the repeated attempts of Stephen James Joyce--Joyce's surviving grandson and controller of the Joyce estate--to prevent scholars from digging too deeply into the private lives of the great man and his family. Literary scholarship, however, cannot and never has been able to dispense completely with an author's intentions, especially when biographies and letters provide potential resources to allay cognitive dissonance.[8] The mythology of Joyce looms over the reception of his work. Scholars have indeed been kept busy, and some of the unresolved puzzles and enigmas are still debated today on internet discussion lists, in published articles and books, and at conferences with no less conviction than they were forty or even seventy years ago. The identity of the man in the macintosh and the meaning of the "U.P.:up" postcard continue to be much-debated examples of the enigmatic nature of Joyce's literary works.[9]

Joyce's "enigmas" statement and its influence on scholarship make clear that Joyce was aware of the future-oriented aspects of ambiguity and fragmentation which stimulate in readers their embodied tendencies for closure. His work looks to a contemporary readership that will complete it and provide meaning for that which is purposefully left unresolved, and it looks to a more distant future of readership where changing horizons of reception are capable of renegotiating ambiguous meaning to conform to changed historical contexts with all of their social, political, and economic implications. Joyce's intentions

here do not tell us what he meant by a specific allusion or provide meaning and context for specific passages in his novels. Instead, his intentions indicate the ways that reception is co-opted by and guided through formal expectations and expectations generated by statements like the "enigmas" one. Like a performative utterance, the "enigmas" statement not only asserts something about a state of affairs, but it functions to bring about the state of affairs to which it refers. The effect of Joyce's "enigmas" statement, then, is the promotion of expectations of difficulty in reading *Ulysses* and the perpetuation of the myth of elitism with regard to high modernism.

The Purloined Woodshadows

Joyce's use of the word "woodshadows" in the "Telemachus" episode of *Ulysses* initiates a cognitive pause because of the momentary dissonance experienced by readers unfamiliar with the word. The epistemological struggle to understand the meaning of Joyce's word begins by testing possible explanatory scripts. Stephen Dedalus stands atop Martello Tower immediately after Buck Mulligan has descended into the tower. The descriptive paragraph reads as follows:

> Woodshadows floated silently by through the morning peace from the stairhead seaward where he gazed. Inshore and farther out the mirror of water whitened, spurned by lightshod hurrying feet. White breast of the dim sea. The twining stresses, two by two. A hand plucking the harpstrings merging their twining chords. Wavewhite wedded words shimmering on the dim tide. (9)

The description is an objective one inflected by indirect discourse. Stephen is seeing what is being described, and Stephen's own aesthetic sensibilities colour the description of the view witnessed from the top of Martello Tower at approximately 8:30am on 16 June 1904.[10]

The word "woodshadows" begins this overly figurative description of the morning scene on a note of cognitive dissonance. Common sense suggests that "wood" is a modifier of the noun "shadows"--forming a compound word to describe the shadows cast by tress. However, the location of Martello Tower at Sandycove suggests otherwise. Trees large enough to cast shadows across the top of the stairhead, are absent from the area surrounding the tower. The sunlight coming from the east at that hour of the morning similarly suggests that the trees in question would have to be right along the coastline or actually in the water to cast shadows onto the tower which sits on the east side of the north promontory of Sandycove. The tower, built by the British as a defense

fortification during the era of the Napoleonic wars, is positioned on the coast facing seaward. If trees ever existed in this area of the size necessary to cast such early-morning shadows, they would have been cut down to provide the lookout tower with an unobstructed view of approaching enemy ships. The logic of verisimilitude by which Joyce abides throughout *Ulysses* rules out trees as the source of "woodshadows." The question of the word's referent becomes more complicated.

The entry for "woodshadows" in the *OED* provides the attributive connection of wood as a collection of trees growing together and the shadow that those trees cast. The passage from *Ulysses* is cited as a source along with an 1828 quotation from Mrs. Hermans's poem *Peasant Girl Rhone 16*: "Sad and slow, through the wood-shadows, moved the knightly train." The inclusion of the *Ulysses* reference under the entry for woodshadows suggests that the meaning in Joyce's work is the same as the one in the Hermans reference, which is obviously one of trees casting shadows. My own experience of "woodshadows" when I recently reread *Ulysses* was to automatically think of clouds, but I could not explain why. With trees not making logical sense in this context and clouds still in my mind, I returned later to the passage to perform a closer reading.

Whatever woodshadows are, they are capable of floating. Stephen is standing alone atop the tower for a matter of minutes--the time it would take Mulligan to put his shaving equipment away (minus the lathering bowl which Stephen resentfully brings down) and make a fried breakfast. At most, Stephen is left alone with the view described and his thoughts of his dead mother for something approximating 10-15 minutes, possibly less. In this time, the shadow cast by a tree would not float "from the stairhead seaward" because the movement of the sun would be almost imperceptible to the human eye. Clouds, however, do float and cumulus clouds cast shadows which appear remarkably similar to the billowing, bulbous shadows cast by deciduous trees full with leaves on an early summer day in June. While this seems like a lot of work to find out the meaning of a single word, this analysis reveals that Joyce is establishing the type of day that 16 June 1904 is by giving readers a metaphoric description of the clouds floating through the air--clouds that create the same effect as woodshadows.

The other details in the passage from which "woodshadows" is extracted also evoke the cognitive script for clouds. As I just mentioned, whatever objects woodshadows refer to they "float silently" from land to sea, which negates the suggestion made by one of my colleagues that perhaps woodshadows were pieces of wood, even ships, floating in Dublin Bay.[11] The "mirror of water whitened" which suggests both the white reflection of passing clouds on the water and whitecaps in the bay lends further legitimacy to the

script for clouds. As Stephen's glance takes in the movement of waves on the bay, references to "lightshod hurrying feet" and the "White breast of the dim sea" describe the breaking forth of whitecaps, but also keep the association of whiteness and clouds in the foreground of readers' speculations. This associative link is intentional, helping to suggestively reinforce the reading of "woodshadows" as a poetic and figurative reference to clouds. And yet this reading and interpretive connection remains speculative, an indecisive moment which is reflected in Joyce's sentence, "Wavewhite wedded words shimmering on the dim tide." This image at once links the connection of cloud white reflection with whitecapped waves in a word "wavewhite" which itself is a wedded word not unlike the compounding of wood and shadows.

At this moment, the paragraph breaks, and then, almost as if the answer was present the whole time, the first sentence of the next paragraph confirms the script for clouds which has been maintained in readers' thoughts as a possibility: "A cloud began to cover the sun slowly, shadowing the bay in deeper green" (*U* 9). This sentence is also important for the temporal connection it makes between sections of the novel. It is repeated almost verbatim in the "Calypso" episode: "A cloud began to cover the sun wholly slowly wholly" (*U* 73). The two images confirm the chronological simultaneity of the episodes and link Stephen's and Bloom's characters to each other. The first instance of the covering cloud comes right at the moment when "cloud" is in the minds of readers as a possible reading of "woodshadows" and, therefore, confirms the reading of the cloud script embedded in the passage.

The change in the description of Dublin Bay as an indistinct "shimmering" to a "deeper green" is an image suggesting clearer focus, in the same way that the cloud passing before the sun marks the end of readers' cognitive dissonance in the face of the unfamiliar use of "woodshadows." The novel's description of the view from the Martello tower mirrors the development of the reading process through the confirmation of clouds for woodshadows. In the end, my initial reading, based as it was on automatic responses and a form of "careless reading," appears correct. However, uncertainty forced a more detailed analysis of that first reading, which subsequently confirmed the cloud script through the juxtaposition of related images and the strategic development of the narrative. I initially thought my automatic interpretation of "woodshadows" as clouds was the result of someone telling me this years earlier during one of my attempts at Joyce, and, in fact, I was correct. That someone was James Joyce himself, but recent scholarship and the depth of analysis practiced on Joyce's fiction over the years had also taken that common sense reading away from me. Like the Paris police searching for the purloined letter, I assumed that "clouds" was too obvious an answer for a writer like Joyce and so

my search was oriented to more complicated and difficult possibilities. Through dialogic reasoning, combined with a lengthy exigetical analysis, I was able to reconfirm my initial reading and what Joyce's novel strategically confirms. While this may seem like a late twentieth-century endorsement of strict New Critical methodology, it is not. Joyce's use of the defamiliarising word "woodshadows" forces readers to subject automatic cognitive operations to critical scrutiny in order to confirm common sense readings.

"Woodshadows" confirms that Joyce's "enigmas" statement and other such characterisatons of modernism as elitist promote expectations of difficulty in reading *Ulysses*. Knowing that the statement would influence reception allows the author to conceal by not concealing in much the same way that the Minister in Poe's "The Purloined Letter" manages to hide the stolen letter in an "excessively obvious" place. There it remains undetectable to the searching eyes, probes, gimlets, and microscopes of the Paris police because their expectations encourage them to overlook the obvious.[12] They do not search the card rack used to hold visiting cards and letters which appears in plain view in the Minister's office. According to Dupin,

> Such a man [the Minister]. . . could not fail to be aware of the ordinary policial modes of action. He could not have failed to anticipate--and the events have proved that he did not fail to anticipate--the waylayings to which he was subjected. He must have foreseen. . . the secret investigations of his premises. (220)

The same may be said of Joyce and other modernist writers who anticipate reception practices and are concerned in their writing with the ways that reception is challenged by and forced to adapt to formal experimentation. To paraphrase Poe, had the answer been deposited within the range of readers' searches, they would have easily found it, "their defect lay in their [range of searches] being inapplicable to the case, and to the man" (209). This experimentation involves negotiations between the expected and the unexpected and the establishment of a dynamic between the two in an imagined moment of reception.

The short stories of Edgar Allan Poe inform my readings of modernism because I find in Poe's characters, who often act as inscribed readers, similar methodologies for reading modernist novels. Through figures like C. Auguste Dupin, Poe is able to supply a model of reading that is applicable to his own fiction. Characters explicate the interpretive practices they use to solve crimes in a highly self-reflexive manner which strongly suggests a correlation between solving crimes and reading hermeneutically. Just as Dupin stresses the necessity of "identification of the reasoner's intellect with that of his

opponent," so too must readers identify with authors' expectations of reception which determine the forms their narratives take. In other words, the inscribed reader becomes a means by which expectations of reception are formally embodied within the text.

III. Inscribed Readers

> **Joyce: Among other things. . . my book is the epic of the human body. . . . In my book the body lives in and moves through space and is the home of a full personality. The words I write are adapted to express first one of its functions then another.**
>
> **Budgen: But the minds, the thoughts of characters. . . .**
>
> **Joyce: If they had no body they would have no mind. . . .It's all one.**
>
> **(*James Joyce and the Making of* Ulysses)**

The position I am taking with Joyce's inscribed readers is that they become figurative models who project patterns of understanding and interpretive practices from one domain of experience (the textual world) to help structure another domain of experience--that of the actual reader. The concept of inscribed readers finds full support in cognitive research on empathetic projection. The transcendent shift involved in "being in the other" is analogous to the metaphoric mapping of one experience into the domain of another which commonly forms the basis for human decision-making and effective responses to novel situations. As cognitive theorists argue, empathetic imagining is invaluable to the learning process and critical evaluation:

> A major function of the embodied mind is empathetic. From birth we have the capacity to imitate others, to vividly imagine being another person, doing what that person does, experiencing what that person experiences. The capacity for imaginative projection is a vital cognitive faculty. (*Philosophy* 565)

Empathetic projection is the means by which we abstract the experience of another and bring it to bear on our own experiences in the same way that we might retrieve a memory of an experience when we were a "different" person at an earlier stage of life. Mark Johnson argues that metaphorical mapping allows humans to adapt and transfer understanding from physical experiences across domains to shape and organise their conceptual understanding. On this account, a metaphor ceases to be "merely a linguistic mode of experience"; instead it also serves as the chief cognitive structure "by which we are able to have coherent, ordered experiences that we can reason about and make sense of" on a more abstract level.

Insights from one experiential domain are therefore used as analogs in new or more conceptual experiential domains. Johnson provides an example of this type of metaphorical understanding using the propositional phrase "More is up." In this generic-level expression, our understanding of quantity depends on the verticality schema where an increase is understood in terms of an upward orientation. The projection from up to more is natural because it is embodied. Our everyday experiences of containers--and we need to remember here that our bodies are containers as well as containable objects--reveal that the level in the container goes up as more objects or liquid is added. Johnson offers the following common examples to show just how pervasive this sense of understanding is: "Prices keep going up; The number of books published each year keeps rising; His gross earnings fell; Turn down the heat" (xv). Metaphorical phrases like these have their origins in a sense of understanding derived from bodily experiences which are often unconsciously processed and automatically adapted to new experiences. Johnson is interested in studying how the body is in the mind and how the body structures cognitive operations which can be projected and elaborated through a process of imaginative metaphorical mapping to constitute networks of meaning between signifying humans. For my part, I want to adopt this methodology to determine how meaning is negotiated more specifically between modernist authors and their readers according to body-based cognitive processes.

Take as another example the common phrase "I'm in trouble." The utterer of this statement is not literally in some material thing that everyone can recognise as trouble. What is important here is the sense of "containment and boundedness" that the word "in" connotes.[13] As humans we have an embodied sense of what it means to be "in" something due to the fact that our bodies are both containers into which things can be put (food, water, air) and they are also containable objects that can be placed in something else (car, room, box, clothes). The structure of our "in-out schemata" depends on experiences of bodily orientation and, in this example, our embodied understanding of "in" is metaphorically mapped onto a conceptual domain of understanding. The human body is a primary experiential container and as such it is the embodiment of unity: we contain a variety of different organs which often perform contradictory functions. From this perspective, it is not difficult to see how New Critics came to view literary texts as well-wrought urns capable of containing and balancing discordant images and meanings.[14] They simply looked to their own bodies and transferred that embodied knowledge to the literary works they studied.

In many ways, inscribed readers help mediate the difficulty of modernism because they provide actual readers with analogic experiences that are needed to aid the comprehension of novelty. Therefore, empathetic or, as I refer to it elsewhere, analogic projection is the key predicate of a theory of inscribed readers and the cognitive means by which it is possible to project mental operations onto future readers and back into the formal designs of an author. Both readers, when they read, and writers, when they write, look forward mentally; but to look forward mentally also requires a backward glance to establish the probable conditions of expectancy. If expectation is the "action of mentally looking for some one to come, forecasting something to happen, or anticipating something to be received; . . . a preconceived idea or opinion with regard to what will take place" (*OED*). then it is a preconceived idea derived from past experience and embodied knowledge bases.

In *Ulysses*, then, readers inscribed within the novel mediate the dialogue of expectations between authors and readers who are absent to each other during the processes of writing and reading.[15] Through the narrative techniques of stream of consciousness and interior monologue, Joyce creates three central characters who express themselves as cognitive agents with their mental operations on display. Stephen Dedalus, Leopold Bloom, and Molly Bloom each perform readings of texts, objects, and situations within the novel akin to those of actual readers confronting *Ulysses*. In doing so, they provide heuristic examples for reception and provide insight into the anticipated types of cognitive operations that Joyce designed his aesthetics to challenge, frustrate, and eventually reinforce. In other words, these characters become both the textual embodiment of authorial expectations and the potential means for dealing with the aestheticised dissonance Joyce incorporates into his work.

Together, these inscribed readers form a textualised reading community and offer alternative interpretive insights into the difficulties of modernist poetics. The three protagonists represent individualised reading practices based on three different levels of cognitive sophistication. There is a developmental shift that occurs between Molly's and Leopold's interpretive acts and another between Leopold's and Stephen's. Joyce's inscribed readers, therefore, provide a useful resource to actual readers dealing with the novel's experimental use of language, comprehensive allusiveness, and unconventional poetics.

Molly's reading practices, for instance, provide a refreshing simplicity and naivete in the face of such challenging poetics. Her observations and thoughts stand in stark contrast to the abstract intellectualism of Stephen's thought processes, and although her

interpretive insights appear rudimentary compared to Stephen's, they are no less relevant. Molly's perspective checks the impulse to hunt for symbols and read for complexity. Her cognition is a welcome relief from Stephen's hyper-educated allusiveness. She supplies the text with a means of highlighting the basic cognitive processes we often take for granted when we read difficult modernist fiction. Stephen, on the other hand, is the Jesuit- and university-trained specialist reader whose formal education and personal explorations provide him with an above-average knowledge of languages, world history, and historical figures. His observations of the everyday are embedded in esoteric references unrecognizable to the so-called "common reader." Finally, Leopold Bloom serves as the Odyssean benchmark for navigating a middle passage between the two extreme poles of Stephen and Molly. Bloom is the incarnation of the common reader: even-keeled, patient, capable of penetrating observations that are neither overly theoretical nor overly simplistic. His readings check those of Molly and Stephen with cautious pragmatism. His interior monologue and daily activities dominate the novel's narratives, and while he would seem to be the privileged reader of common sense, I argue that common sense is accessible only from the combined approaches to the novel that the three different characters model for actual readers.

Without question, *Ulysses* is a novel which demands reader participation; it is a writerly novel which forces readers to become co-producers of the text rather than remaining passive consumers of it. Joyce's poetics, no matter how challenging and unconventional, are nevertheless based on and derive their value from underlying democratic appeals to the shared impulses behind reading for meaning, the common intelligibility inherent in language use, and the basic uniformity of human cognitive processes that are hard-wired to reduce dissonance. The common experience of daily life, however, underpins and provides a stable background for Joyce's disruptive modernist foreground. What ultimately makes *Ulysses* accessible to readers is its identifiable and constant background of the everyday. Joyce lets the undercurrents of the everyday reverberate through the complex difficulty of his experimental poetics and thus provides entry points for all readers rather than excluding them through relentless defamiliarisation. Dublin and its everyday activities are always "just there." Critics and scholars who still solely preoccupy themselves with digging through biographies and historical documents for insight into obscure references miss much of the point; it is knowledge of the everyday that is fundamental to engaging with the novel and not encyclopedic knowledge. While it is important to trace the evolution of Joyce's aesthetic back through his earlier writings--seeing, for instance, in the elliptical and ambiguous stories of *Dubliners* a prefiguring of the fragmented sentences and unreliable narration of *Ulysses* and in the

truncated staccato diary entries which conclude *Portrait* an anticipation of Joyce's extensive use of interior monologue--the best background for reading *Ulysses* is embodied knowledge and experience of daily life and ordinary language use. The novel's internal readers become the means by which the apparent disjunction between the everyday and the complexities of modernist poetics are negotiated and formally inscribed within the novel.

As Leopold Bloom walks along Wellington Quay, for example, he reads the sign outside Aaron Figatner's jewelry shop and reveals, through his interior monologue, the automatic response that the jeweler's name elicits: "Why do I always think Figather?" "Gathering figs I think," he contemplates (*U* 149-50). Bloom doesn't explore this quirky connection beyond identifying it as something he habitually does whenever he sees the sign. He associates "Figatner" with the compound neologism formed by combining "fig" and "gather," two words from his personal lexicon more common than the unfamiliar Figatner. Bloom accepts this response as something natural, and it is; Figatner repeatedly prompts the cognitive script for "gathering figs."

Earlier in the day, he walks past the Provost's House and thinks to himself, "The reverend Dr Salmon: tinned salmon. Well tinned in there" (209). The surname Salmon prompts Bloom to think of the script for "tinned salmon" and he proceeds to associate the constraints of canned salmon with life as a Doctor of Divinity working in Trinity College. He similarly remembers the nun with the "sweet face" whose outstanding account balance he was sent to collect. Bloom recalls interrupting her morning devotions on the "Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel." The combination of Bloom's physical hunger at two o'clock in the afternoon, his thoughts of the nun's "sweet face," and the reference to "Mount Carmel," prompt Bloom to think "Sweet name too: caramel" (195). Bloom's playful association reinitiates the sweetshop script which he observes at the beginning of "Lestrygonians": "Pineapple rock, lemon platt, butter scotch. A sugarsticky girl shovelling scoopfuls of creams for a christian brother" (190). Each of these examples of Bloom's associative wit reveals the habitual nature of his cognitive operations. Bloom's automatic association of a word in one context with a whole other context--an act done in passing--is the cornerstone of Joyce's formal experimentation and the key to successfully reading *Ulysses*.

Joyce represents Bloom's cognition in a self-conscious manner in order to highlight how this unconscious allusiveness formally inscribes the reception practices Joyce expects and around which he designs his poetics. Bloom deliberately breaks down his act of reading Aaron Figatner's sign as a subconsciously complex and automatic set of associations. Two key elements, however, stand out as significant in Bloom's appraisal

of his own reception processes. First, he admits that he "always"--in other words, habitually--thinks "Figather" in response to the word Figatner. His mind, to overcome the unfamiliarity of Figatner, automatically fills in what it perceives as the missing upward stem of the "n" in Figatner that would change it to an "h" and produce the more familiar Figather. The script for gathering figs is more readily accessible and cognitively consonant than the foreignness of Figatner which Bloom's automatic cognitive response cannot accommodate.

That Figatner "appears" as Figather every time Bloom reads the sign suggests that Bloom's identification is a natural act performed without conscious awareness. As I argued in chapter two, the natural desire for closure is not determined by repeated experiences of fiction which emphasise unfragmented and neatly tied-up narratives and plotlines. On the contrary, this type of fiction, of which Victorian realist fiction is the representative example, caters to a natural inclination that all humans possess. The organicity of the work encouraged by Romantic poets and popularised in New Critical methodologies is similar, but does not amount to the same thing as reception modified by biological organicity. There is a distinct difference between treating all works of literature as organic wholes complete in and of themselves, and being predisposed to interpret and analyse fiction according to an innate sense of wholeness for which our physiological bodies provide the regulative example. Modernist aesthetics of openness, interruption, incompletion, and fragmentation create a tension between this natural inclination or biological imperative and artistic creation.

It is easy to find analogies for Bloom's embodied sense of balancing cognitive dissonance in the everyday functioning of the human body. For instance, the psychology experiment used to locate the eye's blind spot using a broken line reveals how compensatory responses function to prevent humans from seeing a constant perceptual blank in the visual field. When viewed from a particular angle and distance which aligns the blind spot in the eye with the break in the line, the line appears continuous and complete. It appears continuous because the visual system compensates for the absence of stimulus at the site of the blind spot. The blind spot is the break in the retina where the optic nerve exits the eye. Because this area contains no photoreceptors for stimuli, it is literally blind. The visual system, however, fills in this absence by projecting a presence using the surrounding visual field as the basis to create the illusion of uniformity so that "there is no experience of any gap in the visual field" (162).[16] The human mind actively fills in the missing stimulus and thus eliminates conscious awareness of the blind

spot. The potential dissonance caused by the missing stimulus is automatically averted by an embodied act of perceptual completion.

According to phenomenologists and cognitive scientists, the human mind works in the same way. The basic idea behind this appeal to biological materialism is to show that the human mind is constantly compensating for perceptual gaps and fragments which regularly appear in the environment of everyday life. The second element of Bloom's observation, then, is that he brings these automatic responses to conscious awareness. He defamiliarises his own automatic process of thinking Figather when reading Figatner to subject it to critical analysis. His self-conscious reflective act momentarily redirects his attention and the attention of readers to his mental operations. All of this leads to the third means to understanding Joyce's design behind this scene: the contextual setting for Bloom's thoughts. I mentioned earlier that Bloom's mind is wandering, taking in his surroundings, as he physically wanders through the streets of Dublin. His thoughts are the thoughts of someone "passing by." They are focussed momentarily and then move on as Bloom moves from Figatner's store at 26 Wellington Quay to noting "Prosper's Lore's huguenot name," the hat manufacturer at 22 Wellington Quay, and Aurelio Bassi's statue and picture-frame workshop at 14 Wellington Quay: "By Bassi's blessed virgins Bloom's dark eyes went by" (334). Bloom's constant movement, both physically and mentally, reinforces the notion that the evocation of cognitive scripts is instantaneous and often beyond conscious control.

Bloom's momentary appreciation of the default mental processing which reads "Figatner" as "Figather" to reduce or eliminate the cognitive dissonance caused by the jeweler's unfamiliar surname charges the scene with aesthetic potential. The dialogue between the two clashing scripts offers readers and Bloom the allusive play of associations that make up the essence of modernist aesthetics which strict Formalist approaches try to squelch by relying only on the text and not investigating the blind spots of reception. What is so distinctly modernist about this moment of defamiliarisation is that Bloom must work through the evoked incorrect script which still informs his reception of the name "Figatner" to come to a correct reading of the sign. The very interplay of experiential background and novel foreground triggers cognitive dissonance as expectations and habitual responses clash with defamiliarising stimuli. The self-conscious nature of Bloom's working through of his misreading similarly conforms with the modernist project to bring the blind spots in language use and communication to conscious awareness. In this case, Joyce accomplishes this through a character whose reading practices and thought processes act as models for actual readers. Bloom's repeated association ("Why do I *always*") provides readers with a chain of inferences that

commingle the script for gathering figs and all of its associations with the script for Figatner, the jeweler and diamond setter. Meaning is involved at each step of this interpretive chain and this apparently passing reference to Bloom's cognitive operations affects the reception of the rest of *Ulysses* and, more broadly, our understanding of modernist poetics and their aesthetic effects.

These examples are more than just "lexical *trompe l'oeil*" (Gottfried 473). They are inscribed textual moments that expose the cognitive activities required to read modernist texts that foreground formal and epistemological fragmentation. By formal fragmentation I mean words and sentences left incomplete, ambiguous meanings, disruptions of syntax, grammar, and conventional language and genre practices, while epistemological fragmentation suggests gaps in understanding and logical sequence or association. Each is a type of fragmentation which calls on readers to compensate for a lack, to fill in the blanks, and to become active participants in the creation of significance.

Bloom's query "why do I always" attunes us to the potential pitfalls of readied cognitive scripts which can actually cause dissonance by automatically instantiating a misreading in a genuine attempt to conserve cognitive energy. Bloom's predicament on 16 June 1904 represents such a predisposition for the mind to misinterpret according to easily accessible scripts. Because Bloom's thoughts are dominated by the idea of his wife's adultery, he must be careful to determine the intentions behind words before he responds to them. In order to do so Bloom must dialogically relate the meanings of the words uttered with his knowledge of the speaker. When he meets Nosey Flynn in Davey Byrne's pub, for instance, Flynn asks Bloom about his wife's singing tour: "Who's getting it up?" (219). Joyce's intended sexual innuendo in Flynn's phrasing of his question registers with Bloom, but he decides to consider Flynn's intentions behind choosing such sexualised language to ask who is arranging the singing tour. As readers have come to know, Blazes Boylan is the one who is organizing the tour and also the man who will cuckold Bloom later that day. The script for adultery is at the fore of Bloom's thoughts during every conversation he has throughout the day, as is the image of Blazes Boylan sleeping with his wife. Every detail of the day takes on a new significance as it gets filtered through this ever-present cognitive script.

When Flynn asks another question, "Isn't Blazes Boylan mixed up in it?", the third person narrative makes sure to add that he asks the question at the same time that he places his hand in his pocket to scratch his groin All of Flynn's questions get sexually contextualised as double entendres because of Bloom's mindset and the third-person narrative contributes to this association of the question with sex by drawing the reader's attention to Flynn's groin area. Eventually Bloom handles the situation matter-of-factly,

stating "Yes, . . . He's the organiser in point of fact" (220) after determining that Flynn does not mean anything beyond the superficial questions he asks. "No fear. No brains." Bloom thinks after he realises that in fact Flynn doesn't know what Bloom in his mind fears every man in Dublin knows--that Blazes Boylan is sleeping with his wife. The idea so dominates Bloom's thoughts that he must filter out associations which prompt the script of adultery from all of his daily encounters. His appeal to intention is the only way Bloom has of filtering out his personal, script-dominated responses to words, events, and situations, which, by default, corrupt the context of reception.

This scene, used to reveal how Bloom's mental preoccupation with his wife's infidelity, however, keeps the script for adultery at the fore of readers' minds as an interpretive framework. Bloom dismisses Flynn's questions and his choice of words as innocent after evaluating the intention behind Flynn's utterances. Common sense returns to Bloom, but not before the script for adultery is reinforced, for readers, as a pervasive theme which textures the entire novel and complicates its reception. Bloom's own response to Flynn as a statement of fact ("He's the organiser in point of fact") is now unavoidably sexually inflected by the cognitive script for adultery. In essence, Bloom's script for adultery becomes shared by Joyce's readers so that from early in the novel readers pick up on and read sexualized double meaning into the details of the narrative that Joyce intended to resonate with this script. This type of reading is most strongly felt in the "Sirens" episode when Bloom tries unsuccessfully to distract himself with food as the hour gets closer to four, the hour of Molly and Boylan's tryst. In this way readers not only use Bloom's paradigmatic reception practices to help guide them through *Ulysses*, but they actually share the same cognitive scripts with him.

Bloom, as an inscribed reader, is an embodied cognitive agent within the pages of the novel and his practice provides a kind of protocol for readers struggling with Joyce's seemingly radical aesthetics. I am arguing that the inscribed readers act as visible examples of Joyce's textual direction of reading practices. Consider the following two examples of fragmentation and the discrete clusters of textual information that provide the script features necessary to read through the cognitive dissonance caused by fragmentation. In the first, Bloom thinks about visiting Molly in Westmeath: "I could make a walking tour to see Milly by the canal. Or cycle down. Hire some old crock, safety. Wren had one the other day at the auction but a Lady's" (124). Few readers have problems determining that the antecedent for the pronoun "one" is "bicycle" even though the word never appears in the text. The context of cycling provides the cognitive script for bicycle. The missing object of possession (bicycle) which should accompany "a Lady's" is not given in the text. Joyce manipulates the narrative in such a way that the

noun "bicycle" and the script for bicycle become cognitive supplements readers automatically contribute while reading. The script for bicycle evokes the antecedent cognitively, filling in automatically what is left missing by design. In Bloom's mind, bicycle does not need to be mentioned because it is the focal point to his thoughts. All his thoughts and their context point back to bicycle because of the script for bicycle which underlies his thought processes. Readers understand Bloom's thoughts not because they imitate them in any real way but because they follow and interpret the procedural flow of his mental operations.

In the second example, Bloom thinks to himself about the "Windy night" in which he went out to pick Molly up after a concert: "Sheet of her music blew out of my hand against the high school railings. Lucky it didn't" (197). Joyce deliberately leaves out the governing verb of the second sentence in an attempt to recreate formally Bloom's fragmented thoughts: "Lucky it [the sheet of music] didn't" what? For readers, the missing verb is supplied by the cognitive script established by the context of the windy night and the sheet of music that *blew* against the railings. What is taken for granted in Bloom's thoughts, is also taken for granted by Joyce, who, through the overdetermination of the script for the verb phrase "blow away," provides readers with the cognitive script which automatically fills in the gap created by the incomplete sentence. In the same stroke, Joyce is clearly relying on reader competence to reinforce a reading of this passage in the same manner in which he is challenging that very competence. This example is neither complex nor highly esoteric. Indeed, it is the type of example which, for the most part, often goes unnoticed by readers because of their natural predilection to reduce or eliminate the cognitive dissonance intentionally generated by textual fragmentation, in the same way that the mind compensates for the eye's blind spot. However, that is precisely why it is so important; it reveals how cognitive scripts function at an everyday, commonsensical level. It is in these unassuming examples that the cognitive-script work which is so elemental to reading the radical experimentation of *Ulysses* is elicited and reinforced. Through his exploitation of cognitive scripts, Joyce is able to avoid mentioning the very thing being discussed and yet still communicate it to readers.

Molly, as a model reader, further serves to reveal the complex interactions involved in what appear to be simple reading practices. She cuts to the chase in her observations and queries and in doing so she provides an implicitly wry critique of and much-needed textual check to the highly modernist interpretive impulse to overcomplicate everything. Early in the day in the Bloom bedroom while chewing a mouthful of breakfast, Molly points to a book she wants Poldy to pick up for her: "Show here, she said. I put a mark in it. There's a word I wanted to ask you" (77). The word is metempsychosis but Molly

breaks it down phonetically into "Met Him Pike Hoses" as if it were a compound word. Molly's sexually charged Freudian pronunciation catches Bloom off guard: "Met him what?"[17] he asks. Molly shows him the word and asks, "What does it mean?" That Molly is concerned enough to mark the words she doesn't know in dime-store erotica like *Ruby: Pride of the Ring* and *Sweets of Sin* so that she can ask her husband to define these words later reveals an intellectual curiosity and depth with which she is not often credited. Bloom pronounces the word correctly as he reads it and Molly responds with, "Yes. Who's he when he's at home?" Molly wants to know, through her figurative question, what such an eccentric word means when it is defined simply, in terms of the familiar, when he's at home and not putting on public airs. She wants the bare-bones definition without the formal jargon. When Bloom accurately, but somewhat pompously, offers "It's Greek: from the Greek. That means the transmigration of souls," his definition truly is "all Greek" to Molly. Her frustrated appeal for simplicity, "O, rocks! . . . Tell us in plain words," may be levelled at Bloom, but it equally and succinctly articulates the frustration of any reader struggling with Joyce's novel. Bloom regroups mentally, his thoughts on display via interior monologue. Finally the word he has been searching for comes to him: "Reincarnation: that's the word." He caters his explanation to his wife's level of intelligence:

> Some people believe . . . that we go on living in another body after death, that we lived before. They call it reincarnation. That we all lived before on earth thousands of years ago or some other planet. They say we have forgotten it. Some say they remember their past lives. (78)

The further Bloom's definition meanders, the more opaque it becomes. As Molly tries to wrap her brain around what for all intents and purposes is a straightforward concept, Joyce supplies readers with an objective correlative for Molly's strained cognitive processing, as "The sluggish cream wound curdling spirals through her tea." Bloom notices her perplexity and decides that an example would help. He restates the word and tells her that the Greeks "used to believe that you could be changed into an animal or a tree, for instance." Molly's spoon stops stirring the sugar into her tea. At this moment she abruptly halts the physical action she is performing strongly suggesting that she has grasped the concept and that it has grasped her. The first thing out of her mouth, however, is the statement, "There's a smell of burn." Literally, this signifies that Bloom has forgotten the kidney frying on the stove, but figuratively, it becomes a comic reference to Molly's mental combustion as she tries to understand the meaning of metempsychosis. Molly's initial strategy for understanding the polysyllabic

metempsychosis is to break it down into four common monosyllabic words. As Joyce himself later confirms, she attempts to ground the strange in the familiarity of the everyday: "Unusual polysyllables of foreign origin she interpreted phonetically or by false analogy or both" (803).

Molly's interpretive move is the same as Bloom's automatic response to "Figatner." Both characters share the corrective impulse to reconcile experiences of cognitive dissonance through a process of refamiliarisation of the defamiliarised. It is tempting to see Bloom's efforts at definition as a kind of "dumbing down," but I want to suggest that the interaction between husband and wife, the sexualized mispronunciation, and the struggle to provide an adequate definition of metempsychosis reveals a complex negotiation not unlike that between modernist authors and the readers of their texts. That Molly never apparently understands what metempsychosis means ceases to be as important as what her attempt at understanding it reveals about reading practices and knowledge acquisition in general. The creative insight and aesthetic potential that even failed interpretive approaches produce can suggest strategies for reading modernist fiction. Through the figure of Molly, Joyce puts on display the basic conceptual apparatus involved in reading unfamiliar words and interpreting unconventional forms, and her interpretive processes expose the basic floor plan of cognition at work during acts of reading.[18]

Stephen would not have the patience to explain to Molly what metempsychosis means. One can only speculate what form Stephen's explanation of the word would take, but because of his training in the Classics, he would probably make reference to Pythagoras and his religious doctrines, as well as offer other specific originary sources for the concept and its practised belief. In "Proteus," his thoughts do turn abstractly to the transmigration of souls as he contemplates the drowned corpse held by the Dublin Bay undercurrent: "God becomes man becomes fish becomes barnacle becomes featherbed mountain" (63). Such a description would only mystify Molly further. It is probably a good thing that the Italian lessons Bloom tries to secure from him for Molly in "Ithaca" won't ever materialise. Stephen's frustrated impatience as a teacher is evident in his dealings with his students at the private school for boys in Dalkey where he teaches. In the classroom, he gives the outward appearance of trying to share knowledge democratically but his interior monologue tells a very different story. Stephen's cognitive operations only appear so much more sophisticated than Molly's because in representing them Joyce dispenses with rehearsing the basic cognitive operations that Molly's mentation highlights. In other words, in Stephen's interior monologue Joyce avoids

mapping out the cognitive groundwork upon which his abstract thoughts hinge because it is something that Stephen, like most of us, takes for granted. If, in contrast, Molly appears to be stating the obvious it is because she epitomises that which Stephen's mind depends on but to which he is not consciously attuned.

The infamous final episode of *Ulysses*, "Penelope," liberates Molly's voice through her stream of consciousness soliloquy. Molly finally speaks for herself and literally takes over the narrative. Her point of view effectively modifies, corrects, and further develops the facts of the novel. In spite of the apparent simplicity of Molly's meditations, her thoughts are no less relevant as heuristic devices. Her privileged position in the novel, in fact, reinforces her importance as a model reader. For instance, she replaces the composite impression readers have formed of her from previous snippets of her dialogue, from their passing glimpses of her, and from the overtly sexualised descriptions of her offered up by the men of Dublin in the preceding seventeen episodes. Joyce calls the episode "the indispensable countersign to Bloom's passport to eternity" in "Ithaca," but it is truly a countersign to the whole novel in terms of its form and its narrative perspective and not simply because the novel finally offers a "female" perspective (qtd. in Budgen 264). The first line of "Penelope" initiates a marked shift in both content and form: "Yes because he never did a thing like that before as ask to get his breakfast in bed with a couple eggs since the *City Arms* hotel" (871). The stark formal contrast between Molly's extremely personal thought flow and the cold catechistic questioning of "Ithaca," coupled with Bloom's strange request for breakfast in bed the next day, violates decorum on two levels. "Penelope" begins on a note of perplexing cognitive dissonance because Bloom's request is a breach of the couple's routine. The fact that Bloom has "never" asked for breakfast since they lived in the City Arms Hotel surprises Molly and dominates her thoughts. In "Calypso," Bloom makes breakfast for his wife and Molly claims that this arrangement has been the status quo for over ten years--the same duration as their marital problems (795). Over the course of her soliloquy she deliberates on Poldy's breakfast request, returning to the subject five times. According to one critic, the request for breakfast is "the central theme of the chapter" because it is Bloom's assertive "bid for reunion," to return things to the way they once were (Sultan 422-49). Molly's "Yes," which ends the episode and the novel, reenacts her acceptance of Bloom's marriage proposal on Howth Head, but it is also marks her acquiescence to Bloom's request for breakfast. Joyce defamiliarises the everyday event of breakfast, transforming it metonymically into a symbol for the Blooms' relationship so that the simple act of agreeing to make breakfast becomes an optimistic marker of the couple's future reconciliation.

For readers, the distinctive shift in narrative form strongly mimics Molly's experience of surprise. Joyce further draws attention to the importance of Bloom's unexpected breakfast request through a dislocation of syntax which momentarily estranges readers' reception of Molly's thoughts. Comically, the sentence reads as if Bloom asks to have breakfast in bed *with* a couple of eggs as his dining companions rather than asking to have the eggs *for* his meal. The sentence's syntax forces readers to pause cognitively for a moment until an appeal to common sense and everyday experience furnishes the sentence's correct meaning. This initial pause disrupts the reading flow and prompts a rereading in an attempt to reconcile the experience of dissonance. After the initial pause--which can be so quick that it goes unnoticed--readers continue to experience the dissonance of the grammatical violation in this sentence with every rereading because it veers away from standard linguistic practice and counters our *a priori* expectations of language use. The repeatability of this cognitive shock and the accompanying semantic humour functions in three significant ways. First, the experience exposes just how naturalised the rules of grammar and the ranges of syntax are, and the degree to which they unconsciously underpin everyday reading practices. Second, the semantic humour draws further conscious attention to this line reinforcing its role as the main subject of the episode and highlighting the theme of reconciliation which is central to the novel. And third, this example reveals the extent to which interpretation relies on experience of the quotidian as its evaluative benchmark. Readers correct this initial dissonant reading through recourse to common sense and personal experience; however, they do so automatically without conscious awareness of having made this move.

Indeed, the breakfast order is also a cognitive shock for readers because it seems to come from nowhere. Only at the end of the "Ithaca" episode is there a cryptic suggestion of Bloom's request condensed with the rest of his sleep-wearied thoughts: "Going to a dark bed there was a square round Sinbad the Sailor roc's auk's egg in the night of the bed of all the auks of the rocs of Darkinbad the Brightdayler" (871). The dream logic of this passage reflects Bloom's brain reenacting and processing the events of the day, and making connections between disparate thoughts to store them in his memory. The word "egg" has a significance in this context only when read retrospectively through the beginning of Molly's soliloquy. This suggestive fragment is the only textual indication of Bloom's breakfast request prior to Molly's soliloquy. Molly reads as all readers read, but she draws attention to the basic cognitive acts which in sophisticated readers go unnoticed. She considers how obvious the word "arse" still is even in elliptical form when it appears by convention in the book she read by "Master Francois somebody": "her bumgut fell out a nice word for any priest to write and her a__e as if any fool wouldn't

know what that meant I hate that pretending of all things" (890). Molly's observations point to the role convention plays in structuring reception. Writing the word "arse" without the "r" and "s" signifies in the same way that writing the word out in its entirety does for readers accustomed to the convention and even for those who are able to contextually read the word and automatically fill in the gaps left by the two missing letters.

Molly's response indicates how convention negotiates the communicative space between readers and authors. The entire "Oxen of the Sun" episode confirms that the history of writing and literature is the history of linguistic conventions which authors and readers share. By creating a mosaic of past literary styles in the episode, Joyce is not simply showing how clever and well-read he is. The formal return to unfamiliar literary styles and conventions serves to defamiliarise the scene in the maternity hospital where a bunch of rowdy medical students are sitting around drinking. The breaking of convention and the upsetting of literary expectation works whether the poetics are avant-garde and experimental like those of high modernism or whether they are retrograde and steeped in forgotten tradition. The insight provided by Molly's "arse" example constitutes an explanation for what actual readers do when they are confronted with instances of disruptive syntax and mistaken word use incorporated into Molly's stream of consciousness.

The context of Molly's trip to her gynecologist is an example of the way in which cognitive dissonance is reconciled through common sense associative scripts. In a pseudo-Freudian act of self-censorship, Molly refers to vaginal emissions as "omissions": "that doctor one guinea please and asking me had I frequent omissions where do those fellows get all the words they have omissions" (916). The similar spelling of the two words, omissions and emissions, causes Molly to make the ironic mental slip because "emissions" is unfamiliar and clinical to her. Readers familiar with the word "emissions" simply reverse Molly's unconscious elimination of cognitive dissonance by transposing the letter "e" with "o" to correct their own experiences of dissonance. The context of Molly's trip to the gynecologist provides the cognitive script from which to make the easy correction of omissions to emissions, and the subsequent reference to "that white thing coming from me" confirms the corrective choice. Once again, the relief of cognitive dissonance appears automatic and quite natural. The inclination to relieve the orthographic and semantic dissonance in obvious examples like this one helps explain the reactions of readers to dissonance where there is no definitive or clear-cut correction available. In an effort to reduce or eliminate the experience of cognitively dissonant situations where the disruption is more complex and indeterminate readers either turn to

creative interpretation for relief or they turn away completely from the novel. Modernist novels do not measure breadth of knowledge in readers as is often asserted; instead, they test levels of tolerance for cognitive dissonance.

Ulysses is a novel that anticipates, encourages, and ultimately legitimises complex readings. However, it is also a novel which addresses the issue of overinterpretation through the figures of Molly and Leopold Bloom. Molly's simplistic readings of events and Bloom's common sense approach to interpreting the world seem to contrast sharply with Stephen Dedalus's hermeneutic style. Stephen is the inscribed reader who most closely resembles the idealised image of the modernist reader, locked in a stuffy room somewhere, pouring over gargantuan texts for minutiae to explicate. This is the impression many readers have, but Joyce does not use Stephen to advocate this type of reading. If anything he uses Stephen to show the pitfalls of esoteric reading. Stephen is the type of literary critic who would write an entire tome on *exactly* what the "U.P.:up" postcard means.

Consider, for instance, Stephen's thoughts about the difference between who he is now and who he was at an earlier stage in his life: "I am other I now." The philosophical simplicity with which this reflection starts out almost immediately becomes complicated by allusive thoughts that draw on Aristotle's writings: "But I, entelechy, form of forms, am I by memory because under everchanging forms" (242). Between these two articulations of the same idea, Stephen thinks "Buzz. Buzz," which alludes to Hamlet's response to Polonius that the announcement of the arrival of the travelling actors is "stale news."[19] For Stephen, his first articulation "I am other I now" is similar "stale news," and he is compelled, quite pretentiously, to find a more obscurely sophisticated way to say it. He subsequently moves conceptually from "I am other I now" to the cryptic formulation "I, I and I. I." (242). Bloom has an almost identical experience while he's eating lunch in Davy Byrne's pub. He remembers the explicit details of the time he and Molly made love on Howth Head, and reflects, "Me. And me now" (224). Aptly, Joyce connects Stephen's abstract reflections on past selves to Bloom's more concrete and embodied reflections by a similar reference to buzzing. However, instead of the "buzz" being an obscure literary allusion it is the sound of two common houseflies mating. The descriptive image, "Stuck on the pane two flies buzzed, stuck," prefaces Bloom's reflective memory and a variation of it follows his reflection, "Stuck, the flies buzzed" (223-224). And in further contrast, Molly's soliloquy at the end of the book is a sustained reflection on and concrete "memory collage" of her life as it is now and as it was

before Rudy's death: "we were never the same since" (927). Joyce makes Stephen's thought processes intentionally abstract and elevated from common life in comparison.

At the boys' school in Dalkey, Stephen practices what is today called the "banking system" of education.[20] The instructor essentially deposits information into the students' minds and later withdraws it by prompting them with "catechetical interrogation" (868). The "Nestor" episode begins in the middle of one of these factual question-and-answer sessions. The subject is history and even Stephen must glance down to his "gorescarred book" to find the correct site and date of a specific battle. It is obvious that Stephen considers this type of rote learning a waste of time because lessons amount to little more than the transfer of information--regurgitation rather than real independent thinking. The conceptual wit of his remark that a pier is "a disappointed bridge" results only in troubled looks from the faces of his students: "No-one here to hear" (29). For the students, "history was a tale like any other too often heard" (29-30). and during such lessons they are like depersonalised machines who perform a series of routine operations and nothing more. Stephen tries to alter the classroom dynamic by switching the subject to literature, but Talbot's reading of Milton's "Lycidas" soon becomes another monotonous act of futility. Reading aloud, Talbot pronounces the words without thinking about them. He is so mesmerized by the unconscious activity of reading dead symbols that Stephen must tell him to turn the page when he begins to read the same line twice without noticing. Stephen, on the other hand, is so carried away by Milton's imagery and allusions that he loses himself in reverie and needs to ask, "Have I heard all?" when Talbot closes his book.

Stephen's encounter with Sargent, who stays back when the rest of the boys go out to play hockey, epitomises Stephen's frustration with the "banking system." Sargent hands Stephen his copybook open at the page marked "Sums" and explains that Mr. Deasy made him write them out again because of errors. Stephen asks Sargent if he understands how to do them and if he can do them by himself. Sargent, predictably, cannot. He has simply copied them off the board and the page of mummified symbols "wearing quaint caps of squares and cubes" remains meaningless to him. Stephen hates the implicit behaviourism of his job. Because it is based on strict stimulus-response formulae, the system does not promote independent cognition. The impossible riddle Stephen asks is a response to this system of mechanical epistemology:

> The cock crew
> The sky was blue:
> The bells in heaven

Were striking eleven.
Tis time for this poor soul
To go to heaven.

He asks his students, "What is that?" Perplexed, they ask Stephen to say the riddle a second time. He repeats it and then offers the solution as "The fox burying his grandmother under a hollybush," which, in spite of its suggestive correspondences to the death of Stephen's mother, is utter nonsense to the students and most readers. Stephen lets out a "shout of nervous laughter" in response to the students' dismay and in doing so he confirms the riddle's intentional absurdity.

Stephen's riddle challenges the students in unfamiliar ways. Its solution is not obvious or drawn superficially from memory like the "banking" questions Stephen asks them during lessons. Stephen offers no explanation because there is none. Consulting a copybook, blackboard, or textbook will not help. Stephen purposefully befuddles his students in an act of pedagogical defiance. The riddle's implicit critique of the banking system is also intentionally directed at the system of education Mr. Deasy forces Stephen to work within as well as at the years of schooling Stephen spent under the supervision of equally dogmatic priests. Even Deasy's letter on foot and mouth disease in cattle reeks of an authoritarianism devoid of any independent thought or possibility of opposition. As Deasy sits down before the typewriter to finish his letter, he prompts his memory by reading aloud the line, "*the dictates of common sense*" (40). Stephen repeats this phrase mentally as he quickly skims the letter's contents. The repetition of "the dictates of common sense" draws attention to the irony of this clause in light of Deasy's belief that his position on foot and mouth disease is so convincing and well-argued that "[t]here can be no two opinions on the matter" (40). Deasy fails to realise that as soon as common sense becomes simply an automatic response it loses its power as the true product of communal dialogue and rational negotiation. He expects readers to accept his position as correct without subjecting it to the judgment of a community of opinions. Deasy wants his letter to be "printed *and* read," but presumably not critically judged (emphasis mine). He practices and perpetuates his system of behaviourist learning in and out of the classroom. For pedagogues like Deasy, common sense is a simple matter of stimulus recognition leading to action; it does not involve independent critical thinking nor does it entertain the possibility of alternative responses.

Mr. Deasy can also throw around words like "just" willy-nilly, but for Stephen it is one of the "big words" he fears. By big words he doesn't mean sesquipedalian words with unfamiliar meanings, but words which carry with them context-shadows of previous use and misuse. The shadows cast by words are the depths of possible significance into

which attempts at clear communication occasionally get lost because they mean differently to different people in different contexts.

As a child, Stephen gains access to the "real" adult world before he is old enough to experience it through the evocative power of words. He revels in the rich imagery that accompanies everyday words like "wine." "It made you think of dark purple," he says, "because the grapes were dark purple that grew in Greece outside houses like white temples" (*Portrait* 47).[21] His experiences of language reveal an early aesthetic appreciation of the power of words to negotiate space between communicating beings. Years later, however, as an adult walking the Dublin streets to university, Stephen finds himself

> glancing from one casual word to another on his right or left in stolid wonder that they had been so silently emptied of instantaneous sense until every mean shop legend bound his mind like the words of a spell and his soul shrivelled up, sighing with age as he walked on in a lane among heaps of dead language. (193)

For Stephen, words used in the tradition of the marketplace are drained of their rich meanings. The unconscious responses they evoke are akin to the purely reflex action of the nervous system, like when our "eyelid closes before we are aware that the fly is about to enter our eye" (223). In his incarnation as Stephen Hero, Stephen

> read Skeat's Etymological Dictionary by the hour and his mind, which had from the first been only too submissive to the infant sense of wonder, was often hypnotized by the most commonplace conversation. People seemed to him strangely ignorant of the value of the words they used so glibly. (*Stephen Hero* 29)[22]

The generic people he describes here are people like Mr. Deasy, his students, the majority of Dubliners walking the streets, and the common readers which high modernist fiction targets with its defamiliarising practices.

High modernist concerns with language and the revolution of the word are attempts to reinvest the currency of language used in the marketplace with a conscious awareness of linguistic practices and conventions. Stephen's philosophical views of language position him pedagogically in line with Joyce, whose project involves aesthetically reanimating worn out words. *Ulysses* is a novel that celebrates communication as well as the problems of communication, and its narrative design functions to pump cognitive life back into common words by using them to describe everyday activities in unfamiliar ways.

The language of literary tradition and literary works is an extension of and derives its significance from the day-to-day use of words in the marketplace.

Stephen's philosophy of education is taken from his views of language and reveals a profound awareness of the role language plays in mediating our contact with the world. Mr. Deasy picks up on Stephen's pedagogical frustration and foresees that he "will not remain long" in the teaching profession (*U* 43). Indeed, Stephen discloses his intention to quit Deasy's school when he meets Corley on the way to the cabman's shelter with Bloom. Stephen suggests that Corley apply to fill the vacancy. Corley responds with "Ah, God, . . . sure I couldn't teach in a school, man. I was never one of your bright ones" (710). It is precisely because Corley is not a "bright one" that Stephen finds him suited to teach at the boys' school. The very reasons why the job does not hold Stephen's interest are the reasons why it is the right one for Corley.

In the third episode of *Ulysses*, Stephen Dedalus's thought processes dominate the narration of the novel. At the beginning of "Proteus," he prepares himself to read the "[s]ignatures of all things" (45). That Stephen is constantly reading his surroundings and interpreting life's details is less important than the ways in which he performs and self-consciously critiques these acts of interpretive reading. His thought process is akin to that of the artist's "synthetic imagination" described by Coleridge, which

> dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still, at all events struggles to idealize and unify. It is essentially *vital*, even as objects (as objects) are fixed and dead. (*Biographia* 167)

Stephen's thoughts give new life to the fixed and dead words he reads and the everyday objects he encounters. However erudite and esoteric his mental connections appear, they stand in stark contrast to the mechanical behaviourism of memory, or what Coleridge calls the "fixities and definites" of fancy. Stephen's seemingly illogical theory of Shakespeare, in which he "proves by algebra that Hamlet's grandson is Shakespeare's grandfather and that he himself is the ghost of his own father" (*U* 21), is an example of the "synthetic imagination" at work. His theory of symbolic substitution allows him to reconstruct Shakespeare's biography from the scraps of historical fact available on the playwright's life and from the recurring motifs of the plays. From this highly speculative biography, Stephen proceeds tautologically to explain Shakespeare's preoccupation in the plays with the themes of deception, adultery, usurpation, and revenge, and justify his choice of names for and descriptions of characters according to personal experience.

His methodology is not unlike Caroline Spurgeon's 1935 study *Shakespere's Imagery and What It Tells Us*. Stephen, like Spurgeon, performs a highly speculative type of

criticism that cannot be empirically proven either way; however, in both cases the methodologies employed to generate portraits of the man behind the plays simultaneously produce useful quantitative accounts of the predominant themes and dramatic imagery in the plays. Spurgeon performs a systematic examination of images in Shakespeare's plays to make strong claims about what tastes and interests the playwright had and even offers a description of the bard's physical appearance based on readings of the plays' imagery.[23] Similarly, Stephen claims that Shakespeare's mother's name (Mary Arden) "lives in the forest of Arden" (267) in *As You Like It* even though the name comes from the source play Shakespeare used, Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde, Euphues' Golden Legacy*, and was likely modelled after the real forest of Arden in England (Gifford 242). Stephen picks up on the coincidence of the names and weaves it into his theory of encrypted references without concern for empirical evidence. He also finds Shakespeare's given name, William, hidden in the plays, "a super here, a clown there, as a painter of old Italy set his face in a dark corner of the canvas," and he claims that Shakespeare "revealed it in the sonnets where there is a Will in overplus" (269).

Stephen acknowledges Shakespeare as a "lord of language" and his readings of the plays through a speculative theory of biography rings particularly false considering Stephen's own love of language. Stephen explicates "deephid meanings" and esoteric chains of correspondence in order to out-theorise the theorists. The fascination with Stephen's theory of Shakespeare is that it is theory constructed from esoterica tempered by a foundational appeal of Shakespeare's day-to-day life, not unlike the creative design of *Ulysses*. According to Stephen, via Aristotle, Shakespeare "found in the world without as actual what was in his world within as possible" (273). The idea behind Stephen's theory, regardless of its value in terms of symbol-hunting, is that all great literature is ultimately derived from the everyday worked through an author's synthetic imagination.

After Stephen completes his Shakespeare lecture with the admission that he doesn't believe his own theory, he walks out of the director's office with Buck Mulligan and thinks to himself, "What have I learned? Of them? Of me?" (276). He is interpreting the intellectual encounter rather than the specific claims of his theory. As readers of this episode we should take our cue from Stephen and ask what we have learned. Arguably, Stephen's unsubstantiated theory of Shakespeare, however entertaining in its creativity, has little value for studying the plays; on the other hand, the episode provides useful insight into Stephen's reading practices, thought processes, and the motivations behind them which have implications for reading Joyce's novel. Stephen's interior monologue provides metacommentary to the external delivery of his theory. The dialogue between

what is audibly expressed and that which is silently thought displays self-reflexively the cognition involved in communication situations. This self-conscious awareness and formal representation of a character's cognitive operations tangibly reproduces what Stephen means when he says, "Thought is the thought of thought" (30-31). At one point in Stephen's verbal exposition, he implicitly links Shakespeare to Christ in claiming that a star rose in the sky above the delta of Cassiopeia when Shakespeare was born. In constructing this rhetorical constellation of events, Stephen purposefully conflates the separate dates of Shakespeare's birth and the appearance of this particular supernova which only lasted for sixteen months rather than into Shakespeare's adulthood.[24] Stephen's desire to woo his listeners outweighs all demands for accuracy and his interior monologue acknowledges the discrepancy: "Don't tell them he was nine years old when [the supernova] was quenched" (269). This minute detail in Stephen's theory appears insignificant until it is brought to bear self-reflexively on other claims he makes, on Joyce's narrative styles and allusiveness, and on the even larger project of literary modernism.

Earlier in the discussion, Stephen defends the errors of literary geniuses as volitional, claiming that such errors "are the portals of discovery" (243). In this statement, he effectively protects himself, Joyce, and other modernist writers like Pound--who consistently get their encyclopedic facts muddled--from adverse criticism. The standard defense in such cases is that these "genius" figures were definitely not sloppy, but that they intentionally included these mistakes in their texts for readers to discover and develop theories around. In other words, the interpretive explanation behind such inconsistencies is that fragmented poetics and factual inaccuracies provide further entry points for readers and literary critics. Stephen performs a similar balancing act in the strategic delivery of his Shakespeare theory: "Local colour. Work in all you know. Make them accomplices" (241). By working in local colour he gives his listeners a comfort zone, recognizable landmarks they can keep in view so that they will not be lost when he works in the encyclopedic depths of all he knows to prove his intelligence. Stephen makes accomplices of his listeners in the same way Joyce does his readers. He leads them through his labyrinthine theory of correspondences and disparate details, knowing that they will perform the task of filling in the gaps by using their own synthetic powers of imagination. Stephen knows as Joyce knows that the human impulse to understand is ultimately characterised by what Coleridge describes as "the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general, with the concrete; the idea with the image; the individual with the representative: the sense of

novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects" (*Biographia* 174). Twice during his lecture, Stephen repeats the idea that there can be no reconciliation where there has not first been a sundering (*U* 247, 249). Stephen, who began his deliberations as the wooer becomes the wooed waiting for requests from his listeners to continue and complete that which he has intentionally left unfinished. Stephen mentions Shakespeare's brothers and the presence of their names in certain plays, but then digresses into a discussion of Shakespeare's name. In response to this calculated shift, Mr. Lyster betrays his cognitive seduction when he asks sheepishly, "I should like to know, he said, which brother you . . . I understand you to suggest there was misconduct with one of the brothers . . . But perhaps I am anticipating?" Stephen takes a mental note: "He caught himself in the act: looked at all: refrained" (270). Stephen's fractured delivery sets up expectations and leaves suggestive gaps open in his performance to pull his listeners further into the complexities of his theoretical argument. Mr. Lyster's attempt to direct Stephen back to a discussion of the brothers signals his active participation in the development of Stephen's theory.

As Stephen holds court in the National Library with his Shakespeare theory, the assembled listeners come across in many ways as incompetent critics whereas in reality they are intelligent, well-read men who get duped by a superior wit. Stephen pits himself against the traditional modes of literary criticism and reading. The group of Dublin literati, which includes Mr. Best and Mr. Lyster (two librarians), the poet A. E., and the co-editor of *Dana: A Magazine of Independent Thought*, John Eglinton, provides Stephen with a challenging audience for his complicated theory. Stephen, however, out-maneuvers them with a theory so complexly unique and so esoteric that none of these individuals is willing to take a stand against Stephen and risk betraying his own ignorance in front of his peers. The rhetoric of esoterica works for Stephen in the same way that it works for Joyce--to confirm his genius in the eyes of his audience and to make them *accomplices* who perpetuate and further develop that status through their interpretive contributions. The responses and objections of Stephen's audience amount to platitudes which he easily brushes aside. Because the basis of Stephen's theory rests on isolated and obscure facts and pure speculation, there is no empirical foundation upon which to establish a legitimate counter-argument. John Eglinton accurately accuses Stephen of apocryphal sophistry and in doing so he provides readers with a common-sense check on the type of specious reading Stephen proffers. Eglinton's concerns are with protecting the sanctity of the plays and the reputation of the playwright. He is the incarnation of an early New Critic who asserts outright that "when we read the poetry of *King Lear* what is it to us how the poet lived?" and finds absolutely no value in "Peeping and prying into greenroom

gossip of the day, the poet's drinking, the poet's debts" (242).[25] Neither Stephen's theory nor Eglinton's approach to literature is adequate for Shakespeare's plays or Joyce's novel. Certain insights of each, however, suggest interpretive entry points into the respective texts. The "Scylla and Charybdis" discussion of Shakespeare, therefore, resonates throughout Joyce's novel. Eglinton summarizes the discussion with "The truth is midway," and the echo of this assessment needs to be maintained as readers try to handle Joyce's slippery poetics.

It is important for Stephen to keep his listeners engaged and not reveal too much too soon, making the performance more significant than the explication. He metaphorically reenacts the murder of King Hamlet by pouring his complex algebraic formulas into his listeners' ears. The very formula that leads to this performance and successfully piques Haines's curiosity is the seductive opaqueness and seemingly illogical-sounding nature of his hypothesis "that Shakespeare's ghost is Hamlet's grandfather" (33). Stephen seduces through obfuscation and it is not surprising to discover that modernism's poet of cultic verse, Ezra Pound, preferred Stephen's character to Bloom's to the point of asking Joyce "whether Bloom . . . could not be relegated to the background [in the novel] and Stephen Telemachas brought forward" (qtd. in Ellmann 459).

Moreover, Shakespeare is a convenient vehicle for Stephen's intellectual showboating. His elaborately detailed readings do not contribute substantially to knowledge about Shakespeare's plays. At best, his hypothesis is intellectual trivia based for the most part on speculative ingenuity. Stephen's interpretation, however, resonates with the central themes of Joyce's novel by confirming the universal pervasiveness of issues like infidelity and fatherhood in life and literature. But his failed reading also serves as admonition for readers who make too much of biographical esoterica and obscure symbol systems in explaining an author's work. What the "Scylla and Charybdis" episode reveals about Stephen is the textual embodiment of the type of reader Joyce predicted would be kept busy for centuries trying to unpack everything he had (or hadn't) woven into the texture of *Ulysses*. Stephen's propensity is to ponder "things that were not," "what might have been," and "things not known" like "what Caesar would have lived to do had he believed the soothsayer" and "what name Achilles bore when he lived among women" (248). His thoughts move to the creative possibilities of unanswerable questions. Standing in the library, Stephen feels as if he is in a mausoleum and this sepulchral atmosphere prompts him to view the stacks of unread books as "Coffined thoughts around me, in mummycases, embalmed in the spice of words" (248). Stephen's project is a modernist

one. He wants to free the mummified ideas gravely trapped in books and preserved in words.

Instead of searching for esoteric puzzles to solve, Bloom looks to Shakespeare's plays for the practical knowledge they supply concerning his day-to-day activities. Shakespeare's *Works* appears as one of the more prominent and recognizable volumes on Bloom's bookshelf nestled between, among other things, copies of *Thom's Dublin Post Office Directory* and *The Useful Ready Reckoner*. Bloom enjoys reading Shakespeare's plays for instruction rather than simply for amusement. He has "applied to the works of William Shakespeare more than once for the solution of difficult problems in imaginary and real life" (791). Bloom appeals to Shakespeare's cultural authority and finds in textual versions of the bard's plays a resource for solving the difficult problems of daily life; however, in spite "of careful and repeated readings of certain classical passages, aided by a glossary, he had derived imperfect conviction from the text, the answers not bearing on all points" (791-92). Shakespeare's works do not provide Bloom with clear-cut answers to his problems because he is not able to extrapolate Shakespeare's solutions out of their situated contexts and specific circumstances in order to apply them directly to his own life. The plays are not exclusively didactic in their concern and the imaginary royal courts and enchanted isles which furnish their settings have little in common with 1904 Dublin. Bloom turns to this literature because he recognises in it ethical situations and concerns common to all readers. The fact that Bloom turns to literature for guidance when he experiences dissonance in his everyday routine while Stephen turns to Shakespeare to showcase his intelligence sharply contrasts the two individuals as very different types of inscribed readers. Bloom's position connects everyday experience with the experiences of sophisticated literature whereas, for Stephen, Shakespeare's life provides the material for his theory which itself becomes a vehicle for esoteric exigesis. Bloom admits that Shakespeare does not always provide solutions to his problems, but the point is that literature offers insight into ordinary life because it directly appeals to and draws on the everyday for its meaning. It offers imaginative engagement and exercises the cognitive processes needed to survive in daily life.

Bloom's approach to Shakespeare is not unlike the one I'm recommending for *Ulysses* and modernist novels in general. That is, these novels have a value for readers as texts which inform everyday practices because they are ultimately based on and self-consciously refer to the world of the everyday. I don't mean to suggest that Joyce's *Ulysses* should be read as a moral tract and that it doesn't offer reading pleasures beyond what would be considered instructional. My point is that treating novels like *Ulysses* as if they were designed for an exclusive readership of specialists obscures the democratic

features I have shown to be inherent in the text's production and reception. The reception history of the novel reveals that it has been, for the most part, either dismissed as plotless formalism of little relevance to the average reader or lauded as elitist high art providing a bulwark against the popularity of mass cultural products.[26] Rarely does interpretation feel comfortable enough with itself or justified enough to position itself in the gaping middleground between these two views, and perhaps the institutionalised status of Joyce studies prevents such a middling position because of the threat to the aura of genius. If inaccessibility is what makes high modernism "high," and continues to be justified as its raison d'etre, inaccessibility will continue to be one of its defining characteristics as well as one of its conditions of reception. The rhetoric surrounding the reception of high modernist novels tends to make Stephen Dedaluses out of its readers by demanding complex readings from what appear to be complex poetics; however, when these defamiliarising poetics are shown to rely on common sense, everyday uses of language, comprehending all of the allusions, and decrypting all of the secret meanings ceases to be the primary goal of reading these texts.

Ulysses partially directs its own interpretations and draws attention to the conditions of its own being, provided that actual readers are receptive to the role inscribed readers play within the text and they recognize the potential of these embodied readers to aid reading practices. Inscribed readers clearly reveal that everyday reading practices are precisely what is needed to experience and meet the challenges of high modernist experimentation and the avant-garde poetics of the novel. Access to the self-reflexive interior monologues and streams of consciousness of Joyce's characters reveals common ground between actual readers and the readers within the novel. Joyce's inscribed readers are heuristic vehicles for community that draw attention to the biologically determined nature of literary interpretation and offer guided tours through the defamiliarising poetics of fragmentation, encyclopedic intertextuality, and unconventional narrative styles which characterise Joyce's high modernism. By inscribing three alternative ways of reading, not to mention those of minor characters who also perform interpretive acts, Joyce presents democratic alternatives to the reception of his novel. The kinds of interpretive strategies used by the inscribed readers in *Ulysses* are effective tools for working through some of Joyce's more challenging or, as is the case with the "U.P.:up" postcard, inscrutable conundrums.

IV. The Golden Age of Postcards

Joyce lived through and set *Ulysses* in the midst of the "Golden Age of postcards" (1900-1918),[27] and he chose to exploit the ostensive affinities between postcard communication and novel communication. Postcards are a genre of their own. As a means of interpersonal communication, they function according to strictures that control use and by extension predetermine reception. As I will demonstrate, the very conditions and guidelines for the production of postcards establishes states of expectancy that when breached generate a form of cognitive dissonance, as in the case of the enigmatic "U.P.:up" postcard.[28]

Postcards connect Dubliners to other Dubliners and to the rest of the world. If the three volumes of Joyce's *Letters of James Joyce* are representative of Joyce's habits of correspondence, postcards were a regular mode of communication for the author.[29] He frequently used postcards while in artistic exile on the continent to communicate brief messages to friends, family, publishers and literary agents. The postcard helped to keep Joyce linked to his Dublin roots. According to Gilbert and Ellmann, Joyce sent over 160 postcards between 1902 and 1922, 41 between 1905 and 1906--evidence that Joyce not only lived through, but participated in, the Golden Age of postcards. In his introduction to volumes two and three of the *Letters of James Joyce*, Richard Ellmann writes, "Joyce did not regard the letter or its brazen sister, the postcard, as a literary form of any consequence, but almost everyday he burdened mailmen in different parts of his hemisphere with his sedulous correspondence" (xxxv). Ellmann admits that even if Joyce was dismissive of written correspondence, he was forced to use it to communicate and could not help but be influenced by its conventions: "Letter-writing imposes its small ceremonies even upon those who disdain the medium. An audience of one requires confrontation too. . . . Whatever his mode, if he is a practising writer his assembling of words can never be totally negligent; once enslaved by language forever enslaved." Ellmann's insights help frame my discussion of Joyce's use of the "U.P.:up" postcard because he confirms that Joyce could not avoid embracing the letter's "brazen sister" as a means of modern communication representative of the spirit of the times.

As *Ulysses* confirms, postcards were commonplace in 1904 Dublin as a popular and inexpensive means to communicate written missives. They are catalogued among the contents of parked mailcars:

> Parked in North Prince's street His Majesty's vermilion mailcars, bearing on their sides the royal initials, E. R., received loudly flung sacks of letters,

> postcards, lettercards, parcels, insured and paid, for local, provincial, British and overseas delivery. (147-48)

In this passage, postcards are set among all the other daily details of Dublin street life and forms of correspondence. As symbols of the everyday, postcards contribute to the naturalistic detail in the novel's settings. Joyce's repeated references to postcards reinforce that commonality by suggesting that the postcard script was unavoidably shared by most people living in the early twentieth century: the young man with whom Buck Mulligan speaks on the beach in front of the Martello tower mentions in passing that he "got a card from Bannon;" Molly receives a postcard from Milly in the morning mail: Gerty MacDowell refers to the "silly postcard" from Reggy Wylie she intends to tear into a dozen pieces; in the offices of the *Freeman's Journal*, J. J. O'Molloy describes how the wife of the Lord Lieutenant inadvertantly purchased a postcard celebrating the Phoenix Park murders;[30] in the cabman's shelter, Bloom investigates the sailor's picture postcard; and Denis Breen receives the now infamous "U.P.:up" postcard--all on 16 June 1904.

For Bloom, postcards are cultural reference points which supply him with memories of distant and foreign countries he has never visited--only seen on picture postcards: "Where was the chap I saw in that picture somewhere? Ah, in the dead sea, floating on his back, reading a book with a parasol open. Couldn't sink if you tried: so thick with salt" (87). Bloom describes the standard dead sea postcard view and his memory of the picture suggests how the common postcard functions as a popular vehicle for knowledge about the strange and unfamiliar. The postcard the sailor offers Stephen and Bloom in the cabman's shelter is similarly described as being "in its way a species of repository" which provides visual evidence for the yarns the old seaman spins (721). *Ulysses*, then, weaves conventional uses of the common postcard into the texture of its own views of Dublin not only as a form of realism, but also to set up Joyce's playful exploitation of postcard conventions.

The "U.P.:up" postcard is an example of the type of conundrum Joyce claimed would keep professors busy for centuries. Bloom first sees the card in "Lestrygonians" when he meets his old flame, Josie Powell, now Mrs. Denis Breen, outside Harrison's confectionery at 29 Westmoreland Street. Mrs. Breen rummages through her disorganised handbag and finally produces the folded postcard and hands it to Bloom: "Read that, she said. He got that this morning" (*U* 129). Because the postcard is folded when it is handed to Bloom, he must unfold it in order to read it. He therefore has a chance to see both sides and scan them for clues which might help determine its meaning or the identity

of the sender. The very act of unfolding the postcard becomes an interpretive act which gets elided in the narrative description of the scene:

> --What is it? Mr Bloom asked, taking the card. U.P.?
>
> --U.P.:up, she said. Someone taking a rise out of him. It's a great shame for them whoever he is.
>
> --Indeed it is, Mr Bloom said.
>
> She took back the card, sighing.
>
> --And now he's going round to Mr Menton's office. He's going to take an action for ten thousand pounds, he says.
>
> She folded the card into her untidy bag and snapped the catch. (199-200)

When Mrs. Breen snaps shut her handbag the postcard disappears as a physical object available for examination. Because Bloom doesn't comment further on the details of the card (its picture, the handwriting, its postmark)--all of which we presume he looks at--an air of mystery is added to this scene. The "U.P.:up" message, however, returns in various contexts and altered forms throughout the course of the novel, remaining open for further interpretive contemplation.[31]

As a result, readers are not allowed to forget the postcard message and are repeatedly challenged to interpret its significance. Bloom himself calls the "U.P.:up" message to mind in his meandering interior monologue a number of times over the course of the day, which suggests only that he revels in the linguistic play and the ludic challenge of determining possible meanings for the mysterious message. The fact that Bloom has trouble pronouncing the postcard message--it is Mrs. Breen who completes his sentence as he reads the message aloud trying to make sense of it--indicates that Bloom does not recognize "U.P.:up" as Irish slang or as a common literary reference. According to Alf Bergan, John Henry Menton--the Dublin solicitor--has a similar reaction to "U.P.:up" when he sees it for the first time: "You should have seen long John's eye. U.p. . ." (386). Menton, like Bloom, does not seem to recognize the message. There is the same elliptical interpretive pause, an indication of the mental confusion and deliberation caused by the enigmatic message.

Ulysses, the novel, unfolds in much the same way as Breen's postcard; however, if readers are not attuned while reading to routine acts like the folding and unfolding of the postcard, much of the accretion of significant detail which Joyce strategically places in the novel will be missed. It is useful to compare Bloom's quick perusal of the "U.P.:up" postcard with the postcard he inspects in detail in the cabman's shelter. In the latter case, Bloom "unostentatiously" turns over "the card to peruse the partially obliterated address

and postmark. It ran as follows: *Tarjeta Postal. Senor A. Boudin, Galeria Becche, Santiago, Chile.* There was no message evidently, as he took particular notice" (722). In contrast to the Breen postcard, Bloom inspects this one with particular attention to detail even though it is late in the day and he is exhausted. His inspection confirms his suspicion that the stories the seaman is telling are fabricated: the name to whom the card is addressed is not the same as the sailor's. The obvious discrepancy between Bloom's consideration of the two postcards with which he comes in contact on this day suggests that he doesn't consider the same effort and detective work necessary for the clearly nonsensical "U.P.:up" postcard. In his mind, it is obviously a joke, as is Breen's intention to take legal action against an anonymous sender.

Breen's response to his postcard reflects what was at the time a genuine fear concerning postcard use: the open transmission of obscenity and slander. In anticipation of this fear, an Austrian named Dr. Emanuel Herrmann added a clause to his 1869 proposal advocating the adoption of the postcard which recognised the problem and offered a solution that would absolve the postal authorities of any responsibility:

> The Post Department will not be responsible for the contents of the message. Nevertheless the post offices are instructed, similar to an order existing for letters that carry offensive remarks in the address (postal regulation of March 8, 1865), to exclude postcards likewise from transportation and delivery, if obscenities, libelous remarks or other punishable acts are found on the cards (qtd. in Staff 83)[32]

Surely postal authorities in Ireland would have noticed a postcard with only four letters on it, the fact that the postcard made it through suggests that "U.P.:up" is not a recognizable obscenity or insult.[33]

The fact that Breen regards as insulting something that no one else even flinches at tells us something about his state of mind. Rather than ignore the message, he, like many of Joyce's readers, feels the need to ease the cognitive dissonance he experiences. Having recourse to inscribed readers and their opinions about the "U.P.:up" postcard provides readers of the novel with clues about how Joyce conceived of the message. For almost all of these internal readers, Breen's mental state is the first thing they think about when they hear the story of the postcard. From this perspective, the entire search for the meaning of "U.P.:up" is the pursuit of a madman. Bloom describes him as "that other old mosey lunatic in those duds" and he pities the wife who must put up with him (202). That Breen's dress and manner are indicators of insanity gets picked up and reinforced by the narrator of "Cyclops" who describes Breen as "that old bloody pantaloon . . . in his bath

slippers" and his wife as an "unfortunate wretched woman" who must follow after him (385). Alf Bergan, amidst his fits of laughter, calls Breen "the bloody old lunatic" and the "bloody old fool" (386): "--Ten thousand pounds, says Alf laughing. God I'd give anything to hear him before a judge and jury" (415). Even Molly alludes to Breen's craziness in the flow of her stream of consciousness: "hes going about in his slippers to look for L10000 for a postcard up up O Sweetheart May wouldnt a thing like that simply bore you stiff to extinction actually too stupid to take his boots off now what you make of a man like that" (880).

For Bloom, Bergan, Molly, and the "Cyclops" narrator, the "U.P.:up" postcard is a practical joke designed specifically to cause just this kind of dissonance in the already mentally unstable Breen. The "Cyclops" narrator accurately identifies Breen as the "pantaloon" in this pantomime. His pursuit of a libel action for a message that does not make sense and for which there is no identifiable sender makes him the butt of some clown's jokes. The majority of the novel's characters dismiss Breen's pursuit of the libel case as a form of insanity because they recognize the impossibility of ever knowing beyond speculation. Even his wife remarks that "He's a caution to rattlesnakes" (198). Her defamiliarising metaphor that Breen's actions would startle rattlesnakes--her apparent benchmark for shock--passes judgement on her husband's actions at the same time as it draws attention to them. Breen is an inscribed reader who is, more accurately, a caution to actual readers.

What is important about the "U.P.:up" postcard is not finding out what it means or which character sent it to Breen, but how Joyce uses this communicative situation as a paradigm for reading *Ulysses*. Joyce's knowledge of reading practices and the epistemological desire to compensate for incompleteness or fragmentation is put to the test with the Breen postcard. The solution to the enigma is secondary to the hermeneutic situation the mysterious postcard throws into relief. The Breen postcard is Joyce's coy way of saying that every allusion is not essential to understand the novel. While it is tempting to get caught up in the minutiae of the novel (and Joyce recognised the temptation), the novel's inscribed readers help orient the interpretive focus. The sender of the "U.P.:up" postcard deliberately flouts the etiquette for postcard use by not signing a name or supplying a return address. What is required in such a textual situation is not to solve the conundrum as such but to move beyond simple questions about what the postcard message means to reconstruct dialogically the sender's expectation of reception. Ultimately, the sender of the "U.P.:up" postcard is James Joyce and the joke he is playing is on readers who feel they simply *must* know what the message means.

Social historians are only just beginning to practice postcard analysis, treating such artifacts as social and historical geiger counters.[34] Their work focuses on the value of postcard pictures and missives as archives which, because they were originally produced without conscious literary and social purpose, reflect in various ways the socio-historical contexts of their production (Stevens 3).[35] And yet, in 1907, the English journalist James Douglas predicted that

> When the archaeologists of the thirtieth century begin to excavate the ruins of London, they will fasten upon the Picture Postcard as the best guide to the spirit of the Edwardian era. They will collect and collate thousands of these pieces of pasteboard and they will reconstruct our age from the strange hieroglyphs and pictures that time has spared. For the Picture Postcard is a candid revelation of our pursuits and pastimes, our customs and costumes, our morals and manners. (qtd. in Staff 76)[36]

Douglas identified the postcard with the spirit of modernism in the Edwardian Era (1901-1910). In 1907, he predicted that the postcard, its history, production, and use, would represent to future archaeologists the zeitgeist of early twentieth-century London and be the means by which to reconstruct the age. The postcard in Douglas's view--beyond its early twentieth-century status as a collectible and use as a means of quick and easy interpersonal communication--is a historical repository of meanings for successor cultures. The idea of the postcard as "the best guide to the spirit of the Edwardian era" is an important observation to be made by someone immersed in the culture of postcards because it suggests the felt importance and popularity of postcard collecting and sending in his own time. As early as October 1903, the Glasgow Evening News reported that "In ten years Europe will be buried beneath picture postcards" (qtd. in Carline 9).

But postcards are also invaluable resources for investigating the dynamics of modern, textually mediated communication. "Like all great inventions," Douglas asserts, "the Picture Postcard has wrought a silent revolution in our habits" (qtd. in Staff 79), specifically those habits of reading and writing. He calls the postcard "a very curt and unceremonious missive" formally constrained by spatial restrictions (qtd. in Staff 81). Elliptical sentences and fragmented syntax filled the limited message space on the postcards and thus seemed to respond to the modernist call of aesthetic *condensare* which produced abridged language forms that were also dense with connotation.[37] Douglas sees the postcard as a modern alternative to the "laborious descriptions" of formal letter-writing and the "wasted hours" spent on such long epistles. He reflects on the tons of unpublished letters by Ruskin and Robert Louis Stevenson: "It is sad to think

of the books that dead authors might have written if they had saved the hours which they squandered upon private correspondences" (qtd. in Staff 79). Douglas's rhetorically charged speculation that an earlier adoption of the postcard to replace formal letter writing would have translated into an increase in the production of literary works points to a connection between pragmatic communication and experimental literary aesthetics that I wish to highlight. The desire for a new means of communication better suited to the pace of the modern world provided the impetus behind the development of the postcard as well as the development of modernist aesthetics.[38]

The "silent revolution" occurred at the level of writing and reading habits. The postcard message "contains no endearing prefix or reassuring affix. It begins without a prelude and ends without an envoy. The Picture Postcard carries rudeness to the fullest extremity. There is no room for anything polite" (qtd. in Staff 81). While some purists resisted the use of abbreviated words and phrases necessitated by postcards, the paring down of epistolary communication to its bare minimum was a social shift in language use that was universally accepted and, more importantly, understandable. However, there were still people who saw in the new postcards a threat to respectful society. In *Don't: A Manual of Mistakes and Improprieties*, published around 1890, the anonymous author writes, "Don't conduct correspondence on postal cards. It is questionable whether a note on a postal card is entitled to the courtesy of a response" (qtd. in Carline 55). One of the objections that Victorians levelled at postcard correspondence was its public nature--or more accurately its lack of privacy. There was also concern that postcards were destroying polite society and letter-writing skills. G.R. Sims argued that, "For the purpose of correspondence, they are practically useless. There is so much view, that there is barely room for you to write your name. . . . They are utterly destructive of style, and give absolutely no play to the emotions."[39]

As a means of expressing oneself, postcards offered little room for exposition and the brevity and terse style with which messages were written appeared as mechanical as telegram messages.[40] Joseph Pennell argued that the mass circulation of postcards was the result of large sections of the population being "too lazy to use their brains and write letters."[41] By 1906, when Pennell made this point, postcard messages themselves had become cliches and a general perception among many was that the art of letter writing was dying. With the postcard, however, people did not all of a sudden start communicating in a different language. They still relied on a basic knowledge of grammatical rules and syntactical structures in writing their messages and in the reading of these messages. The method of communication relied on a dialogic relationship between customary letter-

writing techniques and etiquette and an innovative style of writing that was brought about by the physical materiality of the postcard and by the desire and need to be brief. Abbreviation led to more gap-filling and greater dialogic considerations of expectation on the part of both readers and writers of postcards. And in this way the postcard became an immediate forebearer of modernist experiments in linguistic form. Quite the opposite of Pennell's observation that postcards were making sections of the population too lazy to use their brains, the use of postcards forced readers to read actively and dialogically.

The history of the postcard is for the most part a history of postal regulations which determined the dimensions, cost, and uses of postcards. They were attempts to reconcile the public demand for innovative, inexpensive and accessible means of postal communication with traditional postal standards and cost efficiency. The very use of postcards was dictated by rules, and those rules became conventionalised and universally accepted. It is these conventions that the "U.P.:up" postcard of *Ulysses* challenges and, through its challenge, reaffirms. The aesthetic of Joyce's work functions in much the same way; it challenges and affirms the communicative use of language by bringing conventions and expectations to conscious awareness which in turn reinforces their importance.

It is necessary to differentiate the postcard use we experience today from the way that postcards functioned at the beginning of the twentieth century. Today postcards are almost exclusively used as part of the tourist industry. They serve the needs of vacationers to record the places they have visited and as relatively effortless means of staying in touch with those that one has left behind. During the Golden Age of postcards, postcards were sent back and forth between collectors in huge numbers.[42] The expectation was that if you received a card you would in turn respond with one to the sender. Such was the conventional reciprocal exchange, epitomised in the sentence from Joyce's "A Mother" which cleverly enacts its own content through its parallel structure: "Kathleen and her sister sent Irish picture postcards to their friends and these friends sent back other Irish picture postcards" (150).[43] The "U.P.:up" missive participates in this culture of postcard sending and receiving, but it disrupts the decorum of such practice because it lacks a return address and identifiable sender.

By the time Joyce wrote *Ulysses* (1914-1922) strict regulations were agreed upon by the U.P.U. (United Postal Union). Card size was set at 140 x 90 mm (5 1/2 x 3 1/2 inches), a standard size adopted by the United Kingdom in November 1897. Prior to 1897, postcards were designed in such a way that the stamp and address were restricted to one side of the card and the picture and message to the other. Imprinted on the

postcards themselves were restrictions which read, "THE ADDRESS ONLY TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE" and "WRITE THE ADDRESS ONLY ON THIS SIDE--THE MESSAGE ON THE OTHER." Cards that were ornately decorative left little space for messages on the message side and often writers were forced to write their messages in the margins or in small corner spaces left blank for that purpose. In 1897, the prohibition of writing messages on the same side as the address was lifted.[44] By the end of 1902, Frederick Hartmann had designed divided-back postcards which separated the address side of the card to provide a space for messages. While many publishers followed Hartmann's lead, the older undivided cards continued to circulate until 1906-07 when divided backs became internationally recognized and were in general use all over the world. The format of postcards has not changed since these 1902 introductions.

The introduction of postcards into everyday life was made possible by earlier postal reforms.[45] In 1865, at an Austro-German Postal conference in Carlsruhe, Dr. Heinrich Von Stephan first suggested what he called the *offenes Postblatt* (open post-sheet) as an alternative to traditional letter correspondence. Von Stephan emphasised that the evolution of form in the history of written communication had been greatly influenced by the materials used (wax, parchment, paper) and modified by custom and fashion. The new age called for a new mode of epistolary communication:

> The present form of the letter does not however yet allow of sufficient simplicity and brevity for a large class of communications. It is not simple enough, because note-paper has to be selected and folded, envelopes obtained and closed, and stamps affixed. Its is not brief enough, because, if a letter be written, convention necessitates something more than the bare communication. This is irksome both to the sender and the receiver. (qtd. in Staff 44)

Von Stephan, echoing the mandates of many modernist writers in their desire for linguistic reform, saw in the early postcard a liberation from the formal conventions of writing. The idea was rejected by German postal authorities because of a projected loss of revenue and because they lacked a unified system to accommodate these early postcards.

In January 1869, Dr. Herrmann reconceived of the idea as the *Correspondenz-Karte*. This cost-efficient alternative was accepted and was first issued in Austria on 1 October 1869.[46] Official postcards were first issued in the United Kingdom on 1 October 1870.[47] Reforms democratically opened up postal correspondence to a general public that had previously been excluded from such means of communication because of cost.

Some researchers even credit access to the postal system with promoting literacy among the "poor and ill-educated" (Willoughby 22).

What is truly unique about postcard culture is that postcards simultaneously offer users experiences of the unfamiliar and foreign and expose them to a revolution in language use within a conventional and highly standardized communicative form. Their popularity and frequent use make them emblems of the everyday, while their exotic images and abbreviated messages present the unfamiliar to their readers. As such, postcard use encompasses two central themes of modernist literature which are the discovery and celebration of the extraordinary in the ordinary, and the forcing into conscious awareness habits of thought, language use, and perception. Postcards capture the wonderful, the exotic, the highest, the biggest, all the epic proportions of a world defamiliarised by a strangeness experienced from diverse perspectives. At the same time they ground these "shocks" to the habitual in standardised formats, communication conventions, and postal regulations. The very emergence of a postcard culture marks the significant environmental and social changes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Postcards were accessible and democratic, and they embodied the innovative spirit of the period in their creation and modification. They also became the vehicles for recording the various social, scientific, and technological changes which occurred during the modernist period (Klankin 12).[48] In January 1903, the *Lincolnshire Echo* called them "the spirit of the age--brevity and speed" (qtd. in Carline 57). Miss Meadows called postcards "a sign of the times" in "a period peopled by a hurried generation that has not many minutes to spare for writing to friends, what with express trains going at a rate of a mile a minute, telegrams and telephones" (qtd. in Carline 57).

The increased use of postcards also meant that large numbers of the population were being exposed to artists and photographers who captured scenes and lifestyles that were rapidly changing. While postcards provided the means to perpetuate existing prejudices, they also offered a emancipatory alternative by promoting socialism, women's rights, equality of race, colour and religion, and helping to promote other cultures and customs. The postcard inhabited a unique space capable of both reinforcing existing social conventions or providing iconoclastic alternatives. Images of the new relationships between the sexes, for instance, (mixed bathing and public fraternizing) helped the new generations crawl out from beneath the shadows of Victorian prudishness and its codes of inhibitive etiquette.[49] But, the emergence of the postcard was fraught with the contradictions of the transition from Victorian decorum to modern experimentation because its development was coextensive with the social and cultural upheavals of the

time. Mass-produced and mass-consumed, the affordability of postcards made them available to large sections of the population, but their linguistic fragmentation, which characterised postcard messages, made them part of a high modernist aesthetic. Designed for the convenient and inexpensive communication of brief messages, postcards play out one of the very constituent aspects of modernist literature in the relationship between high and low culture. They also provide models for the interplay of communicative innovation within the regulative constraints of a standardised form.

Because of this fruitful tension, the postcard inevitably accustomed the general public to the shorthand aesthetics of high modernism and this is one of the reasons why Joyce intentionally evoked the postcard script with its entailments of other strong cultural associations.[50] The features of a postcard, its public nature, its commonplace use, its ability to capture the exotic and unfamiliar of distant locales, its abbreviated and informal communication, its history of production and use, and the conventions which have grown up around such popular use all contribute to the cognitive script for postcards. Moreover, the postcard script operates like a genre category which generates expectations in terms of reading and reception. Although the Golden Age of postcards is long since past, many of those script expectations derived from knowledge about or experience with postcards as a mode of communication are still with late twentieth-century readers. The postcard script, posited by all the seemingly passing references to postcards throughout *Ulysses*, is undermined with the "U.P.::up" postcard Denis Breen receives. The cognitive dissonance caused by the unsigned postcard and its unintelligible message gets transferred from Breen as inscribed reader to the novel's actual readers taking up the challenge of Joyce's enigma. The meaning of "U.P.::up" is indeterminate and therefore unknowable beyond speculation. The cognitive dissonance and the consequent impression of being slandered which drives Breen to seek legal action also prompts readers to solve the meaning of the message and figure out who the sender is; however, for readers, there is simply nothing at stake in determining the meaning of the missive. As I have tried to show, the letter's "brazen sister" offered writer's like Joyce an example of practiceable limits of experimental modernism.

V. Postcard Law and Its Implications for Reading

> **--And moreover, says J. J., a postcard is publication. It was held to be sufficient evidence of malice in the testcase Sadgrove *v.* Hole. In my opinion an action might lie. (*U* 417)**

In the humble opinion of J. J. O'Molloy, Breen has a case against the sender of the postcard. Legally, the laws of England were amended to include postcard libel once postcards became popular. According to the Earl of Halsbury's *The Laws of England*, "A person publishes a libel who transmits it to the plaintiff or anyone else through the post on a postcard; . . . for this is presumed to involve communication to third persons before the libel reaches the hands of the addressee" (vol. 18:661). Postcards are considered actionable publications because their messages are subject to the scrutiny of all those who come in contact with them. Since the material conditions of the postcard permit only public missives, anyone who chooses to use a postcard instead of a sealed envelope relinquishes any right of privilege regarding the postcard message. Publicity is an accepted convention of postcard use--what evidence judges call "Notorious Facts." According to sub-section 6 of "Notorious Facts," "the court takes notice of the ordinary course of the business of the post office" and recognises that "a post-card is an unclosed document capable of being read by the servants both of the post office and of the place at which it is delivered" (495). However, because Breen is the receiver of the postcard he is not in control of what is being sent to him. Therefore, as O'Molloy says, "an action might lie," that is, it might hold up in court.

O'Molloy has obviously forgotten the details of the Sadgrove *v.* Hole case he cites to support his barroom legalese. To have a case for postcard libel, Breen must prove "malicious intention" on the part of the sender. This, of course, requires first that he determine what the "U.P.:up" message means and second, that he identify the sender. The 1901 Sandgrove *v.* Hole case, which still stands as the precedent for postcard libel in England, and to which J.J. O'Molloy refers in "Cyclops," presents Breen with another condition that he must meet to prove malicious intention. He must prove that third parties who have come into contact with the postcard have understood the message to be defamatory of the plaintiff. The law states that there can be no actionable publication of libel or slander if the third persons involved do not understand the slanderous content of the message. The "U.P.:up" postcard, at best, only gives the impression of slander to which extensive Joycean scholarship attests.[51] The meaningless message does not provide enough evidence to actually prove slander, so any further action would require a more convincing interpretation.

In many ways literary interpretation requires similar conditions of proof to libel--convincing evidence of intention and possible motives for aesthetic effects. It could even be said that Joyce's exploitation of common scripts for postcard use is his way of appealing to notorious facts--tacit knowledge of and familiarity with postcard features,

associations, and conventions--which he could assume all readers possess. "Judicial notice," then, "is taken of various facts the universal notoriety or regular recurrence of which in the ordinary course of nature or business has made them familiar to judges" (494). Joyce expects his readers to take "hermeneutic notice" of certain unstated, but commonplace assumptions in the reception of his work. In sketching the cultural history of postcard development and use, my project makes accessible as well as confirms the embodied knowledge base which Joyce considered part of his readers' repertoire. The first readers of *Ulysses* would have experienced first-hand the Golden Age of postcards and made use of "their own private knowledge and experience of many matters" for instances where there was no aesthetic precedent (495). My point here is that the cognitive script for postcards would have been shared by anyone living in Europe or North America during the first half of the twentieth century. Joyce's exploitation of this script suggests that his anticipated audience for *Ulysses* was not restricted to an elite. Rather, the everyday awareness of postcard conventions means that common readers could not only appreciate Joyce's aesthetics of cognitive dissonance, but that they were among the intended targets. Problems arise, however, when the notorious facts of the postcard script clash with the notorious facts of Joyce's genius and the presumed elitism of modernism.

> **His postcard proved a centre of attraction for Messrs the greenhorns for several minutes, if not more. (*U* 721)**

The "U.P.:up" message, like the identity of the man in the macintosh, is a Joycean conundrum which receives the most playful critical attention for the very reason that it is unsolvable. The result is a host of tenuous and highly speculative published "notes" and a collection of creative suggestions on discussion lists.[52] Most interpretations treat the message as defamatory, following Breen's own interpretation of the postcard. Breen seems to take the postcard message as either a death threat or some slanderous comment on his sexual abilities. Robert Adams devotes two pages of his study of *Ulysses, Surface and Symbol* to offering possible readings of the "U.P.:up" message. He calls it an example of the type of ambiguity for which readers have no assurance that any meaning at all is intended. And yet, Adams maintains that it makes a difference what the message means because of the response it has generated in the mentally unstable Breen (192). The meaning of the message, however seductive it may be for readers, is really not as important as the medium through which the message is conveyed or the effects which that message has on those who come in contact with it.

Puzzling out the solution to the "U.P.:up" message is at best a ludic victory with tenuous closure that betrays Joyce's intentions in writing *Ulysses*: to exploit the human nature of literary reception. I neither offer a solution to the "U.P.:up" conundrum, nor do I suggest that readers should ignore their nagging desire to figure out its significance. The "U.P.:up" message illuminates the problematic nature of reception involved in reading formally experimental novels like *Ulysses*. Joyce makes use of the strongly coded generic conventions of postcard sending and receiving to undermine conditioned expectations in much the same way that he manipulates the conventional use of language and the genre of the novel in *Ulysses*.

These insights do not help the reader of *Ulysses* solve the conundrum of the Breen postcard, but that is precisely the point. Joyce's novel would not suddenly open up to new significances and be read in a different light from this day forth if one could determine definitively the meaning of "U.P.:up." Indeed, it is pure detective work. Readers who wish to play academic detective place themselves in the same position as Breen lugging around massive law books. Corny Kelleher actually tells Breen to get the handwriting examined and J. J. O'Molloy says that when he saw Breen he was "Looking for a private detective" (*U* 415). Granted, one of the challenges to studying figures like Joyce comes not only from matching wits with the author, but also from contending with the wealth of literary scholarship that has built up around the study of his works. However, to put too much effort into solving what "U.P.:up" means, then, is to match wits with the insane Denis Breen.

In the pub discussion of postcards in "Cyclops," J.J. O'Molloy says "a postcard is publication" (417). Likewise, Joyce's publication of *Ulysses* is a living postcard of Dublin sent to readers, written and mailed from the author's self-imposed artistic exile on the European continent. Joyce told Frank Budgen, "I want to give a picture of Dublin so complete that if the city one day suddenly disappeared from the earth it could be constructed out of my book" (qtd. in Budgen 67-68). *Ulysses* is therefore addressed just as much to readers who do not necessarily know Dublin or the historical details of Irish life around 1904 as it is to readers who do. The novel is thoughtfully designed to accommodate this unknowable future context of reception through aesthetic experiments based on embodied common sense.[53] *Ulysses*, however, includes a return address--the author--which takes readers through biographies, collected letters, annotated reference guides, and more than seventy years of published scholarship to find out what the author meant.[54] This "return to sender" type of scholarship usually comes full circle to point back at the role of readers in the text--inscribed and actual. This is in no way an attempt

to avoid dealing with questions of intention--that is what the isolated activity of decoding the "U.P.:up" message does. As I contend, it is possible to recover Joyce's intentions by studying the frustrated reading strategies of readers as they confront modernist difficulty.

In addition, the "U.P.:up" postcard alters reception through literary parody by subverting what Joyce considered to be a worn out Victorian plot-advancing device: the appearance of mysterious and miscommunicated missives. In a conversation with Arthur Power, Joyce complained about Thomas Hardy's overuse of the convention of "contrived misunderstandings" in his work:

> If you analyse his plots [Hardy's] you will see that they contain all the tricks and subterfuges of melodrama, that ancient and creaking paraphernalia of undelivered messages, misunderstandings and eavesdroppings, in which the simple are over-simple, and the wicked are devilish. (qtd. in Power 44, 46)

Joyce's criticism was that Shakespeare's strategic use of miscommunication to advance his plot and generate both suspense and conflict in his plays had in recent years deteriorated into Victorian mannerism. In the hands of Hardy, these same structural techniques appear old and "creaking." For Joyce, the overuse of these conventions had stripped them of their effectiveness and readers had become conditioned to expect them as just another aspect of the narrative. His response was to use missive communication in *Ulysses* to showcase inscribed readers in the act of reading and to frustrate readers with red herrings, rather than to advance plot. In this way he hoped to reengage conditioned readers. The "U.P.:up" postcard is the example I have chosen to illustrate how Joyce exploits readers' conventional expectations (the cognitive script for postcards) to generate experiences of cognitive dissonance. The postcard's recipient is a minor figure whose paranoid reaction to the message "U.P.:up" becomes a source of amusement for other characters in the novel.

This apparent throw-away event provides the novel with texture though. And it also enacts and addresses in microcosm a variety of issues that *Ulysses* as a whole and the aesthetics of high modernism in general maintain as their focus. The "U.P.:up" postcard thematises hermeneutic impulses and as such serves as a heuristic guide to the reception of Joyce's novel. The postcard is a site through which to read the dialogue of expectations between modernist writers and readers, a dialogue which reveals the unconscious embodied nature of all human acts of communication. The "U.P.:up" postcard and *Ulysses* both challenge conditioned habits of reception, interpretation, and the unconscious cognitive scripts with which readers make sense of the world. In doing so, it forces these scripts to adapt to novel experiences, and at the same time it forces

readers to attend consciously not only to the process of adaptation, but also to the conditioned nature of routine experiences and the bodily basis of our higher order cognitive activities. Because of the embodied character of the mental operations Joyce's aesthetic of cognitive dissonance exploits, *Ulysses* is, in theory, accessible to the common reader and not restricted to a hyper-educated elite class of specialists.

To a considerable degree, cognitive dissonance levels the interpretive playing field and it does so because of its shared difficulty. Jacques Derrida once said of *Ulysses*: "Basically, there can be no Joycean competence, in the certain and strict sense of the concept of competence, with the criteria of evaluation and legitimation that are attached to it" (282).[55] Derrida argues that *Ulysses* is an "overpotentialized text" which humbles anyone who attempts to put on the mantle of "Joyce expert." It simultaneously calls for and deconstructs the ideas of expertise and competence and replaces them with the experience of cognitive dissonance. Reading and interpreting are activities that the novel anticipates in advance, responds to, and even counters through its networks of "language, writing, knowledge, and *even narration*" (281). As a result, knowledge *about* the text cannot be dissociated from *the experience of* the text. For Derrida, *Ulysses* prevents readers from getting enough distance between them and the text to evaluate its significance because there is no position outside of the novel; it is a part of and draws upon all aspects of life. Here Derrida is rearticulating T. S. Eliot's belief that *Ulysses* "is the book to which we are all indebted and from which none of us can escape" (175).[56] Part of our indebtedness lies in the fact that the novel's aesthetics exploit and challenge behaviourist-type conditioning from which none can escape. In the next chapter, I will analyse how William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* illustrates the threat of behaviouristic conditioning thematically and provides a formal means of resisting that threat.

NOTES

[1] James Joyce, *Ulysses* (*U*) (1922; London: Penguin, 1992).

[2] Basically the "initial style" combines use of dialogue, unfiltered interior monologue, and third-person narration at times inflected by free indirect discourse, all of which allowed Joyce to describe the Dublin setting and introduce and develop character. The first three episodes simultaneously familiarise readers with details of Stephen's life since *Portrait*, the psychology of his character, and the nature and form of his internal thought processes. The next three episodes do the same for Leopold Bloom. For a book length study of Joyce's use of free indirect discourse from *Dubliners* to *Finnegans Wake*, see Michael Gillespie's *Reading the Book of Himself: Narrative Strategies in the Works of James Joyce* (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1989).

[3] Many critical examinations of *Ulysses* use as their basic premise the analogy of reader and Odysseus. For example, in *The Book as World*, Marilyn French writes "The reader is Ulysses; the novel is the journey; and the journey itself is one of exploration" (New York: Paragon 1976): 4; in *James Joyce's*

Ulysses, Brooks Thomas refers to the act of reading *Ulysses* as the "reader's Odyssey" (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1982): 131; and, Karen Lawrence's *The Odyssey of Styles in* Ulysses, as her title indicates, charts the effects each of the last nine episodes has on readers as the novel "deliberately changes, develops, transforms itself" (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1981): 5.

[4] For this very conventional reading, see Scott Klein, "Searching for Lost Keys: Epic and Linguistic Dislocations in *Ulysses*," *Approaches to Teaching Joyce's* Ulysses, ed. Kathleen McCormick and Erwin Steinberg (New York: MLA, 1993): 105-112.

[5] John Keats, "Letter to George and Thomas Keats, December 1817" in *The Norton Anthology English Literature Vol. 2*, ed. M. H. Abrams, 5th ed. (New York: Norton: 1986): 863.

[6] Recent scholarship has questioned whether Joyce ever made such a claim. Joe Kelly argues that in 1921, when Joyce reputedly offered the "enigmas'" statement, the author could not have imagined that professors would immortalize him since he was not canonized in the U.S. or anywhere until the 1940s. If the statement holds, it holds perhaps for French professors only. This to my mind is not a very convincing argument. First, it assumes that canonization necessarily precedes imagined canonization, and second, it underestimates Joyce's knowledge of the burgeoning university system and professionalisation that was occurring at that time. See Joseph Kelly, *Our Joyce: From Outcast to Icon* (Austin: U of Texas P, 1998).

[7] Evidence of Joyce's popular cultural significance can be found in a number of films ranging from *Annie Hall* (Woody Allen 1977) to *Who's That Knocking at my Door?* (Martin Scorsese 1969), *Back to School* (Alan Metter 1986), and *The Third Man* (Carol Reed 1949), all of which contain references to Joyce or his work. Joyce's cultural currency is now materially reinforced by the recent Irish ten pound note which includes on it a picture of Joyce's face and a short passage from the beginning of *Finnegans Wake*.

[8] For more on the intentionalist debate, see Steven Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels, "Against Theory," *Critical Inquiry* 8.4 (Summer 1982): 723-742, where the authors argue that it is impossible to separate meaning from intention. The controversy over this article continued in *Critical Inquiry* 9.4 (June 1983).

[9] The confusion over the man in the macintosh results from a miscommunication which began as an attempt to avoid cognitive dissonance during a conversation. As Hynes pauses to mentally search for a word, Bloom automatically fills the gap and completes Hynes's sentence for him. Bloom is able to do so because certain cognitive scripts have been readied and made instantly accessible by the context of the graveyard discussion. Hynes is taking down the names of those in attendance at Paddy Dignam's funeral:

> --And tell us, Hynes said, do you know that fellow in the, fellow was over there in the . . .
>
> He looked around.
>
> --Macintosh. Yes, I saw him, Mr Bloom said. Where is he now?
>
> --M'Intosh, Hynes said scribbling. I don't know who he is. Is that his name? (*U* 141-42)

Hynes assumes that Bloom proffers the name of the man and not the article of clothing which the ellipsis initially elicits as a response. Before Bloom can correct Hynes, he leaves and as a result the name M'Intosh appears as one of the mourners listed in the *Evening Telegraph*. This miscommunication is the result of a desire to avoid the experience of dissonance when another person struggles to find the correct words. The fragmented aesthetics of modernism prompt us to do the same, for instance, when readers fill in gaps that the author has intentionally left open. The "M'Intosh incident" creates further gaps to be filled as the narrative of "Ithaca" points out:

> What selfinvolved enigma did Bloom risen, going, gathering multicoloured multiform multitudinous garments, voluntarily apprehending, not comprehend?
>
> Who was M'Intosh? (*U* 860)

The narrator cues us to the unimportance of determining the identity of M'Intosh by calling it a "selfinvolved enigma," but the gap continues to entice new readers of *Ulysses* reinforcing the embodied idea that nature indeed abhors a vacuum.

[10] Karen Lawrence claims that the "woodshadows" description is a narrative statement which borrows Stephen's lyricism, but she never explains what "woodshadows" are or how they function in this passage (42).

[11] Brian Hurley.

[12] Edgar Allan Poe, "The Purloined Letter," *Selected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. Edward H. Davidson (Boston: Houghton, 1956): 208-225.

[13] My source for this discussion is Mark Johnson, *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1987): 18-40, in which a more detailed account of the "structure of in-out schemata" occurs.

[14] Cleanth Brooks, *The Well-Wrought Urn* (New York: Harcourt, 1947).

[15] The concept of a "dialogue of expectations" is derived from the work of social psychologists who argue that the expectations of one individual can affect the behaviour of another. In terms of readers and writers this becomes something of an infinite regression whereby writers' expectations of the expectations that readers will bring to bear on the text affect creative decisions, especially aesthetic experimentation. The form of a text, then, embodies those expectations and modifies readers' behaviour. Similarly, readers' expectations of a writers' expectations--which are essentially the horizons of expectations (Jauss) in a given historical moment which captures the current spirit of reception--can determine how writers construct their texts. These expectations also tautologically affect the interpretive strategies and determinations of relevance that readers make. The source for this idea, that projected expectations can alter both reception and aesthetic creation, comes from work conducted in the late 1950s and 1960s by Robert Rosenthal and Donald Campbell who independently established that experimenter bias could inadvertently skew the results of experiments by influencing test subjects to produce the results expected. Around the same time, Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson also conducted experiments which proved that a teacher's expectations of students could strongly affect academic performance. They determined that teachers could influence student learning and intellectual performance through their evaluations. The effects were a type of self-fulfilling prophecy where students who were encouraged excelled more than students from a control group who were not encouraged to the same degree. See R. Rosenthal and L. Jacobson, "Teachers' Expectancies: Determinants of Pupils' IQ Gains," *Psychological Reports* 19 (1968): 115-18. The results of these ethically questionable studies led to a theory of interpersonal expectations based on the expectancy hypothesis that the expectations of one person can affect the behaviour of another in a variety of interactive settings from the courtroom to the doctor's office. [Rosenthal calls interpersonal expectancy effects the "silent language of classrooms and laboratories" and referred to it in his 1957 doctoral dissertation as "unconscious experimenter bias" (Blanck xi).] Rosenthal's work--which was controversial when it first appeared--established the role expectations play in shaping behaviour as a social fact, something that was scientifically provable, and which had potential applicability in other communication situations such as the relationship between authors and readers.

The research findings on interpersonal expectations contribute in two ways to the study of modern literature offered here. The idea that reception expectations can be mediated through language and communicated through the forms used in a novel suggests that reading is much more than a one-sided means of communication. Interpersonal expectation research also supports Wimsatt and Beardsley's fear of the intentional fallacy by showing how powerful such influences are, but it also offers an alternative to authorial accounts of works which do not remove the author's intentions from the interpretive process. Interpersonal expectations allow intentions to be discussed openly and speculatively with the support of scientific research, and reveal that the conception of communication as a message encoded by a sender and transmitted through a communication channel to a receiver who decodes the message is oversimplified. See Peter David Blanck, ed., *Interpersonal Expectations* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1993).

[16] For a more detailed account and application of this idea of everyday "visual filling-in," see Evan Thompson, et al., "Perceptual Completion: A case Study in Phenomenology and Cognitive Science," *Naturalising Phenomenology*, ed. Jean Petitot, et al. (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1999): 161-195.

[17] I have argued elsewhere that Molly's misreading of metempsychosis leaves a semantic residue of association which betrays her anticipation of the day's infidelities: "the sexual implications of 'met him' (tryst with Boylan) and the phallic 'pike into women's stockings 'hoses.'" See Bradley Clissold, *Author--*Ulysses*--Reader: Seduction in the Gaps*, M.A. thesis, McGill U, 1994: 24.

[18] For more on the idea of a cognitive floor plan, see Mark Turner, *Reading Minds* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991): chpt. 2.

[19] See Weldon Thornton, *Allusions in Ulysses* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina,1961): 165; Don Gifford with Robert Seidman, Ulysses *Annotated*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: U of California P, 1988): 206.

[20] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. M. B. Ramos. (New York: Continuum, 1970).

[21] See James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, ed. Seamus Deane (1916; New York: Penguin, 1993).

[22] James Joyce, *Stephen Hero*, ed. Theodore Spencer (1944; London: Granada, 1977).

[23] For example, Spurgeon claims that Shakespeare preferred bowls to other games, that he had "an excellent eye for a shot, with bowl or arrow" and that he was a "competent rider who loved horses as indeed he did most animals, except spaniels and house dogs" (202-206). See Caroline Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1935).

[24] Gifford offers a detailed account of the history of Tyco's star which first appeared in 1572 when Shakespeare was eight and a half years old and which burnt out in 1574 when Shakespeare was almost ten (Gifford 244).

[25] Eglinton, however, undermines his position with a reactionary platitude that is anathema to modernist readers and writers alike: "The highroads are dreary but they lead to the town" (*U* 250).

[26] See discussion of Lukacs-Brecht debate in chapter two. See also Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic Of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming. (New York: Continuum, 1991).

[27] See Norman Stevens, ed., *Postcards in the Library: Invaluable Visual Resources* (New York: Haworth, 1995).

[28] For more detailed accounts of this history and the lines of descent leading to the postcard, see Richard Carline, *Pictures in the Post* (London: Gordon Fraser, 1971); Martin Willoughby, *A History of Postcards* (London: Bracken, 1992); and Frank Staff, *The Picture Postcard and Its Origins* (New York: Praeger, 1966).

[29] In spite of questionable editorial justifications for the omission of certain items, I am convinced that the *Letters of James Joyce* provide a representative account of the frequency with which Joyce communicated using letters and postcards during the years of *Ulysses* composition. In his introduction to volume one of the *Letters of James Joyce*, Stuart Gilbert admits that he edited and decided not to publish some letters because they contain "private matters" and others because of a lack of space: "Some of these omissions have been made at the request, always for valid reasons, of those to whom the letters are addressed. Others have been made by the editor; for the most part these affect passages relating to personal and private matters, of no general interest" (39). Richard Ellmann admits in the "Preface" to volumes two and three to similar editorial excisions of "sexual content" and he explains away the ellipses in the transcriptions of Harriet Weaver's letters as "the passages she decided to omit." As editor, Ellmann claims he "has included all Joyce's letters that were available with a few exceptions." He omits what he calls "trivial communications," but, like Gilbert's claim to omitting correspondences "of no general interest," neither editor goes into sufficient detail about the content of these excised items. The question of correspondence availability, of permission to publish, and the nature of the editorial decisions made are all potential causes for concern about the representability of the *Letters of James Joyce*; however, such issues impact little on the claims I am making about Joyce's use and knowledge of the conventions of postcard correspondence. See James Joyce, *Letters of James Joyce*, ed. Stuart Gilbert (New York: Viking, 1957); James Joyce, *Letters of James Joyce*, ed. Richard Ellmann, vols. 2-3 (New York: Viking, 1966).

[30] She "thought she'd buy a view of Dublin. And it turned out to be a commemoration postcard of Joe Brady or Number One or Skin-the-goat" (*U* 174). The hawkers who sold her the postcard were apparently arrested and brought before the chief judicial officer of Dublin. Gifford confirms that a similar incident actually occurred in police court 8 June 1904. The 9 June 1904 *Freeman's Journal* carried the story claiming that the hawkers had been warned to stop selling the postcards as early as November 1903. See Gifford 142.

[31] Susan Swartzlanger notes Mrs. Breen's unwitting participation in Joycean word play when she remarks that the card is "someone taking a rise out of him" because of the association with rise and one of the conventional meanings of the word "up" (29). See Susan Swartzlanger, "Joyce's *Ulysses*" *Explicator* 42.4 (Summer 1984): 29-31.

[32] In 1899, the French Post Office took similar steps to prevent postcard obscenity and libel, but their attempts, at the same time, to respect patrons' privacy produced contradictory rules which would have been ineffectual if followed. Employees were forbidden "(a) to read postcards" and "(b) to send, forward or deliver any postcard bearing written insults or abusive expressions" (qtd. in Staff 63).

[33] It occurred to me that one of the possible reasons why none of the characters thinks about or explains the postcard message in any detail is because they all immediately recognise it, but if this were the case the post office would have confiscated the card when they saw it.

[34] Naomi Schor claims that postcards serve an ideological function in representing national and individual identity. See Naomi Schor, "*Cartes Postales*: Representing Paris 1900" *Critical Inquiry* 18.2 (Winter 1992): 188-244. See also propaganda postcards in Willoughby.

[35] In *Postcards in the Library: Invaluable Visual Resources*, postcards are treated as socio-cultural artifacts and archival resources for the study of society and history. This collection of essays emphasises the importance of collecting postcards and their value as social and historical documents. For a specific study in the ways that postcards socially legitimize racial prejudice and perpetuate these attitudes, see Brooke Baldwin's "On the Verso: Postcard Messages as a Key to Popular Prejudices." *Journal of Popular Culture* 22:3 (1988): 15-28. The editor of *The Picture Postcard Magazine* predicted in 1900 that postcards would some day "subserve larger issues." Postcards became political and served as propaganda during the world wars and the Irish Home Rule campaign.

[36] also qtd. in Eric J. Evans and Jeffrey Richards, *A Social History of Britain in Postcards 1870-1930* (London: Longman, 1980) 4.

[37] In sharp contrast, Allyson Booth analyses the "restrictions of textual space imposed by" government-generated postcards issued to soldiers for use during the First World War in *Postcards from the Trenches*. The Field Service Post Card was designed in such a way that soldiers merely had to cross out inappropriate sentences, leave those which best reflected their situations, and sign their names. The postcard supplied soldiers with conventional postcard cliches, "if they were too tired to transcribe the cliches of the conventional phlegmatic letter" (Paul Fussell qtd. in Booth 13). The postcards were designed with "[i]nfinite replication and utter uniformity" in mind (Fussell qtd. in Booth 14). What the cards failed to provide, and what Booth claims was the British government's attempt to narrate the war, was a blank space in which to write about what was actually taking place at the front. The government postcard served as a form of censorship to control, to a degree, what types of information made it back from the trenches to the civilians at home. The conditions of use of the post card, first printed in November 1914, appeared at the top of the card: "NOTHING is to be written on this side except the date and signature of the sender. Sentences not required may be erased. <u>If anything else is added the post card will be destroyed.</u>" The sentence options on the postcard were severely limited and unfeelingly general. Booth argues the "I am quite well" sentence erases any notion of the trenches and relegates all the unsightly aspects of the war to the margins where they cannot be articulated on the postcard without threat of destruction. The example of the Field Service Post Card illustrates how the postcard's form and conventional use could be manipulated to control information just as Joyce exploits the conventions of postcard use in the "U.P.:up" postcard to challenge reading habits. See Allyson Booth, *Postcards from the Trenches: Negotiating the Space Between Modernism and the First World War* (New York: Oxford UP, 1996); Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York: Oxford UP, 1975).

[38] Jacques Derrida's theoretical work in *The Post Card* offers an account of postcard communication which deconstructs the writer-addressee binary and problematises the accepted genealogy of reception. Derrida uses the genre of the postcard to illustrate the amount of influence the receiver of a post card has on the sender. He discusses the tensions between causality and chronology as they are revealed on a postcard that depicts Plato instructing Socrates what to write while Derrida enacts, in the form of his work, the very tensions he discusses through a series of missives to an unknown addressee sent on the Plato / Socrates postcards. Derrida undermines the supposedly clear-cut distinction between authors and readers suggesting that receivers (real or anticipated) of acts of writing get embodied in the form and content of the text and therefore play a marked role in the act of creation. Post-structuralists have always posited that the readers of works become writers at the moment of reception when they enact meaning and therefore participate in an act of creation; however, my reading of Derrida suggests something slightly different.

Writers orient their writing to an unknown, hypothetical future audience. That audience as a result informs the writer's creative decisions thus granting the expected reader an indirect (and hypothesized) degree of creative input at the moment of creation as authors anticipate reception. Derrida's focus on Plato dictating what to write to Socrates so that it can then be sent to Plato as Socrates' successor illustrates the breach in the traditional sequence of verbal inheritance: "Socrates turns his *back* on Plato, who made him write what he wanted while seeming to receive it from him" (16). Derrida's playful postcard missives also illustrate the difficulties of communicating through mediated graphic means where intention runs the risk of being modified, rerouted, and completely obliterated. The theoretical leap to the novel, a similarly mediated means of communication, is accomplished without much difficulty; however, dialogic reading

strategies and embodied cognition restore and preserve the intentional presence that Derrida claims is absent or, at the very least, corrupted between communicants.

Derrida's point is well taken with regard to the potentializing contexts of language that are the sources of miscommunication and, in fiction, creative interpretation. With an author like Joyce, however, there is evidence that Joyce did construct his text around complex allusive potentials that added dimensions to his novel. There is also evidence to suggest that even where it becomes difficult to reconstruct an intention through a dialogic reading of *Ulysses*, that Joyce was as aware as Derrida of the slipperiness of language to mean alternatively. In this sense, shifts in literary meaning and continually shifting horizons of expectation were anticipated, and therefore weakly intended, by Joyce. The very art of fragmentation and disruption (fissuring) strongly suggests certain (intended) readings while at the same providing for other associations that would not be considered intended in any strong sense of the word.

At the heart of Derrida's work is the claim that readers can influence what writers write by dictating the terms and expectations that are brought to bear on the reception of the work and that it is reductive to think in purely chronological or sequential terms that only writers influence readers. Derrida's point is my point expressed differently and without the poststructuralist play of formal disruption: imaginative space is negotiated by interpersonal expectations when authors and readers are physically absent from each other and communication is mediated by the written word. See Jacques Derrida, *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1987).

[39] Published in *The Referee*, July 1900 (qtd. in Carline 57).

[40] Postcard popularity also prompted more creative uses of the medium which explored its resources as a vehicle for expression. A postcard-sized journal *The Postcard--The Smallest Monthly Journal in the World* ran one issue on March 1893. The message side of the postcard contained advertising, puzzles, jokes, a sparse mission statement and a light-hearted piece of fiction accommodating the constraints of the limited postcard space entitled "A Tragedy in 33 Words" (Staff 61). On the other hand, while the dimensions of the postcard and the space reserved for messages challenged writing styles and forced innovation, the July 1900 edition of *The Picture Postcard Magazine* reported that an eighty-five year old Norwegian scribe had copied a forty-six thousand word novel onto the back of a postcard in four years. As these two examples illustrate, postcard standardization and conventions presented a challenge to writers whether they sought to communicate in an elliptical manner and test the communication thresholds of understandability or whether they sought to challenge the spatial constraints by transcribing entire novels on the surfaces provided.

[41] Published in the *Journal of the Society of Arts*, 27 April 1906 (qtd. in Carline 55)

[42] An article in the *Glasgow Evening News*, October 1903, reported that "In ten years Europe will be buried beneath picture postcards" (qtd. in Carline 9).

[43] James Joyce, "A Mother" (1914), *The Portable James Joyce*, ed. Harry Levin (New York: Penguin, 1976): 148-63.

[44] Until 1897, postal regulations specified that "The address, the senders name [sic] and address, and a request for return in case of non-delivery, but nothing else, may be written, printed or otherwise impressed on the front (or stamped side)" (qtd. in Carline 53).

[45] In Great Britain 1837, Rowland Hill offered three key proposals for simplifying the postal system. First, he recommended standard rates for postage; second, he suggested that those rates be based on the weight of letters rather than the distance travelled; and thirdly, he suggested that postage rates be prepaid rather than collecting payment from the addressee at the moment of delivery. The introduction of the Uniform Penny Postage (prepaid postal stationary) on 10 January 1840 was an important precursor of the first official postcards which were also pre-stamped. It is Martin Willoughby's argument that the combination of nineteenth-century postal reforms and the development of pictorial printing created an environment in which the postcard was able to evolve and thrive (22).

[46] The United States' use of unofficial postcards predates Austria's official issue. The U.S. postal system allowed anything to be sent through the mail (scraps of paper, bits of cardboard) as long as the items had an address and proper postage prior to 1869 (Willoughby 31).

[47] The United States issued official postcards for the first time in 1873. In the 1880s picture postcards (coloured engravings) became popular.

[48] One of the first and most popular of these postcards dates back to 1889 and photographically commemorates the completion of the Eiffel Tower.

[49] Carline 56-57.

[50] Joyce was not the only modernist writer to effectively exploit the expectations and associations prompted by the postcard script. Wallace Stevens's "A Postcard from the Volcano" makes human bones a postcard from one generation to the next. (Stevens' poem appears in the collection entitled *Ideas of Order*, published in 1936); In a similar vein, Tom Wingfield's address to the audience at the beginning of Tennessee Williams's *The Glass Menagerie* (1944) similarly posits the postcard as a conventional means of written communication. As Tom introduces the characters of the play he comes to the fifth character, the absent father who is represented in the "larger-than-life-size photograph over the mantel" and in the postcard he sent after deserting the family: "The last we heard of him was a picture postcard from Mazatlan, on the Pacific coast of Mexico, containing a message of two words: 'Hello--Goodbye!' and no address" (1019). The father's choice of a postcard is important because it highlights the distance geographically and personally between him and his family. He chooses a means of communication which only allows for brief and fragmented messages. The restrictive form of the postcard symbolises the nature of the relationship; the postcard message is direct, simple, and easy; the picture of the Mexican coastline contrasts sharply with the family's lower-middle class St. Louis tenement.

[51] Don Gifford and Robert J. Seidman (Ulysses *Annotated* 1988: 163) note that in chapter 24 of Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* the expression U.P. announces the imminent death ("it's all U.P. there") of a sick woman. They also suggest that the initials U.P. sometimes precede docket numbers in Irish cemeteries--a reading derived, I suspect, and supported by the lines in "Circe" credited to the Superintendent of Prospect Cemetery, John O'Connell: "Burial docket letter number U.P. eightyfive thousand" (*U* 386); R. B. Kershner (*JJQ* 29.2 Winter 1992: 407-08) reinforces the reading of U.P. as signifying an end ("It's all up with you") by locating such contextual references in two novels (*Inspector French's Greatest Case*--1922 and *The Pit-Prop Syndicate*--1922) by a Dublin author contemporary with Joyce named Freeman Wills Crofts; Robert Byrnes (*JJQ* 21.2 Winter 1984: 175-76) argues that U.P. abbreviates "underproof" and appears stamped on bottles of distilled spirits with less than the standard alcohol content; Susan Swartzlanger (*Explicator* 42.2 Summer 1984: 29-31) works through the playful associations of the "U.P.:up" message connected to appearances of the word "up" throughout *Ulysses* and associates the postcard message with contexts of "urination, drunkenness, lunacy, poverty, and death." Swartzlanger ultimately reads "U.P.:up" phonetically and syntactically as "you pay up"--a slight shift in idiomatic pronunciation from the more popular reading of "U.P.:up" as a schoolyard insult "you pee up"; Richard Ellmann (*Ulysses on the Liffey* 1974) reads the "U.P.:up" message as a fusion of Ulysses and Penelope (84) and as implying that Breen is sexually inadequate "in erection he emits urine rather than sperm" (75). See also Ellmann, *James Joyce* 1983: 455n and Ellmann's reiteration in a letter to Don Gifford (3 October 1983): "When erect you urinate rather than ejaculate"--an interpretation that is supported in slang dictionaries where "up," used as a verb, means to copulate with (a woman); Danis Rose and John O'Hanlan's (*The Lost Notebook: New Evidence on the Genesis of* Ulysses 1989) investigation of Joyce's *Ulysses* notebook transcribed by Madame Raphael brings them to the same conclusion about "U.P.:up" as an expression signifying various types of termination. Their hypothetical manuscript reads "--U.P.: spelt out to make the word more forcible--meaning 'finished'; 'Lestrygonians' 257, entered R; and elsewhere" (xxviii). Rose and O'Hanlan produce this reading by reconstructing a virtual or what they call "The Lost Notebook" using J. Redding Ware's *Passing English of the Victorian Era: A Dictionary of Heterodox English, Slang and Phrase* (n.d.) as a sourcebook for the U.P. definition. What they attempt to supply is the used notes from the notebook which would not have made it into the transcribed notebook because Madame Raphael was told to transcribe only the unused notes. With the original notebook now missing Rose and O'Hanlan supply various hypothetical notes for *Ulysses* derived from the source materials they can prove Joyce used for the surviving notes. Despite the apparent theoretical soundness of "The Lost Notebook" project, the findings of this research remains highly speculative as what "might well have been included in the notebook" (xxviii). According to this logic if "U.P.:up" appeared as an entry in "The Lost Notebook," it is evidence that Joyce had to remind himself of the "meaning" of U.P. because it was not common slang to all Dubliners; Robert Adams (*Surface and Symbol* 1962: 192-93) offers the following readings of the "U.P.:up" message: 1) means nothing and Breen is projecting (Rorschach) his own mental state onto an intentional blank; 2) means "'you urinate,' implying 'you're no good'"; 3) implies he puts his finger U.P.--up his anus; 4) is a reference to impotence "you can't get it up anymore"; 5) a threat of blackmail (the jig is "U.P. up"); 6) announces approaching death (it's all "U.P. up")--the exact expression found in Arnold Bennett's novel *Old Wives' Tale* (Book IV, chap. 4). Adams also cites J. C. Hotten's *The Slang Dictionary* (Chatto & Windus, 1903) where it is noted that U.P., when pronounced naming the two

letters separately, connotes "settled" or "done." Adams, like others, turns to the French edition of *Ulysses* which Joyce personally reviewed and okayed. In the Auguste Morel, Stuart Gilbert, and Valery Larbaud translation, "U.P.:up" becomes "Fou. Tu: foutu," generating as many interpretations as its english counterpart--meaning among other things "you're nuts," "you've been screwed," "it's all up with you," and "you're all washed up." Joyce's supposed input regarding the French translation of *Ulysses* offers some insight into Joyce's intention regarding the "U.P.:up" postcard, but really only further points to its ambiguous connotations. If anything can be gleaned from Joyce's participation in the French *Ulysses* it is that what Joyce intended was ambiguity. A quick glance at the pages of entries under "up" in the *OED* further suggests myriad possibilities--in addition to supporting many of the interpretations discussed here--as well as the very tempting abbreviating of Ulster Protestant. This list of readings is far from complete because the equivocal nature of the postcard message, as it is alluded to by Joyce in *Ulysses*, resists all but creative speculation. The reading that Alf Bergan is the sender has also been put forward because Bergan's knowledge of how John Menton reacted suggests that he has been following Breen to enjoy the joke and because of an encoded narrative play on words. After Bergan tells the story of Breen and the "U.P.:up" postcard he is prevented from finishing his sentence because of a fit of laughter. The narrative reads

> --Look at him, says he. Breen. He's traipsing all round Dublin with a postcard someone sent him with u.p.:up on it to take a li. . .
> And he doubled up. (*U* 385-86)

Bergan doubles up in laughter and this sentence read with a double meaning suggests that it was Bergan who "doubled up" on the postcard, but there is little relevance to knowing who sent the postcard unless they reveal what the message means which no character, including Bergan, ever does.

[52] See above note.

[53] Joyce's comment also points to the realism he felt remained intact beneath the formal experimentation of the novel.

[54] Jacques Derrida similarly calls "*Ulysses*, an immense postcard" ("Ulysses Gramophone: Hear Say Yes in Joyce" 260) because of its potential to shift and destabilize meaning through the corrupting dissemination of written language. Derrida's statement follows his claim that "a postcard has no proper addressee, apart from the person who acknowledges having received it with some inimitable signature." Derrida calls into question the notion of a "Joyce expert" because the text of *Ulysses* repeatedly and intentionally undermines interpretive positions because the novel anticipates all strategies. His paper stresses the ways that communication (postal, telephonic, and telegraphic) networks in the novel function, deteriorate, transform, and ultimately "babelize" communicative acts analogous to reading and theorizing about the novel. See Jacques Derrida, "*Ulysses* Gramophone: Hear Say Yes in Joyce," *Acts of Literature*, ed. Derek Attridge (New York: Routledge, 1992): 253-309.

[55] Jonathan Culler's concept of competence is the internalised "grammar" or "the repertoire of conscious and unconscious knowledge" that readers come to possess via experiences with literature and language (113). In describing literary competence, he argues that "To read a text as literature is not to make one's mind a *tabula rasa* and approach it without preconceptions; one must bring to it an implicit understanding of literary discourse which tells one what to look for" (113-14). Similarly, Joyce did not write *ex nihil*, but found himself constrained by traditions and conventions against which he had to struggle. As early as 1898, when he was sixteen, Joyce wrote an essay entitled "The Study of Language" which strongly endorses literary and linguistic Classicism. Joyce compares literature to mathematics because of their shared reliance on "neatness and regularity" (26). Joyce also writes that

> the names we meet in the literature of our language are handed down to us, as venerable names, not to be treated lightly but entitled beforehand to our respect. They are landmarks in the transition of a language, keeping inviolate, directing its course straight on like an advancing way, widening and improving as it advances but staying always on the high road, though many byways branch off it at all parts and seem smooth to follow. Thus these names, as those of the masters of English, are standards for imitation and reference, and are valuable because their use of the language was also based on their study of it, and is for that reason deserving of great and serious attention. (28-29)

See Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics* (London: Routledge, 1975); James Joyce, "The Study of Languages," *The Critical Writings of James Joyce*, ed. Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellmann (Ithaca: Cornell, UP, 1959): 25-30.

[56] Penguin uses Eliot's remark from his essay "*Ulysses*, Order, and Myth" (1923) as cover copy on its 1984 "definitive" Gabler edition and on its more recent reprinting of the 1960 Random House/Bodley Head "standard" edition.

Chapter Four: Reconditioning Gaps

In the following chapter, I examine how ideas characteristic of psychological behaviourism influenced William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* both thematically and formally and produced a novel that is at once a warning to readers about the threat of behaviouristic conditioning and a practical corrective. I argue that the novel presents characters who are obsessively conditioned in a variety of ways and who have trouble dealing with experiences of cognitive dissonance that challenge their conditioning. Each Compson brother exhibits different signs of compulsive, automatic behaviour which idiosyncratically affects his narrative point of view and forces readers to adjust their own reading habits to negotiate these disorienting perspectives. The aestheticised cognitive dissonance within each section and between them pushes readers to recognise their own conditioned interpretive reading practices while providing them with opportunities to break free of conditioned routine--something none of Faulkner's characters is finally able to do.

I. A Prolonged Instant Of Mesmerized Gravity

We put thirty spokes to make a wheel:
But it is the hole in the center that the use of the cart hinges.

We make a vessel from a lump of clay;
But it is the empty space within the vessel that makes it useful.

We make doors and windows for a room;
But it is the empty spaces that make a room livable.

Thus, while existence has advantages,
It is the emptiness that makes it useful.
(Lao Tzu, *Tao Teh Ching*)

Odd thing that I, who used to clear out for any part of the world at twenty-four hours' notice, with less thought than most men give to crossing the street, had a moment--I won't say of hesitation, but of startled pause, before this commonplace affair. (*Heart of Darkness*)

"'Do you want me to question this boy?' But he could hear, and during those subsequent long seconds while there was absolutely no sound in the crowded little room save that of quiet and intent breathing it was as if he had swung outward at the end of a grape vine, over a ravine, and at the top of the swing had been caught in a prolonged instant of mesmerized gravity, weightless in time" (1633). In Faulkner's "Barn Burning."

Sarty Snopes experiences a moment out of time as he waits in anticipation for the Justice of the Peace to question him.[1] His father has been accused of burning down a neighbour's barn and Sarty knows that he is guilty. The figurative description of this suspended moment grounds the disturbing new experience in a relatable one to overcome its dissonance. In this description Faulkner is employing a type of free indirect speech whereby the frame of reference for this anticipatory moment is given through a contextualising image familiar to Sarty. Like the swinger held in a "prolonged instant of mesmerized gravity," Sarty experiences a type of cognitive dissonance, or what might be better called a cognitive pause. He is scared and confused, caught between contemplation and verbal articulation. The dissonance stems from knowing that if he tells the truth about Mr. Harris's barn he risks his father's anger. Sarty's confusion is the conflict between two warring value systems--his father's corrupt sense of justice and his personal knowledge of what is right and wrong--and that confusion generates a desire for balance. He wants to break free of the sensation of "being pulled two ways like between two teams of horses" (1640).

Sarty conceives of the experience of being caught Hamlet-like between two discordant impulses through the narrator's metaphoric analogue of swinging over a ravine. The image captures both the threatening sense of danger and the thrill of abandonment that accompany experiences of cognitive dissonance--at once a challenge to survival and an opportunity to explore cognitive capacities. On the metaphoric swing, he is caught momentarily in a liminal space. He is no longer ascending higher, nor has he started his counter-swinging descent. The concept of being betwixt and between is relevant to his status as a young boy struggling through a period of strong cognitive dissonance as his dependent child-like innocence clashes with the more independent adult world of responsibilities. The pause Sarty experiences gives him a sense of release, but that release is accompanied by discomfort. For Rollo May,

> The pause is the moment when a person is most vulnerable to anxiety. It is the tremulous moment when we balance possible decisions, when we look forward with awe and wonder or with dread or fear of failure. The pause is the moment when we open ourselves, and the opening is our vulnerability to anxiety. (187)[2]

May's existential belief that freedom (choice) is impossible without anxiety reflects the modernist motivation behind the aesthetic use of cognitive dissonance. He defines freedom as "the capacity to pause in the midst of stimuli from all directions, and in this pause to throw our weight toward this response rather than that one" (163). Sarty's experience, then, is one of anxious freedom where he recognises his own capacity as an

agent to make independent choices and suffer the consequences of those choices. It is precisely in the "gap," the "hiatus," the "pause," the "vacancy," the "lack of something," the "space yet unfilled," where mechanical routine and conditioning get challenged (163-64). Since, according to May, there is no pause in technology, the pause is undeniably one of the hallmarks of humanity which distinguishes us not only from Artificial Intelligence machines, but also from purely instinctual animals. "*The significance of the pause,*" May argues, "*is that the rigid chain of cause and effect is broken*":

> The pause momentarily suspends the billiard-ball system of Pavlov. In the person's life response no longer blindly follows stimulus. There intervenes between the two our human imaginings, reflections, considerations, ponderings. Pause is the prerequisite for wonder. (167)

Modernist writers attempt to aesthetically recreate in readers Sarty's experience of swinging out over a ravine by challenging established reading habits with formal and epistemological fragments. Joyce, for example, deliberately begins *Ulysses* in ambiguity worthy of Empsonian analysis.[3] The very first word of the novel's first sentence announces how precarious an activity reading is in the world of high modernist novels: "Stately, plump Buck Mulligan came from the stairhead, bearing a bowl of lather on which a mirror and razor lay crossed" (*U* 1). Is Buck "stately" in addition to being "plump" or is he just moving in a "stately" manner? Joyce's confusing syntax makes "stately" either a modifying adjective or a modifying adverb. However subtle the difference may seem, depending on how one reads this first sentence will determine forthcoming interpretive reading strategies. According to Clive Hart's reading of Joyce's first sentence, "The comma after 'Stately,' throws us into doubt and is a preparation for all of these things--the shifting and twisting about, the confusing of our sense of direction and thus of our sense of the terrain we are about to traverse" (429). The opening sentence of *Ulysses* and its subtly disturbing ambiguity functions as a warning to readers. The apparent complement to Buck that he is a "stately" person is undercut almost as soon as it is offered. Rather than being a permanent characteristic of his like "plumpness," "stately" refers equally to a mannerism which he adopts by design. The sentence can be parsed in both ways. Joyce purposefully confuses his meaning by exploiting what I. A. Richards calls the "interanimation of words"--the way neighbour words in a whole utterance function to control meaning and animate the interplay of possible interpretations.[4] This ambiguity contributes to the representation of Buck Mulligan's character in the novel. Stephen's personal usurper is usurped by Joyce's description of him. Readers are left wondering if Buck is in fact "stately" or whether he simply puts on

false airs. This destabilizing ambiguity leads readers to adopt a position similar to Stephen's with regards to Mulligan: can he be trusted or is he simply an attention-seeking blowhard? His parodic mockery of the eucharist while shaving, his treatment of Stephen after his mother's death, and his undermining of Stephen's Shakespeare lecture at the end of "Scylla and Charybdis" suggest that he is more the latter, but this is a determination that can only be made by marshalling evidence from elsewhere in the novel.

This example suggests how modernist aesthetics of dissonance generate cognitive pauses in interpretive reading and force readers to take responsibility for how they negotiate the difficult terrain of multiple potential meanings that prevent any sense of definitive closure. Through dislocating syntax, Joyce begins his novel on a dissonant note to create both uncertainty and possibility in the alternative meanings. The very feeling of this sentence being in some way "dislocated" is further evidence of the way that body-based metaphors underpin literary interpretation. As I've shown throughout, decorum is associated with normal body functioning and a dislocation marks a disruption of this normalcy. As readers progress through the novel the general comfort zone of the six early episodes gives way to more drastically shifting experimental narrative styles. In the later, more experimental episodes of *Ulysses*, Joyce often uses fragmented sentences and unconventional narrative perspectives which mean and are animated by what remains in the background of the mind--the "initial style" and past literary experiences--and is inferentially evoked rather than presented in the text.

Faulkner's *The Sound and The Fury* inverts this strategic order of narrative development.[5] The disruptive points of view of Benjy's and Quentin's chapters are followed by the comfort of Jason's fairly straightforward narrative perspective and the third-person narrative of the novel's fourth and final section, rather than moving from relative narrative stability to experimental disruption as is the case in *Ulysses*. The contrast in Faulkner's novel supplies initial dissonance and is one of the reasons why early critics found Jason Compson to be the most honest and forthcoming of the novel's protagonists, not because his character is honest--in fact all of his actions suggest just the opposite--but because the more radical experimental forms of the novel end where his narrative voice begins. Jason's section of the novel and the final one--often called Faulkner's--do little to complete the narrated picture of the Compson family; however, because they are more conventionally conceived sections, they offer readers relief when encountered. The narrative form in the second half of the book shifts to a style resembling what a reader might reasonably expect to find when opening up a "traditional" novel. Even though the last two sections offer simply two more perspectives on the

deterioration of the Compson family and the old South, Faulkner describes Jason as the "first sane Compson": "Logical, rational, contained and even a philosopher in the old tradition" ("Appendix" 716). This description applies not as much to Jason's character as to the formal properties of the third section of the novel. It is perhaps understandable that readers would come to see Jason as "sane" and "logical" after reading the dislocating fragmentation of Benjy's and Quentin's sections. A closer examination, however, reveals that Jason is a sadistic, manipulative, and self-serving individual who suffers from paranoid beliefs that he has been wronged by everyone in the world. The only sane and logical thing about Jason's section is that it, like the final section, is easier to read, and therefore more accessible to the majority of readers. Benjy and Quentin are difficult to describe because of the accompanying difficulties of their subjectivised narrative form. Jason appears to be a much more clearly defined character in part because the form his narrative section takes is more accessible. Mrs. Compson reinforces this view when she says that Jason "is the only one of my children with any practical sense" (*SF* 107), an evaluation that seems to foreshadow the formal stability of Jason's chapter. Ultimately the predictability of the chapter's conventional style gets projected onto the character. To an extent, the form does mirror Jason's own oversimplified view of the world and tunnel-vision, but he is no less complex a character than either Benjy or Quentin. His goal is to get his share at the expense of his boss, his mother, his sister, his niece, and even his defenseless idiot brother. More than anything else, Jason's section reveals to readers the extent to which clear comprehension and familiarity can be confused with truthfulness. Faulkner's novel, however, purposefully undermines such easy assumptions. In this way he participates in the modernist struggle against the behaviouristic view of what is considered literary realism: the belief that conventional linguistic referentiality translates directly into verisimilitude, transparency, and representational fidelity.

In its formal experimentation, *The Sound and the Fury* resists the repetitive conditioning characteristic of behaviourism. Faulkner's dissonant aesthetics are designed to challenge readers' habitual reading practices and what has since been described as linguistic behaviourism--"the idea that semantic facts must be construed in behavioral terms; semantic reality is behavioral reality" (235).[6] Faulkner's novel disrupts these automatic stimulus-response interactions with language by forcing readers to consider the subjective vantage points from which the use of language issues. Because of this focus on breaking conditioned responses, the adverb "again"--which Quentin finds so depressing--perhaps most accurately characterises the obsessive personalities of Faulkner's protagonists, his attempts to write the novel, readers' frustrations at the novel's difficult

aesthetics, and the fear of a popularised behaviourism which, in part, motivated the aestheticisation of cognitive dissonance. To begin, each of Faulkner's narrating brothers expresses himself through an idiosyncratic narrative style coloured by his personality. Benjy, for instance, is a completely conditioned being. He epitomises the repetition of "again." His daily routine is one where there are no real breaks and thus no unbearable dissonance. He has no reflective abilities and no capacity to differentiate past and present, establish cause and effect, or contextualise pragmatically. Simply put, Benjy is the human embodiment of the conditioned reflex. He is an unconscious recorder of the material world and his actions and responses are triggered by purely objective stimuli. Readers quickly isolate and differentiate themselves from Benjy's perspective because he lacks self-reflexive cognitive abilities and this forces readers to compensate for this lack in order to make sense of Benjy's experiences. He is behaviourism's mechanical man functioning according to the observable logic of "again" in the absence of cognitive reflection.

Quentin also suffers from the behaviouristic "again," however, the stimuli that prompt his mental flashbacks and stream of consciousness do not follow an observable logic. Almost everything he sees and does initiates the cognitive script for his sister. Unlike Benjy, though, Quentin is conscious of this compulsive return to thoughts of Caddy and her virginity. Everything is processed symbolically in relation to that context and he cannot live outside of this obsessive focus. For Quentin Compson, "again" is a sad word because it marks the hopeless repetition of experiences he sees as constituting his life: "Again. Sadder than was. Again. Saddest of all. Again." (*SF* 109). Quentin knows that the temporal encroachment of the past distorts the way he functions in the everyday world. The difficulty readers have with Quentin's narrative perspective is that his cognitive responses overlap and become layered, completely distorting the logic of stimulus-response relationships. Quentin's suicide is the direct result of his not being able to stop the intrusion of "again," of not being able to bring his mind and thoughts to order because the associative details of things like honeysuckle (a mnemonic smell he associates with Caddy) repeatedly get "all mixed up" with his other thoughts, even displacing them entirely. His decision to kill himself must be read as the result of his lack of control over the behaviouristic associationism in his cognitive operations. His conditioning is obsessively personal and he cannot recondition himself to have responses that do not in some way lead back to Caddy. Even when he befriends the immigrant girl he greets her with the very loaded expression, "Hello, sister" (143). He becomes a big-brother figure to the girl and the subtext of his need and desire to see her home safely is a transferred

response to his failed attempts to protect Caddy and her virginity. The immigrant girl provides him with a symbolic opportunity to try "again" in his role as protector.

Jason appears, in contrast, relatively normal simply because the narrative style of his section returns to one that readers find more accessible. His chapter is a combination of dialogue and self-justifying interior monologue all revolving around his obsessive concern to constantly reestablish control in his environment. However, it is difficult to characterise any of the speech exchanged between Jason and other characters as dialogue because Jason really doesn't listen to anyone but himself. He directs, he blames, he threatens, he curses, but he will not take orders from anyone else, not even from his boss whom he repeatedly challenges to fire him. Ultimately, Caddy is the common stimulus that sends Benjy into fits of bellowing, controls Quentin's stream of consciousness, and is what stimulates much of Jason's poisonous rage--so much so that her name cannot be mentioned ever "again" in the Compson house after she leaves. Finally, the fourth section of the novel, which follows Jason's, marks an obsessive return of sorts. Faulkner reestablishes the conventional third-person point of view in his own attempt to restore order to his story through narrative objectivity. This narrative shift after what has preceded it, however, reveals just how stagnant and unfeeling such a return is.

Writing *The Sound and the Fury* was, for Faulkner, an act of obsessive repetition not unlike the torment of Quentin's sensations of "again." He locates the origins of the novel in a short story without a plot, or rather, in an image, a "mental picture" of the "muddy seat of a girl's drawers in a pear tree." He describes the novel's evolution organically as one section growing out of and in response to the shortcomings of the previous section(s):

> And so I told the idiot's experience of that day, and that was incomprehensible, even I could not have told what was going on then, so I had to write another chapter. Then I decided to let Quentin tell his version of the same day, or that same occasion, so he told it. Then there had to be a counterpoint, which was the other brother, Jason. By that time it was completely confusing. I knew that it was not anywhere near finished and then I had to write another section from the outside with an outsider, which was the writer, to tell what had happened on that particular day. And that's how the book grew. That is, I wrote that same story four times. None of them were right, but I had anguished so much that I could not throw any of it away and start over, so I printed it in the four sections. That was not a deliberate *tour de force* at all, the book just grew that way. That I was still

> trying to tell one story which moved me very much and each time I failed. . . .(qtd. in Bleikasten 49)[7]

Faulkner describes the frustrated process of writing the novel in terms of a repetitive drive to "complete" or "finish." His own dissonance at not understanding fully what he had written compels him to begin again in order to relieve such felt discomfort. Later Faulkner would claim that in fact he tried to write the same story five times, and tried to get it right yet again in the "Appendix" that was published in 1946 in *The Portable Faulkner*.[8] That *The Sound and the Fury* continued to grow with every new attempt "to tell" from different narrative perspectives suggests something about the organic structure that Faulkner used as a benchmark against which to measure his novel. His perception of the novel as "incomprehensible," "confusing," and "not anywhere near finished" locates his aesthetic benchmark in the commitments of nineteenth-century realist fiction. Rhetorically at least, Faulkner aspired to an ideal of clarity and that apparently motivated his rewriting. As the novel's first reader, Faulkner repeatedly sensed a void in the narrative, successive fragments that were, like Benjy, each successively "trying to say." Faulkner's own struggle "trying to say" over and over again finds embodiment in Benjy's confrontation with the Burgess girl: "I was trying to say, and I caught her, trying to say, and she screamed and I was trying to say and trying and the bright shapes began to stop and I tried to get out" (*SF* 60).[9]

Faulkner describes telling the story first through the eyes of an idiot child who was "capable only of knowing what happened, but not why." Feeling like he hadn't told the story adequately through Benjy, Faulkner decided to try it again, "the same story through the eyes of another brother." When the second attempt proved unsatisfactory, he "told it for the third time through the eyes of the third brother," but that was still not it. He describes writing the fourth chapter as an attempt "to gather the pieces together and fill in the gaps by making myself the spokesman." After letting his characters try their hand at telling the story of the Compson family, Faulkner asserts authorial control through the conventional third-person point of view. But he still considered the novel incomplete until he wrote the infamous "Appendix: The Compsons" in a "final effort to get the story told and off my mind, so that I myself could have some peace from it." Faulkner admits that he couldn't leave the story alone: "I could never tell it right, though I tried hard and would like to try *again*, though I'd probably fail *again*" (emphasis added 245).[10]

Faulkner's successive rewriting of the story, what he attributes to his need to "have some peace from it," is the consequence of the cognitive dissonance he experienced when he reread his work and was forced to struggle with the gaps left open by the idiosyncratic

narrative styles and the epistemological fragmentation that each brother contributed to the picture of the family history. Faulkner has always referred to *The Sound and the Fury* as a "splendid failure," a novel that attempts to tell the story of the Compson family four times and yet fails with each attempt: "even when I knew I couldn't bring it off, I still worked at it" (qtd. in Bleikasten 48). The frustration that Faulkner felt as he wrote and the determination to get the story right, to complete it, are the natural impulses to order that readers bring to the novel. When Faulkner says that he "wrote this book and learned how to read"[11] he is referring to how his rewritings of the text revealed to him just how reading, like writing, is a consistency-building activity. Writing was compensation for gaps in reading, and in attempting to construct a "completed" story, Faulkner learned that behind the act of reading lies a similar impulse to have closure. The same incompatible versions and incomplete aspects that made the novel a "failure" in Faulkner's eyes, also make it "splendid" because its difficult poetics engage readers in active filling-in processes as they read. The aesthetics of dissonance in *The Sound and the Fury* are what prevent readers' reading habits from being conditioned and fixed.

Because Faulkner's repeated attempt to tell the story produced a fragmented reading experience, the strategic design and narrative complexity of *The Sound and the Fury* warrants rereading. The novel problematises single linear reading experiences because of the ordering of the chapters which Faulkner admitted was calculated. The very temporality of reading is set against the achronological sequence of chapters and the shifting temporality of characters' thoughts. In Benjy's section, for instance, the two Quentins are mentioned in undifferentiated contexts and this confusion is not settled definitively until Jason's section, where Caddy's daughter, named after Quentin, takes on an identity independent of her namesake.[12] High modernist writers generally, in their search for disruptive innovative forms and in their creation of "writerly" texts, are committed to an ideal of rereadability (73).[13] If reading is indeed an orienting effort and self-adjusting process, then the challenging poetics and temporal instability of the content of characters' streams of consciousness in Faulkner's novel force readers out of conventional reading habits--what Ian Watt calls "a rapid, inattentive, almost unconscious kind of reading habit" (49)--and into critical rereading.[14] To reread is to place the first experience of linear, end-oriented reading into an intertextual dialogue with a second experience of reading which is highly reflective and interpretive, characterised by a back-and-forth circularity of cross-referencing and reevaluation of textual details in light of readers' knowledge of the novel's total structure and idiosyncratic forms (Calinescu 3). From this perspective it is possible to analyse the ways in which calculated

epistemological gaps and the selective communication of textual information strategically manipulate readers' unexamined expectations and their heuristic impulses, something not always observable during a first read-through. Rereading tests hypotheses derived from the first reading and reconsiders interpretive positions in light of reexperienced details that can only appear relevant after the completion of a first reading (Calinescu 8). Difficult modernist poetics demand that readers read "again" if they want to understand the complexity such texts contain.

Just as rereading attempts to compensate for a perceived lack, *The Sound and the Fury* thematises loss and the desperate attempt to compensate for and reconcile the dissonance of that loss. As readers reading Faulkner's narratively fragmented novel, we also find ourselves trying to compensate interpretively for a perceived loss. Faulkner specifically referred to his novel as "the tragedy of two lost women: Caddy and her daughter," to which I would add the loss of a third woman--Mrs. Compson, the debilitated absent mother (qtd. in Cowan 16). The sense of loss and the instability of the void are issues that get transferred to readers through the formal inconsistencies and the incoherence of the novel's multiple narrative perspectives. Each narrative point of view provides, at best, an impressionistic sketch of Caddy, life in the South, the family dynamic, and the everyday world. Compensating for gaps is not just part of the reading experience but it is also the daily struggle of Faulkner's characters.

Faulkner claimed that his "Appendix" was the "key to the whole book, and after reading it, the 4 sections as they stand now fall into clarity and place"; but, arguably the "Appendix" destroys the dynamic of the novel's dissonance with a reductive and superficial gloss designed to reduce feelings of confusion on the part of readers. Here I sympathise with John Mathews who envies his students and laments the fact that he will never again experience "the thrill of the outraged amazement that the first page [of the novel] produces in the first-time reader" (122).[15] The "Appendix" eliminates too much of this surprise, frustration, and confusion by prefacing and explaining away the clash between reader expectations and experimental form. It is almost as if looking back on his work, and after years of critics' and readers' questions about the novel, Faulkner simply gave in and forgot about the reasons why he arranged and wrote the novel the way he did. Fifteen years intervened to obscure the situatedness of *The Sound and the Fury*'s experimental style which powerfully responded to the social and aesthetic currents of the 1920s, and most notably to behaviourism. Faulkner's "Appendix" is an attempt to secure an alternative reception. As an author, he was spoon-feeding modernism to readers whom he assumed had extremely low thresholds for cognitive dissonance--not unlike his

characters. But cognitive dissonance was the vehicle through which he developed the characters of Benjy and Quentin and it was the means by which he drew readers into the text and into the process of reading beyond the information given. With the "Appendix" he was giving the information prior to the experience of dissonance and depriving readers of its full impact. In doing so, he was undoing the aesthetic resistance that high modernist experimental fiction sets up against the behaviouristic type of mentality that seemed to be running rampant through all forms of mass cultural production and everyday experiences of the world at the time.

Faulkner hoped readers would only read the "Appendix" after completing the novel. According to him, Benjy's section--which he called "the most obscure and troublesome"--had to appear first because his original design was to challenge the reader from the outset with Benjy's unusual perspective. This makes Faulkner's insistence that the "Appendix" appear before the first section of the novel very confusing. By calling it an "Appendix," rather than a "Foreward" he hoped, perhaps somewhat naively, that the "Appendix" would not alter the novel's chronology or pander "to those who wont *make the effort* to understand the book" (emphasis added 228).[16] The "Appendix" was always intended to be a basic guide that would confirm specific interpretations after the fact and help pacify disgruntled readers. Faulkner saw the "Appendix" as a means of making the novel more accessible and more coherent: "after reading this any reader will understand all the other sections." But the "Appendix" is an ill-fitting prosthesis that eliminates much of the novel's interpretive dynamics and intended dissonance, taking away from the reading experience more than it contributes.[17]

If the "Appendix" is read first, the novel does not reveal itself in the reading process in the same way. For instance, it effectively destroys through explanation the confusion about the two Quentins, the blurred chronology of events in Benjy's mind, and the obscuring of context in the opening scene. It also replaces the dialogue of reading and rereading by removing much of the difficulty and uncertainty that originally motivated Faulkner to write the novel the way he did. He goes out of his way to provocatively hint in Quentin's section and at other points in the novel that Caddy and Quentin have committed incest only to undermine it in the "Appendix." Quentin's narrative is peppered with suggestive fragments and references to incest, but none definitively confirms or denies it. In the same way, readers cannot be completely sure whether Quentin actually confesses to his father about the incestuous relationship with his sister or whether it is solely an imagined account. Faulkner's "Appendix," however, stifles the exploration of these possibilities when he explains that Quentin "loved not the idea of

incest which he would not commit, but some presbyterian concept of its eternal punishment" (*Portable* 710). In interpreting his own novel for readers, Faulkner successfully reduced the dissonance he originally intended as a bulwark against behaviouristic conditioning. If forcing readers to "make the effort of understanding the book" was as important to Faulkner as he claimed, it indeed seems strange that he would even contemplate publishing the "Appendix."

Faulkner's decision to publish the "Appendix" is even more perplexing when one considers how adamant he was about having the narrative in the novel's first section shift back and forth between italics and roman type in order to give objective form to Benjy's subjective transferences which, for Benjy, constitute one continuous, coherent present. He wanted these shifts to mark for readers a thought transference too, but he intentionally avoided systematically using roman type for actual scenes in the present and italics for remembered ones. Instead, he chose to keep alternating randomly back and forth, "letting the recollection [its content] postulate its own date" (*Selected Letters* 44-45). In order to confuse readers, he uses roman type one time to narrate from the present and then uses italics when he returns to the present to pick up where he left off. Faulkner refused to accept the suggestions made by his editor, Ben Wasson, which consisted of changing all the italics to roman type and indicating time shifts with line breaks. As far as Faulkner was concerned, the alterations presented "a most dull and poorly articulated picture" to his eye: "If something were to be done, it were better to rewrite the whole section objectively, like the 4th section" (qtd. in Polk 8). For Faulkner, a break marked an objective change in tempo, whereas he wanted to capture Benjy's inability to distinguish between experiences in the past and the present and transfer that confusion to readers. He was more concerned with what was going on in Benjy's mind than in the reader's eye: "I think italics are necessary to establish for the reader Benjy's confusion; that unbroken-surfaced confusion of an idiot which is outwardly a dynamic and logical coherence" (qtd. in Polk 8). On this account, his intention is to force readers into a situation in which they are compelled to give order to subjective temporal shifts and compensate cognitively for Benjy's mental deficiencies. The forms the novel takes are inevitably what enact this engagement. In Faulkner's mind, changing the form amounted to nothing less than dismantling the very design he had created to provoke dissonance. Rather than have his work altered even slightly, he was determined to rewrite the entire novel using a conventional third-person objective narrative form.

As evidence of Faulkner's change of heart, the "Appendix" is an interesting text to study; however, as a guide to *The Sound and the Fury* it is a *supplement* in the Derridean

sense--something that displaces that which it was intended to complete.[18] Whether Faulkner wrote it in response to readers' complaints or prompted by his own dissonant feeling that the novel was still unfinished, the "Appendix" is a testament to the effectiveness of the aesthetics of cognitive dissonance. It is my contention that writing the "Appendix" was a compulsive mistake on Faulkner's part which effectively neutralised much of the aestheticised cognitive dissonance of his novel and diminished its effective opposition to behaviourism. The "Appendix" removes experiences of the pause. "the prolonged instant of mesmerized gravity," in which readers are given the opportunity to confront their own conditioned states and exercise their interpretive independence in managing the cognitive dissonance of difficult modernist literature. *The Sound and the Fury* engages with the threat of a popularised behaviourism on both the formal and thematic levels. In what follows I examine how the idea of behaviourism becomes a central animating force behind the disorienting narrative shifts of Faulkner's novel and how it characterises the narrative perspectives of the four different sections.

II. The Negative Space Of Behaviourism

I don't think I handle the notes much differently from other pianists. But the pauses between the notes--ah, there is where the artistry lies! (Artur Sachnabel)

tell me what youre thinking about tell me (*The Sound and the Fury*)

William Faulkner never mentioned John B. Watson or Ivan Pavlov specifically in any of his letters, interviews, or fictional works. It would seem as though he was either uninterested in behaviourism as a psychological discipline or that he just hadn't heard enough about it to cause him concern. *The Sound and the Fury*, however, tells a different story. The poetics of Faulkner's novel reveal that the fear of a behaviouristic world was a philosophical subtext for modernist novels and that dissonant aesthetics could disrupt readers' habituated responses to fiction. Faulkner's characters are themselves obsessively conditioned individuals whose cognitive inflexibilities are warnings for readers at the same time as their idiosyncratic narrative perspectives prevent readers from reading habitually. Each character has a low tolerance for cognitive dissonance which makes them appear mechanical and habituated. First-hand experience of the cognitive inflexibility of these characters--whatever the individual reasons--is offered to readers through the sections of the novel narrated from their perspectives. Readers are forced to become mediators

negotiating the ground between these resistant narrative points of view and their own conditioned use of language. In order to understand Benjy and Quentin, for instance, readers must have a flexibility in their own uses of language which allows them to adapt to perspectives that are foreign to them. This way Faulkner's novel forces readers out of their own potentially restrictive language uses and modes of reception.

Faulkner's novels have been mined repeatedly for their rich psychological material, but no study to date has attempted to read *The Sound and the Fury*--or any of his other works--behaviourally.[19] My goal in introducing behaviourism somewhat tangentially earlier in the dissertation was to offer a way of looking at modernist difficulty from an historical context that helps explain the aestheticisation of cognitive dissonance beyond the standard refrain that defamiliarisation simply challenges our habits. Moreover, behaviourism enriches the Frankfurt School view of low (or mass) art as corruptive and high art (modernism) as a bulwark, shifting the focus away from the means by which products are made to the kinds of reception they tend to promote and condition. In other words, behaviourism allows us to view modernist aesthetics as targeting passivity and uncritical responses without necessarily aligning these qualities with popular culture and mass-produced products. In what follows I want to examine some of the ways that modernist experimentation resists the threat of behaviourism by breaking the conditioned machinery of conventional reception and by bringing a heightened consciousness to literary reception and conventional forms of language use.

The complex reading experience of *The Sound and the Fury* is compounded by the fact that the characters in the novel are not inscribed readers who aid our own reading strategies; rather, they are figures whose interpretive practices are to be resisted. Only the daily routines of these individuals thematise the struggle that readers experience as they negotiate aestheticised forms that play dissonance and conditioning off of each other. Characters in the novel function on three levels of categorisation: "the thematic (character as idea), the synthetic (character as artificial construct), and the mimetic (character as person)" (148).[20] As I will show, however, these distinctions are not mutually exclusive. Thematically, each of Faulkner's characters is a highly conditioned being living behaviouristically in a modern world of constant change. Synthetically, their identities are constructions of language, textualities which attempt to embody their narrative perspectives. And mimetically, these characters experience forms of cognitive dissonance that readers can identify with and need to identify with if they are to understand the novel's idiosyncratically narrated points of view.

Benjy

"'Wait a minute.' Luster said. 'You snagged on that nail again. Cant you never crawl through here without snagging on that nail'" (*SF* 4). Benjy catches his clothes on a nail as he and Luster crawl through the "broken place" in the fence. The stimulus of getting caught prompts Benjy to recall an earlier incident of getting caught and he relives the memory as if it is happening again at that moment. This is the first narrative temporal shift in the novel and it is the point where Caddy makes her first appearance: she uncatches Benjy from the fence. The very mention of her name, in turn, catches readers off guard. Her appearance is neither introduced nor explained, but signalled formally by a typographic shift from roman type to italics. The textual mention of her name creates a dissonance for readers not unlike the dissonance her name causes Benjy and other members of the Compson household. Narratively speaking, the point where Benjy gets caught and is forced to stop and untangle himself at the "broken place" in the fence marks the same hiatus in the reading process where readers are forced to stop and reorient themselves at the "broken place" in the text. Benjy's section is a narrative of successive cognitive catches both for him and for readers--nails, names, gestures, familiar images, events, and words--which automatically trigger Benjy's memories through an associative logic that is completely divorced from any willful intention or reflective understanding on his part. At the same time, this associative logic is foreign to readers and the mnemonic-temporal shifts generate cognitive dissonance in the reading process. But these are not transferred from Benjy to readers as clearly marked shifts because he is not capable of conceiving of them as dissonant in any rational way. He simply experiences the shift, but doesn't feel compelled or isn't able to make sense of it in a conscious way. Unlike Benjy, however, readers are forced to experience and consider the nagging discomfort of such intentionally designed dissonance. There is at once a feeling of interpretive freedom before such textual "catches" as well as a felt anxiety in the face of the unknown. In working out these dissonant moments, readers are forced to encounter their own predispositions and thresholds for dissonance through the conscious adjustment of their reading habits. Dissonant scenes constantly need to be weighed according to an embodied sense of relevance, that is, what is and is not worth the investment of cognitive energy. Faulkner intended the radical originality of his narrative to be both perplexing and frustrating for readers used to more traditional chronological and stable narratives. Benjy's section of the novel is the representative high modernist text since it foregrounds an aesthetic of cognitive dissonance: making the everyday appear strange; struggling with language "to say"; poeticising prose; and self-consciously narrating about the processes of

writing and reading. Like so many of its contemporary modernist novels, *The Sound and the Fury* implicitly addresses readers as readers by resisting the easy processing associated with conventional works in the tradition of nineteenth-century realist novels. The opening section of the novel violates reading expectations because it resists readers' desires to orient themselves and compose stable interpretive wholes out of the narrative fragmentation.

The Sound and the Fury begins with a sentence that suggestively signifies several possibilities because of the absence of a definite anchoring context: "Through the fence, between the curling flower spaces, I could see them hitting" (3). This establishing shot announces the novel's own constrained limitations as Benjy's view is restricted by the position of his body. Even though Benjy cannot intellectually appreciate the degree to which the body is in the mind and how it ultimately affects perception, his limited perspective and understanding of what he sees is still filtered through his minimal mental capacities. His mental state determines his view of events in the world and Faulkner attempts to reproduce the confusion, or lack thereof, by offering readers pure sensation and fragments of contexts. It might be more accurate to call the opening sentence a close-up rather than an establishing shot because it doesn't provide an overall picture of the setting from a distance or contextualise the spatial relations between characters, actions, and environmental objects.[21] In other words, readers are forced to reconcile the discrepancy between what is narrated (and how it is narrated) and what is actually taking place. Part of this process involves reconstructing a chronological history of the Compson family from the confusion of events and remembered fragments which blur into and speak cryptically to each other in Benjy's thoughts.

The physically constrained opening description of what appears to be a violent activity immediately prompts the question of who or what is being hit? The suggestive implications of violence is figuratively a violence against readers and their conventional reading practices. In a sense, conditioned reading strategies and the ability to find appropriate cognitive scripts to fill in the extremely limited context are being attacked here. The lack of such an anchoring context for this description destabilizes the reading process, and the constrained view and the apparent violence described by the narrating voice transfers an analogous experience to the reader. The opening description of "hitting" first calls to mind physical violence of some sort. As the description continues, alternative scripts present themselves as possibilities. While the repeated references to "hitting" as well as taking out and putting back the "flag" could equally refer to activities performed on a battlefield as on a golf course, the calling of "Here, caddie" confirms that

the cognitive script for golf is correct. However, there is no mention of golf balls being hit, and the word "golf" doesn't appear until much later in the text. When it does appear, it is after many non-specific references to flying and found "balls" (14, 16, 17). Luster, still trying to scrounge up enough money to go to the "show," says to Miss Quentin's Charlie, "You don't want to buy no golf ball neither, does you." This is the first mention of golf in the novel. And just in case readers missed this direct confirmation of the novel's opening context, Faulkner reemphasises it with Charlie's response, "What kind of ball," which forces Luster to repeat "Golf ball" (57). Up until this point, the description of golfing has been suggestively fragmented.

These descriptions are, moreover, amputations because they lack direct objects and objects of prepositions. What are "they hitting"? And what is the flag being taken out of and put back into? The missing words "golf balls" and "cup" that would contextually complete these ideas are purposefully left out for effect. As I argued at the end of the first chapter, any fragmented or restricted narrative point of view amputates the conventional narrative perspective of the God-like objectivity established by the practitioners of realist fiction. Readers get Benjy's perspective mediated artificially through a narrating voice which is not actually Benjy's since Benjy does not possess the power of speech. In Faulkner's attempt to represent the limitations of Benjy's understanding of what he sees in what used to be his pasture, he amputates his description of events and in so doing momentarily renders readers as helpless as Benjy. Unlike Benjy, readers who experience this cognitive disorientation recognise it as such and are compelled to eliminate or reduce their confusion through interpretation and a cognitive search for possible contexts for "hitting" and "flags."

The limitations of Benjy's understanding are most clearly transferred formally through the narrative to readers when the children leave the kitchen after eating dinner on the day of Damuddy's death. As they go out to the back porch Benjy sees Versh close "the door black." In complete darkness, disembodied voices commingle and Benjy is unable to keep the individual speakers separate. Faulkner represents this confusion formally with a paragraph of untagged verbal statements as Benjy attempts to orient himself through smell and touch:

> I could smell Versh and feel him. You all be quiet, now. We're not going upstairs yet. Mr Jason said for you to come right up stairs. He said to mind me. I'm not going to mind you. But he said for all us to. Didn't he, Quentin. I could feel Versh's head. I could hear us. Didn't he, Versh. Yes, that right. Then I say for us to go out doors a while. Come on. (*SF* 31)

Although it is not difficult for readers to figure out who says what, it does take some effort to follow this conversation without "seeing" the speakers. From this passage and others like it, readers get a sense of what Benjy's world is like and how much he relies on sensory input to situate himself and others within his world of the continuous or "virtual" present. Benjy's experience here is similar to that of readers who must orient themselves among the various voices, defamiliarised conventions of representation, and various memories from the past that intrude into the narrative present.

To maintain dissonance, Faulkner purposefully misleads readers through his characters' interpretations of events. Jason and the rest of the Compson family are convinced that Benjy laments the loss of his pasture and that this explains why he is repeatedly drawn to the golfers "hitting," whereas in reality he is simply searching for his missing sister, Caddy, whose name he hears regularly as each group of golfers makes its way to the green. Benjy's confusion between his sister's name and the call for a golf attendant reveals that Benjy is a completely conditioned being who cannot differentiate between contexts that alter the significance of words and their meanings. The golfers' cries of "Here, caddie" and "Fore, caddie" register phonetically as "Caddy," and Benjy expects to see his sister when he hears the name. The disappointment at not seeing her and the visual memory elicited by the word triggers his uncontainable "bellering." When one of the golfers asks Luster why Benjy moans, Luster's response is "Lawd knows. . . . He just starts like that" (19) as if there is no rhyme or reason for Benjy's reactions. While Luster may not be perceptive enough to make the connection between the golfing and Caddy, his relentless teasing of Benjy using Caddy's name helps to cement the automatic association. For readers, Faulkner makes this connection obvious towards the end of the novel when Luster's teasing directly follows Benjy's bellowing response to a golfer's "Here, Caddie. Bring the bag." Frustrated by the persistent bellowing that seems to come from nowhere, Luster decides to give Benjy "somethin to beller about." He looks over his shoulder to the house and then whispers, "Caddy! Beller now. Caddy! Caddy! Caddy!" (365). Luster torments Benjy with Caddy's name, but he doesn't connect the word to the golfers. Dilsey also knows that the name provokes an emotional response in Benjy. When Frony claims that Benjy "dont know nobody's name," Dilsey replies, "You just say it and see if he dont. . . . You say it to him while he sleeping and I bet he hear you" (36). Mrs. Compson's prohibition to utter Caddy's name around the Compson house similarly attempts to remove a stimulus (signifier) which recalls the family's fallen reputation.

Caddy helped condition Benjy's response to her name. When she speaks to him she refers to herself in the third person using her proper name rather than using the subject

pronoun "I" or the object pronoun "me." She constantly reinforces the association between her name and her appearance. For example, when Benjy meets her at the gate after school she twice repeats the sentences, "Did you come to meet Caddy" and "What are you trying to tell Caddy" (7). Caddy conditions Benjy to associate the love and attention he receives from his sister with her name. The name becomes inextricably linked to, almost synonymous with, these other pleasant sensations. When that conditioned bond is broken Benjy suffers a mental dissonance that he cannot understand, but which makes him desire reconciliation.

Benjy is so deeply conditioned that he goes in search of the generating stimulus when it does not come on its own. He moans to get outside at specific times of the day because that is the time when Caddy comes home from school. According to Versh, they "Couldn't keep him in. . . . He kept on until they let him go and he comes straight down here, looking through the gate" (7). Benjy waits by the gate until she appears: "Caddy was walking. Then she was running, her booksatchel swinging and jouncing behind her" (6). This conditioning routine marks Benjy to such a degree that years later, after Caddy has left the Compson home, he still tries to make his way down to the gate when school lets out for the day. Benjy comes to identify the appearance of Caddy with booksatchels and children returning home from school. Benjy only breaks from the closed, conditioned world of the Compson property when, prompted by this identification, he ventures out beyond the gate in search of Caddy. Unable to contain himself, he grabs the Burgess girl as though she were his missing stimulus. His supposed attack is misinterpreted as an attempted rape and Jason has him castrated for breaking with the routine of staying in the Compson yard. The castration acts as a negative reinforcement serving only to associate change at the most basic level in Benjy's mind with physical pain and unrecoverable loss. Benjy's castration is a physical amputation that figuratively stands in for the psychological loss for which he is trying to compensate by searching for Caddy. Unfortunately, what he could not appreciate as an embodied response to a loss has now been given a bodily signification through surgery.

Faulkner's representation of Benjy as a completely conditioned being who automatically responds to certain stimuli is strikingly reminiscent of Ivan Pavlov's experiments on canine conditioned reflex activity. As I outlined in chapter two, Pavlov's research on conditioned behaviour and adaptability provided the theoretical foundations for the discipline of psychology known as behaviourism. He was primarily concerned with studying the types of conditioned reflexes that were involved in the survival of the species and in establishing a theory based on stimulus and response that would account for the ways in which conditioned signalling agents or stimuli worked to excite and / or

inhibit specific responses by creating "unequilibriated" states in dogs--findings that he extended to humans and all other animals with similar central nervous systems.

In 1935, he summarised his work on the conditioned reflex and made explicit that which had been implicitly accepted as a natural extension of behaviourist thought--that language was also a conditioned signalling system:

> When the developing animal world reached the stage of man, an extremely important addition was made to the mechanisms of the nervous activity. In the animal, reality signalised almost exclusively by stimulations and by the traces they leave in the cerebral hemispheres, which come directly to the special cells of the visual, auditory or other receptors of the organism. This is what we, too, possess as impressions, sensations and notions of the world around us, both the natural and the social--with the exception of the words heard or seen. This is the first system of signals of reality common to man and animals. But speech constitutes a second signalling system of reality which is peculiarly ours, being the signal of the first signals. On the one hand, numerous speech stimulations have removed us from reality, and we must always remember this in order not to distort our attitude to reality. On the other hand, it is precisely speech which has made us human, a subject on which I need not dwell in detail here. However, it cannot be doubted that the fundamental laws governing the activity of the first signalling system must also govern that of the second, because it, too, is activity of the same nervous tissue. (344-45)[22]

Pavlov argues that language works according to a conditioned reflex, a second signalling system based on the first. This second linguistic system provides corresponding linguistic signs that referentially stand in for the concrete stimuli (real objects) of the first signalling system. Pavlov's observations underscore the degree to which Faulkner appears to have been influenced by and responding to the behaviouristic conditioning that was seen characterising the modern world and modes of reception for literature. Read against this background of behaviourism, Benjy's character is Faulkner's projection of what the threat of conditioning can do to humans if left unchecked. Benjy responds like an animal to both the second and the first signalling systems--language and objects--but he is not able to process the causes of his responses, change his responsive behaviour to them, or even articulate verbally his experiences of such conditioning beyond his "moaning" and "bellering."

Much is made of Benjy's supposed attempts "to say" and how they are like the modernist struggle to find words and forms to express a modern sensibility.[23] Benjy's grunts and moans in fact reveal his inability to process, organise, and encode thought with linguistic symbols. Physically Benjy has the power to produce noise, to vocalise, but he cannot speak because of a mental deficiency. Caddy asks him repeatedly, "What are you trying to tell Caddy," but Benjy is unable to tell not because he doesn't have the words but because he cannot perform the mental activities that stand behind "telling." The desire to view Benjy as "trying to say" is a compensatory projection on the part of other characters who are trying to understand Benjy in terms of their own cognitive processes and impulses. Readers are also placed in a similar position to these characters because they are confronted with Faulkner's interpretation of what Benjy would say if he could. The potential confusion of unravelling what is at stake in Faulkner's opening chapter amounts to the same type of cognitive reconciliation. Faulkner projects a narrative onto Benjy trying to represent his thought processes, but the very act betrays its own artifice and complicates the very nature of narrative representation. What should be noted is that as Faulkner tries to produce an alternative to conventional narrative, however flawed, he creates a gap between expectation and narrative that readers are forced to negotiate when they read. Because they require readers to fill in gaps and make sense of fragments, modernist works like Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* aesthetically exploit the embodied rage for order which is a biological fact first and a social one second.

Faulkner's narrative misrepresents Benjy's feelings of loss because of his inability to communicate. At the gate to the property Benjy watches the girls pass on their way from school with their booksatchels just like Caddy used to: "I tried to say, but they went on, and I went along the fence, trying to say, and they went faster. Then they were running and I came to the corner of the fence and I couldn't go any further, and I held to the fence, looking after them and trying to say" (59). Later when he catches the Burgess girl he again tries to say something to her (60-61). In Faulkner's attempt to make Benjy's motivations clear to readers--that the attack is not sexual but an attempt to communicate and get information about Caddy--he betrays his own sense of frustration at the limitations of a character who is mentally unable to even "try to say." Benjy responds to Pavlov's second signalling system in an unconscious manner in the same way a trained animal responds to conditioned commands, but he doesn't have the ability to use language consciously to organise his thoughts or express causal agency. In the novel's fourth section, the objective narrator aptly describes Benjy's musclebound eagerness in anticipation of food as an "inarticulate" hunger, "not knowing it is hunger" (319).

Because of Benjy's inability to think critically, he is instinctively reactionary; that is, he reacts to stimuli without cognitively processing the causal relations which undergird his conditioning. He cannot distinguish between past and present or adapt his behaviour to different contexts and this makes him a threat not only to himself, but to all of society. All he recognises is the basic stimulus - response relationships that motivate his daily activities. Benjy's understanding of his missing testicles is not the result of cognitive dissonance like the experience of phantom limb sensation, but rather of his visual experience: "I got undressed and I looked at myself, and I began to cry. Hush, Luster said. Looking for them aint going to do no good. They're gone" (84). Rather than possessing a conscious awareness of a completed self that is not fragmented, Benjy only becomes aware that something is missing when he literally sees that it is gone. This, perhaps, is the clearest indicator of Benjy's cognitive abilities. Unless something triggers a strongly conditioned association between stimulus and response, what is out of sight for Benjy is literally out of mind. Even his automatic responses are foreign to him. After he burns his hand touching the stove, Faulkner narrates from Benjy's perspective: "My hand jerked back and I put it in my mouth" (67). Without knowing why, Benjy observes his hand jerk back as if it were not part of his own body. The automatic response to suck on his burnt fingers is not something *he* consciously does for any logical reason. His perception is simply an observation: "My hand was trying to go to my mouth, but Dilsey held it" (68). Again Benjy's lack of cognitive ability prevents him from conceiving of his hand as connected to the rest of his body; it is his, but it is also curiously independent. He has no knowledge of himself as a complete being and his lack of awareness is precisely what becomes such a challenge to readers reading his section. The description of Benjy's body in the fourth section matches exactly the narrative of his disconnected thoughts: "a big man who appeared to be shaped of some substance whose particles would not or did not cohere to one another or to the frame that supported it" (317).

When Jason compares Benjy's routine of waiting at the gate to that of a habitualised animal, his analogy explicitly draws on Pavlovian research into the conditioned reflex. Years after Caddy's departure Jason still finds

> Ben and that nigger hanging on the gate like a bear and a monkey in the same cage. Just let it come toward sundown and he'd head for the gate like a cow for the barn, hanging his head and sort of moaning to himself. That's a hog punishment for you. If what had happened to him for fooling with open gates had happened to me, I never would want to see another one. I often wondered what he'd be thinking about, down there at the gate, watching the

> girls going home from school, trying to want something he couldn't even remember he didn't and couldn't want any longer. (292)

Jason sees Benjy as a caged bear, says his conditioned behavior is like that of a cow heading for the barn at sundown, and describes his "fooling with open gates" after his castration as "a hog punishment." His repeated use of animal tropes to describe Benjy confirm that Jason sees his brother as something less than human. Jason's view of Benjy as a conditioned animal is reinforced by the narrator of the fourth section who compares Benjy's gait to that of a "trained bear" (317). Only at the end of his section does Jason approach empathetic understanding when he thinks, "But maybe he [Benjy] didn't know what they'd done to him. I dont reckon he even knew what he had been trying to do, or why Mr. Burgess knocked him out with a fence picket" (304). The truth is that Benjy can't know why he has been castrated or why Mr. Burgess attacked him. Even if the incident with the girl had been sexually motivated, which it wasn't, he is not able to connect these isolated acts of punishment to his persistent waiting by the gate--that becomes the reader's job.

Jason's mistake, however, is to assume that Benjy instinctively wants what he would want when it comes to girls. As a punishment, castration negatively reinforces certain behaviours and may even eliminate sexual urges, but Benjy's behaviour is a conditioned association of the gate with Caddy and not motivated by sexual desire. Jason should know what effect the mention of Caddy's name or the memory of her appearance has on Benjy since it is through Benjy's incessant bellowing that Jason discovers that Caddy has returned to visit Miss Quentin against his wishes (237-38). Benjy is the human equivalent of Pavlov's dogs. Because he has been conditioned to associate Caddy with the gate, it is understandable that he would expect to find one when he sees the other. He simply wants to fill in a dissonant gap that torments him because it thwarts his expectations. On his way to church with Dilsey, for instance, as soon as Benjy goes through the gate he ceases wailing, but when they come back through the gate on the way home "[i]mmediately" Benjy begins to whimper again (334, 344). His fascination with golf would likely also end if the golfers didn't use caddies and frequently call to them as they approach the greens.

At one point in the novel Mrs. Compson reprimands Caddy for not noticing that Benjy is not wearing his overshoes. Her remarks equally describe what is at stake in the process of reading this chapter. She says, "You must think. . . . Someday I'll be gone, and you'll have to think for him" (9). To varying degrees all the characters in the novel think for Benjy. They try to explain away or interpret that which is seemingly inscrutable, beyond both logic and communication, since Benjy does not possess the power of speech

to articulate his dissonance. Readers must similarly make sense of his untagged mental perceptions as they shift back and forth between memories that occurred over a thirty-year span and piece together the family history from fragments of thought that blend into a continuous present. Faulkner provides cues to these shifts through alternating references to Benjy's caregivers and, as I've said, through the formal interplay between italicised and roman print; however, even this system breaks down as a means of separating events as the narrative progresses and Faulkner purposefully avoids typographical systematization.

These unstable narrative forms compound Benjy's already confusing narrative point of view. The dissonant perspective that Benjy's point of view offers readers is an important modernist vehicle for calling to awareness the assumptions and cognitive processes brought to bear on reading. Benjy's limited understanding of the world around him successfully rejuvenates that world and the conventional means of perceiving it. His chapter poeticises prose in a uniquely modernist way and Benjy's perspective becomes a vehicle for modernist experimentation. He represents both the conditioned reader who expects to read passively and without a great deal of cognitive effort as well as the modernist artist bent on defamiliarising experiences of the everyday through disorienting points of view. Put simply, he is at once the source of and epitomised resistance to modernist experimentation.[24]

The extent of his programmed nature is glaringly evident in the final scene of the novel. Luster sets out to drive Benjy to the cemetery, a trip Benjy knows by heart because he has made it once a week for years, except that Luster gets so caught up in his new-found freedom and responsibility driving the surrey that he alters the route so that he can show off to the other blacks in the square. He decides to turn left instead of right at the statue of the Confederate soldier with empty eyes. Benjy's gaze, equally "empty and untroubled," is shocked to attention by this break in the weekly routine:

> For an instant Ben sat in an utter hiatus. Then he bellowed. Bellow on bellow, his voice mounted, with scarce interval for breath. There was more than astonishment in it, it was horror; shock; agony eyeless, tongueless; just sound. . . . with Ben's voice mounting towards its unbelievable crescendo. . . . (370)

Benjy gets caught in a moment of complete dissonant confusion where the continuity of the ordered landmarks is broken by Luster's opposite turn. All that Benjy knows is that something is different and therefore threateningly wrong; the break in the conditioned sequence of landmarks uncomfortably disorients him. Only when Jason turns the surrey

around and forces Luster to drive home does Benjy's calm return: "his eyes were empty and blue and serene again as cornice and facade flowed smoothly once more from left to right, post and tree, window and doorway and signboard each in its ordered place" (371). Benjy's heightened panic at the break in his habitualised routine conveys the underlying potential threat of conditioned habit taken to an extreme--the very thing that modernist aesthetics attempt to counter. For Benjy, disturbances of routine cannot be logically explained and as such they become traumatic events which in his mind potentially threaten his very survival.

Benjy is the epitome of the unthinking behaviourist's subject conditioned by unbreakable stimulus-response routines. For Benjy, the trip to the cemetery is habitualised by recognisable sensory input: the sound of Queenie's feet and "the bright shapes" moving "smooth and steady on both sides" of the road. An earlier trip to the cemetery provides a marked contrast to the outing with Luster. On this previous occasion T. P. takes the familiar route and Benjy recognises the turn at the statue in the town square by the flow of "the bright shapes": "Then those on the one side stopped at the tall white post where the soldier was. But on the other side they went on smooth and steady, but a little slower" (12). After the turn, the shapes on the other side begin to flow again "bright and fast and smooth" (13). The verb "flow" and the adverbs "smooth and steady" signal Benjy's comfort when events occur according to their conditioned order. Jason is wrong when he totally dismisses Benjy's outings as meaningless and forgettable: "What does he know about where he goes or what he goes in, and us keeping a carriage and a horse so that he can take a ride on Sunday afternoon" (289). The regular trip to the cemetery reveals not only Benjy's capacity for learning through conditioned repetition, but also the comfort that routine provides him. He does know where he goes, right down to the order of every last landmark they pass going to and from the cemetery. The fact that it matters "where he goes [and] what he goes in," establishes his common humanity with readers in the fact that cognitive dissonance disturbs him.

Benjy, of course, is an extreme case. There is only one way to get to the cemetery and one way home. There is no room for change, digressions, alternative routes, or any form of experimentation. Benjy is the reactionary reader writ large confronting modernism's unfamiliar poetics with an inability to think through the potential reasons for narratives to be presented from fragmented, subjectively nuanced points of view. When Caddy wears perfume, Benjy's narrative mantra that she "smells like trees" is threatened. Benjy's reaction forces Caddy into the bathroom to wash it off and leads her to give away the perfume to Dilsey (48). Benjy's associations are so strong and so deeply entrenched in his being that they are almost completely resistant to change. Because he does not

possess the capacity for logical reasoning or knowledge of cause and effect he is unable to reduce or eliminate his own experienced dissonance through contemplation. Instead, he does what any mindless individual or helpless child without an understanding of agency or faculties for independent thought would do: he vocalises his discomfort through "moaning" and "bellowing." In this respect, Benjy is a caricature of the completely conditioned human posited by behaviourists who either deny the importance, even the existence, of consciousness in decision-making and behaviour. These psychologists would have us all become Benjys of sorts, however irrational that may sound. Faulkner, however, in presenting Benjy's impressions in the dissonant manner that he does forces readers to adjust their conditioned reading habits--thereby preventing them from becoming unconscious readers. Faulkner ends the first section with Benjy's inchoate memory of drifting off to sleep, described as the dark beginning "to go in smooth, bright shapes, like it always does" (85). And from this impressionistic description of sleep overtaking consciousness, readers are awoken with Quentin on his last morning at Harvard almost eighteen years earlier in order to begin the narrative of the next section.

Quentin

After waking on 2 June 1910, one of the first things Quentin does is break his pocket watch. In breaking his watch, Quentin is symbolically and literally breaking from the mechanistic world of time that regulates and organises daily existence. The destruction of his watch appears as an existentialist attempt to recover an authentic self that functions according to its own subjective laws and concerns.[25] Without time, for instance, Quentin doesn't know when class is supposed to begin and is not compelled to go. The pocket watch is a symbol of Compson-family continuity and therefore a symbol of the past existing in the present. Quentin inherits it from his grandfather through his father and it, along with his father's words of wisdom, become family heirlooms Quentin carries around with him in his consciousness as a constant reminder of his environmental conditioning. Quentin finds that time, just like the past, is something that he cannot ever fully escape. In breaking his watch, however, Quentin gives up on trying to maintain the appearance of normalcy in his life. For Quentin, time is both a symbol of his relentless personal conditioning as well as a concept that helps condition human society, but which does not ultimately help him organise his own mental behaviour. Time, therefore, *means* nothing to him, but only serves to remind him through its relentless procession of the uncontrollable "again" of the repeated intrusion of the past into his consciousness of the

present. By shifting without warning between the past and the present in Quentin's mind, Faulkner strategically shares this experience of disturbing intrusion with readers.

Quentin comes to realise that he cannot completely escape time while he is still alive. Even after he has smashed the glass face of his pocket watch and twisted off the hands, his watch continues to mechanically mark off time "with little wheels clicking and clicking" behind the face, "not knowing any better" (91). The inevitability of time constantly confronts Quentin as he wanders throughout the day. While eating breakfast, he hears a clock strike the hour and thinks, "But then I suppose it takes at least an hour to lose time in, who has been longer than history getting into the mechanical progression of it" (94). Later, he passes a jeweller's window and avoids looking at the watches on display just "in time," but even this figurative phrase indicates the extent to which the concept of time is inescapably embodied in everyday discourse. Moreover, Quentin considers throughout the day how time, as measured by things like watches, structures and conditions human activity. Quentin recalls that when he and Versh hunted all day they wouldn't take any lunch with them but "at twelve oclock" he'd get hungry: "I'd stay hungry until about one, then all of a sudden I'd even forget that I wasn't hungry anymore" (129). Quentin's feeling of hunger reveals an embodied sense of time more the result of conditioning than his body's actual need for sustenance. As the hour passes, so too does the felt need for food.

Time becomes much like the Harvard campus bells that stay in the air and are "more felt than heard" even after the last stroke ceases to vibrate (90), or as they are described in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* as "leaden circles" dissolving in the air (*MD* 6). Because Quentin has presumably eaten at around the same time every day for most of his life, time becomes the stimulus for his activities--even those as important as eating--and it regulates his responses in an unconscious manner. The business of eating commingles associatively time and empty space in the stomach: "Stomach saying noon brain saying eat oclock" (*SF* 120). According to Quentin, "You can feel noon," and he wonders "if even miners in the bowels of the earth" can feel noon conditioned in their stomachs (119).[26] The idea that time becomes embodied can also be seen in sayings like "biological time clock," and in the way that people "feel their age." But time also becomes humanised as I noted in Frank Kermode's "tick-tock" example and in the projection of human body parts (hands, faces) onto watches. These are further examples of how the human body is the main resource for interpreting and thinking conceptually about the world.

Critics have consistently picked up on Quentin's preoccupation with time and its pervasive influence on human activity and argued for its centrality to understanding Quentin's psychological state of mind. Andre Bleikasten calls Quentin "time-haunted" (122), but his description applies equally to the list of literary critics who analyse Quentin's chapter.[27] In reality, Faulkner helps define all of his principal characters (Benjy, Quentin, Jason, and Dilsey) according to their idiosyncratic relationships to the concept of time.[28] But Quentin, more than any of the others, philosophically reflects on the concept and functions of time. He appears to be caught in a Bergsonian struggle between mechanical time and subjective time. Unfortunately, no matter how hard Quentin tries to avoid reminders of the mechanical progression of time, he can never completely escape time's material signifiers. At one point, for example, Quentin searches for something to take his mind off of wondering what time it is and considers that if "it had been cloudy I could have looked at the window" (87). The sun's very presence threatens to reveal the time by the shadows it casts, so that only clouds can prevent Quentin from getting a sense of the hour when he looks out the window.

Quentin's attempts to lose his shadow in the water and among other shadows over the course of the day, then, are further attempts to avoid the reminder of mechanical time. He avoids getting close to factory smoke stacks for the very same reasons: he is afraid he will hear the bells that mark lunch breaks and other work stoppages. Church steeples also present problems for Quentin because they often have clock faces set in their towers, and both smoke stacks and church steeples act like large sundials which cast shadows to register the hour. If Quentin does, as one critic claims, exhibit symptoms of an "exacerbated chronophobia,"[29] it is because mechanical time symbolises the conditioned mental bond that prevents him from experiencing anything in the present which does not recall his cognitive script for Caddy. The only way that Quentin can break the obsessive clock-like stimulus-response patterns of his thoughts is through suicide. He suffers from a personal law of association that does not conform to the temporal logic of recency, contiguity, or rational cause and effect.

In this sense, he is out of synch with the regulated world around him which moves mechanically with the ordered progression of time marked by clocks and calendars. That time is a relational concept that marks the temporal distance between two events depresses Quentin because it doesn't keep his memories of the past distinct from the present. Quentin recognises that time is a conceptual measurement that helps humans organise their lives and that they have given this abstract concept objective form in clocks which further segment it into discrete quantifiable units of seconds, minutes, hours, days,

and years; but he also realises that the very thing that makes history possible and coordinates daily activities does not help him manage the dissonant experiences of his associative conditioning. Quentin wishes his mental operations functioned more behaviouristically according to discrete sets of stimulus and response rather than the way they currently function, with all stimuli leading back to the same response: his obsession with Caddy. While Quentin's obsession makes his responses highly predictable there is no hope for reconditioning, and time comes to stand for the logical organisation of thought and ordered behaviour that he lacks.

Almost as soon as Quentin is awake his conscious preoccupation with time resumes. Opening his eyes, he automatically determines the hour from the shadow of the sash on the curtain and remarks, "I was in time *again*" (emphasis added 86). He observes, "I don't suppose anybody ever deliberately listens to a watch or a clock. You dont have to. You can be oblivious to the sound for a long while, then in a second of ticking it can create in the mind unbroken the long diminishing parade of time you didn't hear" (86). Modern human life is so regulated by ticking timepieces that their very presence recedes into an unconscious background of habit. It is only when their functions are brought to conscious awareness that the "parade of time you didn't hear" makes one cognizant of his / her situatedness in the passing of time. Bertolt Brecht makes a similar type of observation with his question, "Have you ever really looked carefully at your watch?" In asking the question he draws attention to what we take for granted and effectively alienates timepieces:

> The questioner knows that I've looked at it often enough, and now his question deprives me of the sight I have grown used to and which accordingly has nothing more to say to me. I used to look at it to see the time, and now when he asks me in this importunate way I realise that I have given up seeing the watch itself with an astonished eye; and it is in many ways an astonishing piece of machinery.[30]

Quentin's struggle with time and its philosophical consequences forces readers into a similarly alienated relationship with an everyday object by drawing attention to what stands behind the superficial facade of a watch face. By drawing attention to the inexorable qualities of watches, Quentin transforms the experience of time from "something ordinary, familiar, immediately accessible, into something peculiar, striking, and unexpected" (Brecht 143).

Quentin's complex relationship with time is bound up with his relationship to his father who gives him not only the pocket watch, but philosophical advice regarding time

as well. Quentin remembers his father's assertion that watches are mausoleums "of all hope and desire" and that they reduce human experience to absurdity marked off by mechanical progression. He advises Quentin not to try to conquer time, but to try to forget it now and then because "victory is an illusion of philosophers and fools" (86). Mr. Compson's remarks are no doubt partly the source of Quentin's conflicting feelings about time as time offers hope for an orderly life but can never be escaped. Quentin's description of the watches on display in the jeweller's window epitomises both time's uselessness for him and its ineluctable modality:

> There were about a dozen watches in the window, a dozen different hours and each with the same assertive and contradictory assurance that mine had, without any hands at all. Contradicting one another. I could hear mine, ticking away inside my pocket, even though nobody could see it, even though it could tell nothing if anyone could. (96)

For Quentin, all watches are contradictory because time doesn't help him regulate his behavioural responses and as a result their ever-present assertiveness mocks him.[31] Like Quentin, the watches in the window have not been "regulated and set" (96).

Quentin's father also warns him that "constant speculation regarding the position of mechanical hands on an arbitrary dial which is a symptom of mind-function" is an idle habit (87). Unfortunately, Quentin's "mind-function" is not exemplified by the mechanical nature of clocks but that does not diminish his reliance on time as the only means to give his life a semblance of organisation.[32] Impulsively, Quentin wants to know the time as soon as it is out of sight, to know essentially what is unknowable: "as soon as I couldn't see it, I began to wonder what time it was" (87). This desire to know the time is a desire to maintain an order that is founded on mechanical arbitrariness, but it is the only hope Quentin has to maintain an existence within the quotidian. Ironically, Quentin's experiences of dissonance are the result of comparing his own obsessive conditioning to a seemingly more rational conditioning that was promoted by psychological behaviourism and symbolised by the concept of time and its material signifiers. As readers, our dissonance is also the result of such a comparison, this time between Quentin's shifting stream of consciousness formalised in the narrative's shifting style and our own experiences of cognitive associations and more conventional narrative forms.

Without question, the uncontrollable fluidity of Quentin's thought processes--blurring the actual past, the imagined past, and lived present--is a threat to narrative clarity and comprehension; the experience of confusion is conveyed to readers through the narrative

as it moves in and out of a stream of consciousness of fragmented italics and roman type. The scene in which Quentin enters the general store to buy buns allegorically inscribes his and readers' struggles to manage dissonant experiences. A Pavlovian bell that rings when the door opens announces to the owner that someone has entered. The lady who owns the store epitomises order which is conveyed through Quentin's repetitious description of "her neat gray face . . . her neat gray skull, spectacles in neat gray rims"; he compares her controlled appearance to a "cash box in a store" (143). She has rigged the bell above the store door perfectly, balanced with a mechanical exactness, "gauged and tempered to make that single clear small sound so as not to wear the bell out nor to require the expenditure of too much silence in restoring it" (143). The setting is completely controlled to eliminate as much as possible the shock of dissonance. As such, it feels lifeless. Quentin compares the storeowner to a librarian: "Something among dusty shelves of ordered certitudes long divorced from reality" (143). Each of Quentin's descriptive analogies connotes a sense of strict yet stifling decorum represented in the storeowner's appearance and mannerisms. The store scene is a welcome one for readers in search of relief from Quentin's dislocating stream of consciousness, but Faulkner's attention to detail warns readers that this is a false and lifeless relief that breeds passivity. A world without dissonance is a world without life because negotiating and responding to dissonance is fundamental to continued survival--not to mention the appreciation of modernist aesthetics.

Quentin enters this completely organised world where everything is regulated and assigned its proper place and meets a "little dirty child" whom he greets with "Hello, sister" (143). In most Faulkner criticism, the immigrant girl is read as a substitute figure for Caddy whom Quentin protects from the storeowner and whom he tries to escort safely home.[33] According to such interpretations, by addressing her as "sister" Quentin makes explicit the connection between the girl and Caddy as females in need of protection. Quentin's colloquial identification of the girl as being somehow related to him also aligns Quentin with her in terms of the threat her presence has on this ordered environment. When the storeowner finally sees her she asks, "Did you bring her in here?" She calls her a "little wretch" and accuses the girl of stealing. As if the Italian girl is some kind of dissonant foreign contagion, the storeowner continues, "How'd she get in without the bell ringing?" (145) and says "I got to have that bell fixed" (*146*). Here she sounds more like Ivan Pavlov reacting to a faulty conditioning apparatus than a storekeeper interested in serving her customers. As Quentin leaves the store she offers him this advice, "Them foreigners . . . stay clear of them, young man" (146). Quentin identifies

with the immigrant girl because, like him, she does not fit easily into an ordered society that is regulated by tradition and orthodoxies which make little room for foreigners or aberrant behaviour. The little Italian girl is a defamiliarising presence that threatens the established order because she is one of them "foreigners," stereotypically sneaky and dishonest. I would suggest that this well-crafted scene serves as Faulkner's warning to readers who are questioning the interpretive yield of struggling with difficult modernist poetics.

Benjy's problem, as we've seen, is that he is not aware of his completely conditioned way of being. Quentin, on the other hand, is all too aware of his conditioned responses and wants to leave the mechanistic world of regimented routine which he can no longer consciously control. Whereas Benjy is unable to determine the systematic nature of his conditioning and lacks the mental capabilities to anticipate his responses and make sense of their causal relationship to specific stimuli, Quentin suffers from an unalterable, obsessive conditioning. In the same way that Caddy's name triggers Benjy's moaning, Quentin relives his memories of Caddy as they are mnemonically triggered by analogous events in the present. The difference between Benjy and Quentin, however, is that Quentin is able to discern the source of the connection between the stimulus and its attendant response even if he is unable to control it. Caddy continues to dominate his life long after she has gone and the second section of the novel is dominated by Quentin's memories of her. His obsession is so strong that it blocks out the present and Quentin gets carried away in the stream of memories flowing through his consciousness. Quentin's dissonance results from his inability to control the intrusion of the past into the present which consequently blurs the chronological order between them. Quentin's struggle to control his thoughts and keep the flashbacks from the past from displacing the present is also the readers' struggle. Readers experience Quentin's narrated consciousness as he experiences it, unable always to maintain a temporal or causal logic to the movements of his mind. The flatirons will finally permit him to be grounded, submerged in a single position and not swept away by the myriad directions of the flowing river of his consciousness.

Quentin's problem is that his mental state does not allow him to be reconditioned and move out of his obsessive thinking. For instance, his entire life he has tried to wear the mantle of manly protector. In school, he fought to protect his teacher when another student threatened to put a frog in her desk (77). When he hears his mother crying at Damuddy's death, his acute sensitivity to the frailties of those he perceives as defenseless women prevents him from finishing his dinner (31-32). This chivalric ideal is also what prompts him to protect the immigrant girl he meets in Boston and help her find her way

home. Quentin ultimately designates himself Caddy's protector. He elects to confess to his father that he has committed adultery with the pregnant Caddy so that he can share her punishment and shame (203). On an earlier occasion he confronted and threatened to kill Dalton Ames, the man to whom Caddy lost her virginity. All of these impulses to protect, associated as they are with Caddy, prevent Quentin from maintaining a strict mental division between the past as background and the present as foreground.

He resents, for example, being an audience for Gerald Bland on another outing organised by Bland's mother. Quentin thinks of himself, quite ironically, as background to the bravado-filled stories about Gerald's treatment of women and his accomplishments, but no sooner is he riding in the car as a captive audience to another boastful narrative than what's background and foreground, past and present, shift dramatically in his mind. Quentin's consciousness reverts to a sustained memory of his meeting with Dalton Ames and he lives in that moment, as does the reader, because the narrative of the memory displaces the narrative of the present. Quentin fights the encroachment of the mental fragments that vie for his cognitive attention and readers get a clear indication of how he struggles to prevent these mental intrusions but in the end cannot:

> I could feel it in my throat and I looked off into the trees where the afternoon slanted, thinking of afternoon and of the bird and the boys in swimming. But still I couldn't stop it and then I knew that if I tried too hard to stop it I'd be crying and I thought about how I'd thought about I could not be a virgin. . . . and I quit trying to stop it. (169)

His attempt to concentrate on the present and recent events fails. Triggered earlier by the sight of the immigrant girl, Quentin's thoughts about Caddy and his father commingle with images of Gerald Bland and the conversation that is taking place in the present. After eighteen pages of narrative flashback about his failed physical confrontation with Dalton Ames, Quentin returns to the present having been savagely beaten by Gerald Bland in the interim. Shreve's question, "Has it stopped?" (188) returns Quentin and readers consciously to that present.

Shreve is asking about the blood coming from Quentin's nose but he seems equally to be asking about the Caddy-related memory. Spoade reports to Quentin, and to readers, that "you jumped up all of sudden and said, 'Did you ever have a sister? did you?' and when he said No, you hit him" (190). Quentin responds to the content of the flashback he relives so exactly that the present disappears from consciousness and the narrative and is temporarily subsumed into unconscious background. Gerald's bragging about how he mistreats one of his girlfriends and his misogynist comments about women in general function as thematic triggers or stimuli to recall Quentin's attempt to defend Caddy's

honour with Dalton Ames (190-91). Although he fights the automatic response, he cannot seem to prevent his responses from obsessively returning to his incestuous desires and protective impulses concerning his sister.

Time has not diminished either the frequency or intensity of his associative responses. Quentin, for example, acknowledges his own automatic conditioning when he unconsciously cranes his neck to look up at that clock in the sky, the sun. He catches himself and considers "how, when you dont want to do a thing, your body will try to trick you into doing it, sort of unawares" (94). Quentin identifies the body's unconscious natural inclination to perform habitual or automatic functions and in doing so comments not only on his own involuntary conditioning but also physiological foundations for embodied cognition. It is no wonder that Quentin considers the word "again" "[s]addest of all" because it identifies the reductive state of conditioned repetition and the return of the irrepressible past through which he must interminably suffer in the everyday present (109). Quentin drowns himself in the Charles river because he is unable to recondition his mental habits--he is the knowing victim of a pernicious mental bond between associations much like Benjy is the unwitting victim of an automatic associationism he cannot understand. Quentin has tried to carve a new path by leaving home and attending Harvard, but he has failed to recondition his cognitive reflexes.

Ironically, the class he misses that morning is Psychology where, in 1910, he would have studied William James and his two volume *The Principles of Psychology* (1891).[34] In the *Principles*, James devotes entire chapters to, among other subjects, "The Stream of Thought," "Association," "The Automaton-Theory," and "Habit"--subjects which all have bearing on Quentin's predicament. James calls all living creatures "bundles of habits" (320) who function according to reflex machinery.[35] Benjy's habitual responses to events of a purely material order place him in the category of the "automatism of brutes." He lacks a consciousness of causal efficacy or the ability to identify, interpret, and consciously change his behavioural patterns. And in defining how habit operates, James appears to be discussing Quentin when he argues that "nothing is easier to imagine how, when a current once has traversed a path, it should traverse it more readily still a second time" (324). Part of Quentin's psychological problem is that his thoughts have grooved obsessive patterns in his consciousness regarding his relationship with Caddy to the point where every other thought either triggers that cognitive script or gets subsumed through association.

Calendars, watches, dates, all the things that function to organize, arrange, and record the passage of time and the sequence of events in a human life fail to help Quentin

establish rigid boundaries between past and present events in his stream of consciousness. Chronological divisions remain neither distinct nor clear; he has no controlling time-sense. Since mechanical time does not serve Quentin--it is only Faulkner's alternating italics which signal a chronological shift to readers--he abandons it because its relentless, repetitive ticking only serves to remind him of his unalterable and conditioned state. And even after he smashes the face of his watch and tears off its hands, the mechanical wheels continue to click all day like his conditioned consciousness, that is, until he puts the watch in Shreve's drawer and makes his way to the Charles River to test his father's claim that "time is dead as long as it is being clicked off by little wheels" and that "only when the clock stops does time come to life" (97).

Jason

By the time readers reach Jason's section they welcome the relief of the more familiar narrative style. "It's because a man never gets anywhere if fact and his ledgers don't square" is the unwanted admonishment Earl offers Jason when he arrives at work late on 6 April 1928 (264). Earl's economic metaphor to describe a person's life as a necessary equilibrium between action and perception is more accurate than even he knows. It simultaneously picks up on the notion of homeostasis as the human basis for survival and provides the central metaphor by which Jason lives his life. Jason is an individual who lives according to a balance sheet that is constantly owing him, a view of his life that Mrs. Compson encourages and helps perpetuate. She tells her son, "I always wanted you to get ahead" (254) and frequently reminds him of the unequal distribution of the family estate among the children:

> When they began to sell the land to send Quentin to Harvard I told your father that he must make an equal provision for you. Then when Herbert offered to take you into the bank I said Jason is provided for now, and when all the expense began to pile up and I was forced to sell our furniture and the rest of the pasture, I wrote her [Caddy] at once because I said she will realise that she and Quentin have had their share and part of Jason's too and that it depends on her now to compensate him. (303)

The balance-sheet mentality that Mrs. Compson passes on to Jason is what motivates him to go about his life making sure he gets his share and then something extra to compensate for what he has been denied. He compares himself not only to his brothers and sister, but also to those around him who have anything that he lacks. He is driven by a pervasive and poisonous resentment which lowers his thresholds for cognitive

dissonance and predisposes him to resist or compensate for change. Jason is an embodiment of the homeostatic drive found in all humans, but taken psychologically to an extreme.

Shocked, for instance, that Caddy would send Miss Quentin fifty dollars, he remarks. "Why I never saw fifty dollars until I was twenty-one years old, with all the other boys with the afternoon off and all day Saturday and me working in a store" (242). Jason's life becomes the benchmark for normalcy and any divergence from this model threatens his sense of equilibrium. As a result, he compensates by criticising others to neutralise their difference as a source of cognitive dissonance. He incessantly compares himself to others in order to find them wanting. This comparative mentality reveals the extent to which Jason's personal experience of perceived dissonance informs how he cognitively processes information and thus how he sees and reacts to situations that take place in the world around him. Jason is preoccupied with balance and his preoccupation often manifests itself in materialistic concerns. In terms of the stock market, he simply wants to earn back the money he has lost so that he can break even: "I just want an even chance to get my money back" (305). Jason's whole life is directed at getting that "even chance," getting what, in his mind, would restore a missing equilibrium. What motivates his actions also gives him headaches: cognitive dissonance. As a result, he projects his embodied sense of homeostatic balance onto everything he experiences. Formally, as I mentioned, Jason's section restores balance to the novel by providing readers with a more stabilised reading experience compared to the previous two more experimental sections. Consequently, readers project the relative normalcy of Jason's narrative onto his personality when, in fact, he is no less behaviourally compulsive than either of his two brothers.

In Jason's mind the world functions in grossly economic terms that have their basis in human physiology. He says the "niggers" in his kitchen "cant even stand up out of a chair unless they've got a pan full of bread and meat to balance them" (206). Jason views every one and every thing according to his balance-sheet mentality and his figurative language foregrounds his obsession with equilibrium. The monthly check from Caddy upsets him because it arrives six days late and Jason measures his dissonance in economic terms: "How long would a man that thought the first of the month came on the sixth last in business" (218). Because Jason feels like his balance sheet will never reach an equilibrium, disequilibrium is a daily experience which generates in him emotional and mental dissonance. Faulkner offers readers a day-in-the-life view of how the third Compson brother's compulsion to maintain order and control prevents him from establishing any meaningful human relationships or enjoying his life. Instead, he

manipulates and manages relationships. He states: "I never promise a woman anything nor let her know what I'm going to give her. That's the only way to manage them. Always keep them guessing. If you can't think of any other way to surprise them, give them a bust in the jaw" (222). Jason's misogyny masks his own insecurities about control. His strategy for managing women is to make them experience the types of cognitive dissonance Jason finds so uncomfortable.

Resistance to his prescriptive view of the world results in conflict and a sense of disequilibrium. This is embodied in the figure of Miss Quentin, who refuses to be ordered around by Jason. His platitude of complete frustration at the beginning of his section, "Once a bitch always a bitch, what I say," reveals the extent to which Jason suffers in trying to bring others in line with his view of the world (206). He articulates his desire to change Miss Quentin in the prescriptive tone he takes with her. He believes he knows where "she ought" to be and what "she ought" to be doing. His life is a series of negotiations and manipulations in which he treats his relatives like trading partners or customers, ignoring that they too are struggling with their own experiences of dissonance.

He also criticises the government for mismanaging money. He sees it as a problem of priorities and unequal allocation. He predicts another flood will destroy the cotton crops and imagines that the government will continue to "Let it wash a man's crop out of the ground year after year, and them up there in Washington spending fifty thousand dollars a day keeping an army in Nicaragua or some place" (270). Jason's personal sense of justice is based on balance and a proper order to things, all of which stems from his inability to manage dissonance and his feelings that he is owed his fair share. He attempts to control what in the past was beyond his control. The description of Jason's pursuit of Miss Quentin and the man with the red tie figuratively illustrates his constant struggle to find a level playing field through a bodily experience. He describes crossing a plowed field, suffering from a migraine, as if at every step

> somebody was walking behind me, hitting me on the head with a club. I kept thinking that when I got across the field at least I'd have something level to walk on, that wouldn't jolt me every step, but when I got into the woods it was full of underbrush and I had to twist around through it, and then I came to ditch full of briers. . . . [which] got thicker and thicker. . . . (277)

Jason's life is this constant search for the level ground without obstacles that seems to be just up ahead but never actually comes. He sums up this perpetual state of dissonance and fatalistic bad luck as he moves further into the woods: "I happened to look around and I had my hand right on some poison oak. The only thing I couldn't understand was why it was just poison oak and not a snake or something" (278).

Part of Jason's struggle to restore a missing balance to his life involves holding onto an idea of the old South that is no longer accurate by 1928. He laments the passing of the Compson's fortunes and their good name in the community and he responds to town gossip about his family with a nostalgic and idealised vision of the family's past financial security: "I says my people owned slaves here when you all were running little shirt tail country stores and farming land no nigger would look at on shares" (275). Jason's sense of perpetual dissonance motivates all of his thoughts and actions; he even configures the relationship between the American north and south as an unfair disequilibrium. For Jason, difference, change, and novelty all generate dissonance--he is the reactionary modernist reader. New York becomes the target of his frustration because it is the place where the stock market is located, the side shows come from, and Babe Ruth and the Yankees play. An imbalance of knowledge makes him see everyone in the east as sharks who exploit the farmers and steal their money. In particular, he sees the stock market as a conspiracy against the agrarian south: "Dam if I believe anybody knows anything about the dam thing except the ones that sit back in those New York offices and watch the country suckers come up and beg them to take their money." He also thinks that the telegraph company Western Union is "hand in glove with that New York crowd," delaying information until it's too late in order to defraud investors of their money (261).[36]

Jason's personal scales of justice seem unfairly lopsided like the demographics of the country. He doesn't "see how a city no bigger than New York can hold enough people to take the money away from us country suckers" (270). In comparing the geographical size of New York City with the American south, Jason is dismayed by the disproportionate power and influence that New York wields. Jason is still very much a product of the southern mentality that sees land and property ownership as the material basis for measuring success and a conspicuous signifier of privilege and power. This obsolete ideal of a land-based economy is the very reason why he hates the rootless travelling shows that move across the country from town to town, carrying "at least a thousand dollars out of the county" (266) each time they come. For Jason, the travelling shows epitomise disruption. Side show people disturb the routine and equilibrium of the community with their tents and bands and spectacles. According to Jason, they are "a bunch of Yankees that come in and pay maybe ten dollars for the privilege" (265). Again, Jason measures this dissonance in terms of both economics and irritation to the human body. He argues, "You can put the balance of what they'll spend in your eye" (266). Jason uses a body-based metaphor that stresses both the size and hypersensitivity of the human eye which

normally blinks at contact with microscopic dust particles to indicate the pittance the travelling show gives back to the communities it entertains. The amount is so small that it can be put in the eye and it will not trigger the automatic reflex of your eyelid to bat. The very metaphor depends on a mapping of automatic responses of the human body as a universal frame of reference onto a concern over economic *quid pro quo*.

The willingness with which everyone in town is prepared to drop their daily activities and responsibilities frustrates Jason. He cannot see the show, as Earl does, as an enjoyable break for farmers. Earl tells Jason, "Let them spend a little money on a show now and then. A hill farmer works pretty hard and gets mighty little for it" (287). Earl sees the show as means of providing farmers with respite from their work and thus creating balance, but Jason can only see a dissonant disturbance to his routine. When Jason arrives home after work he is late for dinner and Dilsey, bothered by the delay, asks him why he's late. Jason responds sarcastically, "Maybe I went to the show" (293). Ironically, he uses the very excuse he finds so infuriating when everyone else in town uses it to legitimise the day's disruptions to business and life. The fact that he offers this excuse to Dilsey indicates just how much the dissonance of the show still bothers him and is at the forefront of his thoughts.

Jason also hates the New York Yankees and Babe Ruth because they represent difference and an "otherness" that is disturbingly foreign to his set ways. He can't accept that anyone can actually be as talented as Ruth and the Yankees: "You think a team can be that lucky forever?" It must be luck because no team can be that disproportionately better than all the other teams. He further states, "I wouldn't bet on any team that fellow Ruth played on. . . . Even if I knew it was going to win" (291). He tells the men collected in the drugstore that he "can name a dozen men in either league who're more valuable than [Ruth] is" (291). The assertion that there are twenty-four players active in 1928 who are better than Babe Ruth is absurd, but it is a way of verbally diminishing the imbalance of Ruth's talent. Faulkner wrote this episode with the knowledge--a knowledge he expected his readers to share--that the Yankees not only won the pennant in both 1927 and 1928, but that they also went on to win the World Series both years. Furthermore Ruth hit 60 homeruns in the 1927 season and followed that record-breaking year with 54 homeruns in 1928. Jason, of course, doesn't name the other players because he can't--no one could. The Sultan of Swat was already a legend of the game by then.

Jason doesn't even follow baseball or care about it but the celebration of someone else's disproportionate ability provokes him to denigrate them in self-defense. The Yankees and Babe Ruth are simply symbols of everything he hates about the north, especially New York. Both are threats to the security of his routine which force him to think

otherwise and evaluate his own life. The contrast between this other world of concerns and his own stifling, stagnant ways of life in the South produce cognitive dissonance. He doesn't hate Babe Ruth because he's Babe Ruth, but because he represents the good life, success, and difference--basically everything that has been denied Jason. The threat of disequilibrium and its consequent dissonance finds representation in the travelling show, in the instability of the stock market, and in Miss Quentin whose wildness he cannot contain like he does his black help, his bed-ridden mother, and his idiot "gelded" brother. This is Jason's kingdom and New York and everything else that is unfamiliar threatens his control.

The travelling shows and everything related to New York (lifestyle, stock market, baseball) produce anxiety causing dissonance for Jason rather than escapist entertainment and fantasy because they defamiliarise and break the comfortable routines of his life. They threaten a conditioned way of life and Jason's explicit racism can be read in a context of this threat to the balance in the South. His use of the word "nigger" and his treatment of blacks is part of a desperate attempt to maintain his social position during times of sweeping change. With regard to immigration, he complains that it has "come to a pretty pass when any dam foreigner that cant make a living in his own country where God put him, can come to this one and take money right out of an American's pocket" (221). This xenophobia is a type of dissonance which, if Quentin's experiences with the treatment of Italian immigrants in Boston are any indication, was widespread throughout the United States at the time. Jason scapegoats others as a means of alleviating his feelings of dispossession and disruption. His is a struggle to maintain delicate balances and the conditioned (i.e. traditional) aspects of his life. If he continues to invest in the stock market and react so strongly to small disruptions caused by things like travelling shows and missed meals, Jason seems a strong candidate to join the ranks of those Americans who couldn't bear the economic and social dissonance of the Stock Market Crash of 1929--an event Faulkner's novel prophetically predicts--and who decided, like Quentin, that the best way to eliminate dissonance was by killing themselves.

All three chapters narrated from the perspective of the Compson boys begin *in medias res* with each character phenomenologically imposing his personality on to the description of the world on that given day. Jason, like his two other brothers, is an individual caught in a struggle to eliminate dissonance from his life. He is a controlling individual who barks orders at his servants and taunts them; he manipulates his mother emotionally and financially; and he hates to take orders from anyone except himself. He is constantly arguing with Earl, daring his boss to fire him for not working. Over the course of the day at the hardware store, Jason yells at Job, is rude to the customers he

serves, and skips out for most of the day to run personal errands following his own idea of organisation and order. The things that bother Jason most are those that he cannot direct and control. Jason is the personification of the old South, insular and set in his ways. And yet Jason wants to have it both ways. Change frightens him because it threatens his control but at the same time he is looking to earn the quick buck--he is still looking for his just desserts. Jason tries to make up for what he never received by keeping the money Caddy sends for Quentin while pretending to burn the cheques with his mother for fifteen years. Jason tells an acquaintance that the key to financial success in the stock market is "inside information from someone who knows what's going on" (220). His whole life is guided by "inside information" that his body communicates to him about how to model his family and business affairs according to biological imperatives and homeostatic readjustment. But Jason begins skewed and only ever manages to maintain an already skewed sense of balance because of his inability to move beyond his resentment and insecurity. Jason's section only seems balanced and controlled because of the strict chronology of events and his objective style of describing the world. Readers do not have to struggle as much with form in this section, but they must still negotiate the dissonance between Jason's conditioned perspective and the apparently straightforward style of the narrative.

Dilsey

The fourth section of Faulkner's novel marks a formal shift in narrative point of view: an ostensibly objective third-person narrative perspective replaces the first-person, highly subjective perspectives of the three Compson boys. The shift completes an evolutionary narrative development from the idiosyncratic and defamiliarising narrative styles of Benjy and Quentin to the less formally experimental, but still highly personal, style of Jason. The conventional nature with which the fourth chapter begins is a return to the past, to the standardised and conventional forms of nineteenth-century realist fiction. It consists of recorded dialogue and purely objective, unpenetrating descriptions such as, "The day dawned bleak and chill" and "The cabin door opened and Dilsey emerged" (306). No longer are readers given access to the interior monologues and streams of consciousness of the narrating subjectivities of the Compson sons--whose characters loosely correspond to behaviouristic tendencies of three stages of human development: childhood (Benjy), adolescence (Quentin), and adulthood (Jason).[37] Gone too is the informing and haunting historical past that is so inextricably and confusingly

interfused with present events and which so determines character behaviour. In the final chapter, conscious awareness of the shaping role of the past is repressed by the narrative's empiricism. The narrative style shifts from subjective fragmentation and temporal uncertainty, epitomised by Quentin's claim that "all stable things had become shadowy paradoxical," to impersonal description, conventional linear progression, and literal representation where language is used functionally and transparently (194-95).

In a 1956 interview with Jean Stein, Faulkner, in describing the fourth section of his novel, said, "I tried to gather the pieces together and fill in the gaps by making myself the spokesman" (qtd. in Cowan 17). The return to a standard form of narration is an attempted reassertion of unity and harmony to compensate for the discordant fragments that precede it; however, the final section of the novel fails to provide the closure it promises--a closure one has come to associate as a convention of realist fiction. In contrast to the other three sections, the fourth section provides all objective two-dimensional surface area. The road to the weathered church, for instance, opens at one point onto "a scene like a painted backdrop" (*SF* 337). The complex psychologies of the subjective narratives found in the novel's first three sections give way to descriptions of "painted churches" and whole scenes that are "as flat and without perspective as a painted cardboard set upon the ultimate edge of the flat earth" (337). Faulkner's fourth chapter returns to the behaviourist world of realist fiction which is essentially an objective, stimulus-response style of referentiality and direct correspondence.

The fourth section of Faulkner's novel begins with a description of Dilsey fetching firewood. As she battles the "venomous particles" of rain that "needled laterally into her flesh," the history of the Compson family can be read in her physical body. Her breasts are fallen and her face is collapsed. Although she had once been a "big woman," her skeleton is "draped loosely in unpadded skin that tightened . . . upon a paunch almost dropsical, as though muscle and tissue had been courage or fortitude which the days or the years had consumed until only the indomitable skeleton was left rising like a ruin or a landmark above the somnolent and impervious guts" (307). Dilsey's body is a testament to the fact that she has indeed "seed de first en de last." Every movement for her is now a struggle. Faulkner repeatedly describes the "painful and terrific slowness" with which she ascends and descends the stairs between the first and second floors of the Compson house (310). And yet she places herself without fear between Miss Quentin and Jason when they fight (212, 326). Dilsey functions as the organizational center of the Compson family. She constantly tries to keep the peace and the routine of the household in spite of the turmoil that surrounds her. Because of her strong association with unity and order, the appearance of her figure at the beginning of the fourth chapter is a comforting image

for readers still seeking to fill in the epistemological gaps created by and left open by the previous three sections.

Appropriately, she first appears busily doing the chores Luster has left undone, filling in where others have been remiss.[38] Every such task she performs appears calculated to maintain equilibrium in her immediate surroundings. She threatens to beat Luster if he throws his load of wood noisily in the box again. But instead, she makes him stand still until she meticulously unloads him "a stick at a time" (316). When Mrs. Compson yells to her that Luster has not been up to keep Benjy from disturbing Jason on his one day to sleep in, Dilsey restores quiet with her sarcastic reply, "I dont see how you expect anybody to sleep, wid you standin in de hall, holl'in at folks fum de crack of dawn" (313). Even her preparation of breakfast is described as a reassuring activity of choreographed organisation: "she moved about the kitchen, gathering about her the raw materials of food, coordinating the meal" (316). And like Stephen Dedalus's mother at the beginning of chapter five of *A Portrait*, Dilsey has the ability to read the correct time from a broken clock. She announces, after the cabinet clock with one hand strikes five times, that it is "Eight oclock" (316-17). Dilsey has the uncanny ability to organise and reconcile that which is discordant. As such, she appears as the epitome of rationally balanced order amidst the chaos of the Compson home. Faulkner repeatedly portrays her as figure successfully eliminating or at least reducing dissonance and it therefore seems appropriate that she should be one of the main focal points of the novel's concluding section.

In this chapter, however, Jason is also involved with restoring personal order to his life after Miss Quentin steals his money. Jason is a complete creature of habit and the other characters are acutely aware of what breaks in routine mean for him. Mrs. Compson twice reminds Dilsey "how it frets Jason when breakfast is late." The second time, she unwittingly reveals just how unnecessary such a reminder is for Dilsey when she says, "You know as well as I do how Jason acts when it's late" (313). Disruption triggers his anger, for instance, when he realises that because "the darkies are having a special Easter service, he'll have to eat cold dinner "or none at all" (322). Jason's low tolerance for dissonant situations is matched by Benjy's and, as previously discussed, when Luster takes Benjy the wrong way around the square it is Jason who intercedes to restore order. He jumps onto the surrey, pushes Luster aside, and grabs the reins to direct Queenie around the monument to the right and towards home. Jason yells at Luster, "Don't you know any better than to take him to the left?" (371). The embarrassing public spectacle of Benjy's "unbelievable crescendo" of wailing spurs Jason into action; however, his scolding of Luster also reveals that Jason understands Benjy's low threshold for change

even if he doesn't respect it. He understands it because, although he would never admit it or even recognize it, he and Benjy are very similar in their inability to bear experiences of dissonance.

The visiting minister for the special Easter Service is similarly a reconciling presence. Frony tells a passerby that Dilsey "aint feelin well dis mawnin." The passerby responds, "Rev'un Shegog'll kyo dat. He'll give her de comfort en de unburdenin" (337). Indeed, Reverend Shegog's sermon makes all the members of the congregation feel like "empty vessels" temporarily transcending bodily concerns:

> And the congregation seemed to watch with its own eyes while the voice consumed him, until he was nothing and they were nothing and there was not even a voice but instead their hearts were speaking to one another in charming measures beyond the need for words, so that when he came to rest against the reading desk, his monkey face lifted and his whole attitude that of a serene, tortured crucifix that transcended its shabbiness and insignificance and made it of no moment. . . . (340-41)

The spiritual transcendence imparted by the Reverend's sermon on Christ's death and resurrection makes the congregation forget their bodies and lose the need for words, but this rarified moment only lasts while the congregation is inside the church. As soon as Dilsey leaves the communal sanctuary of the church, her feeling of disembodied "annealment" dissipates (343). She knows she must return to the troubled Compson house--a black servant to a family of white racists, responding over and over again to the bed-ridden Mrs. Compson barking out her name with "machinelike regularity" to perform menial tasks (312). The moment of bodily transcendence, like the shift to the fourth section's objective narrative for readers, only provides temporary relief from embodied cognitive dissonance.

The very first verb with which the narrator describes Dilsey outside the church is carefully chosen to reestablish her corporeality: "As they walked through the bright noon, up the sandy road with the dispersing congregation talking easily again group to group, she continued to weep, unmindful of the talk" (343). The communal experience of the sermon begins to break down marked by a return to bodily movement ("walking") and the breaking up of the congregation's unity. Dilsey's full return to the material world is prompted by her need to use words again, and because language is body-based in its meanings and its use, this necessitates a return from her spiritual, disembodied experience to the everyday world. Frony reprimands her mother for crying unabashedly in public and the first words of response out of Dilsey's mouth reveal that her thoughts have been focused on the Compson family the entire time--the source of her dissonant feelings as

well as readers'. She says, "I've seed de first en de last . . . . I seed de beginnin, en now I sees de endin" (344). Her words simultaneously announce the end of the Compson family line and anticipate the completion of their story, but the tears which accompany her response also symbolically signal that the sense of closure and resolution sought after by readers will be frustrated with this ending. The chapter has not provided the novel with a paraphraseable plot, filled in many of the missing pieces to the Compson puzzle, or explained any of the lingering textual enigmas such as why Quentin kills himself, what the nature of his relationship with his sister was, or who the father of Caddy's baby is. It cannot do so through the superficial empirical observation of details.

The gaps in the text have been created by formal dislocations and the body-based, situated cognitive operations of the Compson sons. Ultimately, the onus of completion falls on readers who must bring their own awareness of cognitive processes to bear on the defamiliarising forms and incomplete information provided by Faulkner's novel. And this, as I have been arguing, is precisely the point of high modernist aesthetics. Each character in the novel expresses behaviouristic tendencies in their responses to their environment; however, it is the fourth chapter, with its return to a quasi-omniscient narrator who does not have privileged access to characters' unspoken feelings, motives, and cognitive operations, that is the most behaviouristic. The chapter reenacts the mission of behaviourist psychology, to restrict observation to what is external and ignore consciousness and the mental operations behind behavioural responses. In this way, the return to observable objectivity uncoloured by personal, bodily experience and subjective interiorization reveals itself as even more limiting and unfulfilling than the previous dissonance-causing fragmented narratives. The first three sections of the novel address readers as readers in the complex materiality of textual construction which consequently forces them to reflect on their own conditioned habits of reading and interpretation as they consciously adjust their habits to make sense of Faulkner's novel. The reversion to narrative conventions of nineteenth-century realism in the fourth section serves, by way of contrast, to highlight the behaviourism of reading and the role dissonance plays in motivating interpretation.

The narrative limitations prevent readers from gaining access to Dilsey's thoughts and memories--the very thing that would fill in the epistemological gaps left gaping from the previous three sections. She has after all "seed de first en de last" and yet in spite of her presence as the constant through the lives and fortunes of the Compson children, the third person narration prevents a realisation of Dilsey as a figure who can provide plenitude and unity. The third person narrative method of the fourth section, which is split between the Easter Church Service Dilsey attends and Jason's attempts to recover his

stolen money, formally connotes the restoration of order while the action of the chapter thematises attempts at reconciliation which are not realised. Despite the comfort that the chapter's more accessible narrative style provides to readers, however, they are still left frustrated by gaps either left unfulfilled by the narrative or which were too difficult to understand (chronologies of events). Even after the final section many readers are still left wondering, as first-time readers do and as early reviewers did after reading Benjy's section, whether it was worth their trouble and where the point of diminishing returns lies.

* * * * * * *

The marshall who arrests Quentin on kidnapping charges responds to the confusion of multiple voices during the hearing by yelling, "Order, order" (*SF* 164). In doing so, he metacritically speaks for frustrated readers who are struggling to organise Quentin's achronological shifts of consciousness and the often untagged cast of speakers in his mind that occur over the course of his aimless wandering on 2 June 1910. He also speaks more generally for readers attempting to make sense of Faulkner's fragmented history of the Compson family and the intended confusion of Benjy's and Quentin's section. In *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner forces readers to read relationally: how different sections of the novel relate to each other; how the different characters and their idiosyncratic personalities relate to each other; and how we, as readers, relate to the characters and their narrative styles. I have tried to show that behaviourism provides alternative ways of interpreting both Faulkner's characters and his possible motives behind creating them the way he did in much the same way as cognitive dissonance provides readers with an alternative method of exploring their responses to high modernism.

Without question, the various forms of conditioning that each of Faulkner's characters displays corrupts language use and modifies the narrative perspective through which Faulkner recounts their stories. These disruptive forces within the narratives and between the sections of the novel produce a highly dissonant reading experience which prevents readers from reading on "automatic pilot." Instead, the defamiliarising poetics of Faulkner's first two sections break readers out of conditioned reading habits at the same time that they are exposed to obsessively conditioned individuals who serve as warnings to readers about the threat of behaviourism. The second half of the novel relieves much of the difficulty of reading the first. However, both sections--one narrated from Jason's controlling perspective and the other from a traditional third-person perspective--do not help to complete the novel and readers are left to contemplate the importance and

arbitrariness of form as a communicative medium. The four sections of the novel correspond roughly with four different modes of cognition: the literal; the abstract-philosophical; the economical; and the conventional.

Faulkner's novel highlights the way that conditioned habits--cognitive and otherwise--are simultaneously "ruts" and "resources" to human life. John Dewey calls these two types of habit "routine" and "intellectual" (71).[39] He recognises both the threat and value of cognitive efficiency and economy. On the one extreme, however, he warns, "All habit-forming involves the beginning of an intellectual specialization which if unchecked ends in thoughtless action" (173). His claim more than adequately describes the mechanical routine of Benjy's life. At the same time, he argues, "Few persons have either the energy or the wealth to build private roads to travel upon. They find it convenient, 'natural,' to use the roads that are already there" (59). Dewey's observations reaffirm what Faulkner's novel teaches readers: some conditioning is essential to life, but it needs to remain flexible in order to accommodate new experiences and manage cognitive dissonance.

The poetics of difficulty employed in *The Sound and the Fury* break the machinery of reading habits and force readers to reflect consciously on the nature and role of those conditioned habits. Habits are not just abandoned in reading disruptive high modernist novels, rather they are modified by consciousness and made more flexible for future uses. Hitches in cognitive processes do not just provoke thought. They reveal the value of cognitive dissonance in honing our critical skills and keeping our experiences of life freshly nuanced and engaged. Accordingly, Faulkner's novel counters the threat of behaviourism in the very process of representing characters who are hopelessly conditioned. In effect, the reading experience produced reaffirms Dewey's conclusion to his discussion of habit which advocates the necessity of cognitive dissonance: "Without habit there is only irritation and confused hesitation. With habit alone there is a machine-like repetition, a duplicating recurrence of old acts. With conflict of habits and release of impulse there is conscious search" (180). In the chapter that follows, we will see how Virginia Woolf exploits readers' desires to reduce experiences of cognitive dissonance and to establish equilibrium while reading. In *Jacob's Room* she thematises the inevitability of dissonant-causing gaps in experience while in *Mrs. Dalloway* she shows the necessity of dissonance to preserve individuality in the face of social conformity.

NOTES

[1] William Faulkner, "Barn Burning," *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, ed. Nina Baym, et al., vol. 2, 3rd ed. (New York: Norton: 1989): 1632-44.

[2] Rollo May, *Freedom and Destiny* (New York: Norton, 1981).

[3] Clive Hart, "Gaps and Cracks in *Ulysses*," *JJQ* 30 (Spring 1993): 427-37.

[4] I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 45-66.

[5] William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* (*SF*), the corrected text (1929; New York: Random, 1984).

[6] Dorit Bar-On, "Semantic Verificationism, Linguistic Behaviourism, and Translation," *Philosophical Studies* 66.3 (June 1992): 235-59.

[7] See Andre Bleikasten, *The Most Splendid Failure: Faulkner's* The Sound and the Fury, (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1976). Faulkner's claim that *The Sound and the Fury* was not a strategic "*tour de force*" and "just grew" on its own needs to be taken with a grain of salt because he also claimed that Benjy's section needed to go first to establish difficulty and disorient readers.

[8] William Faulkner, "Appendix: Compson: 1699-1945," *The Portable Faulkner*, ed. Malcolm Cowley (New York: Viking, 1946): 737-56.

[9] See also Donald Kartiganer, *The Fragile Thread: The Meaning of Form in Faulkner's Novels* (Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1979).

[10] See James Meriwether and Michael Millgate, ed., *Lion in the Garden: Interviews with William Faulkner, 1926-1962* (New York: Random, 1968).

[11] qtd. in Bleikasten 44 (from the Introduction to the 1933 publication of *The Sound and the Fury*).

[12] There are also two Jasons mentioned and undifferentiated, and two Maurys. Naming as linguistic identification also takes on an uncertainty.

[13] See Matei Calinescu, *Rereading* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1993).

[14] See Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1959).

[15] See John Mathews, "Text and Context: Teaching *The Sound and the Fury* after Deconstruction," *Approaches to Teaching Faulkner's* The Sound and the Fury, ed. Stephen Hahn and Arthur Kinney (New York: MLA, 1996): 122-27.

[16] See William Faulkner, *Selected Letters of William Faulkner*, ed. Joseph Blotner (New York: Random, 1977).

[17] See Noel Polk, "Introduction," *New Essays on* The Sound and the Fury, ed. Noel Polk (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993): 12.

[18] See Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. G. Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1976): 157, 141-64.

[19] See Donald Kartiganer and Ann Abadie, eds., *Faulkner and Psychology* (Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1994).

[20] See Thomas C. Beattie, "Moments of Meaning Dearly Achieved: Virginia Woolf's Sense of an Ending," *Modern Fiction Studies* 32.4 (Winter 1986): 521-41. Beattie bases his breakdown of character into categories on James Phelan's work in *Reading People, Reading Plots*. See James Phelan, *Reading People, Reading Plots* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1989).

[21] For more on how an establishing shot works, see David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction*, 5th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997).

[22] See Ivan Pavlov, "The Conditioned Reflex," *Great Ideas in Psychology*, ed. Robert Marks (New York: Bantam, 1966): 344-52. Most communication theorists and linguists find behaviouristic elements involved in language acquisition and use, but whole-heartedly refute that behaviourism can account for

human language as an objective behaviour in terms of stimulus and response. Frederic Gruber, for instance, argues,

> Behaviour theory does not make a distinction between meaning and reference, which has for so long been recognised as crucial by philosophers of language. "Tricky Dick" and the Thirty-Seventh President of the United States of America may refer to the same person, but they do not mean the same thing. (12)

See Frederic Gruber, "Why Empirical Methods Cannot Apply in Communication Research: The Case Against Behaviourism," *Intercultural and International Communication*, ed. Fred Casmir (Washington: UP of America, 1978): 7-41. See also Leonard Linsky, ed., *Semantics and the Philosophy of Language: A Collection of Readings* (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1952).

[23] See Noel Polk, "Trying Not to Say: A Primer on the Language of the *Sound and the Fury*," in Polk 139-75; John Mathews, *The Play of Faulkner's Language* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1982); Judith Lockyer, *Ordered by Words: Language and Narration in the Novels of William Faulkner* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1991); Irena Kaluza, *The Functioning of Sentence Structure in the Stream-of-Consciousness Technique of William Faulkner's "The Sound and the Fury"* (Krakow: Nadladem Uniwersytetu Jagiellonskiego, 1967); Arnold Weinstein, "'Trying to Say': Sound and Silence, Subject and Community in *The Sound and the Fury*," in Hahn 38-43; James Burnham, "Trying to Say" *Symposium* 2 (January 1931): 51-59.

[24] The complicated figure of Benjy also calls into question issues of intentionality since he is not conscious of the way he describes things. His is a falsified narrative that celebrates the simple materiality of the world and records observations as Faulkner can only assume a mentally-deficient individual would. Literal descriptions, because they are not accompanied by a rationalising mind, unintentionally become highly poetic figurative representations. Faulkner develops Benjy's perspective as if he were an Imagist poet following the now famous credos Ezra Pound set out in his 1913 "A Few Don'ts for an Imagist": "Direct treatment of the 'thing,' whether subjective or objective" and "To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation." Benjy's narrative adheres remarkably to Pound's statement about the aim of the Imagist which is to "present an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time . . . which gives the sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits." Benjy's section has a condensed allusiveness akin to Imagist poetry which requires that readers make hermeneutical decisions about what to import in terms of intertextual contexts and meanings into the singular images and descriptions that are presented and provocatively left to stand by themselves. Such Imagistic allusiveness provides opportunity for interpretation and misinterpretation and that is exactly Faulkner's point. In presenting the perspective of a completely conditioned being who is unable to reflect on his responses and their connections with prompting stimuli the onus of understanding shifts from character to reader. At the moment of such a shift, readers take on the responsibilities of interpretation and perceive alternative explanations that Benjy never will. The distance between Benjy's view of the world and the view that readers bring to the text is the negotiated distance of interpretation which provides the means by which to read this section of the novel. His section tests readers for cognitive adaptability and their tolerance levels for cognitive dissonance. Through Benjy, Faulkner complicates the everyday with simplicity. While Benjy's section can also be read as a return to primitivism for the purposes of commenting on and critiquing modern society, I want to read the difficulty generated by Benjy's rudimentary cognitive abilities as an example of behaviourist principles taken to an extreme which in turn challenge passive behaviourist models of reading and interpretation. Donald Kartiganer was the first to note the resemblance between the descriptions attributed to and derived from Benjy's point of view and Imagist principles for poetic creation. He also reads Quentin's section as a parody of High Modernist styles and Jason's as a parody of Postmodernism. See Ezra Pound, "A Retrospect," *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. T. S. Eliot (London: Faber, 1954): 4; Donald Kartiganer, "'Now I Can Write': Faulkner's Novel of Invention," Polk 71-97.

[25] For a reading in this vein, see Jean-Paul Sartre, "Time in Faulkner: *The Sound and the Fury*," *William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism*, ed. Frederick Hoffman and Olga Vickery (East Lansing: Michigan State UP, 1960): 225-32

[26] A similar stimulus-response automatic association occurs when Quentin cuts his thumb on the glass shards of his pocket watch. He does not initially feel the pain of the cut until he sees the "red smear on the dial." The sight of blood automatically triggers Quentin's sense of pain and discomfort: "When I saw it my thumb began to smart" (91). Quentin's past experiences of cutting himself have associated blood and pain to condition his response here also.

[27] For critics on issues of time in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* see Andre Bleikasten, *The Most Splendid Failure*, chpt. 5, 121-144; Perrin Lowrey, "Concepts of Time in *The Sound and the Fury*," 53-62, and Cleanth Brooks, "Man, Time, and Eternity," 63-70, in *Twentieth Century Interpretations of* The Sound and the Fury, edited by Michael H. Cowan; Jean-Paul Sartre, "Time in Faulkner: *The Sound and the Fury*," in *William Faulkner: Three Decades of Criticism*, 225-32; Marsha Warren, "Time, Space, and Semiotic Discourse in the Feminization / Disintegration of Quentin Compson," *The Faulkner Journal* 4 (Fall 1988-Spring 1989): 99-111; John Hampsey, "Checking in on Time in *The Sound and the Fury*," *Arizona Quarterly* 43 (Summer 1987):133-140; Peter Swiggart, "Moral and Temporal Order in *The Sound and the Fury*," *Sewanee Review*, 61 (Spring 1953): 221-37; Douglas Messerli, "The Problem of Time in *The Sound and the Fury*," *The Southern Literary Journal* 6 (Spring 1974): 19-41; and, more generally, in Faulkner's fiction, Olga W. Vickery, "The Contours of Time," *The Novels of William Faulkner*, rev. ed. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1964): 226-36; Margaret Church, "William Faulkner: Myth and Duration," *Time and Reality: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* (Chapel Hill: U of North Caroline P, 1963): 227-50; Karl E. Zink, "Flux and the Frozen Moment: The Imagery of Stasis in Faulkner's Prose," *PMLA* 71 (June 1956): 285-301; Wesley Kort, "Social Time in Faulkner's Fiction," *Arizona Quarterly* 37 (Summer 1981) 101-115; William Davis, "William Faulkner's Stopped Clock: Time in Yoknapatawpha County," *Appropriations and Impositions: National, Regional and Sexual Identity in Literature*, ed. Igor Navratic and Robert Pynsent (Bratislava, Slovakia: Narodne literarne centrum, 1997): 164-76.

[28] See Perrin Lowrey, "Concepts of Time in *The Sound and the Fury*," *Twentieth Century Interpretations of* The Sound and the Fury, ed. Michael Cowan (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice: 1968): 53-62.

[29] Bleikasten 127.

[30] Bertolt Brecht, "Short Description of a New Technique of Acting which Produces an Alienation Effect," *Brecht on Theatre*, ed. and trans. John Willett (New York: Hill, 1964): 143-45.

[31] I realise that calling Quentin's introspective conditioning "behavioural" appears to betray the empirical basis of behaviourism's desire only to study observable responses, but I am evoking behaviourism here more liberally to mean many different types of human conditioning because that is how it would have been known in the popular imagination.

[32] The fragmented nature of Quentin's memory of his father's warning also allows it to be read to mean that "constant speculation" is "a symptom of mind-function." In this case, Mr. Compson's observation aligns him with one of the main arguments of this dissertation. In calling the desire to know that which is absent a habit symptomatic of mind-function, he connects the habitual and automatic impulse to fill in experiential gaps with basic human cognition.

[33] See, for example, Michael Millgate, *The Achievement of William Faulkner* (New York: Random, 1966); John Desmond, "Teaching Religion and Philosophy in *The Sound and the Fury*" in Hahn 84-88; Richard Godden, "Quentin Compson: Tyrrhenian Vase or Crucible of Race?" in Polk 99-137.

[34] In 1872, William James was appointed as an instructor in physiology at Harvard and, in 1875, he taught a course entitled "The Relation between Physiology and Psychology," setting up the first laboratory in America for experimenting in the field of psychology. See William James, *The Principles of Psychology* (1891; New York: Dover, 1950).

[35] See William James, "Habit" in Marks 320-43.

[36] It is perhaps important to note that *The Sound and the Fury* was originally published (1,780 copies) on 7 October 1929 only two weeks before the Wall Street stock market crash. While Jason's views of the stock market read prophetically, many critics blame the novel's lack of popular reception on the onset of the Great Depression. Until 1946 only 3,300 copies of Faulkner's novel were printed and yet today it is considered Faulkner's greatest literary achievement. See John Meriwether, "The Textual History of The Sound and the Fury," *The Merrill Studies in* The Sound and the Fury, ed. James Meriwether (Columbus: Merrill, 1970): 1-32.

[37] Kartiganer, "'Now I Can Write': Faulkner's Novel of Invention," 77.

[38] This scene confirms Jason's paranoid fears about the travelling show because Luster has irresponsibly not completed his chores because he has gone to the show the night before.

[39] See John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (New York: Holt, 1922).

Chapter Five: A Sense of Proportion

I begin this chapter by discussing what I believe forms the basis for Virginia Woolf's aesthetics of cognitive dissonance in her later fiction: "moments of being" that effectively disrupt the "cotton wool" of daily routines. I then turn to Woolf's literary criticism in which I locate--despite its apparent contradictions and inconsistencies--Woolf's conflicted characterisation of modernism and her awareness of reading as a harmony-seeking activity. I then proceed to examine the way that Woolf's novel *Jacob's Room* thematises the inability to "sum up" characters into complete wholes, and how this frustrating experience transfers to readers through disruptive narrative forms. In the final section, I read *Mrs. Dalloway* as a novel that pits social conformity against individual expression to create cognitive dissonance. In doing so, Woolf explores how dissonance affects both personal behaviour and social custom--not to mention interpretive reading--and reveals how her characters and readers are driven by a desire to reconcile the inevitability of cognitive dissonance.

I. Aestheticising "Moments of Being"

> **A great part of every day is not lived consciously. One walks, eats, sees things, deals with what has to be done; the broken vacuum cleaner; ordering dinner; bookbinding. (Virginia Woolf, "A Sketch of the Past").**

"Once you stumble, Septimus wrote on the back of a postcard, human nature is on you" (*MD* 70). Unlike the cryptic "U.P.:up" message from *Ulysses*, the message on this modernist postcard announces a real threat to personal expression: human nature. In the London of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, the goddess Proportion and her sister Conversion represent the deification of human nature and serve as the cornerstones of modern civilisation. Together they maintain *the correct and desirable* relationships between parts and wholes, or, in more humanistic terms, the relations between individuals and society. Septimus Smith's metaphor of stumbling establishes the direct link between the actual loss of bodily equilibrium and society's homeostatic need to control all "unsocial impulses" that threaten its functional balance. When the human body stumbles, its automatic reaction is to physically adjust the body's weight and momentum to compensate for the loss of balance to avoid the risk associated with falling. In society, the corresponding reassertion of proportion is the responsibility of medical doctors and the governing-classes who prescribe cures and pass laws that reduce the dissonant threat of figurative stumbling.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf recognises both the importance of a sense of proportion to society and the individual as well as its pernicious threat. According to the narrator, "Worshipping proportion" is what makes England prosper. Men like Dr. Bradshaw "secluded her lunatics, forbade childbirth, penalised despair, made it impossible for the unfit to propagate their views until they, too, shared his sense of proportion" (75). Proportion and her "less smiling, more formidable" sister, Conversion, are what maintain smooth social functioning not only at home, but abroad. Woolf similarly locates the desire to teach proportion within the civilising mission of colonisation. In 1923, the year in which her novel is set, conversion is engaged

> in the heat and sands of India, the mud and swamp of Africa, the purlieus of London, wherever in short the climate or the devil tempts men to fall from the true belief which is her own--is even now engaged in dashing down shrines, smashing idols, and setting up in their place her own stern countenance. Conversion is her name and she feasts on the wills of the weakly, loving to impress, to impose, adoring her own features stamped on the face of the populace. (75-76)

As I will come to show, *Mrs. Dalloway* embodies Woolf's own mixed feelings about the necessity of a sense of proportion to maintain modern social order and the potential threat to culture and human existence itself that more extreme manifestations of this natural inclination pose. Implicitly aware that proportion is a body-based concept that derives its power from the lived experiences of the homeostatic human body, Woolf develops an aesthetic of cognitive dissonance that disrupts our natural inclinations for balance, symmetry, and proportion.

Throughout her essays of literary criticism, Woolf consistently alludes to the related propensity to read for wholeness and interpretive closure. Moreover, in her novel *Jacob's Room*--the one that has perhaps received the least amount of critical attention--she makes readers painfully aware that appearances and descriptions can only ever be relative and partial. Thematically and formally, she exploits readers' gap-filling impulses through her overly self-reflexive narrator. This phenomenological approach to literary representation marks the beginning of Woolf's experimentation with cognitive dissonance as an aesthetic principle. Woolf intimately knows that dissonance is what breaks the routine of life, offers possibilities for discovery and change, and prompts responses which effectively reassert a more conscious and enriched balance to life. The unsettling difficulty of *Jacob's Room* leads directly to the multi-perspective narrative of drifting consciousness in *Mrs. Dalloway*--a novel that I contend allegorises the struggle of high modernist writers to find the balance between the disruption and maintenance of

proportion needed to avoid excluding the common reader from their works. Before looking at Woolf's literary criticism and fiction in any detail, I want to turn to her 1939-40 autobiographical memoir, "A Sketch of the Past," in which she articulates a life philosophy that also functions as her aesthetic philosophy.[1]

For Woolf, proportion and conversion--albeit based on bodily responses necessary for survival--threaten "being" in their more pernicious social manifestations. Near the beginning of "A Sketch of the Past," Woolf attempts, in what she labels a "digression," to explain her own psychology (which she presumes is similar to that of other people). In doing so, she describes experiences of the "exceptional"[2] as "being" and experiences of the habitual as "non-being." According to her distinction, "Every day includes much more non-being than being" (70). For Woolf, moments of "being" are exceptions to the much more abundant moments of "non-being" and therefore rely on "non-being" for their impact. She refers to "non-being" as "a kind of nondescript cotton wool," the total absence of any "sudden violent shock." "Non-being," then, is her name for the routine of everyday life. In contrast, it is "being" that leaves an indelible mark on human memory and becomes conscious because it shocks one out of "non-being," whereas "non-being" remains undifferentiated and habitual.[3] As a result, moments of "being" are fruitful discoveries that one returns to, turns over, and explores. They are easily recalled because they force a cognitive adjustment in perception and disrupt the easy flow of routine. Woolf describes one such experience of "being" as "the moment of the puddle in the path; when for no reason I could discover, everything suddenly became unreal; I was suspended; I could not step across the puddle; I tried to touch something . . . the whole world became unreal." Woolf says it was "as if I were . . . exposed to a whole avalanche of meaning that had heaped itself up and discharged itself upon me, unprotected, with nothing to ward it off. . . . I could not explain it" (78). Woolf echoes the mixed feeling of unbridled freedom and anxiety generated by cognitive dissonance which causes individuals to pause and consciously attend to novel experiences.

Woolf goes on to separate "moments of being" into those that end in a state of despair and those that end in a state of satisfaction. Although she wants to mark a profound distinction between these two types of exceptional experience, in reality they are simply different experiences of cognitive dissonance. Those that supply satisfaction are reconciled moments of dissonance where either an epiphanic showing through occurs or reason provides a satisfactory explanation and blunts "the sledge-hammer blow" (72). The significance of this exceptional moment quickly becomes apparent because its dissonance is easily equilibriated by existing cognitive scripts that adapt to it. On the

other hand, those exceptional moments which end in despair indicate a lasting irreconcilability of cognitive dissonance as is the case in someone's death or other traumatic experiences which are not easily explainable and seem beyond one's control. According to Woolf, "a peculiar horror and a physical collapse" accompanies these moments and one feels powerless and passive (72).

The sensation Woolf describes here is akin to the cognitive pause I outlined at the beginning of the previous chapter--a momentary feeling of negative capability when all teleological flow has ceased and a sense of end-anxiety has not yet reasserted itself. For Woolf, such moments are the stuff of great fiction. Shocks alter perception and expose alternative, unconscious meaning to consciousness; they are signals that something exists beyond the mere appearances of things. She believes that what ultimately makes her a writer is a "shock-receiving capacity," the feeling that she has received a "blow from an enemy hidden behind the cotton wool of daily life," and subsequently desires to make sense of that blow (72). These moments are "particularly valuable" because they are "a revelation of some order" and Woolf recognises the organisation impulse that they elicit through their dissonance: "I hazard the explanation that a shock is at once in my case followed by the desire to explain it" (72). Writing, then, is a type of conversion process--taking the dissonant experience and putting it into words to make it comprehensible and thereby manage its discomforting dissonance. Woolf's account of this process not only describes her desire to eliminate the experience of cognitive dissonance, but also describes the nature of interpretive reading more generally:

> It is only by putting it into words that I make it *whole*; this *wholeness* means that it has lost its power to hurt me; it gives me, perhaps because by doing so I *take away the pain*, a great delight *to put the severed parts together*. Perhaps this is the strongest pleasure known to me. It is the rapture I get when in writing I seem to be discovering what belongs to what; making a scene come right; making a character come together. From this I reach what I might call a philosophy; at any rate it is a constant idea of mine; that behind the cotton wool is a hidden pattern; that we--I mean all human beings--are connected with this; that the whole world is a work of art; that we are parts of the work of art. (emphasis added 72)

In her explanation of how writing compensates for and replaces feelings of dissonance, Woolf makes use of a vocabulary that recalls the metaphor of phantom limb. Her desire in writing is to "take away the pain" and "put the severed parts together." In this passage, which sounds straight out of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Woolf privileges the concepts of "wholeness" and "completion" over "fragmentation" and "severance." They

provide her with "the strongest pleasure" because they eliminate the dissonance brought about by moments of being.

In discussing one of her motivations for writing, Woolf, quite inadvertently, stumbles onto the main motivation behind interpretive reading. Most critics read this passage and others like it as Woolf's appreciation of the transcendental interconnectedness of the world. I am suggesting that in fact Woolf's observations amount to an aesthetic theory that confirms the instinctual impulse to create wholes out of fragments and perceive patterns where in fact they may not exist. Such was the case with the "U.P.:up" postcard and what motivated the reconstructive reading of *The Sound and the Fury*'s fragmented sections. As we will see shortly, in *Jacob's Room* Woolf illustrates this impulse thematically and frustrates it formally. The reading experience--and writing experience according to Woolf--involves mapping our knowledge of our own bodies, our embodied sense of wholeness, onto the literature we read. This predisposition for wholeness nuances Woolf's assertion that "one's life is not confined to one's body and what one says and does; one is living all the time in relation to certain background rods or conceptions. Mine is that there is a pattern hid behind the cotton wool. And this conception affects me every day" (73). Woolf may explain her desire to seek out patterns in life which are not direct responses to experiences of cognitive dissonance, but her understanding of the human propensity for harmony and closure aligns her with much of the cognitive research discussed in chapter one. Nowhere is this appreciation more apparent than in Woolf's nonfictional works of literary criticism.

II. The Essays

Such as the Life is, Such is the Form (Coleridge)

Between 1904 and 1922, Woolf "was primarily a reviewer and essayist, writing more than half of her 500-plus articles, essays, and reviews" (1).[4] This early image of Woolf as a prolific literary critic, however, often gets eclipsed by the figure of Woolf the novelist. With the exception of "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" and "Modern Fiction"--her two most famous and often-quoted modernist manifestoes--Woolf's literary criticism often gets ignored because a good deal of it does not appear to bear directly on her fiction. Instead, it appears casual and light in tone when compared with the high-minded rigour and elitism of other modernist artist / critics like T. S. Eliot.[5] Because of the volumes of Woolf's critical writings which are currently available, it is almost impossible to

summarise Woolf's aesthetic views and characterise her literary criticism.[6] It often appears vague, colloquial, contradictory, and inconsistent. At times her evaluations are highly subjective, even "impressionistic," and at other times prescriptive and programmatic. She is torn between accounting for form and feeling, and she struggles to defend traditionalism in literary works while advocating experimentalism.[7]

In "How Should One Read a Book?", for instance, Woolf claims, "The only advice, indeed, that one person can give another about reading is to take no advice, to follow your own instincts, to use your own reason, to come to your own conclusions" (258).[8] Woolf's attempt to liberate common readers from the authority and opinions of professional critics paradoxically undermines her own *raison d'etre* as a reviewer. In the very first sentence of the essay she draws attention to her interrogative title, claiming that any answer she provides for the question of "how to read" can only apply to her. With this disclaimer out of the way, Woolf then proceeds to put forward "a few ideas and suggestions," knowing that they won't fetter the independence of readers. This initial speculative tone, however, soon gives way to a much more prescriptive one. Woolf commands readers, "Do not dictate to your author; try to become him. Be his fellow-worker and accomplice" (259). Woolf's ideas that readers read according to their instincts and that they become authors' accomplices have obvious significance to the cognitive approach to literature I have been advocating; however, the point here is not to determine the validity of Woolf's claims, but to highlight the contradictory nature of her critical positions and the difficulty of knowing "how to read" *her* works.

In what follows, I won't attempt to argue around the contradictions and inconsistencies in Woolf's literary criticism. One could, however, argue that these elements are only superficial and that a closer analysis of the essays reveals a coherent pattern of thought or a transcendent theme that unites their divergent aspects. Another way to get around the problem of inconsistency is to say that Woolf simply changed her mind and wrote according to the mood she was in: the impressionistic claim. Another consideration is that Woolf was paid to write most of her reviews, articles, and essays, and therefore needed to court the fickle sensibilities of her prospective publishers and readers. However one chooses to account for these discrepancies doesn't change the fact that they exist. My concern is with what I have identified as a recurring idea in her criticism: her holistic desire to experience life and literary works as organised wholes. Coincidentally, or perhaps not, a good number of these essays first appeared in a collection published in 1925 under the title *The Common Reader*.

Woolf began writing the essays for *The Common Reader* after she completed *Jacob's Room* and she continued to work on them while she was writing *Mrs. Dalloway*. One would assume that her collection of critical essays would reflect the influence of these high modernist experimental novels. While it may be possible to recruit sections from the essays, single sentences even, into service for the purposes of explicating specific aspects of individual novels, this happens only with the greatest of intellectual dexterity. Most of Woolf's critical essays and reviews appear to take their subject matter on its own terms. For instance, one critic in particular "find[s] her criticism devoid of method, if delightful in content" (Goldman 104). And yet this is not to say that Woolf's critical essays cannot provide assistance in understanding the aesthetics of her own fictional works. Relevance, I've argued, is a functional concept that is based on individual levels of tolerance for cognitive dissonance. Although it is impossible to predict these levels in common readers, we know that they exist to some degree in all readers and affect how they read. This makes predicting which types of aesthetic variations will elicit experiences of cognitive dissonance something writers can do with at least some degree of certainty.

Woolf begins *The Common Reader* with a short essay of the same name in which she cites a passage from Samuel Johnson's "Life of Gray" to set up her idea of the common reader: "I rejoice to concur with the common reader; for by the *common sense* of readers, uncorrupted by literary prejudices, after all the refinement of subtilty and the dogmatism of learning, must be finally decided all claim to poetical honours" (emphasis added 11). For Woolf, the common reader "differs from the critic and the scholar," and "reads for [her] own pleasure rather than to impart knowledge or correct the opinions of others" (11). From other sources it is possible to sketch out just what Woolf has in mind when she invokes the common reader. In contrast to the academic or critic, the common reader is one of the "thousands of unimportant people" who reads "slowly and unprofessionally" for pleasure, and is therefore "an infallible judge."[9] In the edited transcript version of "Byron and Mr. Briggs," Woolf outlines her idea for the common reader:

> When Johnson talked of the common sense of readers, no doubt he meant that the faculty of knowing what to use, what to neglect, is well developed among us, and can be trusted in the long run to whittle away even the enormous deposits which have heaped themselves over a man like Byron . . . .[10]

Ultimately, Woolf's common reader is an average reader who is neither a professional reviewer nor an academic specialist, but rather one who uses a practical approach to reading which is based on common (embodied) sense.

Critics have read Woolf's common reader as an ideal construct as well as a rhetorical persona or mask which allows her to address all readers inclusively and democratically, thereby avoiding both the implicit class distinctions and the authoritarianism of learned scholars--the very things she wants to move beyond in the essays of *The Common Reader*. One critic describes the common reader as "a metaphor for how texts operate and how knowledge is constructed." According to this view, the common reader is really just a dialogical or conversational mode of reading that allows for "communication between different points of view."[11] This notion of Woolf's common reader as an anticipated universal reader is closest to my own--the non-pejorative lowest common denominator of reader who reads from a position of lived bodily experiences and basic knowledge. What makes common readers "common" are the innate motivations which inspire the reading strategies they employ. "Above all," Woolf argues, the common reader "is guided by an instinct to create for himself, out of whatever odds and ends he can come by, some kind of whole--a portrait of a man, a sketch of an age, a theory of the art of writing" (*Common* 11). The common reader, according to Woolf, is compelled to read for completion. It is a ceaseless pursuit to satisfy an instinctual need which can be

> Hasty, inaccurate, and superficial, snatching now this poem, now that scrap of old furniture, without caring where he finds it or of what nature it may be so long as it serves his purpose and rounds his structure . . . . (11-12)

Woolf, therefore, implies that interpretive reading to assuage the cognitive dissonance of incompletion and indeterminacy sometimes results in readers grasping haphazardly after anything to fill in gaps in their experiences. In this respect, common readers *may* differ from the more "responsible" interpretations generated by academics and literary critics. The important point, however, is that Woolf's common reader is defined by a desire for holistic interpretations and in that way he or she is no different than academics and literary critics.

Woolf's desire to write *for* and *as* the common reader contributed to much of the confusion one experiences when reading her essays and comparing them to her own fiction. In *The Common Reader*, she thinks of literature as a means of supplementing the chaos of the everyday world by providing readers with characters and worlds that are "rounded and complete" (24). Daily life comprises "scenes, thoughts, and apparently fortuitous groupings of incongruous things which impinge upon us with . . . a keen sense

of novelty," but only literature offers these experiences "whole and comprehended" (299). Such a view makes it very difficult for Woolf to support the experimental literature she herself produced. In fact, she calls the high modernist period "an age of fragments" and refers to the contemporary literature as a "rubbish heap" that contains only "tiny pearls" (296-97). As a result, she advises common readers to return to "the masterpieces of the past . . . . [in order] to anchor our instability upon their security," all in an attempt to counter the acute irritation and "profound dissatisfaction" produced by modernist fiction (300). Despite how strange this advice seems coming from a writer whose own fictional works contributed to this "profound dissatisfaction," Woolf's criticism provides two important insights to note: first, that the common reader is motivated by a strong desire for harmony and closure; and second, that cognitive dissonance is a recognisable and representative characteristic of modernist fiction seemingly designed to upset the common reader's holistic impulses.

Curiously enough, Woolf fails to see in her contemporaries the same virtues she finds in reading Greek or Russian literature. In "The Russian Point of View," Woolf claims that reading Chekhov's short fiction produces the feeling "as if a tune had stopped short without the expected chords to close it" (223). There is a lack of completed harmony about these works that contrasts the familiar and emphatic endings found in most realist fiction. According to Woolf, Chekhov's stories "are inconclusive . . . and proceed to frame a criticism based upon the assumption that stories ought to conclude in a way we recognise" (223). She admits that there is something alien and difficult about reading Russian literature of this sort: "Nothing is solved; nothing is rightly held together" (224-25). The same dissonant aesthetics, however, that she condemns in modernist literature possess a redeeming value in contemporary Russian literature simply by virtue of the fact that the literature is foreign and expected to be disruptively different. In what is probably her most perceptive insight, Woolf claims that the aesthetics of inconclusiveness "raise the question of our own fitness as readers" because English readers feel disturbed when the "process to which [they are] accustomed in [their] own literature is reversed" (223, 227). Woolf seems willing to grant Russian literature a leniency not afforded "the littered fragments" of Anglo-American modernist fiction. Chekhov's short stories, we are told, somehow assure readers that the author is "not merely rambling disconnectedly" and this makes it more acceptable that it is "we [who] hold the parts together" as we read (223). When she discusses Greek poetry (not in translation) she is obviously no longer writing for any non-Greek-speaking common reader, but she still advocates strategies for reading it which she denies modernist works. She says of reading Greek, "We can never hope to get the whole fling of a sentence in Greek as we do in English" (55). This in turn prompts

readers to adopt a compensatory reading strategy that involves "reading into Greek poetry not what they have but what we lack" (54)--the exact description of the reading strategies needed to negotiate modernist works that aestheticise cognitive dissonance.

It is rather perplexing that Woolf could write the type of essays she does in *The Common Reader* in light of her own aesthetic commitments. Little wonder, then, that scholars have focused critical attention on the two distinctively modernist essays, "Modern Fiction" and "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," both of which discuss the type of literary experimentation that Woolf practices in her later fiction. And yet even these two pieces bristle with contradictions when put side by side, evidence that Woolf was still trying to come to terms with the experience of cognitive dissonance in fiction. In "Modern Fiction," Woolf attacks the "well constructed and solid craftsmanship" of Edwardian novels where "There is not so much as a draught between the frames of the windows, or a crack in the boards" (209). The imagery here is apt: convention suffocates literary works when they contain no disruptive gaps through which the reader can enter the text. In addition, Woolf calls on modernist writers to "discard the conventions which are commonly observed by the novelist," disregard probability and coherence if need be, even if the result is "difficult or unpleasant" reading experiences (213-214): "Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness" (213). Woolf is obviously writing as a writer in this essay when she claims "that nothing--no 'method', no experiment, even of the wildest--is forbidden, but only falsity and pretense" (218).[12]

Such is not the case in "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" where instead of advocating radical experimentation, Woolf condemns examples of it as "wanton exhibitions of spleen" (110), this time speaking from the common reader's perspective.[13] Joyce's "conscious and calculated indecency" in *Ulysses* is the work of a "desperate man who feels that in order to breathe he must break windows"--here Woolf ironically evokes the same architectural metaphors she used in "Modern Fiction" to argue against conventional fiction. She also says that the obscurity of Eliot's poetry forces her as a reader to make dizzy and dangerous leaps from one line to the next, "like an acrobat flying precariously from bar to bar" (109). She confesses that the reading experience causes her to cry out "for the old decorums, and envy the indolence of my ancestors who, instead of spinning madly through mid-air, dreamt quietly in the shade with a book" (109). In this essay, Woolf defends and highlights the importance of the same conventions she railed against in "Modern Fiction."[14] Conventions previously anathema to the writer now provide the

means of "bridging the gulf" between writer and reader; they are recognisable, "common meeting-place[s]" which can be reached "easily, almost instinctively, in the dark, with one's eyes closed" (104). Whereas "Modern Fiction" encouraged writers to experiment freely and create cognitive dissonance, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" told readers that they would merely have to accept this unsatisfactory dissonance: "Tolerate the spasmodic, the obscure, the fragmentary, the failure" as a temporary and transitional phase which inevitably will lead to "one of the great ages of English literature" (111).

Woolf obviously struggled with the concept of aestheticised cognitive dissonance, moving back and forth between a position of identification with readers to one of identifying with writers much like Faulkner did in writing the "Appendix" to *The Sound and the Fury*. The underlying idea, however, that recurs throughout much of her criticism is the need to satisfy "our innate sense of harmony."[15] In "Poetry, Fiction and the Future," Woolf asserts that "Tumult is vile; confusion is hateful; everything in a work of art should be mastered and ordered" (438-39). Her desire for "some general shaping power, some conception which lends the whole harmony and force" is the response of a conservative mind to the liberating cognitive dissonance of modernist literature (430). "Nobody indeed," writes Woolf, "can read much modern literature without being aware that some dissatisfaction, some difficulty, is lying in our way" (429). In "How It Strikes a Contemporary," it is precisely the disconcerting and discomforting nature of modernism that prevents readers from taking their "bearings in the chaos of contemporary literature" (*Common* 292); it is also what prompts Woolf to lament the absence of a unifying critical force along the lines of a Dryden, a Johnson, a Coleridge, or an Arnold, who could provide interpreting readers with a sense of stability and control (294). If her critical essays reveal anything, it is that Woolf, however conflicted she might be about the nature of modernist aesthetics, was aware of the predisposition of common readers to want "complete" and "harmonious" reading experiences even if they had to create them through acts of interpretations. She was keenly aware of this fact because the cognitive dissonance she experienced when she read other modernist writers confirmed her own predisposition for completed forms.

III. Jacob's Room

> **Every moment is the center and meeting place of an extraordinary number of perceptions which have not yet been expressed. Life is always and inevitably much richer than we who try to express it.**
> **(Virginia Woolf, "Poetry, Fiction and the Future")**

Only half a sentence followed; but these half-sentences are like flags set on tops of buildings to the observer of external sights down below. (Virginia Woolf, *Jacob's Room*)

In "A Sketch of the Past," Woolf characterises a memoir as a struggle to reconcile the past with the everchanging present. Modernism is often seen similarly as a clash between two contrasting aesthetics--the innovative and the traditional--as well as a conflict over the appropriate subject matter for the novel. Woolf claims that in the Stephens household a similar type of clash existed over social conventions, generationally between father and children, and sexually between men and women.[16] According to Woolf,

> Two different ages confronted each other in the drawing room at Hyde Park Gate: the Victorian age; and the Edwardian age. We [Vanessa and Virginia] were not his children, but his grandchildren. When we both felt he was not only terrifying but also ridiculous we were looking at him with eyes that saw ahead of us something--something so easily seen now by every boy and girl of sixteen and eighteen that the sight is perfectly familiar. The cruel thing was that while we could see the future, we were completely in the power of the past. That bred a violent struggle. By nature, both Vanessa and I were explorers, revolutionists, reformers. But our surroundings were at least fifty years behind the times. Father himself was a typical Victorian: George and Gerald were unspeakably conventional. So that while we fought against them as individuals we also fought against them in their public capacity. We were living say in 1910: they were living in 1860. (126-27)

Among the gaps that Woolf sought to reconcile was the generation gap that placed restrictions on women and more "modern"-minded individuals. Her father and her two step-brothers were shaped by and then helped perpetuate what Woolf called the "patriarchal machinery" that accounted for their traditionalist views. The division between the traditional past and a revolutionary future that Woolf describes as dividing their lives was symbolised in the architecture of the house: "downstairs there was pure convention: upstairs pure intellect. But there was no connection between them" (135). Woolf laments the fact that no matter how hard she tried to reconcile these two forces within her life, she could not connect her father's study with the drawing room even though they were in the same house: "There were so many different worlds . . . . I could not make them cohere" (137). The struggle to connect the different worlds housed within her own home was a struggle that made its way into Woolf's aesthetic sensibility. As we

have just seen, it was a struggle that pervaded her literary criticism and was a dissonant experience that became aestheticised in her novel *Jacob's Room.*

Virginia Woolf begins *Jacob's Room* (1922) *in medias res* with Betty Flanders writing a letter to Captain Barfoot that announces a recent departure: "So of course there was nothing for it but to leave" (5).[17] Almost immediately after writing this sentence, Betty loses herself in an unarticulated thought which momentarily displaces the missive from her consciousness. As she returns to her letter-writing, she reads over what she has just penned to reorient herself as well as Woolf's readers. The narrative tantalizingly repeats the uncontextualised sentence fragment ". . . nothing for it but to leave." Flanders and her three sons have suddenly changed lodgings while on vacation in Cornwall; but, the narrative never explains why the family moves from their previous lodging house to the more cramped one where they are "packed . . . like herrings in a barrel." This announcement of leavetaking after-the-fact simultaneously announces to Woolf's readers an imminent departure in her writing style and her representation of character. An unexpected shift is about to take place away from the more conventional, realist marriage / love plots which drove *The Voyage Out* (1915) and *Night and Day* (1919).[18] Just as Betty Flanders's written communication marks a change in living space, Woolf's new novel marks a change in the presentation of living space in modern fiction.

The actual figure of Jacob Flanders is a notable absence at the very beginning of the book. His mother doesn't see him anywhere and his brother Archer shouts out "Ja-cob! Ja-cob!" in repeated attempts to call him forth bodily. The attempt to call out Jacob into full corporeal presence soon becomes the central preoccupation of the novel. The main theme of *Jacob's Room* revolves around the desire to give a complete account of character faced with the knowledge that every attempt will only ever produce a partial representation. Woolf's narrator self-consciously and repeatedly warns readers that "It is no use trying to sum people up. One must follow hints, not exactly what is said, nor yet entirely what is done" (28, 150). According to the narrator, "Nobody sees anyone as he is . . . .They see a whole--they see all sorts of things--they see themselves" (28). The whole that is seen is an illusory one where viewers project their own embodied sense of wholeness onto others just as Woolf's readers must project themselves onto her fictional characters. In this quotation, Woolf's narrator recognises the faulty nature of human perception as well as the need to compensate for it through what I call "analogic projection."

Without "analogic projection" interpretation of both the actions of fictional characters and the intentions of authors, not to mention feelings of identification, empathy,

allegiance, and a more general understanding of others, is not possible. Because our experiences of everything outside of ourselves is partial at best, comprehending these experiences requires "filling in." Authors, for instance, must project themselves into the positions of potential readers, just as readers try to reconstruct an author's intentions from a similar type of "analogic projection." This process is given form in Woolf's novel when the narrator projects what she thinks takes place in Professor Huxley's mind as he reads:

> Now, as his eye goes down the print, what a procession tramps through the corridors of his brain, orderly, quick-stepping, and reinforced, as the march goes on, by fresh runnels, till the whole hall, dome, whatever one calls it, is populous with ideas. Such a muster takes place in no other brain (37).[19]

This last line acknowledges the uniqueness of individual cognitive operations right after a paragraph that describes the mental activities which accompany reading in universal terms. It appears almost as a qualifying afterthought, as if after detailing the cognitive processes going on inside the Professor's head, however abstractly, the narrator realises that she has done exactly what on other occasions she claims she is unable to do. This passage embodies the very tensions thematised in the novel, experienced by readers, and contained within this very thesis. The narrator, who consistently warns readers about the impossibility of ever knowing another person except through fragments, effectively transcends her perspectival limitations and projects her own experiences in similar situations onto the Professor. The narrator enacts the inevitable "analogic projection" that makes community possible, not to mention civil society. Whereas on other occasions the narrator has been reluctant to offer readers insights based on such apparent "filling in," she attempts to do so here even though she recognises the impossibility of her endeavour. She also does it when she tries to find the one word which will accurately describe Jacob, revealing that she too has succumbed to the dissonance that all the different views of Jacob have produced.

In the novel, for instance, each character has a different interpretation of Jacob. Clara Durrant describes him as "unworldly" and without airs--a person to whom "one can say what one likes" (68). Julia Eliot focuses on Jacob's quiet demeanor and calls him "the silent young man" whereas Jacob's own mother remembers his "clumsiness in the house." Mrs. Durrant labels him "distinguished-looking," but categorises his behaviour as "Extremely awkward" (68), while her son, Timothy Durrant, "never made any comment at all" (69) about Jacob. Captain Barfoot "liked him best of the boys; but as for saying why . . . ," either he or the narrator are at a loss. With so many, not necessarily divergent,

but different impressions of Jacob in circulation coupled with the narrator's reluctance to offer a synthesising description of his character, readers are left with only an impressionistic and fragmented sketch of the protagonist.

As an inscribed reader in the novel, the narrator begins to label him in what amounts to just another failed attempt to find the appropriate words that will contain him: "A writer? He lacked self-consciousness. A painter? There was something in the shape of his hands . . . which indicated taste. Then his mouth--but surely, of all futile occupations this of cataloguing features is the worst. One word is sufficient. But if one cannot find it?" (68). Once again readers encounter a tension between the struggle to describe a character in order to reduce the dissonance of multiple, fragmentary impressions, and the inability to find the words that will do the necessary work. The narrator's frustrated search to find *le mot juste* is not only the struggle of modernist writers, but also the struggle of readers who find themselves in the same position with the same narrated fragments.

Woolf's narrator accepts that "a profound, impartial, and absolutely just opinion of our fellow-creatures is utterly unknown" and that this "is the manner of our seeing . . . . the conditions of our love" (69). Essentially, Woolf's novel highlights the fragmentariness of life, perception, knowledge, and understanding. The novel's plot is driven by this idea and so is the reading experience. Readers continue to read hoping to find on the next page or the page after that the very description that will complete the brief sketches of Jacob or satisfy their expectations of "proper" narrative development and character representation.[20] That this novel is a collection of impressionistic bits and pieces of life assembled in fragmented, but nevertheless chronological, order seems to be the point of the novel rather than its weakness. Woolf subverts the traditional *bildungsroman* or novel of development. She has her central character die in the war beyond the purview of the narrating persona and by extension the reader. As a result, the novel denies readers an image of Jacob in closing that would give meaning to everything that has preceded his death and retroactively charge earlier glimpses of Jacob's life with explanatory significance. Instead, Woolf's anti-*bildungsroman* questions whether a person can ever come of age or be represented whole. In the end, Woolf manages to condemn the war which fragmented and destroyed so many young lives and at the same time critique the literary convention of representing character in fiction as complete.[21]

The novel itself is replete with gnomonic images and descriptions that serve to highlight its central theme of epistemological fragmentation. The description of Captain Barfoot as a lame veteran who "wanted two fingers on the left hand, having served his country" picks up on the metaphorics of phantom limb (22). He is a symbol of modern

humanity dislocated and fragmented by modern war. Instead of saying that Captain Barfoot was missing two fingers, Woolf chooses a verb ("wanted") that signifies not only the lack of something but also the desire for something. In this case it is two fingers without which Barfoot's body cannot be whole--he is characterised by that which makes him incomplete.[22] Similarly, Mrs. Jarvis, the clergyman's wife, walks the moors when she is unhappy (24-25). She threatens to leave her husband--which would ruin his career--but she cannot bring herself to do it. Her inability to follow through with her threat and complete the act leads to solipsistic wandering that prolongs her depression. From a little book she carries with her she reads "a few lines of poetry," but symbolically "never read[s] her poem through." Mrs. Jarvis's character is representative of Woolf's characterisation in *Jacob's Room*. The narrative compiles bits and pieces of character and scenes, but is unable or refuses to complete the picture. This in turn produces reading experiences that parallel readers' fragmented experiences of characters. At one point the narrator even stops narrating a story, addresses Woolf's readers directly, and invites them to "fill in the sketch as you like" (92-93). What has been the implicit role of readers is made explicit by the direct invitation to complete the story, to fill in textual gaps left open. The narrative's limited perspective and fragmentary structure have forced readers into this position from the opening pages of the novel, but it is not until over halfway through that their expected role as the text's co-producer is so unabashedly articulated.

The novel's opening pages include another inscribed clue that points to the text's predominant theme of the problem of artistic representation. Charles Steele is the frustrated painter who tries to capture on his canvas the image of Betty Flanders as she sits by the seashore writing her letter. The problem is that she keeps moving and in doing so changes how she appears. Every movement offers the painter another perspective, another angle of her person and Steele has difficulty reconciling these new perspectives with the ones already committed to canvas. Herein lies the dilemma of artistic creation. Any attempt to reproduce a living object in a painting or a verbal description can only ever be a momentarily captured fragment. It is a matter of choosing what details appear most salient and excluding the rest. Since every experience of an object is partial, so is the artistic representation of that object.

In a related way, Steele anticipates that the "critics" will say that his painting is "too pale" and this prompts him to add "a hasty violet-black dab": "For the landscape needed it" (6). He is less concerned with how his work corresponds to reality and more concerned with a balance of colours that "critics" will want to see. He is not interested in challenging the perceptions of his critics, but appeasing the kind of artistic sensibility that

demands a balance of darker colours to offset the greys and whites and lavenders. In pandering to his audience, Steele guarantees a standardised reception for his works and commits himself to artistic obscurity where the only audience he can expect for his paintings is the continued appreciation of his landladies who all "liked his pictures." Steele is pleased with the effect of the black dab: "It was just *that* note which brought the rest together" (7). He tries to create a balance in his art akin to the concept of symmetry derived from the human body. The narrator alludes to the bodily substrate upon which Steele's embodied sense of aesthetic balance is founded when she says, "stability and balance affect the body first" (146). Even the narrator, without being consciously aware of how acuminous her passing description of Jacob walking on the Acropolis is, appreciates how the homeostatic impulses of the human body regularly compensate for imbalance and gaps in experience. "It is thus that we live, they say," states the narrator, "driven by an unseizable force. They say that the novelists never catch it; that it goes hurtling through their nets and leaves them torn to ribbons" (152).

All communication and aesthetic endeavour involves this frustrating struggle to capture life through all of its complexity and as completely as possible. For characters in and readers of *Jacob's Room* momentary glimpses and episodic fragments reveal how the human mind responds to gaps and negotiates the epistemological lacunae inherent in everyday events. Henry James reportedly said that an author "make[s] his reader very much as he makes his characters."[23] I would modify James's claim so that it reads: authors make their characters inscribed readers within the text to help negotiate reception of difficult texts. The value of these inscribed readers, as I have been arguing, is that they embody both an author's intentions and the frustrations of readers who confront unconventional poetics.

In "The Writer's Audience is Always a Fiction," Walter Ong argues that all forms of written communication fictionalise an audience by creating "roles" for readers to play, and that, in response, readers "fictionalise themselves to correspond to" an author's projection (19).[24] According to his observations, authors necessarily "give body" to the readers for whom they write, not in all their particularities but by addressing them generally. I would extend Ong's argument to include an additional fictionalisation where readers, while simultaneously adopting reception roles posited by the text's formal elements, fictionalise an idea of individual authors that helps determine meaning, establish relevance, and negotiate dissonant elements at the moment of reception. Thus while reading fiction appears to be a one way street in terms of communication (i.e. it seems to contain no possibility of feedback), I want to suggest that authors and readers are able to control

each other's behavioural responses (writing and reading) indirectly through expectations and the exploitation of conventions. "The epistolary situation is made tolerable by conventions," reminds Ong, "and learning to write letters is largely a matter of learning what the writer-reader conventions are" (19).

Woolf's narrator addresses the issues of relevance and convention in a similar way when she describes how the human mind organises an endless flood of impressions and details collectively rather than individually:

> In short, the observer is choked with observations. Only to prevent us from being submerged by chaos, nature and society between them have arranged a system of classification which is simplicity itself; stalls, boxes, ampitheatre, gallery. The moulds are filled nightly. There is no need to distinguish details. But the difficulty remains--one has to choose. (*JR* 66)

The narrator is basically describing what cognitive theorists would call script building and information "chunking."[25] It is the process by which humans effectively economise on their expenditure of cognitive energy. Moreover, as Woolf's narrator insists, "No doubt we should be, on the whole, much worse off than we are without our astonishing gift for illusion" (133). Aware of the phenomenological limitations of individuals, the narrator grants that illusions that fill in for missing patterns, stimulus, and information are necessary for human survival. In a single sentence, she self-consciously articulates the frustration of readers while she recognises the inevitable necessity of filling in or "illusions." Her point of view, cast in the first person pluralised pronoun "we," suggests not only common cause with readers, but a recognition of the apparent universality of the desire for cognitive consistency.

At best, one can only ever know another person through a series of descriptive still lifes or through representative items. When Jacob selects a book of Byron's poetry from Mr. Floyd's study, he provides readers with another potentially loaded hint about his character and personality, but it remains just a hint. A newspaper article similarly reveals only fragmented details about Mr. Floyd's new life: "she read in the *Scarborough and Harrogate Courier* that the Rev. Andrew Floyd, etc., etc., had been made Principle of Maresfield House, 'that must be our Mr. Floyd'" (20). At best, newspaper articles "take the impression of the whole," selecting relevant details from a "cotton wool" mass of potentially significant details (94). What Jacob finds in newspapers are mere fragments of life that need to be supplemented and synthesised by his consciousness. In this way, reading the newspaper is akin to riding omnibuses. Passengers are given momentary

glimpses of other passengers as their buses pass. They are mere surfaces that can only be read superficially:

> Each had his past shut in him like the leaves of a book known to him by heart; and his friends could only read the title, James Spalding, or Charles Budgeon, and the passengers going the opposite way could read nothing at all--save 'a man with a red moustache,' 'a young man in grey smoking a pipe.' (62)

When Jacob climbs into a train carriage on his way to Cambridge in 1906, his fellow passenger, Mrs. Norman, looks stealthily at him to evaluate her safety. She uses what the narrator describes as "the infallible test of appearance . . . ." (27). The presence of the ellipsis following this statement mocks Mrs. Norman's superficial assessment of Jacob which is gleaned from a single surreptitious glance. The narrator articulates the paradox of phenomenological experience when she adds, "Nobody sees anyone as he is, let alone an elderly body sitting opposite a strange young man in a railway carriage" (28). Woolf's narrator betrays her Husserlian commitments in these two passages which strongly resemble the description accompanying Roman Ingarden's definition of "spots of determinacy: "If, instead of simply 'man,' we say 'an old, experienced man,' we do remove, by addition of these attributive expressions, certain spots of indeterminacy; but an infinite number still remains to be removed" (249).[26]

As an inscribed reader, Bonamy struggles with spots of indeterminacy in Jacob's letters.[27] He tries to understand Jacob's claim that he intends on returning to Greece every year for as long as he lives because it is the only chance of "protecting oneself from civilization" (142). The cryptic message is suggestive and appears to be an ironic critique of modern life, but Jacob does not explain his statement. Perplexed, Bonamy expresses his own confusion and self-reflexively articulates Woolf's anticipated response from her readers: "'Goodness knows what he means by that,' Bonamy sighed. For as he never said a clumsy thing himself, these dark sayings of Jacob's made him feel apprehensive, yet somehow impressed, his own turn being all for the definite, the concrete, and the rational" (142). Bonamy's reception of Jacob's letter is analogous to the common reader's encounter with experimental modernist aesthetics. Used to, and therefore expecting, "the definite, the concrete, and the rational"--all adjectival descriptors which reductively characterise Victorian realist fiction--readers instead experience the ambiguous and the inconclusive. For readers, the result is an experience of cognitive dissonance akin to Bonamy's reception of Jacob's letters and in both contexts there is an impression that semantic obscurity somehow confirms the profundity of these textual communications.

At the end of the novel readers are left with the same thing that Betty Flanders and Bonamy are left with as they go through Jacob's room: "a pair of Jacob's old shoes" (173). The shoes say as much about Jacob as any of the previous descriptions or dialogue in the novel. All we know is that they are shoes that Jacob once wore. They are old and perhaps no longer fit him; perhaps they are worn out, or just out of fashion. A pair of old shoes is all that is left to represent a life once lived. The shoes epitomise the fragmentariness of the glimpses we get and yet they do not supply enough information to recreate an image of Jacob that captures him fully. The two inscribed readers present in the room sum up what remains of Jacob's life in words that equally express how Woolf's readers feel looking back over the novel. Bonamy looks around and says, "Nothing arranged," while the exasperated Betty Flanders exclaims, "Such confusion everywhere!" (172, 173). Meanwhile, out in the street, "A harsh and unhappy voice cried something unintelligible" (172).

IV. Mrs. Dalloway

Can I quickly fill in that outline? (Virginia Woolf "A Sketch of the Past")

Mrs. Dalloway picks up on the predominant themes of *Jacob's Room* which are the impossibility of ever knowing or representing characters in their entirety and the inevitable human compulsion to do so in spite of this knowledge. The narrating characters of *Mrs. Dalloway* present the same concern for completion. It is Clarissa Dalloway who articulates the theory "that to know her, or any one, one must seek out the people who completed them; even the places" (114).[28] She articulates her frustration that even after years and years of interaction, "It was unsatisfactory how little one knew people" (13-14). Peter Walsh also admits that "It was a mere sketch, he often felt, that even he, after all these years, could make of Clarissa" (59-60). At the level of her characters' perceptions, Woolf's aspires to her overall goal for the novel: "to keep the quality of a sketch in a finished and complete work."[29] Before Peter Walsh returns from India, for instance, Clarissa remembers him as a list of generic fragments: "his eyes, his pocketknife, his smile, his grumpiness and . . . a few sayings . . . about cabbages" (5). For Clarissa, the limitations of human perception only allow us to experience incomplete moments of each other which leave much unknown, "since our apparitions, the part of us which appears, are so momentary compared with the other, the unseen part of us" (114).

Peter Walsh calls this hidden part of each of us both the soul and the self, and he describes the relationship between what is seen and unseen in metaphoric terms that recall Hemingway's "iceberg principle":

> For this is the truth about our soul, he thought, our self, who fishlike inhabits deep seas and plies among obscurities threading her way between the boles of giant weeds, over sun-flickered spaces and on and on into the gloom, cold, deep, inscrutable; suddenly she shoots to the surface and sports on the wind-wrinkled waves; that is, has a positive need to brush, scrape, kindle herself, gossiping. (120)

One of Clarissa's gifts, however, is her ability to emerge in social moments of "surface," like her party, where she can at least *appear* complete and whole: "to be; to exist: to sum it all up in the moment as she passed" (129). Even when she turns and catches her scarf "in some other woman's dress," she simply unhitches it without further ado, "all with the ease and air of a creature floating in its element" (129). Clarissa's "ease" and the image of her "floating" conveys anything but dissonance. She seems together, unphaseable; however, readers have access to her hidden thoughts in which she considers what actually goes into creating this *illusion* of "self." As she looks at herself in the mirror, she collects herself into a whole by sheer act of will:

> pointed; dartlike; definite. That was her self when some effort, some call on her to be her self, drew the parts together, she alone knew how different, how incompatible and composed so for the world only into one centre, one diamond, one woman who sat in her drawing room and made a meeting-point. (29)

Unlike *Jacob's Room*, where readers were forced to experience character through the metacritical narrator, in *Mrs. Dalloway* Woolf has designed a novel in which readers have access to the thoughts of her characters as well as to descriptions of their interactions with other people and places and the objective evaluations offered by other characters.

Mrs. Dalloway, then, is much more than a collection of fragmented descriptions of characters from a single perspective. Instead, it is a complex study in parallax as events in the phenomenological world are viewed from different vantage points which shift accordingly in relation to the position of the observing consciousness. In fact, the narrating perspective not only shifts back and forth in a disorienting manner between the past and the present, but it also shifts to other narrating consciousnesses cued by shared external experiences of events in the lifeworld. After Peter's surprise visit with Clarissa, for instance, the narrative point of view shifts to Peter's perspective as he wanders about the streets of London and comes to rest on a bench in Regent's Park. Peter watches "little Elise Mitchell" run around picking up pebbles and placing them on her nurses lap. All of

a sudden, she runs "full tilt into a lady's legs" (50). Peter laughs out loud, and when the next paragraph begins, the narrative perspective has shifted to the thoughts of the lady who was run into "full tilt." Two pages later, the narrative perspective shifts away from Lucrezia Warren Smith to her husband, Septimus, at the moment when they both look at her left hand and her missing wedding ring. Two pages after that, Peter watches the couple together and the narrative perspective shifts back to him. The constant exchange of narrative consciousness to different characters' perspectives offers readers access to multiple points of view that provide them with what would appear to be a more complete picture of the life of Woolf's characters; however, formally, this perpetual shifting also generates in readers an experience of disorienting cognitive dissonance as they must constantly reorient themselves with each new narrative hand-off and try to synthesise these fragmented contributions.

Ultimately, dissonance is the novel's main theme and the aesthetic principle behind its shifting narrative. Ironically, however, *Mrs. Dalloway* opens with a matter-of-fact sentence that seems anything but dissonant: "Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself" (5). In retrospect, after reading the novel, this simple statement of fact takes on greater significance because it announces Clarissa's desire to leave the cloistered environment of her upper-class life in search of dissonant experiences in the world of everyday commerce and city bustle. "What a lark! What a plunge!", she thinks. In getting the flowers for her party, Clarissa is performing one of the tasks that her servants customarily perform. Her casual walk through the streets of London is charged with novelty and excitement because it breaks the routine of her life; it is indeed a plunge for her. As a result, this typical June day of routine interactions in the streets hits her "fresh as if issued to children on a beach" (5). Woolf offers readers the experience of "an ordinary mind on an ordinary day" as it receives "myriad impressions" through Clarissa's perspective ("Modern Fiction" 212). These myriad impressions create the texture of life and Clarissa observes it in "people's eyes, in the swing, tramp, and trudge; in the bellow and the uproar; the carriages, motor cars, omnibuses, vans, sandwich men shuffling and swinging; brass bands; barrel organs; in the triumph and the jingle and the strange high singing of some aeroplane overhead" (*MD* 6).

Upon her return to the security of her home, away from the bustle of the everyday, Clarissa "felt like a nun who has left the world and feels fold round her the familiar veils and responses to old devotions" (23-24). This simile marks the stark contrast between the London streets where she buys flowers and the upper-class world of custom she inhabits. Her cloistered life is protected from much of the daily dissonance and confusion she finds in the streets of London; her life is for the most part "a series of gig lamps

symmetrically arranged"--an artificial world designed to isolate her from the dissonant forces of daily life. This image of Clarissa as nun gets repeated as she climbs the staircase to get to her attic room where she has slept alone since her illness. Her husband has insisted that she sleep away from him so that she will remain "undisturbed" when he returns late from the House of Commons. The prescription for illness is isolation and rest to prevent any extra dissonance from affecting what is already a physically disturbed state. She climbs the stairs "Like a nun withdrawing, or a child exploring a tower" (25). The mixed metaphor of Clarissa as both secluded nun and adventure-seeking child reflects the contradictory nature of the protagonist's relationship to dissonance. At times she wants to avoid it like a nun, and at others she seeks it out like a curious child. Clarissa is torn between an instinctual survival response and a need to break the habit of routine that deadens her experiences of life. Her shifting consciousness between her youthful past and her aged present reflects this dual pull.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, the return to the past inverts the modernist view of the past as traditional, stale, and fixed. For Clarissa, the past is exciting because it is more dissonant, more experimental. The operative word when she invokes a memory of her adolescence is open: "she had burst *open* the French windows and plunged at Bourton into the *open* air" (emphasis added 5). Her memory is one of unbridled freedom and it contrasts sharply with the closed environment of her current life. This sudden discontinuous shift into the past creates dissonance for readers--there is an openness about the gap created by this temporal shift which forces them to reorient themselves by searching for contextual clues in the verb tenses and unfamiliar words like "Bourton." The difference in the two worlds, between which Clarissa moves in her mind (as well as in society), is akin to Umberto Eco's distinction between open and closed texts.[30] For Eco, a closed text is one that attempts to circumscribe and direct precise responses to produce a harmonious, predetermined experience for readers. There is a sense of inflexibility about the way these text's move readers through them, setting up expectations that are satisfied without a great deal of effort. By comparison, an open text grants readers much more freedom to explore and experience dissonance. In open texts, interpretive issues are never definitively settled to the same degree that they are in closed texts. Open texts often intentionally frustrate expectations and force readers to actively participate in the co-creation of the text's meanings in contrast to the relatively passive experience of closed texts.

As a woman of fifty-two, married to a Conservative MP, Clarissa's life is a closed text--full of stability and security. Very little intrudes to disrupt her leisured life. Planning her party, then, is an organisational activity that mimics the cognitive operations

needed to manage cognitive dissonance, but even this activity is falsified by a group of servants who take care of the practical details and effectively absorb the dissonance of planning the party. In this way, the servants provide a buffer between people like Clarissa, who is from the "governing class," and the constant disruptions of daily life.[31] Lady Bruton, for instance, is described as being "washed round . . . day in, day out" in a "grey tide of service":

> collecting, intercepting, enveloping her in a fine tissue which broke concussions, mitigated interruptions, and spread round the house in Brook Street a fine net where things lodged and were picked out accurately, instantly, by grey-haired Perkins, who had been with Lady Bruton these thirty years . . . . (*MD* 81)

This is a rarified world separate from everyday struggles. Woolf describes this space as a "grand deception" full of illusions where the food and drink that is consumed appear "not paid for" and tables spread themselves "voluntarily with glass and silver, little mats, saucers of red fruit" (79); all of the nagging details of life are taken care of by "the help": "Live? our servants will do that for us . . . . Oh, the external world!"[32]

Clarissa, then, does not allow her servant Lucy to order the flowers for her party because she wants to experience the dissonance that characterises life. She loves the experience of "making it up, building it round one, tumbling it, creating it every moment afresh" (6). Clarissa recognises in daily living a homeostatic necessity that requires constant mental and physiological rebalancing in response to "the incessant shower of innumerable atoms" that constantly alter our living environment ("Modern Fiction" 212). Even "the veriest frumps, the most dejected of miseries sitting on doorsteps . . . do the same," although they are mostly unconscious of the process (*MD* 6). She considers that Acts of Parliament cannot legislate dissonance out of life because the homeostatic activity of living involves continuous adjustment and readjustment, a dynamic procedure that no fixed law can anticipate.

Clarissa summarises this desire to experience and respond to dissonance when she claims, "It was enemies one wanted, not friends" (130). Enemies provide a steady source of dissonance because they oppose us and force us to deal with their opposition. Clarissa's realisation of the importance of enemies to life comes right after she feels the "hollowness" of her party. She recognises the falseness, the insincerity, and the artifice of custom that her party serves to perpetuate--all the things that Peter has been criticising in his interior monologue for the benefit of Woolf's readers. As I mentioned, her parties are her attempts to exercise the neglected organisational impulse that everyday dissonance prompts:

> Here was So-in-so in South Kensington; some one up in Baywater; and somebody else, say in Mayfair. And she felt quite continuously a sense of their existence; and she felt what a waste; and she felt what a pity; and she felt if only they could be brought together; so she did it. And it was an offering; to combine, to create; but to whom? (91)

Clarissa models her parties after living organisms, and attempts to create life in all of its disturbing aspects by bringing disparate elements together and reconciling them. She likes the way that at parties every one seems a little unreal: "It was, she thought, partly their clothes, partly being taken out of their ordinary ways, partly the background, it was possible to say things you couldn't say anyhow else, things that needed an effort; possible to go deeper" (127).

And yet, Clarissa's parties do not provide the carnivalesque atmosphere that she imagines. If anything, they serve to reinforce the status quo rather than provide an opportunity to critique authority and think in alternative ways. The same politics and business affairs that are discussed in the day-to-day lives of the governing classes are discussed at the party. The guests, far from contrasting with each other and creating a diversified mosaic, all come from the same privileged upper-middle class neighbourhoods as the Dalloways do.[33] To critique authority in this setting would amount to self-critique and only Sally Seton, Peter Walsh, and Clarissa Dalloway seem capable of stepping back from it all and perceiving the "hollowness" of life kept "at arm's length . . . [and] not in the heart" (130).[34]

Clarissa's genuine appreciation of "life" in the commonplace of the streets of London is the direct result of its dissonance for her. She sees the common, everyday activities of London with a foreigner's eye, defamiliarised and new, like Peter, who having just returned from India after a five-year absence, observes, "things stand out as if one had never seen them before" (54).[35] He also notes how the dissonance of the war has changed things (fashions, make up, people, newspapers) and prompted adjustments: "Now for instance there was a man writing quite openly in one of the respectable weeklies about water-closets. That you couldn't have done ten years ago" (55). Without question, *Mrs. Dalloway* is a "war-haunted" novel;[36] all of its characters are war casualties who suffer from varying degrees of shell shock: as Rezia remarks, "Everyone has friends who were killed in the war" (51). The Great War permanently disrupted the traditional conventions of life that existed prior to it. In a sense, the lost generation of dead and unemployed young men is a type of social amputation or dislocation. Even five years after the war, discussions among the governing-class revolve around diagnosing

England's ills and restoring a healthy order to the body politic: Lady Bruton advocates sending the nation's unemployed to Canada; and Dr. Bradshaw wants to add a provision to a Bill "about the deferred effects of shell shock" (82, 136).

On the surface, things appear to be returning to their pre-war order ("The King and Queen were in the Palace"), but the "prying and insidious fingers of the European War" had left indelible prints on the nation's psyche (6, 65). In one of the book's most telling sentences, Clarissa sums up the present situation: "The War was over, except for . . . . "--where any character's name or any number of disturbing social aftereffects could be inserted into the elliptical break (6). The incomplete sentence itself formally symbolises the sense of fragmentation and dislocation of post-war London. Air raids had brought the war to the nation's backyards, "smash[ing] a plaster cast of Ceres, plough[ing] a hole in the geranium beds, and utterly ruin[ing] the cook's nerves" (65). The impact of the war was felt throughout all levels of society and now things needed to be rebalanced and controlled. The pervasiveness of the war's influence is made apparent when a backfiring car causes every one in the street who hears it to freeze, jarring them out of their routines. The cognitive script for war is still readied and easily accessible even for those who never saw front-line fighting. Clarissa's initial, automatic reaction isn't that a car has backfired--no doubt an everyday occurrence in the streets of London in 1923--but that the sound is gunfire: "oh! a pistol shot in the street outside!" (12). The passers-by who are initially frozen in shock, subsequently become caught up by the need to reconcile this dissonant experience. Everyone looks around for the source of the explosion to confirm their initial scripts or to find a more acceptable explanation creating a perceivable "gradual drawing together of everything to one centre" (13). All eyes fall on the car "just in time to see a face of the very greatest importance against the dove-grey upholstery, before a male hand drew the blind and there was nothing to be seen except a square of dove grey" (13).

This momentary glimpse of the car's mysterious passenger, however, is not enough for anyone to identify it definitively. As a result, the initial dissonance caused of the backfiring car is displaced onto the desire to know the identity of the car's passenger and this leads to a series of interpretive speculations: was it the Queen, the Prince, or the Prime Minister? "Every one stared at the motor car" as it sat in traffic and "rumours were at once in circulation" as each person offered an opinion about the car's occupant, but no one could say for sure (13). The desire to know overcomes the passers-by who abandon their routines to restore cognitive harmony.

The interpretive exercise of guessing who is riding in the car generates many different responses and the democratic process of speculation becomes therapeutically participatory. Thrown out of their routines by the disturbance, each tries to reconcile the

dissonant experience in their own way. As time passes and speculation abounds, even the sex of the car's occupant falls into dispute. To reconcile this interpretive impasse, all interpreters find common ground. They implicitly agree that although the identity of the car's passenger can never be known with absolute certainty from just a glimpse, "there could be no doubt that greatness was seated within; greatness was passing, hidden, down Bond Street, removed only a hand's-breadth from ordinary people" (14). What began as the simple backfiring of a car has turned into a national event because of the war's impact. The apparent sound of gunfire triggers an immediate fight or flight reaction from the crowd who once they realise the source of the disturbing sound redirect their survival instincts to interpret the identity of the car's passenger. Each spectator is essentially buying time until he or she has restored cognitive equilibrium and can continue on his or her way. Only after the car drives away leaving a "slight ripple which flowed through . . . both sides of Bond Street," do people resume their activities. The source of dissonance abates and equilibrium returns to the streets. What the backfiring car illustrates is that every one in the streets on this June morning is in an unbalanced state after the war. To appease that unbalanced feeling and provide a sense of closure, attention is collectively shifted away from the initial disturbance which recalls painful memories about the war and focused on a less threatening experience of dissonance to work through. Ultimately, whoever is in the car becomes an "enduring symbol of the state," all fears and anxiety are lifted with this compensatory image, and dissonance is effectively neutralised.

However, the sound of the backfiring car is not the only instance of modern technology disrupting the flow of London's city streets on this morning. Immediately after the car incident, "The sound of an aeroplane bored ominously into the ears of the crowd" and "Every one looked up" (17). Again the script for war suggests the threat of attack, but it soon gives way when the crowd begins to make out letters in the sky. As they all focus on reading the skywriting, a similar transference from the threat to survival to acts of collective interpretation occurs to assuage the dissonant feelings of interruption. The letters in the sky created by "a thick ruffled bar of white smoke" are difficult to read. They lie still momentarily and then begin to drift and melt away until they dissipate in the sky before the message can be completed. The fragmented writing invokes in the crowd below the desire to know and they begin to interpretively fill in. They are convinced that an attempt at communication is being made: "But what letters? A C was it? an E, then an L? . . . . a K, an E, a Y perhaps?" (17). The skywriting prompts the cognitive script for advertising and various onlookers shout out brand names in pre-emptive attempts to complete the message:

"Glaxo," said Mrs. Coates in a strained, awe-stricken voice, gazing straight up, and her baby, lying stiffly and white in her arms, gazed straight up.

"Kreemo," murmured Mrs. Bletchley, like a sleep-walker. (17)

And yet, there remains a sense of panic in their automatic interpretive responses.

The writing initially grabs and sustains people's attention because of the difficulty onlookers have determining what words are being written in the message. Somehow the message seems of the "greatest importance which would never be revealed" (18). People all along "the Mall, in the Green Park, in Picaddilly, in Regent Street, in Regent's Park" are united in watching the plane's attempt to communicate. Returning home, Clarissa asks one of her maids, "What are they all looking at?" (23). The more important question which never gets asked, however, is why are they all looking at a message in the sky that most already assume is just advertising, presumably for something unimportant like toffee? Septimus Smith is not entirely wrong when he feels that someone in the plane is signalling specifically to him: "Not indeed in actual words; that is, he could not read the language yet" (18). To secure an audience of prospective consumers the advertisers are exploiting human nature--the felt need to eliminate all forms of cognitive dissonance.

There exists behind the idea of embodied cognitive dissonance a fundamental assumption that equates successful communication with health. Pathological readings of high modernist texts which suggest that there is something schizophrenic or dissociative about experimental forms are based on this belief. "Communication," Septimus repeats in a rote manner, "is health; communication is happiness" (71). He realises this social fact, but because he cannot feel anymore or perhaps because he now feels too much, most of his attempts at communication get labelled "nonsense." For example, Dr. Holmes asks Septimus if he talks "nonsense" to frighten his wife (Rezia) to whom he dictates his thoughts (71). Rezia writes down what Septimus says and describes the messages in terms that are reminiscent of high modernist aesthetics: "Some things were very beautiful; others sheer nonsense. And he was always stopping in the middle, changing his mind; wanting to add something; hearing something new" (105). Rezia notes the disjunctive nature of her husband's thoughts--something he is unable to recognise. Before the war, Miss Isabel Pole prophetically asked, "Was he [Septimus] not like Keats?" Septimus's problem is that he can and does exist in a protracted state of negative capability. He cannot easily be categorised; "he was, on the whole, a border case, neither one thing nor the other" (64): "the happiest man in the world, and the most miserable" (63).

According to Dr. Holmes, he "was a little out of sorts," and Dr. Bradshaw doesn't call Septimus's condition "madness"; "he called it not having a sense of proportion" (18, 73). Both diagnoses are attempts to apply a bodily sense of balanced equilibrium to a mental

condition: "health we must have; and health is proportion; so that when a man comes into your room and says that he is Christ (a common delusion) . . . you invoke proportion" (75). In *Mrs. Dalloway*, illness is described in terms of homeostatic function. Evelyn Whitbread, for instance, has come into London "to see doctors" because she "was a good deal out of sorts" (7). Illness also becomes a figurative means of communicating highly subjective emotions and experiences to readers through the body's shareable frame of reference. Throughout Woolf's novel characters' experiences of dissonance--whether it be the experience of emotional pain, incompatible opinions, or a sudden shock into conscious awareness from the unexpected--register figuratively as physical pain: Clarissa's feels that for years after the break-up with Peter she bore her grief and anguish like "an arrow sticking in her heart" (8); engines caught in traffic sound "like a pulse irregularly drumming through an entire body" (13); Clarissa compares the shock when Peter interrupts her kiss with Sally to "running one's face against a granite wall in the darkness" (28); Peter describes his instinct that Clarissa would marry Dalloway as "blinding" (47); Rezia declares that "She could *stand* it [her relationship with Septimus] no longer" (emphasis added 51); when Elizabeth takes her leave of Miss Kilman, it is as if she is "drawing out . . . the very entrails in her body" (99); and the painful letters Peter receives from Clarissa are "like a nudge in the ribs" (115).

By comparing cognitive dissonance to bodily pain and threats to the physical body, these conceptual and subjective experiences become communicable between individuals. Closer examination reveals that the conventional linguistic expressions we often use unconsciously and take for granted are based on shared bodily awareness. Figuratively, as Septimus works on Mrs. Peters's hat with his wife, she notes that "though he had no fingers . . . he had a wonderful eye" (107). Such a description should give us pause because literally it is not true. Septimus has not lost his fingers in the war and his eye is no better or worse for seeing objects than any other normal functioning eye. Having a "good eye" is conceptually understandable because we know what it means to have a bad eye and to have impaired vision. The dissonance of actually not having fingers communicates the idea that Septimus lacks the physical dexterity needed to do the detailing on the hat despite having the aesthetic sense to envision it.

In a similar way, Clarissa feels Septimus's death in her body because it threatens her party's success, and because his death personifies her own desire to resist the conforming pressure of human nature: "Always her body went through it first, when she was told, suddenly, of an accident; her dressed flamed, her body burnt" (136). Clarissa's embodied sense of body consciousness is a common frame of reference that enables her to empathetically imagine Septimus's suicide. She feels in her own body the leap through

the air, the bruising and blundering rusty spikes that penetrate the body, and the thudding in the brain before the final suffocation of blackness. Clarissa can never truly experience what it was like to die this way, but she can approximate the bodily experience by virtue of the fact that her body functions physiologically and feels pain in the same way that Septimus's does. What is most striking about Clarissa's response to Septimus's death is her celebration of it. Rather than seeing it as a tragedy, she considers the suicide leap a defiant act. The theory of cognitive dissonance helps to explain Clarissa's strange reaction to the suicide. At first, Clarissa's concern is that talk of death will disrupt her party and spoil all of her organisation: "Oh! thought Clarissa, in the middle of my party, here's death, she thought" (136). She is outraged at the apparent lack of decorum, "What business had the Bradshaws to talk of death at her party?" (136). These feelings, however, soon give way to more philosophical considerations.

Septimus becomes, for Clarissa, a defiant figure whose death preserves an elemental quality of life which laws, custom, and "proper" society hold at arm's length and threaten to eliminate. Clarissa describes it as "A thing . . . that mattered; a thing, wreathed about with chatter, defaced, obscured in her own life, let drop every day in corruption, lies, chatter" (137). For her, there is something authentic about Septimus's suicide. Earlier in the novel we are told that Clarissa's uncle rolled over in bed one day during the war, said "I've had enough," and died (11). He simply decided that he could no longer take the constant struggle to maintain equilibrium that characterises life. In contrast, Clarissa says that Septimus "plunged" to his death, and her repetition of the word here links it to her earlier use to describe how she "plunged" into the dissonance of London's streets to experience life. She sees Septimus's death as defiance, an attempt to communicate and preserve feelings of "the impossibility of reaching the center" (137). Prior to his death, Septimus feels like "He had committed an appalling crime and been condemned to death by human nature" (73). Society and its appointed judges--Dr. Holmes and Dr. Bradshaw--convict Septimus because he does not follow human nature or seem to possess the natural instinct for proportion and the desire to avoid cognitive dissonance. Just before he dies he wonders, "human beings--what did *they* want?" He answers his question in flinging him self out the window crying, "I'll give it to you!" (111).

Septimus is a threat to society precisely because he will not conform and because he shows no concern for cognitive dissonance. Clarissa realises that living like Septimus is not an option because it goes against every survival instinct humans possess. However, she does find something refreshing in his death because it occurs as a result of and in opposition to the pernicious social conformity advocated by the governing-class and enforced by its engineers of behaviour in the health profession, the proponents of which

Clarissa thinks "make life intolerable" (137). Septimus's death provides Clarissa with a "shock of delight" which the routines and isolation of her upper-class life obscure (138). It is appropriate that just as Clarissa finishes thinking about "the young man who had killed himself" Big Ben strikes the hour casting its leaden circles into the air to dissolve with every stroke. As we saw in the previous chapter, clocks are significant because they are a manmade means of regulating life and reducing its disruptive forces. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, however, even mechanical time appears dissonant. The image of clocks as devices that shred, slice, divide, and subdivide our days and lives--objects that "counselled submission, upheld authority, and pointed out in chorus the extreme advantages of a sense of proportion"--is undercut by the disjunctive striking of St. Margaret's Church clock two minutes after Big Ben supposedly lays down the law (77, 96).[37]

The dissonance created by the two clocks serves to remind characters and readers that no matter how calculated and organised our attempts are to harmonise existence according to mechanistic models, dissonance will always remain because it is what makes us distinctively human: the dialogue between dissonance and consonance is basic to human survival. For Clarissa, Septimus symbolises dissonance and possibility. He personifies the feeling Clarissa has just before Big Ben booms out the "irrevocable" hour: "a particular hush, or solemnity; an indescribable pause; a suspense" (6). Clarissa's hesitation just before the "leaden circles" fill the air is at once a solemn anticipation of what is assured to come, but also a suspenseful desire for things to be otherwise. It is a feeling Clarissa has had for twenty years "in the midst of the traffic, or waking at night." At the very moment when Big Ben is on the verge of behaviouristically regulating London life, there is a building desire--a readiness and a hopefulness--for dissonance to inject that life with a sense of *jouissance* in place of its reassuring *plaisir*. This is what Clarissa Dalloway experiences, almost craves, in the pause before Big Ben strikes the hour; it is also what she finds so compelling about Septimus's suicide.

Clarissa's thought processes offer readers glimpses of how she manages the dissonance that troubles her. At one point in the day, Clarissa experiences feelings of dissonance and she attempts to find out what made her "suddenly feel, for no reason that she could discover, desperately unhappy" (90). The description of her cognitive scrolling in search of the source of her dissonant feelings is worth quoting at length because it illustrates the nagging sense of cognitive discomfort that lingers in the mind:

> As a person who has dropped some grain of pearl or diamond into the grass and parts the blades very carefully, this way and that, and searches here and there vainly, and at last spies it there at the roots, so she went through one thing and

> another; no, it was not Sally Seton saying that Richard would never be in the Cabinet because he had a second-class brain (it came back to her); no, she did not mind that; nor was it to do with Elizabeth either and Miss Kilman; those were facts. It was a feeling, some unpleasant feeling, earlier in the day perhaps; something Peter had said, combined with some depression of her own, in her bedroom, taking off her hat; and what Richard had said added to it, but what had he said? There were her roses. Her parties! That was it! Her parties! (90-91)

Richard's protective statement that "If she worried about these parties he would not let her give them" bothers Clarissa because her parties are the substitute means by which she practises the very organisational skills that allow her to work through experiences of cognitive dissonance (90). Clarissa also detects in Richard a trivialising attitude towards her parties reminiscent of Peter's attitude, and Peter has always been a source of dissonance in her life.

Formally, Woolf's description of Clarissa's dissonance follows her protagonist's flowing cognition as she methodically moves from thought to thought searching for the source of her discomforting. The passage is representative of much of Woolf's writing style in the novel. It is somewhat dissonant itself in the way that her meandering sentences build up subordinate clause after subordinate clause, interceding, digressing, displacing, and complicating the verb and subject with which the passage begin. The reader is continuously forced in these situations to revert back and forth to the beginning of the sentence, between its main clause and subordinate clauses, in an act of cognitive disentangling that parallels Clarissa's own attempt to resolve her felt dissonance.

The novel also reveals how other characters manage their own personal experiences of dissonance. After Clarissa ends her relationship with Peter, for example, he leaves for India to avoid the dissonance which Clarissa's presence causes. He not only escapes, but at the same time embarks on a conversion mission to bring a "sense of proportion" to the colonial "heathens." In a similar way, Miss Kilman finds that Clarissa frustrates her attempts to master her flesh because she invokes dissonance-causing feelings of hatred and jealousy. Her means of overcoming this dissonance is to turn to religion: "So now, whenever the hot and painful feelings boiled within her, this hatred of Mrs. Dalloway, this grudge against the world, she thought of God" (93). In the end, "Rage [is] succeeded by calm" and dissonance is eliminated. Each character deals with his or her personal experiences of dissonance in different ways, and some of these coping strategies manifest themselves as ideological commitments that mask the bodily basis for avoiding, reducing, or eliminating dissonance. The governing-classes avoid dissonance by passing laws to maintain social harmony and isolating themselves from anxiety-causing activities. As

strategies for dealing with cognitive dissonance these examples force readers to consider their own strategies for resolving dissonant experiences not only in their interpretive reading but in the day-to-day dissonance that characterises life.

As far as Dr. Bradshaw is concerned, "health is largely a matter in our own control . . . . for did he not owe his own excellent health . . . to the fact that he could always switch off from his patients and on to old furniture?" (69). He counters the stress of life with a distracting hobby that displaces, or rather balances, his dissonance. What he recommends for Septimus amounts to the same thing. He wants to send him to a home in the country away from the dissonance of the everyday: "rest in solitude; silence and rest; rest without friends, without books, without messages" (75). He wants Septimus to learn a sense of proportion before returning to society. Doctors, like Holmes and Bradshaw, effectively take over for people who can no longer manage their own balancing strategies and maintain a healthy equilibrium. Septimus correctly identifies doctors as human nature personified: "Once you fall . . . human nature is on you. Holmes and Bradshaw are on you" (74). Septimus has lost the instinct for survival, and his desire to kill himself reveals that he has no sense of proportion. As a result, he must be isolated and converted or cured depending on how Septimus is read.

Septimus is an apparent threat to equilibriated life because his whole way of being is unorthodox and dissonant. His hazel eyes have a "look of apprehension in them which makes complete strangers apprehensive too" (13). His dissonance appears as contagion. Because he cannot balance himself, he threatens the equilibrium of others and all of society. Dr. Bradshaw's contribution to society is that he allows England to prosper because he "secluded her lunatics, forbade childbirth, penalised despair, made it impossible for the unfit to propagate their views until they, too, shared his sense of proportion" (75). His sense of proportion is his "infallible instinct" (75). All doctors like Bradshaw do is apply their own embodied sense of proportion on a much larger scale--that of society.

Dr. Bradshaw's job is to eliminate extreme behaviour and sharp opposition. Woolf, therefore, colour codes him according to his profession and his class. He has grey hair and his car is "low, powerful, grey . . . . so to match its sober suavity, grey furs, silver grey rugs were heaped in it, to keep her ladyship warm while she waited" (72, 71). As this description implies grey is a secure and comforting colour that mediates between the harsh extremes of black and white. In many respects, Dr. Bradshaw is involved through his profession in the greying of society: finding a neutral, intermediate mode of existence that mixes or balances extreme forms of behaviour. Grey, however, also is a characteristic of old age and connotes gloom and dullness. Woolf assigns the colour grey to the

governing class because they are concerned with stifling the natural energies of life. Their conservative politics and worship of the goddesses of proportion and conversion produce a monochromatic society--a grey society that is at once stable, venerable, and wise in appearance, but also corpse-like. Modernism is the cognitive dissonance which attempts to inject a healthy colour of defiance and discord back into this society of the dead.

Civilisation is built on such attempts to reduce dissonance and, as a result, Peter considers the sight of the ambulance carrying Septimus's body "one of the triumphs of civilisation." In instantly removing the injured, the maimed, and the diseased, the ambulance comes to symbolise human nature itself: "the efficiency, the organisation, the communal spirit of London" (112). And yet, no matter how hard individuals work to eliminate all forms of dissonance from their lives, it still remains as an inevitable part of it. Dr. Bradshaw's high fees, for instance, reassure his wife that they will become progressively more financially secure and less susceptible to life's dissonant fluctuations: "the wall of gold . . . was mounting between them and all shifts and anxieties (she had borne them bravely; they had had their struggles) until she felt wedged on a calm ocean, where only spice winds blow; respected, admired, envied, with scarcely anything left to wish for" (71-72). The Bradshaws live the good life for all intents and purposes, however, the operative word in the previous description is "scarcely" because Lady Bradshaw is not dissonance-free. She still regrets her "stoutness," laments the limited amount of time she spends with her husband, and still wishes she'd had a daughter (72). Dissonance, therefore, is inescapable; it appears all around the novel's characters in all forms and manifestations.

As one reads *Mrs. Dalloway* it becomes more and more apparent that besides being Woolf's critique of British society, the novel is a sophisticated study of cognitive dissonance in everyday life. Every character in the novel struggles with situations that generate homeostatic responses such that almost every action appears in some way motivated by a desire to alleviate or in some cases experience the natural state of cognitive dissonance governing human existence. The warring opposition that functions at all levels of human existence from the personal to the social can be summarised in two quotations from the novel. The first addresses the unconscious and embodied sense of habit necessary for survival: "Rigid, the skeleton of habit alone upholds the human frame" (38). The second warns of habit's potential to dull the experience of the world: "Having done things millions of times enriched them, though it might be said to take the surface off" (121).

Mrs. Dalloway is a novel that carefully illustrates how "natural instinct," embodied conceptions of wholeness, and homeostatic functioning underpin the attitudes, customs,

and practices of British society. Notions of decorum and propriety are outward projections of bodily experience into the social domain and everyday activities. Taken to extremes, the "infallible instinct" and "sense of proportion" of individuals like Dr. Bradshaw reveal the devastatingly pernicious side to conformity and social balance. In the novel, there are various moments where characters get involved in organisational activities like planning parties, designing hats, passing Bills, and arranging flowers. Each of these activities supplies characters with an outlet for the instinctual drive for synthesis and harmony in a world where dissonance is a commonplace experience that the customs of society are meant to absorb and relieve. Accordingly, both Dr. Holmes and Dr. Bradshaw tell Septimus that he should take up a hobby not only as a distraction but also in an attempt to regain the sense of proportion that the trauma of helplessly watching his best friend be blown into pieces during the war has caused him. Literary interpretation also coaxes us into using these instinctual survival skills. High modernist novels especially invoke us to shore up their fragments against what threatens us with ruin.

Woolf said that her goal in writing the novel was to study "the world seen by the sane and the insane side by side" (51).[38] As a result of this famous statement, most critical accounts highlight the novel's supposed dual narrative structure which records a day in the life (an unspecified June day in 1923) of both Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Warren Smith as well as the other characters with whom they come in contact.[39] Ironically, however, it is the concept of cognitive dissonance that helps to reconcile the dissonant relationship between the "dual narratives" of Septimus and Clarissa which many early reviewers found distracting and ununified. Rather than being incidental to each other, the narrative perspectives of these characters allow Woolf to address the complexities of life and the synthesising threads (phenomenological and embodied) that link separated individuals. Since all of Woolf's central characters are involved in a daily struggle to maintain an equilibrium in their lives, they serve simultaneously as inscribed readers whose strategies for survival provide possible means of managing Woolf's own text and as the sources of dissonant reading experiences.

Mrs. Dalloway aptly ends as it begins with a plain matter-of-fact statement: "For there she was" (144). After all is said and thought, readers are left with an interpretive impression of Clarissa Dalloway's character, a composite sketch of moments derived from her own thoughts and actions as well as from those around her. Her presence, like Jacob's old shoes, offers only one aspect of her. The novel is open-ended in the sense that it highlights the gaps in our experiences as readers which the author has not attempted to fill. She is a source of dissonance for readers who must balance the competing narrative

accounts of her--which can only ever add up to a provisional whole. The narrative answers Peter's reflective questions, "What is this terror? what is this ecstasy? . . . . What is it that fills me with extraordinary excitement?", with "It is Clarissa" (144). His dissonance as the betrayed lover who still pines for consummation in spite of insurmountable obstacles is essentially our sense of dissonance textually inscribed. Every interpretive reading, that is, any attempt to provide a coherent account of a text's phenomenological "aspects" struggles to achieve a "sense of proportion."

Woolf's novel stresses above all else that attempts to eliminate dissonance completely are bound to fail. In fact, the novel suggests through its two protagonists, Clarissa and Septimus, that some dissonance is necessary for continued survival. It adds a thrill and excitement to life, it effectively breaks the routine of the everyday, and keeps human cognitive scripts and faculties flexible enough to handle new situations and make discoveries about life. Read allegorically, Septimus is a figure of modernist experimentation whose dissonance-causing actions threaten the stability of conventional society. His extremism resembles that of the revolution of the wordists who damned the common reader. On the other hand, Clarissa appears extremely conservative and traditional in life, a symbol of Victorianism in her old age. But, she also craves the excitement of dissonant experiences to make her feel alive. In this way, she may be more like the tempered advocates from *The Modern Quarterly* who recognised the need to experiment with language but wanted to establish limits to the revolution of the word. The undercurrent of Woolf's novel is the struggle of literary modernism to find a place within established society. Like Septimus, modernism appeared to threaten human nature but in effect it revitalised the very thing it challenged precisely because it was challenging.

However cliched it may seem, the rage for order is one of the most common themes in literary modernism, and it also accurately describes interpretive strategies used in the reception of these works. Since what I have argued is that this compulsion to create order is a natural instinct that is based on our physiological and cognitive struggles to maintain a healthy equilibrium, it stands to reason that high modernist works that aestheticise cognitive dissonance in what has been considered a strategy to alienate readers actually provide democratic reading opportunities. Any literary aesthetic modelled after the concept of cognitive dissonance cannot be created only for an elite readership. Because cognition is embodied, all interpretation and communication shares a common frame of reference in the human body. Put simply, since everyone has a body that functions according to homeostasis, the experience of high modernism can never be an exclusive one. Many readers who have a low threshold for or trouble reconciling experiences of cognitive

dissonance may decide that the benefits are not worth the effort; however, this does not preclude them from being technically *able* to read these texts.

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The critical problem my thesis addresses is the widespread assumption that modernist literature was exclusively designed for an elite readership and was therefore inhospitable to the common reader. I locate the origins of this misconception in early, often reactionary, critical responses to high modernist works as well as in early debates like the one that took place between the writers of *transition* and *The Modern Quarterly* over the rhetoric and practiceable limits of aesthetic experimentation. In recovering this debate from obscurity, I found in it concerns that paralleled my own: a belief in the value of innovative and revolutionary aesthetic experimentation and a desire not to lose sight of the common reader. In many ways the same issues which motivated V. F. Calverton to take pen in hand and challenge the ruling aesthetic authority of the day also motivated the writing of this dissertation. Like most debates of this sort the more radical of the two positions resonated the longest, while the less radical position was seemingly written off as reactionary conservatism and forgotten about. Without question the rhetoric associated with the "Revolution of the Word" continues to influence the way modernism is read and by whom. My thesis is an intervention in this struggle to recover the place of the common reader within literary modernism.

My research developed from an initial observation that many high modernist novels in their themes, their formal experimentation, and especially in their representation of character, revealed an awareness of embodied cognition that prefigured and anticipated later developments in the field of cognitive science. By bringing cognitive theory to bear on these novels, I soon realised that there were aspects of these texts that had been neglected because of the mischaracterisation of modernism as elitist and inaccessible because difficult. The cognitive approach I applied to modernist literature not only allowed for enriched readings of canonised modernist novels, but also led to a new way of conceiving of modernist reading in general. Through the concept of cognitive dissonance I found a way to break down and identify just what it means when modernist aesthetics are described as alienating and defamiliarising for readers. Recent theories of embodied cognition allowed me to update Festinger's concept of dissonance and apply it to literature in order to delineate some of the motivations behind practices of interpretive reading common to the majority of readers.

Embodied cognition also became a way to resuscitate and advance certain lines of reader response criticism which had been compromised in recent years by poststructuralism and an inability to find a way around the impossible dilemma of reconciling subjective responses with objective methodologies. My turn to behaviourism as a tool to help explain some of the motivations behind modernist aesthetics of dissonance was similarly motivated by a desire to reconfigure notions of reception. John Watson's popularisation of psychological behaviourism meant that ideas about conditioning and habit found widespread circulation as part of the modernist climate of ideas. When read alongside literary modernism the ideas behind behaviourism not only help explain the need for modernist difficulty but they also help reorient the Frankfurt School opposition to mass culture so that what is considered the problem is not necessarily the products themselves, but the modes of habitualised reception those products condition and endorse. Aestheticised cognitive dissonance was the means by which high modernist novels resisted the threat of unthinking, conditioned behaviour.

It is my contention that modernism not only frustrates and challenges its readers, but liberates them as well. Through its more difficult aesthetic forms it celebrates both our limitations as cognitive agents as well as our relentless drive to overcome those limitations. I have argued throughout this thesis that reading high modernist literature is a self-defining activity. When confronted by aesthetic experiments that disrupt habitualised reading practices and problematise reception, readers are forced to recognise that the organising principle behind interpretive reading is their own embodied inclination towards cognitive consistency. The aestheticised cognitive dissonance of high modernist novels exploits that inclination, and it is through the struggle to manage and reconcile such experiences of dissonance that readers exercise and add flexibility to their cognitive faculties. I see this dissertation as breaking new ground in the study of high modernism in three ways. First, by bringing recent theories of embodied cognition to bear on the high modernist novels in question, I have shown how they not only illuminate neglected aspects of this fiction, but can also recharge many of their more well-known aspects. Second, the theory of cognitive dissonance as a uniquely modernist aesthetic radically revises the idea of modernist reading by opening up democratic spaces for common readers and explaining the drive behind interpretation. Third, by recovering contemporary debates about the nature of aesthetic experimentation and situating modernist texts in previously unexplored contexts, it is possible to shift the fundamental assumptions upon which the reception of literary high modernism has until now been based. In doing so, we can better understand the roles that these novels play in our lives and the roles that we, as readers, can play in these novels.

NOTES

[1] Virginia Woolf, "A Sketch of the Past," *Moments of Being*, ed. Jeanne Schulkind (Sussex: Sussex UP, 1976): 61-137.

[2] Woolf's discussion of the "exceptional" is in relation to the misleading nature of memory which easily recalls disturbing breaks in routine because they stand out against a background of the unconscious everyday. This backdrop is often what isn't remembered in memoirs and Woolf argues that "the things one does not remember are as important; perhaps they are more important" than what one does ("Sketch" 69).

[3] It should be noted that Woolf somewhat paradoxically calls a day where she had a "slight temperature" almost a "whole day of non-being." This leads me to conclude that mind-altering states such as fevers or drug-induced hallucinations or any alterations of consciousness prevent the occurrence of "sudden violent shocks" even though they may leave lasting impressions on the individual. Woolf contradicts this position, as we will see, in her essay "On Being Ill."

[4] *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas* are, however, both non-fiction critical works that have received considerable scholarly attention alongside the fictional works. Beginning in the 1970s, scholars started to reassess Woolf's literary criticism and the result has been book-length studies of her essays and reviews. See Mark Goldman, *The Reader's Art: Virginia Woolf as Literary Critic* (The Hague: Mouton, 1976); Vijay Sharma, *Virginia Woolf as Literary Critic* (New Delhi: Arnold-Heineman, 1977); Beth Carole Rosenberg and Jeanne Dubino, *Virginia Woolf and the Essay* (New York: St. Martin's, 1997).

[5] Michael Kaufmann argues that Woolf and Eliot represent poles of modernist appeal in both their criticism and their creative work: "Eliot preached his doctrine to a limited audience, as a poet-critic to other poets and critics; Woolf spoke to a much wider audience, as a reader to other readers, thereby defining Modernism and literature in general as something available to all, not set apart for a select few" (137). See "A Modernism of One's Own: Virginia Woolf's *TLS* Reviews and Eliotic Modernism," *Virginia Woolf and the Essay*, ed. Beth Carole Rosenberg and Jeanne Dubino. (New York: St. Martin's, 1997): 137-55.

[6] See Virginia Woolf, *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, 6 vols., ed Andrew McNeillie (San Diego: Harcourt, 1986; 1987; 1988).

[7] See Goldman 39. Goldman claims that "The essential paradox in Woolf's criticism--her traditional-experimental position--springs from her dual role as artist-critic and her concern for the changing nature of reality and its influence on literary forms." Throughout Woolf's essays, one can perceive "a creative tension . . . between the emotional response, the impression, the experience of the work, and its rational explanation and evaluation--on formal grounds and in terms of traditional standards" (86). In her criticism Woolf repeatedly calls for new forms and new ways of looking at the world ("Modern Fiction"; "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown"; "Poetry, Fiction and the Future"; "What Is a Novel?"), while at the same time she finds fault with contemporary fiction which attempts to do just that. Woolf's infamous critique of Joyce's *Ulysses* as "a memorable catastrophe--immense in daring, terrific in disaster" serves to make my point that while Woolf advocated experimental forms, the very dissonance of those experiments created what in 1927 she called "the chaotic state of fiction" (See "How It Strikes a Contemporary" in *The Common Reader* 297 and "What Is a Novel?"). Woolf inaccurately describes the high modernist period as a transitional one out of which a successor period of masterpieces will emerge--perhaps she should have heeded her own advice that "it is impossible for the living to judge the works of the living" ("Lockhart's Criticism" in *The Moment and Other Essays* [1948]. New York: Harcourt, 1974: 62).

[8] Virginia Woolf, "How Should One Read a Book?", *The Common Reader, Second Series* (London: Hogarth, 1932): 258-70.

[9] See Virginia Woolf, "Byron and Mr. Briggs," *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 3., ed. Andrew McNeillie (New York: Harcourt, 1988): 477; Virginia Woolf, "How Should One Read a Book?" in *The Common Reader, Second Series* 270.

[10] Virginia Woolf, "Byron and Mr. Briggs" in *Essays* vol. 3: 485.

[11] See Beth Rowenberg, "Virginia Woolf: Conversation and the Common Reader," *Virginia Woolf Miscellanies*, ed. Mark Hussey and Vera Neverow-Turk (New York: Pace UP, 1992): 1-8. See also Jeanne Dubino, "Creating the Conditions of Life: Virginia Woolf and the Common Reader," *Re: Reading, Re: Writing, Re: Teaching Virginia Woolf*, ed. Eileen Barrett, et als. (New York: Pace UP, 1995): 127-37.

[12] Ironically enough, Woolf suggests in this essay that English modernist writers learn to produce works more in line with the "inconclusiveness" found in the stories of Russian writers like Chekhov:

> It is the sense that there is no answer, that if honestly examined life presents question after question which must be left to sound on and on after the story is over in hopeless interrogation that fills us with a deep, and finally it may be with a resentful, despair. (217)

See Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction" in *The Common Reader* 184-95.

[13] Virginia Woolf, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," *The Captain's Death Bed and Other Essays* (London: Hogarth, 1950): 90-111.

[14] The same writers--Mr. Galsworthy, Mr. Bennett, and Mr. Wells--who Woolf claims wrote such "well constructed and solid," but suffocating books in "Modern Fiction" (209), she criticises for producing "incomplete" books that require "that the reader should finish them, actively and practically, for himself" in "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" (100).

[15] "Art and Life," *Essays* vol. 1: 278. Woolf's own sense of literary organicism is evident in "The Patron and the Crocus" where she describes the "intensity, . . . angularities, obscurities, and affectations" of Henry James's novels as "tortured plants, beautiful and bright, but with something wry-necked about them, malformed, shrivelled on the one side, overblown on the other" (*Common* 263). According to Woolf, the organicism of James's fiction is aberrant because the author "despised the [reading] public" (262).

[16] Woolf's concept of androgyny (after Coleridge's belief that "a great mind is androgynous") as articulated in *A Room of One's Own* can be read as both a reconciliation of dissonance between two opposing sides of the mind and as a form of Keatsian "negative capability" as Phyllis Rose argues. Critics have applied the concept widely not only as a means of promoting feminist poetics (issues, concerns, points of view), but also as perpetuation of patriarchal myth that denies women a distinctive sense of female pain, anger, and ambition. See Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (1929; St. Albans: Triad, 1977): 94; Phyllis Rose, *Woman of Letters: A Life of Virginia Woolf* (New York: Oxford UP, 1978): 188; Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1977): 264, 278.

[17] Virginia Woolf, *Jacob's Room* (*JR*) (1922; London: Granada, 1976).

[18] See Virginia Woolf, *The Voyage Out* (1915; San Diego: Harcourt, 1948); Virginia Woolf, *Night and Day* (1919; San Diego: Harcourt, 1948). The writing styles of both *The Voyage Out* and *Night and Day* appear to follow the conventions of nineteenth-century realist fiction, but what ultimately separates these works from their literary forebears is their unconventional subject matter. *The Voyage Out*, for example, prevents the completion of the marriage plot between Rachel and Terrence by killing off Rachel. The novel is often read as a critique of traditional male and female relations such as marriage in a patriarchal society. Characters discusss among other things starting up activists' clubs and the necessary "enlightenment of women" (164). *Night and Day* similarly questions conventional social relations between men and women, issues of imperial domination, and the "proper" behaviour of unmarried women in early twentieth-century London. As a result many critics label these novels "feminist" simply because they highlight a concern for the status of women and actively protest against patriarchal society; however, my dissertation is an attempt to recover more universally humanist features of Woolf's fiction and aesthetic practices which often get occluded in overly politicised readings. Woolf is without question a feminist writer and much has and still can be learned from studying her novels through this critical lens. This does not, however, make her novels exclusively "feminist." Reading *Night and Day* and *The Voyage Out* against Woolf's later, more experimental fiction has led to a critical reassessment of these works. Many argue that both novels are only "ostensibly conventional" and that the familiar narrative formulas function to disguise a more subversive poetics. See Avrom Fleishman, *Virginia Woolf: A Critical Reading* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1975) 22; Mark Hussey, *Virginia Woolf A to Z* (New York: Facts on File, 1995): 328.

[19] In a similar situation, Woolf once watched her mother reading the Bible and was compelled to speculate about her mother's thoughts at that precise moment because of the gravity of her face: "I . . . told myself that her first husband had been a clergyman and that she was thinking, as she read what he had read, of him" ("A Sketch of the Past" 82). While she admits that this account of her mother's consciousness was a "fable," Woolf nonetheless reveals how readers of people, like readers of novels, build interpretive hypotheses for that which is not known, even unknowable, based on other relevant and associative information to appease, however inadequately, the desire to know and resolve experiences of cognitive dissonance.

[20] E. M. Forster's distinction between "flat" and "round" characters perhaps offers parallels and sheds light on this point. For Forster, flat characters are two-dimensional types that do not develop. They represent single ideas and are essentially formulaic; they can easily "be summed up in a single phrase" (79). Round characters, on the other hand, have a depth and complexity that prevents them from being summed up in a sentence. They are highly organised and develop in complicated ways "capable of surprising" readers (85). See E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (1927; Middlesex: Penguin, 1962): 75-85.

[21] By penetrating the objective surface of character and representing characters thinking--stream of consciousness, interior monologue--modernist novels show that characters were considerably more complex. In an additional way, modernist literature refuted the Victorian realist convention of representing objective, complete characters.

[22] In relation to the earlier chapter discussing phantom limb and amputation, it is noteworthy that Woolf has Jacob read Plato's *Phaedrus* and continue the argument in his mind after he has closed the book (106). Similarly, the narrator makes mention of "Nelson on his column surveying the horizon, and the world our ship," further positing the amputee Admiral as a figure who symbolically guides Londoners in their daily encounters with the world (87).

[23] Qtd. in Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1961): 49.

[24] See Walter Ong, S. J., "The Writer's Audience Is Always a Fiction" *PMLA* 90 (1975): 9-21.

[25] Chunking is the term used in psychology for the process of converting long-term memory into the largest units or "chunks" that can be stored in short-term memory.

[26] Roman Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, trans. George Grabowicz (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1973).

[27] Elsewhere in the novel, Woolf describes letters as "phantoms of ourselves" that get captured on sheets of paper (*JR* 89).

[28] Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* [*MD*], ed. Morris Beja. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

[29] Virginia Woolf, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 2, 1920-24, ed. Anne Bell (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981): 312.

[30] Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1979). Roland Barthes makes a similar distinction in *S/Z* between two different kinds of texts: the *lisible* ("readerly") and the *scriptible* ("writerly"). See Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill, 1974).

[31] For a more detailed analysis of Woolf's critique of society in *Mrs. Dalloway*, see Alex Zwerdling, "*Mrs. Dalloway* and the Social System," *Virginia Woolf's* Mrs. Dalloway, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea, 1988): 145-64.

[32] Comte Jean Marie Mathias Philippe Auguste de Villiers de L'Isle-Adam, *Axel* qtd. in Edmund Wilson, *Axel's Castle: A Study in the Imaginative Literature of 1870-1930* (New York: Scribner's, 1931): 263. Joyce quotes this same passage in *Ulysses* during a discussion in which AE argues against prying into Shakespeare's private life to explain his plays (*U* 242). In *Axel*, this line appears at the end of the play and marks the double suicide of the lovers.

[33] Zwerdling, "*Mrs. Dalloway* and the Social System" 151. The self-contained, truly uneventful nature of the party prompts Zwerdling to call it "a kind of wake" in spite of its superficial brilliance (146).

[34] Sally and Peter are both figures from Clarissa's past associated with dissonance. With Sally, Clarissa founded a society to abolish private property, they read William Morris (founder of the Socialist League) wrapped in brown paper, and shared a sexually charged kiss ("The whole world might have turned upside down!") (28). Clarissa remembers Sally as untidy, unconventional, and uninhibited: "Indeed she did shock people" (27). And yet "the wild, the daring, the romantic Sally," "the last person in the world one would have expected to marry a rich man and live in a large house near Manchester," did just that. Like Clarissa, the exuberance and dissonance of youth gave way to a reserved traditionalism in old age: a governing-class spirit had grown on them. Peter and Clarissa who had once been, and still are, in love continue to be sources of dissonance for each other. In her thoughts, Clarissa constantly wonders if Peter is criticising her, and Peter still struggles with his intense feelings for the married Mrs. Dalloway.

[35] "Hadn't Mrs. Dempster always longed to see foreign parts?" (*MD* 22). Mrs. Dempster epitomises the desire to break routines and experience the shock of the foreign. The dissonant nature of travel to different lands compels many individuals because experiences of the unknown challenge our conventional assumptions by providing a contrast to our lives. The experience of the new always involves a conscious appreciation and recognition of that which is taken for granted. Modernism is very much an experience of travelling to foreign and unknown lands. Our only resource for handling these experiences of dissonance is to appeal to our habitual ways of dealing with the world--carefully examining them, and adjusting them to novel circumstances.

[36] Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *Sexchanges*, vol. II of *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1989): 315.

[37] This dissonance between the two clocks can also be read in terms of the division of church (St. Margaret's) and state (Big Ben), and in terms of an alternative feminist rejoinder to the intoning of masculine authority. For the way time is humanised into a narrative ("tick-tock") and becomes a supplementary model for the lack of organisation of our own lives, see Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending* 44-48.

[38] Virginia Woolf, *A Writer's Diary*, ed. Leonard Woolf (New York: Harcourt, 1973). Woolf also said that she wanted "to criticise the social system, and show it at work, at its most intense" (56)--another statement that has strongly influenced the novel's reception and the approaches used to interpret it.

[39] The parallels between Woolf's novel about the movements of characters on a single June day in 1923 London and Joyce's *Ulysses*, which recounts a single day's activities in 1904 Dublin have been the topic of much scholarship over the years. As early as 1934, Wyndam Lewis called *Mrs. Dalloway* "a sort of undergraduate imitation" of *Ulysses* (*Men Without Art*. New York: Russell, 1934). For critical comparisons of the two novels, see Suzette Henke, "Virginia Woolf Reads James Joyce," *James Joyce: The Centennial Symposium*, ed. Morris Beja et al. (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1986): 39-42; Maria DiBattista, "Joyce, Woolf, and the Modern Mind," *Virginia Woolf*, ed. Patricia Clements and Isobel Grundy (Totowa: Barnes, 1983): 96-114; William Jenkins, "Virginia Woolf and the Belittling of *Ulysses*," *James Joyce Quarterly* 25.4 (1988): 513-19; Richard Pearce, "Who Comes First, Joyce or Woolf?", *Virginia Woolf: Themes and Variations*, ed. Vara Neverow-Turk and Mark Hussey (New York: Pace UP, 1993): 59-67; Harvena Richter, "The Ulysses Connection: Clarissa Dalloway's Bloomsday," *Studies in the Novel* 21.3 (1989): 305-19; Michael Seidl, "The Pathology of the Everyday: Uses of Madness in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *Ulysses*," *Virginia Woolf: Themes and Variations*, ed. Vara Neverow-Turk and Mark Hussey (New York: Pace UP, 1993): 52-59; Elizabeth Abel, "Narrative Structure(s) and Female Development: The Case of *Mrs. Dalloway*," *Virginia Woolf*, ed. Margaret Homans (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1993): 93-114; Jean Guiguet, *Virginia Woolf and Her Works* (New York: Harcourt, 1965); Mark Spilka, *Virginia Woolf's Quarrel with Grieving* (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1980); Mark Hussey, *Virginia Woolf A to Z* (New York: Facts on File, 1995): 174. In addition, I have always thought that Joyce's short story "The Dead," which critiques the insularity of upper-middle class Irish society during a party, also bears strong affinities to Woolf's novel.

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