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Subject on trial: The displacement of the reader in modern and postmodern fiction

Travis, Molly Abel, Ph.D.
The Ohio State University, 1989

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SUBJECT ON TRIAL:
THE DISPLACEMENT OF THE READER
IN MODERN AND POST-MODERN FICTION

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

Molly Abel Travis, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

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"She is a friend of mine. She gather me, man. The pieces I am, she gather them and give them back to me in all the right order."

--Toni Morrison

_Beloved_

To Paul, Austen, and Joshua

who, in loving me,

gather my pieces and give them back to me

in just the right order
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INTRODUCTION

4. When critics turned from the text (new criticism) to the reader's response, it was hailed for opening up things. Did it? Discuss different reader-response theories in terms of what they open--and what they avoid. What would real openness be in this area? (Suggested names: Fish, Rosenblatt, Booth, Felman, Fetterley)

In the course of answering the question above, one of five questions on my Ph.D. General Exam for Mac Davis, I discovered how unsatisfied I was with literally all of the reader-response criticism I had read. In my answer, Stanley Fish, Louise Rosenblatt, Wayne Booth, and Judith Fetterley took some abuse: Fish--for being so fish-y, so wishy-washy, for pointing out the dialectical importance of disruptive texts while positing a reader who cannot be surprised or frustrated; Rosenblatt--for proposing a transactional theory of interpretation but not allowing the reader to be a full partner; Booth--for exaggerating the persuasive power of the author and the text, thereby distorting the rhetorical relationship of the author and the reader; Fetterley--for reading reductively and for describing a male paradigm too all-pervasive and unified
to undermine, thereby rendering "active" reading into a politically passive act. What I wanted to find was "a reader-response theory that comes to terms with the reader as a complex subject involved in a historical situation, inscribed by an ideology, influenced by psychological drives, and engaged in self-reflective thinking." During the Oral Examination, Mac Davis referred to my notion of the ideal reader-response theory and asked me to elaborate, to describe in more specific terms what such a theory might be like. . . . Well, three years later, this study represents the beginning of an answer.

My goal was, and still remains, to construct a reader-response theory that ties the reading response to larger theories of the subject. Involved in this goal is my desire to interrogate traditional rhetorical analysis of literature, using as a tool of interrogation a combination of semiotics-deconstruction, psychoanalysis, feminism, and Marxism. (None of these is a "pure" category, rather they are all intertwined.) Reader-response theory as well as rhetorical analysis have concentrated on those literary speech acts that involve a cooperative relationship between reader and writer. Of the various types of relationships possible among reader, text, and author, I think that the most revelatory relationships are not based on cooperation. Texts that
challenge and threaten the reader reveal more about her subjectivity than do those texts that simply hold up a mirror and allow her to read herself. Best of all are those texts that go beyond threats and actually subvert the secure position of the Cartesian subject, which is why I have chosen to focus on disruptive texts of the modern and post-modern periods. When readers collide with texts that refuse to be consumed or owned, they express desires and fears that define their positions as subjects. This subject position determines the critical stances of literary theorists and the pedagogical practices of the academy as well as the personal responses of individual readers. Twentieth-century texts such as *Ulysses*, *Gravity's Rainbow*, and *The Waves* displace those readers—still in the vast majority—who view the world from the nineteenth-century position of the transcendent subject.

The theories of post-Saussurean French feminists, especially Julia Kristeva's, have provided me with the vision for interrogating critical methods and literary texts in a new way. Kristeva's *Revolution in Poetic Language* has been the single most important influence on my study, a book with which I will never be "finished," for the dialogue goes on and on. Important to Kristeva's work is the idea of woman's inhabiting the negative space, a position that allows her the ceaseless opportunity to
question and undermine the fixed, patriarchal subject position, a.k.a. phallogocentrism. But in order to avoid assuming another static position—a gynologo-centrism—one must remain a subject on trial/in process.

I began this project with the naive notion that one could establish an absolute distinction between the implied/ideal reader and the actual reader. Steven Mailloux's *Interpretive Conventions* convinced me that all readers and reading experiences are interpretive constructs. My phallogocentric reader is a construct—with individual literary critics and, let us be honest, with you and me as actual examples.

I begin my analysis by considering the ways literary critics have avoided coming to terms with the fact that Joyce’s *Ulysses* exiles them as reading subjects from a comfortable home within language. By pushing language to its limits and showing how the heterogeneity of experience exceeds the grammatico-logical system that would contain it, Joyce makes vividly clear the distance/difference between signifier and signified. In my chapter on Woolf’s fiction, I consider the displacement the reader of *Mrs. Dalloway* feels as she turns to *The Waves*, alternating between the positions of neurosis and psychosis and the relationship to language that each position represents. Pynchon’s *Gravity’s Rainbow* causes a cognitive overload
(overdose) in that paranoid, hyper-rational reader who serves as an exaggerated version of the thinking subject. Pynchon dissolves all of those binary oppositions so dear to the phallogophile, making the disoriented reader understand how tenuous knowledge is. Chapter IV demonstrates how post-modern novels by Monique Wittig, Hélène Cixous, Kathy Acker, and Toni Morrison put the phallogocentric reading subject on trial by confronting him with the other, the O-oracle-orifice-object--heterogeneous and finally unknowable. In the conclusion, I am the undutiful daughter, taking on Wayne Booth, whose conception of rhetoric is both paternal and phallogocentric. In arguing that Booth's method of rhetorical analysis is nostalgic and impoverished, I am making much the same argument as I did in the opening pages of the first chapter in reference to T. S. Eliot's effort to tame and reduce *Ulysses*. 
ULYSSES AND THE EXILE OF THE READING SUBJECT

You have once again gone "down where the asparagus grows" and gone down as far as the lector most bloody benevolens can be expected to respire.

--Ezra Pound to James Joyce, in a letter dated 10 June 1919, referring to "The Sirens" chapter of Ulysses

Early critical reviews of Joyce's Ulysses fell under two main categories of response: boredom and awe. Although awe was the predominant reaction, it was not of a uniform variety; in some cases (e.g., Richard Aldington) awe meant fear and even repugnance, while in other cases (e.g., Valery Larbaud) it meant extreme admiration. In "Ulysses, Order, and Myth" (1923), T. S. Eliot declared that the novel had given him "all the surprise, delight, and terror that [he could] require" (480). And the particular form that his awe took influenced many critical evaluations and interpretations after his.

Eliot described Joyce's method of using myth as "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 . . . " (483). Eliot's use of the terms controlling and ordering is significant, for these terms reflect his own attempt to tame the anarchy of *Ulysses*. Characterizing this response, A. Walton Litz says, "Like a devoted but somewhat timid child, Eliot was trying to process Joyce's novel into a congenial world of 'authority' and 'tradition'" (qtd. in Staley 15).

In trying to understand Eliot's need to domesticate *Ulysses*, we should look to *The Waste Land*. Despite the fact that these works, both published in 1922, tend to be lumped together as the two twentieth-century touchstones of literary modernism, they differ in important ways, the most profound difference resulting from their attitudes toward language. While Joyce liberates language, Eliot expresses the desire to control language, revealing a distrust of his own lyrical gift. At the end of *The Waste Land*, Eliot offers up a silence that can deliver us from a corrupted language. Just as he struggles to transcend sexuality, a sexuality inextricably bound up with death, so does he struggle to transcend the condition of loss and absence that the use of language makes apparent. In the last few lines of the poem, the Fisher King refers to the "fragments [he has] shored against [his] ruins," conveying Eliot's attempt, through his own poetic language, to come
to terms with the waste land. Yet language is exactly what Eliot finally disavows, turning instead to the Unpanishad Shantih, "the peace which passeth understanding." Eliot's attempt at transcendence reflects a desire for ultimate certainty, a desire that Lacanian theory would call neurotic because of its refusal to accept the primal lack that is the central condition of life. Eliot's nostalgia encourages the belief in an original essential plenitude that can make whole the fragmented condition of existence. In spite of its brilliant formal experimentation, The Waste Land is anything but revolutionary in terms of the writer's and the reader's subjectivity.

I want to argue that Eliot's struggle for artistic and critical transcendence reflects the attempts of many literary critics to ignore Joyce's dispersal and dissolution of the transcendental ego. In Ulysses (and even more so in Finnegans Wake) Joyce refuses semantic and narrative closure, and this refusal has threatened many critics. Colin MacCabe claims that "criticism preserves [Joyce] as unread":

Joyce's texts are transformed into complicated crosswords puzzles whose solution is the banal liberal humanism of the critic. The reason for the failure of the critics to give an account of Joyce's text is not some congenital inability on their part but that literary criticism itself cannot cope with Joyce's text because these texts refuse to reproduce the relation between
reader and text on which literary criticism is predicated. (3)

To illustrate how critics writing about Ulysses have attempted to protect the position of the reading subject, I want to turn now to three respected critical works: S.L. Goldberg's *The Classical Temper*, Hugh Kenner's *Ulysses*, and Mark Shechner's *Joyce in Nighttown*. Each of these works contains observations and insights that add rich dimensions to *Ulysses*. Because the polyvalent complexity of the novel accommodates these three critical approaches as well as a host of others, I am not interested in simply pointing out the differences between and among these approaches. Instead, I am concerned with the different method that each of the three critics uses to make secure the position of the reading subject; I am interested in illuminating the sameness within their differences.

*The Classical Temper* is acknowledged by many critics to be one of the closest, most careful readings of *Ulysses* ever written. Even though he disagrees with Goldberg's reading, Fritz Senn feels that the work is "to this day still the best book ever written against *Ulysses*" (qtd. in Riquelme 159). What might Senn mean by the term against? Surely, he is referring to the way that Golberg insists on seeing Joyce's novel as a work exhibiting a "classical
Goldberg defines the classical temper as an artistic attitude that accepts the ordinary world of humanity as the primary object of its attention, and endeavors to see it and present it steadily and whole. In order to do so, it seeks patiently for maturity, detachment, impersonality of judgment and an artistic method, that, while it begins with the local and the concrete as its foundation, enables it to penetrate beyond them. The classical temper thus involves a moral as well as an artistic ideal, an ideal of spiritual completeness and impersonal order. (32)

Goldberg stresses Joyce's moral and spiritual commitments to art, de-emphasizing his technical experimentation. He connects Stephen's desire for "the freedom of spiritual power, the freedom of detached, impersonal objectivity" with Joyce's aesthetic achievement in *Ulysses* (82). This objectivity occurs when "a man's knowledge is complete enough," freeing him "from the darkness of ignorance, from his former subjection to forces he did not understand. The burden of his environment, obsessive ideas, of ruling emotions, can be shaken off . . ." (82). Describing Bloom's triumph in "Circe," Goldberg points to his refusal "to succumb to the passionate, violent chimeras that threaten his basic rationality"; Bloom's vital core of human individuality" is the source of his moral strength (134-135). Goldberg puts a lot of faith in the cogito of the liberal humanist subject and assigns that same faith to Joyce. Goldberg
connects the abandonment of reason and of moral sense to aesthetic kinesis, a state evident in the art of the Romantics. In claiming that Joyce represents the classical temper, he contends that Ulysses achieves aesthetic stasis.

Goldberg complains that Joyce's achievement of stasis is partly marred because of the chapters "Wandering Rocks," "The Sirens," "Nausicaa," "The Oxen of the Sun," "Eumaeus," and "Penelope." Although he constantly reminds us that we must view Ulysses as a whole, Goldberg simply (too simply) dispenses with the above-mentioned six chapters as failures and/or aberrations. He argues that these chapters compromise Joyce's moral stasis by either putting too much stress on technical inventiveness and linguistic brilliance ("Wandering Rocks," "The Sirens," "The Oxen of the Sun"); or by focusing a mean-spirited irony or a shallow parody on an object such as Gerty, who is unworthy of such attention, or Bloom, who is too noble for such debasement ("Nausicaa," "The Oxen of the Sun," "Eumaeus") or by qualifying the novel's overall affirmation, such as the case of Molly's ambiguous "yes" in "Penelope." In lopping off such a substantial part of the whole to make his interpretation fit, Goldberg reads in opposition to Ulysses. He reads against Joyce's self
irony and against those avant-garde aspects of the novel that make it a montage of fragments.¹

Goldberg constantly points out how concerned Joyce was with uniting subject and object, and certainly his own reading of *Ulysses* struggles against the otherness of the textual object by making it into his own vision. But surely the very intensity of Goldberg's effort to see the novel as organic and static should make us aware of the split between subject (reader) and object (text) and of the disruptions that the text causes for the would-be secure reading subject. Can the reader of *Ulysses* ever really forget that she is reading and reading strenuously?²

One critical reading of *Ulysses* that Goldberg particularly objects to is Hugh Kenner's *Dublin's Joyce* (1956), complaining that "on Mr. Kenner's reading *Ulysses* is extraordinarily static . . . only a machine" with "no action in any sense but that used by watch-makers, only 'rhythms'--the subtle placing and balancing of characters, symbols, techniques for critical effect" (106-107). Goldberg claims that the novel becomes merely a complex, symbolic poem in this view. Kenner's ignoring the representational aspects of the work threatens Goldberg's interpretation.
Kenner does not mention Goldberg in his *Ulysses* (1980), not even in his survey of fifty years of critical positions. I suspect that the omission occurs because Goldberg's focus is so different from his own. Kenner's recent critical position does not depart radically from his position in 1956; he is still interested primarily in Joyce's techniques. He denounces the "naive dualism" of those critics (like Goldberg) who insist on separating a narrative tied to external reality from the aesthetic technique that determines the closed system that exists between the covers of the book; this "naive dualism between flawed reportage and mocking puzzle-master, which though it survives in English Departments, comports with a world-view elsewhere obsolete" (154). Kenner then proceeds to connect what Joyce did with narrative to Einstein's denying an ideal simultaneity among physical occurrences in the universe, and to Godel's proving that closure is impossible in the deductive thought process, and to Picasso's ending the ideal separation of painting style from the subject matter of painting. All four overturned the objective paradigm that had established a dualism between observer and observed.

When Kenner tells us that no single reading of *Ulysses* can ever be comprehensive (80), he refers to the complexity of the book's design, a complexity that extends
even to its smallest details. The universe of Joyce’s novel "is Einsteinian, non-simultaneous, internally consistent, but never to be grasped in one act of apprehension; not only because the details are so numerous but also because their pertinent interconnections are more numerous still" (81). Joyce practices a "rhetoric of avoidance" (48), refusing to tell the reader much of what would help him to unravel the mysteries of the narrative. So, despite its din of words and welter of details, Ulysses is "a book of silences" (48). The reader must search for the patterns and seek out the alignments that the book abounds in. Joyce’s cues enable the reader to discover internal connections, but often these connections—like those in the post-Einsteinian universe—seem random and coincidental. Pointing to examples of Joyce’s repeating details and "twinning" episodes, alignments sometimes separated by hundreds of pages, Kenner acknowledges the intricacy of authorial design. Yet he also observes how the connections of the book exceed even Joyce’s intentions: "The letters of Yes, the last word, run backward through Stately, the first. Joyce may never have noticed this, and assuredly did not arrive at the words together; ‘Stately’ was in print in 1918, ‘Yes’ decided on only in 1921" (155).
The content and nature of Kenner's three appendices offer a clear indication of his particular method:

Appendix 1 involves an extended calculation of the length of Stephen's stay in Paris; Appendix 2 features a discussion of Joyce's mistake in claiming that Bloom's chest measured only 28 inches before and 29 1/2 inches after the Sandow exercises, much too small for a man 5 ft. 9 1/2 in.; Appendix 3 discusses nine to the ninth power of nine, a number mentioned in "Ithaca," which is Joyce's respectably close estimate of the number of digits that would fill 30 volumes of 100 pages each. Preceding these appendices is the following note:

These are specimen notes, offered here as instances of the kind of attention Ulysses invites. The book's quantity of interlocked detail is beyond reckoning and, if Joyce's dealing with all of it do not betoken omniscience, still great issues, Sherlock Holmes said, can hang on a bootlace, and we need to earn the certainty that our insight in each instance surpasses our author's, or that we have taken his point. (159)

In assembling "large orders of fact" (81) and in working with layer upon layer of particulars, Kenner becomes an ideal authorial reader of Joyce, who is both the encyclopedic writer fond of closed systems and the mocking puzzlemaster who checks our empirical obsession by promoting incertitude. Perhaps Kenner's note to the appendices tells us that he is being more than just a bit
ironic about his own method of mastering details. Indeed, irony is another form of mastery, and it would be entirely in character with Kenner's critical method. In any event, Kenner—as a reading subject—experiences no real disruption in the task of deciphering *Ulysses*. Implicit in his treatment is the idea that careful and repeated rereadings will enable the reader to perceive the incredible network of internal connections in the novel and to distinguish between what is finally knowable from what is unknowable. Such a reader assumes a secure position, involved in a "symbiosis of observer and observed" (155).

Mark Shechner would disagree completely with Goldberg's calling *Ulysses* a work of "perfect objectivity," free of the "presence of unassimilated personal issues of the author's" (226). He considers the novel to be "above all, a reflexive gesture, a repertoire of self-regarding dances and charades which Joyce struck endlessly by and for himself" (7). Shechner's particular version of psychoanalytic reading attempts to make clear "the characteristic terms of Joyce's psychic redundancy," translating "otherwise disparate aspects of style, imagery, theme, characters, and ideas" as "transformations of the same, ultimately tiresome, conflicts" (8). Shechner claims that psychoanalytic criticism can offer a
fuller comprehension of *Ulysses* and of Joyce than can any other form of interpretation. Praising psychoanalytic criticism in general, Shechner says that the "interpretive virtue" resides not only in its revealing "the deep structure of the artist's psychic processes, but in its demonstrations that the manifest artistic and behavioral materials of his life and work contain thematic unities that are otherwise unrecognizable" (139). Though they would disagree about the source of the unity, Shechner and Goldberg both see *Ulysses* as a unified work.

Shechner's method involves applying to the character of Bloom and of Stephen the evidence of Joyce's "Oedipal guilt" that he finds in Joyce's letters to Nora. Both characters, who together represent Joyce, exhibit a fear of castration and the narcissism that accompanies such fear. In response to the "other," Bloom and Stephen (and, thus, Joyce) react with a "defensive orality" (74). Shechner says that the only real success Joyce had in struggling against sexual repression was rhetorical success, with "language . . . functioning for him as a surrogate penis" (106). In Shechner's view, *Ulysses* is an extended self-revelation of Joyce's guilt expressed in anal behavior—a "dialectic of shame," which involves confessions camouflaged by an impersonal "comic saturnalia" (150-151). Through art, shame can become
self-exhibition; "(a)rt bribes the superego by insisting on the artist's ability to exercise manipulative control over the sources of his own shame and guilt" (151).

Having begun by psychoanalyzing Joyce, Shechner spends the remainder of his book in a "hermeneutics of reconciliation" (7), tracing the diverse aspects of the novel to Joyce's basic psychosexual conflicts.

Shechner's reading of *Ulysses* clearly reveals the split that divides Freudian theory: the Freud of ego psychology, which is the "substantial" Freud, and the semiotic Freud. The Freud of ego psychology posits a substantial ego, an actual self, that contains a narcissistic libido struggling against a punishing superego and an unbending external "reality," while the Freud of Lacan's reading describes the "I" as "a field of [semiotic] play, a site marked in an unconscious discourse, with the unconscious determining the 'I'" (Robert Con Davis 751). Obviously, Shechner's approach derives from ego psychology. Acting as analyst, he is the masterful subject (le sujet supposé savoir), who holds the key to understanding Joyce and *Ulysses*.

So where does Shechner's interpretation leave him as a reading subject? Occupying a position of dominance. In Shechner's analysis, it is the text/object--not the reading subject--that gets put on trial. His masterful
subject maintains just the sort of privileged position that psychoanalysis seeks to cancel. *Joyce in Nighttown* illuminates the distance/difference between psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic criticism.

One might expect a reception theory such as Wolfgang Iser's to grapple with Joyce's challenges to the reading subject in a way that Goldberg's, Kenner's, and Shechner's interpretations do not. In *The Implied Reader*, Iser focuses on the means by which novels question social and historical norms, thereby forcing the reader "to take an active part in the composition of the novel's meaning, which revolves around a basic divergence from the familiar" (xii). Through his attempts to construct the meaning of the twentieth-century novel, the reader realizes the difficulty of satisfactorily filling in the gaps. "In this way," Iser claims, "the reader is forced to discover the hitherto unconscious expectations that underlie all his perceptions, and also the whole process of consistency-building as a prerequisite for understanding" (xiv). This discovery provides the reader with "the chance of discovering himself, both in and through the constant involvement in 'home-made' illusions and fictions" (xiv). Literary works that transgress normative ways of perception force Iser's reader to become self-reflexive--but only to a point. For Iser's reader is also
a secure liberal humanist, willing to open himself to the
defamiliarizing effects of the text in order to more fully
know himself. I agree with Terry Eagleton's observation
that Iser's reader "is not so much radically upbraided, as
simply returned to himself or herself as a more thoroughly
liberal subject" (Literary Theory 79).

Iser stresses the fact that Ulysses constantly tests
the reader's perception and corrects the reader's picture
by complicating it with each new chapter. Joyce gives us
"eighteen different aspects of a single day in Dublin"
(196). The reader, overburdened by the details of too
many aspects, settles for a diminished picture of reality
in the novel but recognizes her perception for what it is:
a manageable fragment. This reader both creates illusions
in the process of consistency-building and destroys those
illusions in recognizing them as such. Iser says that
this production and destruction of illusion "makes it
impossible for [the reader] to stand aside and view
'reality' from a distance--the only reality for [her] to
view is the one [she] is creating" (233). Like Stephen in
the "Proteus" chapter, the reader recognizes that she is
bound by the limits of her own perception--and that is the
extent to which Iser's reception theory explores the
subjectivity of the reader. Iser's implied reader
maintains a position of dominance, secure in her liberal
humanist capacity to tolerate indeterminancy and able to understand her subjectivity through the use of logic.

In a March 1922 issue of *Daily Express*, the reviewer S.P.B. Mais sent out an alarm about *Ulysses*: "Reading Mr. Joyce is like making an excursion into Bolshevist Russia: all standards go by the board... [One becomes] aware of the necessity of putting up a fight to preserve the noble qualities of balance, rhythm, harmony, and reverence for simple majesty that have been for three centuries the glory of our written tongue..." (Deming 191). Compared with Iser's liberal response, Mais' review seems reactionary, and one might point to this difference as an indication of how much progress Joycean criticism has made in sixty years. Yet, upon closer inspection, the two views seem not so different after all. Mais' reader fights to maintain the "simple majesty" and "harmony" of the mother tongue, while Iser's reader struggles to create her own meaning by logically and self-reflexively assimilating indeterminancies. Both responses attempt to transcend the discourse of the Other, the Other being specifically the opaque, the chaotic, the a-logical *Ulysses*. And, more broadly, the discourse of the Other is the unconscious.

With the help of post-structural theories, I want to push Iser's conclusions further, showing how *Ulysses* puts
the reading subject on trial and prevents the subject from assuming a stable position of dominance. The disruption of the subject's stasis is the key to the revolutionary potential of Joyce's late works, and it is this disruption that threatens the interpretations of literary critics as reading subjects.

In assuming a position of dominance in relation to a text that disallows such a position, a literary critic necessarily produces a skewed or at least an incomplete reading. One of the recurring concepts in *Ulysses* is the parallax effect, an effect that can be applied fruitfully to critical interpretations. Simply put, parallax is the difference in views of a fixed object perceived from different reference points. In terms of literary interpretations, we have the parallax of different interpretations of a text from various critical positions. But what happens when the object, instead of being fixed, is perpetually changing and moving? To maintain the same angle of vision, or, indeed, any angle of vision, the observer/critic must move constantly to different points of reference. In this inversion of the parallax effect, the observer, rather than the object, gets displaced. The full extent of their displacement as reading subjects is a matter that very few critics choose to incorporate into their interpretations of *Ulysses*. 
To chart the extent of this displacement, I will focus on various forms of disruption at work in "Aeolus," "The Sirens," "The Cyclops," "The Oxen of the Sun," "Eumaeus, Ithaca," and "Penelope." Caught up in each of these chapters and in the interplay between and among them, the reader experiences himself or herself as a perpetually conflicted subject (conscious/unconscious), unable to occupy the transcendent position that Goldberg's, Kenner's, Shechner's and Iser's reader implies.

In the six chapters that precede "Aeolus," the consciousness of Stephen and then of Bloom provide the focus. Although Stephen's discourse includes the voices of Aristotle, Shakespeare, and others, the reader comes to recognize Stephen's as a distinct voice. The same holds true for Bloom, his voice a heteroglossia of such voices as advertising and popular science, yet still a voice we perceive as Bloom's. But in "Aeolus," there is no such focus, Stephen and Bloom having become peripheral characters in the chapter. In moving Stephen and Bloom to peripheral positions, Joyce begins to undermine the coherence of the narrative, a coherence (of the classic realist text) that grants the reader a position outside and above the text. The primary grammatical device of this chapter is parataxis, the juxtaposition of discourse
fragments. Here, the reader encounters a random mixture of dialogue, direct and indirect quotations, first-person narration, interior monologue, and omniscient reporting. Suddenly, in the midst of dialogue among the characters, the narrator (or one of the narrators) turns not to the reader but to someone else "outside" with whom he engages in his own dialogue. Commenting on Myles Crawford's mouth, the speaker says to the other: "Would anyone wish that mouth for a kiss? How do you know? Why did you write it then?" (133). The succession of questions implies that someone outside the frame is answering the narrator or that perhaps the narrator is talking delusively to himself. These questions become all the more puzzling when the reader compares them with the straight, reportorial narrative comment that directly precedes them: "His mouth continued to twitch unspeaking in nervous curls of disdain." It is as if the narrator comments on his own reporting, or perhaps the comment comes from a voice speaking to the narrator about his reporting. In any event, the slippage does not stop there. Immediately after the questions, a narrator—but now, the reader is not sure which narrator—indulges first in childish rhymes and then in purple prose. At other points in "Aeolus," the narrative intrusions are worded in styles that are, by turns, fatuously elegant and bluntly
proletarian. The reader, accustomed to relying on the narrator to establish a fixed position for the subject, finds no such guide in this chapter.

The outward form of "Aeolus" offers no help to the reader either. Although the headlines divide the chapter into small segments, these captions tell us little about the text that follows them. Often, they interrupt the dialogue, simply picking out a character's word or phrase. The tone of the captions varies from simple reporting ("RETURN OF BLOOM") to humorous comment on the dialogue ("DIMINISHED DIGITS PROVE TOO TITILLATING FOR FRISKY FRUMPS"). Normally, headlines act as guides for the reader, but these fragment and impede the narrative, forcing the reader to see them as the material representation of language, as matter separated from meaning.

In Of Grammatology, Jacques Derrida discusses the ways that philosophy has privileged the spoken word over the written word. The immediacy of the spoken word links it directly to a single consciousness. The spoken word effaces the signifier, but the written word makes such effacement impossible, because in the written word, the signifier is recorded and then subject to change through the effects of time and space. MacCabe points out that the "materiality of language constantly insists on . . .
what is insistently repressed in our society[...]. . . . the separation between speech (or writing) and consciousness. This separation can be understood as the gap between the act of saying and what is said (15).

The materiality of language becomes especially apparent when Joyce focuses on rhetoric. "Aeolus" is a bladder full of hot air. As highblown prose, rhetoric calls attention to language and shifts attention away from the referent of language. The words and phrases themselves take on the primary importance. As a system of tropes, rhetoric features words in other than their literal sense, further distancing the signifier from the signified. Most critics agree that Joyce condemns the paralysis of both journalistic and nationalistic rhetoric. Such discourses are extremely formulaic, exhibiting what Roland Barthes calls the "reification of topics" ("L'ancienne" 207). Along with Joyce's ironic intentions in regard to rhetoric, "Aeolus" makes clear the fundamental problem of Saussure's theory of language. On the one hand, Saussure says that language is a differential structure, with each element being defined only by its difference from others; on the other hand, he says that language is communication through shared symbols. Comparable to this conflict, we have rhetoric as a system of tropes and rhetoric as a performative or
speech-act function. In "The Resistance to Theory," Paul de Man demonstrates how the rhetorical (i.e., figural) function of language undermines the cognitive function of language. Although cognition aims toward pure, finalized meaning, the rhetorical dimension of language makes impossible this purity (McGee 675). These conflicts are all versions of the same tension, the gap between signifier and signified. The gap represents the impossibility of the subject’s full access to meaning, an impossibility—inscribed in language—that reveals a divided subjectivity. Struggling to make his way to the meaning through the gales and gusts of language in "Aeolus," the reader need not be a Lacanian theorist to experience the failure of language to represent meaning (truth). Through this unsettling experience, the reader finds no home, no dominant and secure position within language.

Certainly, "The Sirens" makes the material effect of language even more apparent than does "Aeolus." One need only read the first "sentence" to be struck by language as sound separated from sense: "Bronze by gold heard the hoofirons, steely ringing Imperthnthn thnthn."

Following the first line are two more pages of fragmented lines, one after another but each disconnected from the ones around it. All of these lines recur in contexts
throughout the chapter, but, until then, the meaning is deferred by interpolation, the lines originating as floating, musical signifiers. Julia Kristeva describes literature as "rhythm made intelligible by syntax" (Revolution 30), syntactical order not governing the rhythm but acting, instead, as its vehicle. In "The Sirens," rhythm takes precedence over syntax. Joyce unbinds syntactical constructions: rearranging words, omitting words, creating words. But once unbound, words float loose from meaning, because the meaning that words possess comes from their position in relation to other words that surround them. In reading the sentence "Sweet tea Miss Kennedy having poured with milk plugged both two ear with little fingers" (248), the reader might initially establish the following rhythm: "Sweet tea--Miss Kennedy/having poured with--milk plugged/both two ear--with little fingers." This rhythm has little do do with chunks of meaning, rather it picks up the six beats (2+4) of the first chunk and distinguishes six beats that form a mirror effect (4+2) in the next chunk, followed by eight discordant beats that finish off the sentence. The reader will have to reread the sentence in an attempt to pin down the meaning. By making us reread, "The Sirens forces our attention on the activity of reading, which we can no longer claim is the consumption of a unity but must
recognize as the constant movement of division" (MacCabe 80-81).

I referred earlier to the tendency of the spoken word to efface the signifier. But, in "The Sirens," Bloom—as de-composer—reinstates the signifier by explaining the voice in terms of difference through time and space (MacCabe 83): "The human voice, two tiny silk chords. . . . It's in the silence you feel you hear. Vibrations. Now silent air" (265). Bloom also points to the deferred moment in music: "Want to listen sharp. Hard. Begin all right: then hear chords a bit off: feel lost a bit. In and out of sacks over barrels, through wirefences, obstacle race. Time makes the tune" (266-267). The recurring images of the chapter reinforce the notion of temporal and spatial deferment: the ear, the shell, and the cave, all labyrinthine; the mirrors, which capture the reflection of the barmaids looking at themselves as well as the reflection of the men watching the barmaids gazing at themselves (while the reader watches the men who watch the barmaids who . . . ).

It is true that "The Sirens" materializes the spoken voice, thus distancing words from consciousness, but this is not the only way that the chapter indicates the divided subject. Through the rhetorical economy peculiar to music and to poetic language, Joyce enables the reader to
Perceive meaning in ways other than the semantic/the logical. As Kristeva claims in "The System and the Speaking Subject," to cling to the (dated) conception of meaning as determined solely by a "logico-mathematical" system is to cling to the notion of a "transcendental ego, cut off from its body, its unconscious, and also its history." Poetic language, music, dancing, painting, all make use of the heterogeneity of experience that exceeds a symbolic code that can no longer contain its subject. The rhetoric of Joyce's musical poetic language includes the syntactic and verbal abbreviations to which I have already alluded as well as affective rhythms and sound combinations, all of which allow for a meaning or a sense that is in excess of the meaning dictated by grammatical rules. Anthony Burgess observes that the phatic is an important element in Joyce's rhetoric; Joyce uses "peripheral or totally extra-linguistic signs which . . . are legitimate modes of communication" (24). The musicality of Joyce's forms and language extends the rhetorical field far beyond the cognitive dimension.

When Joyce writes "Bald deaf Pat brought quite flat pad ink. Pat set with ink pen quite flat pad. Pat took plate dish knife fork. Pat went." (267), he reflects qualities of the deaf waiter that are inscribed not in the meaning of the words as much as in the rhythm of the
sounds. Because Pat cannot hear, he must read lips; for
him, speech is always materialized, the signifier never
effaced (MacCabe 84). Joyce’s monosyllabic string of
words materializes or breaks up the elements of the
sentence in just the way that Pat perceives them. In
addition, the repetition within the string of
monosyllables conveys Pat’s solicitous and mechanically
efficient manner; he is, indeed, “deaf Pat, bald Pat,
tipped Pat” (272).

And then we have God’s gift to women, Blazes Boylan,
wonderfully described and satirized in a brief passage:
"Jog jig jogged stopped. Dandy tan shoe of dandy Boylan
socks skyblue clocks came light to earth" (270). The
alliteration, assonance, and rhythm tell the reader much
more than the mere words can. The reader not only can
visualize the scene, she can feel the rhythm of Boylan’s
jaunty carriage and feel Boylan’s cocksure (pun intended)
energy as well. Also, in the rhythm and sounds, the
reader can hear the narrator’s mockery of Boylan. At
another point in the chapter, there is a remarkable pas-
sage of synaesthesia that describes Boylan visually,
aurally, tactiley, and kinesthetically: "By Bachelor’s
walk jogjaunty jingled Blazes Boylan, bachelor, in sun, in
heat, mare’s glossy rump atrot, with flick of whip, on
bounding tyres: sprawled, warmseated, Boylan impatience,
ardentbold. Horn. Have you the? Horn. Have you the? Haw haw horn" (258). Shechner has remarked that the lines reveal Boylan as the horn/phallus who is opposed to Bloom the flute/anus. In any event, the passage sounds like a trumpet player's description of Boylan: fast, brassy, brash, hot. The trumpeter finishes off the piece with the flourish "Horn. Have you the? Horn. Have you the? Haw haw horn."

Another example of Joyce's effective poetic rhetoric is in the narrator's one-sentence description of Miss Douce--after she has performed her "Sonnez-la-cloche" routine: "She smilesmirked supercilious (wept! aren't men?) but, lightward gliding, mild she smiled on Boylan" (255). Phonetically, the preponderance of s's and l's as well as the assonance of long i's convey a snake-like hissing and gliding, qualities appropriate for the fetish-temptress Lydia Douce. Only the parenthetical words fail to fit the pattern, and they seem to point to Lydia's resentment at being the mirror of these men's desires. She is a woman who plays a role and knows she plays a role.

The most sensual paragraph of "The Sirens" features Lydia "leave-it-to-my-hands" Douce at the beerpull. In this passage, the reader hears some of the same sounds as in the Lydia passage above:
On the smooth jutting beerpull laid Lydia hand lightly, plumply, leave it to my hands. All lost in pity for croppy. Fro, to: to, fro: over the polished knob (she knows his eyes, my eyes, her eyes) her thumb and finger passed in pity; passed, repassed and, gently touching, then slid so smoothly, slowly down, a cool firm white enamel baton protruding through their sliding ring. (274)

The beerpull is "smooth" and "jutting," and the phonetic combination of plosives and u and oo vowel sounds reflects the anatomy of the penis, that "firm white enamel baton." In addition to the phonetic aspect of the description, the reader feels the sensuality of the scene in the rhythm of the phrases "Fro, to: to, fro . . . his eyes, my eyes, her eyes . . . her thumb and finger passed in pity: passed, repassed. . . ."

On the thematic level, this passage—with all of its voyeurism—anticipates Bloom's voyeurism and masturbation in "Nausicaa." Both chapters focus on narcissism, considering a subject's refusal to acknowledge the sexuality or desire of the Other, and in this refusal to recognize the Other, comes an arresting of signifiers.

Once again, we encounter the neurotic response, which refuses to acknowledge difference, absence, and loss.

Fritz Senn has said that with the publication of each serial chapter of Ulysses, Joyce lost a trusted reader and/or a good friend. After the publication of "The Sirens," Ezra Pound left the fold. In June of 1919, he
sent Joyce a letter protesting the linguistic experimentation and Bloom's fart at the end of the chapter. Pound claims a "gallic preference for Phallus--purely personal--know mittel europa humor runs to other orifice--But don't think you will strengthen your impact by that particular" (MacCabe 170 n.). Long before Lacan, Pound links the authority of the phallus to the dominant discourse. Furthermore, he disapproves of Joyce's relinquishing the strong impact of the phallic discourse. Despite Pound's extensive interweaving of languages and voices in the Cantos, one senses the semantic/cognitive control throughout. In "The Sirens," Joyce rejects the rhetorical economy of the dominant discourse in favor of a musical excess of signifiers. And this excess is what Pound could not abide.

As in the case with "Aeolus," "The Cyclops" contains heterogeneous discourses. Parodic interpolations interrupt the would-be secure patriarchal discourse of the nameless first-person narrator. These counter-texts, though related metonymically to the narrator's text undermine his narrative and distract the reader. The interruptions--which include biblical, mystical, parliamentary, scientific, and other discourses--vary rhetorically and stylistically. One thing that they all have in common is that, while being self-parodic, they
also make clear the crudeness of the language spoken by
the narrator, the citizen, and the other Irish pubgoers.
The hyperbole of the intrusions—many of them long lists,
overflowing with abundance—juxtaposed to the meanness of
the narrator’s and the characters’ observations creates
much of the antagonism that exists in this chapter. The
following paired descriptions provide the sort of tension
that characterizes "The Cyclops," the first paragraph
being Alf Bergan’s description of a boxing match and the
second being a description of the same event by that
narrative presence whom David Hayman has called "The
Arranger":

--Myler dusted the floor with him, says Alf.
Heenan and Sayers was only a bloody fool to
it. Handed him the father and mother of a
beating. See the little kipper not up to his
navel and the big fellow swiping. God, he gave
him one last puck in the wind. Queensberry
rules and all, made him puke what he never ate.

It was a historic and hefty battle when Myler
and Percy were scheduled to don the glove for
the purse of fifty sovereigns. Handicapped as
he was by lack of poundage, Dublin’s pet lamb
made up for it by superlative skill in
ringcraft. The final bout of fireworks was
gruelling for both champions. . . . The
Englishman, whose right eye was nearly closed,
took his corner where he was liberally drenched
with water and, when the bell went, came on
gamey and brimful of pluck, confident of
knocking out the fistic Eblanite in jigtine. It
was a fight to a finish and the best man for it.
(304-305)
Such antagonistic discourses demonstrate how the heterogeneity of language undermines the authority of a language that would claim itself to be univocal and unilogical, i.e., one-eyed like the Cyclops.

Closely related to the heterogeneity of the discourses in "The Cyclops" is the instability of the irony. The interpolated texts level irony not only at the narrator and the citizen but at Bloom as well. Because these various texts differ so much from each other, they reflect ironically on each other also. Describing Joyce's irony, Stephen Heath says that it "knows no fixity, and its critique is not moral," rather it is "a perpetual displacement of sense in a play of forms without resolution" (qtd. in Attridge and Ferrer 36). This irony, which Heath calls self-reflexive, differs significantly from traditional fixed irony, which critiques positions that diverge from it. Wayne Booth might argue that the irony in this chapter is more controlled than it appears to be at first glance, for Bloom's discourse on love and humanity is rather protected. But I would argue that the seeming protection early in the chapter makes the ironic treatment of Bloom at the end all the more unsettling for the reader.

In "The Cyclops," Irish nationalism, like all versions of nationalism, is xenophobic and paranoiac.
Intent on naming and defining (and, thus, controlling), the Irish nationalists create an identity for the slippery Bloom, an identity that the intrusions subvert by fracturing it into different names (e.g., Herr Professor Luitpold Blumenduft, Uncle Leo, Nagyasagos ural Lipoti Virag, O’Bloom) and by exaggerating it to the point of ridiculousness. The complicated effect of this chapter is that Bloom becomes the Other—the Jew—of the Irish pubgoers’ definition. The last paragraph of the chapter, which features Bloom’s ascension to heaven, parodies this role that Bloom has assumed:

And they beheld Him in the chariot, clothed upon in the glory of the brightness, having raiment as of the sun, fair as the moon and terrible that for awe they durst not look upon Him. And there came a voice out of heaven, calling: Elijah! Elijah! And he answered with a main cry: Abba! Adonai! And they beheld Him even Him, ben Bloom Elijah, amid clouds of angels ascend to the glory of the brightness at an angle of fortyfive degrees over Donohoe’s in Little Green Street like a shot off a shovel.

(329)

So the irony of "The Cyclops" is not conventionally stable. With the objectification of Bloom, the reader unaccustomed to such treatment of a novel’s protagonist experiences a jolt.

The unstable irony and the mixture of discourses create numerous centers of consciousness within the chapter. No hierarchy of discourses exists. Without such
a hierarchy, the chapter refuses to provide the reader with the secure subject position that the implied reader of classic realism occupies. A classic realist text, such as George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, assumes a meta-language outside and above other discourses in the text, a meta-language that is excluded from the interpretation to which the other discourses are subject. MacCabe defines meta-language as the "narrative discourse [that] functions simply as a window on reality" (15). A meta-language refuses "to admit its own materiality" (14), refuses to admit that, like all other discourses, it too is based on what Saussure described as a system of differences and is not a transparent medium to the world. A meta-language denies the distance/difference between the signifier and the signified. In claiming that there is a truth and a reality outside of language that can be conveyed in language, the classic realist text must establish a hierarchy of discourses that allows the reader to assume a dominant (transcendent) discourse--and, thus, a dominant subject position. In *Middlemarch*, the reader shares the narrator's meta-language; however, in "The Cyclops," no such sharing occurs, because no overriding meta-language exists.

The reader of *Middlemarch* occupies a transcendent subject position in relation to the discourses of the
characters in the novel, but in this position no
heterogeneity of subjectivity is possible. Kristeva
points out that

[The addressee of metalanguage is made in
the image of its "we"—an indifferent subject,
supposedly everyone, since symbolic
systematicity eliminated heterogeneity by
eliminating the negative and unfolds, purporting
to be transparent, eternally communicable,
omnivalent. The addressee is thus an
undifferentiated totality which is not in
process; the addressee . . . has become a mere
term, an element of the system with which it is
identified because it has no existence as a
subject apart from the system. (Revolution 95)

Joyce liberates the reader from a meta-language that
renders her an anonymous, collective subject, like the
nameless narrator, the nameless narratee, and the nameless
citizen of this chapter.

About "The Oxen of the Sun," David Hayman observes
that "[t]he reader becomes the object of the text's
activity, and the engagement is with the text as
experience, while the protagonists’ predicaments are
rendered universal by the style" (133). In this chapter,
as in "Aeolus," parataxis determines the construction.
Joyce juxtaposes descriptive passages written in different
styles reflecting a succession of historical periods of
English literature. The reader, beginning in Latinate
English and ending in a welter of contemporary Irish
slang, finds it a challenge to distinguish the narrative
strands through centuries of changing styles. Joyce attempts to represent the processes of gestation and birth through the evolution of language; in so doing, he makes evident the materiality of the signifier, the material presence of language, changing with temporal shifts. And because the diverse styles tell the same story, the significance of the story falls away, causing the reader to focus on the language itself. In the classic realist text, language tries to disguise itself as a transparent medium to reality, as a mere connection between the full presence of the subject and of the object (MacCabe 99), but in "The Oxen of the Sun," no such disguise of innocence is allowed. Although Joyce could have made the material presence of language a bit less obvious by engineering a smooth evolution of styles, he chose, instead, to use abrupt changes and to insert anachronisms throughout.

The language of "Oxen" moves through numerous periods of style, but the chapter does not allow much narrative progression. The reader begins to sense that he has been wrong to expect or to hope for any real union of Bloom and Stephen in a father-son relationship. The language of this chapter, as well as the language of "Eumaeus" and "Ithaca," draws attention to itself and deflates the potential for dramatic narrative action. The cumulative
effect of these chapters denies the reader the main appeal of classic realism: the enjoyment of the play/movement in the narrative middle, with the knowledge that stasis will return in the resolution (MacCabe 45).

Peter Brooks, who sees Freud's model of psychic functioning described in Beyond the Pleasure Principle as a narrative masterplot, would explain the dynamics of these chapters in terms of binding. The narrative middle stages a binding of textual energy "to make [the narrative's] final discharge more effective" (Reading 108). The binding involves repetition and recursiveness, which postpone and thus intensify the final pleasure of closure. Brooks contends that Joyce's novels "plot with bad conscience" (113), and presumably, he would conclude that chapters such as "Oxen" fail to provide the significant repetitions necessary to cause the deviant-but-forward movement of the narrative and that Ulysses comes unbound in the middle, its energy spilling out in many directions. Extending Brooks' notion of the "erotics of form" ("Psychoanalytic" 348), I would say that in those chapters that most obviously feature experiments with language, Joyce gets caught up in foreplay and purposely avoids the linear path ending in climax.

Related to the diffuse structure of "Oxen" is the theme of blasphemy committed against fertility; at one
point, a narrative voice calls this blasphemy "[copulation without population." Throughout the chapter, there are allusions to the brilliant-but-empty conversations of Stephen, Mulligan, and the other revelers. Joyce himself commits blasphemy against artistic creation by giving us parodies of his literary "fathers," and he also acts irreverently toward artistic fertility by using sterile renditions of past styles to tell a tale of the present.

In "Lexicon Rhetoricae," Kenneth Burke says, "Form in literature is an arousing and fulfillment of [the reader's] desires" (Counter-Statement 124). "Form is 'correct' insofar as it gratifies the needs which it creates" (138). During the reading process, "the anticipation and gratifications of progressive and repetitive form arise" while "the expectations of conventional form may be anterior to the reading" (126). Burke locates desire in both the reader's expectations that the textual form excites and in the anticipations that the reader has built from formal conventions. According to Burke's terms, "The Oxen of the Sun" leaves the reader's desires largely unsatisfied on both counts. As a whole, Ulysses avoids gratifying those narrative needs that it begins by creating. In this way, the novel is a negative dialectic, keeping alive the novel as a
genre, while negating its possibility with each successive chapter.

In desire, which is caused by the conditions of loss and absence, the reader experiences himself as a divided subject—nothing like the self-sufficient, unified Cartesian subject that classic realism implies. Highlighting the reader's misplaced assumptions and false expectations, Ulysses undermines the notion of a masterful subject. Along with the desire created by Joyce's refusal to adhere to conventional narrative form is the desire that results from the reader's inability to attain temporal transcendence. The last ten paragraphs of "The Oxen of the Sun" feature a drunken cacophony of dialects and registers. Despite the fact that these paragraphs are composed in contemporary English, they grant no privilege in meaning (MacCabe 127). Though situated in the present, they offer no clearer representation of the scene than do the preceding paragraphs written in past prose styles.

The narrator of "Eumaeus" fits perfectly Kristeva's description of the addressee of a meta-language: "an undifferentiated totality" and an "element of the system" that has created it (Revolution 95). This narrator speaks in a voice composed entirely of the discourses of other voices. He uses only the empty, clichéd language of the
tribe, denying life to the chapter and rendering the
characters as flat types.

Classic realism often features a narrator who deals
in aphorisms and generalizations that encourage the
reader's assent and corroboration in the narrative. In
this way, the reader can not only share the narrator's
meta-language but take up the position of the narratee as
well. However, the reader of "Eumaeus" finds it very
difficult to assume the narratee's position, for the
narrator is a failed rhetorician. The narrator has no
sense of audience. Or, perhaps, he is too conscious of an
audience. Attempting to fully communicate his story in
impressive fashion, he excessively pads and qualifies his
statements, repeats himself unnecessarily, uses affectedly
formal language, and parenthetically translates the
pronouns into proper nouns:

Accordingly, after a few such preliminaries,
as, in spite of his having fogotten to take up
his rather soapsuddy hankerchief after it had
done yeoman service in the shaving line,
brushing, they both walked together along Beaver
street, or, more properly, lane, as far as the
farrier's. . . . (517-518)

Adjacent to the men's public urinal he perceived
an icecream car round which a group of
presumably Italians in heated altercation were
going rid of voluble expressions in their
vivacious language in a particularly animated
way. . . . (525)

Mr. Bloom thoroughly acquiesced in the general
gist of this though the mystical finesse
involved was a bit out of his sublunary depth
still he felt bound to enter a demurrer on the
head of simple. . . . (537)

Caught up in compulsive digressions, the narrator often
seems to be performing for himself.

This narrator constantly alludes to different names
for the same thing. The reader senses his paranoia in the
face of the slipperiness of language. Shechner's term
"defensive orality" aptly describes the narrator's
compulsion to control language. He seeks to subdue
language into exactly conveying his thoughts, and he ends
by stifling it under layers and layers of verbiage. The
language of "Eumaeus" resembles not at all the rich
dialogic language that Mikhail Bakhtin attributes to the
genre of the novel ("Discourse in the Novel"). Yet in the
narrator's efforts to still language (thus, killing the
Other and desire), we perceive a struggle. So it is not
entirely true that "Eumaeus" is composed of dead language,
for the movement of language becomes latently apparent in
the narrator's attempts to repress the movement.

Once again, the reader encounters a chapter that
offers no real guidance from the narrator. In fact,
"Eumaeus" is an example of omniscient narration run amok.
A plethora of unimportant details and the ponderous
presence of an intrusive narrative voice fabricated from
dead commonplaces prevents the reader from focusing on the
characters and the action. As is the case with "Aeolus," one searches through the verbal detritus for the narrative strands. The reader perceives language as a material presence filling up space and taking up time. The narrator relies on clichés, signifiers that move farther away from the signified with each successive use. At one point in the chapter, Stephen says to Bloom, "Sounds are impostures" (526), and the narrator dramatizes this observation by stuffing his narrative with empty words.

"The Cyclops," "The Oxen of the Sun," and "Eumaeus" all stage clashes of discourses, substituting linguistic action (or, in the case of "Eumaeus," inaction) for narrative action. By the time the reader gets to "Eumaeus," she recognizes that the potential for drama has been collapsed; the Stephen-Bloom plot fails to progress, becoming instead an anti-plot. Bloom moves to the periphery in "Aeolus," begins to be objectified in "The Cyclops," and in "Eumaeus" comes to be identified with the narrator, who makes Bloom speak the same impoverished language as himself. Indeed, Kenner says that "Eumaeus is Bloom's reward for being the hero of the novel," an episode written in his own voice (Joyce's Voices 35).

Having said all of this about the rhetoric of the chapter, let me now slightly subvert my analysis by taking up Kenner's suggestion as an ironic reading that changes
the narrator from an inept rhetorician to a clever mimic of Bloom. The reader who perceives the irony becomes the ideal narrative audience, and this sharing of irony diminishes the challenge to the reading subject's position. Yet the issue of whether or not the narrator is being ironic finally matters much less than what is happening to Bloom and the narrative: Bloom suffers by association with the narrative voice in "Eumaeus," his character becoming increasingly more diffuse. The microscoping-telescoping effect of "Ithaca" further disperses his character; one loses sight of Bloom in the morass of detail.

Although Joyce considered "Ithaca" to be the end of the narrative, it exhibits no conventional narrative closure. Senn has observed that the black sphere that marks the end of the chapter is a "grotesquely hyperbolized" period (qtd. in Riquelme 103). Without a resolution to provide a point of departure from the narrative, the reader faces an endless play of signifiers and can find no secure position outside of language. Unless the reader is as skilled at ironic reading as Kenner, she will surely feel unsettled by the incertitude of the characterization and the narrative structure, for the resolution of a classic realist text involves not only cognitive closure but some sense of emotional completeness.
as well. If the reader is to attain emotional stasis at the end of "Ithaca," she must work to provide it on her own.

"Ithaca" includes an incredible amount of detail, much of it scientific or philosophic minutiae. One is reminded here of Virginia Woolf's complaint in "Modern Fiction" about the realists who labored to describe everything in a scene but failed to convey the essence of life. In this chapter, Joyce levels irony at the omniscience of nineteenth-century fiction. According to Lacan's definition of the real, realist fiction avoids reality, in so far as the term reality, if it refers to anything at all, refers to the limited ability of language to represent experience. Lacan calls the real the "missed encounter," the awareness that language functions referentially but that it is not to be identified with the real (McGee 675).

The reader's missed encounter with Bloom dramatizes Lacan's definition of reality. Despite all of the quantitative, analytical, "scientific" information in this chapter, Joyce provides no cognitive security for the reader.

In addition to the ironic treatment of fictional omniscience, Joyce seems to treat ironically his own encyclopedic tendency, a tendency that post-structuralist
criticism would connect with desire. In the face of lack, one musters symbols to fill the gap. To describe what is infinitely complex and finally indescribable, one uses more and more details. Seeking to master the void of incertitude, one piles fact upon fact (and, here, one is reminded of Kenner's treatment of the novel). Yet the abundance of facts in "Ithaca" only serves to point to the endless number of facts that have been displaced. Desire for certitude leads to the discovery of the impossibility of achieving certitude. And, thus, in an endless circle, desire breeds desire.

The image of Penelope's weaving her tapestry during the day and then unraveling it every night makes a perfect symbol for the structure of Joyce's "Penelope." The chapter is loose, unclosed, recursive, and full of contradictions—perhaps the best example of a negative dialectical chapter in a novel that, as a whole, is a negative dialectic. In describing "The Oxen of the Sun," I referred to its refusal to provide the reader with temporal transcendence. Similarly, "Penelope" offers the reader no transcendent present to act as a secure vantage point from which to judge the past and to control it. The present of Molly's soliloquy becomes a place for past situations to flow together elliptically, unmoored from their causal contexts; these past occurrences are not
fixed, rather they take on new possibilities in Molly’s memory of them (Iser 224). Spiraling from one yes to another in the chapter, the reader senses that some of the yeses are actually nos and that the next time around the nos might be yeses.

. . . I hope that lamp is not smoking fill my nose up with smuts better than having him leaving the gas on all night I couldn’t rest easy in my bed in Gibraltar even getting up to see why am I so damned nervous about that though I like it in the winter its more company O Lord it was rotten cold too that winter when I was only about ten was I yes I had the big doll with all the funny clothes dressing her up and undressing that icy wind skeeting across from those mountains the something Nevada sierra nevada standing at the fire with a little bit of a short shift I had up to heat myself I loved dancing about in it then make a race back into bed Im sure that fellow opposite used to be there the whole time watching with the lights out in the summer and I in my skin hopping around I used to love myself then stripped at the washstand dabbing and creaming only when it came to the chamber performance I put out the light too so then there were 2 of us Goodbye to my sleep for this night anyhow I hope hes not going to get in with those medicals leading him astray to imagine hes young again coming in at 4 in the morning it must be if not more . . . . then he starts giving us his orders for eggs and tea Findon haddy and hot buttered toast I suppose well have him sitting up like the king of the country pumping the wrong end of the spoon up and down in his egg wherever he learned that from and I love to hear him falling up the stairs of a morning with the cups rattling on the tray . . . I think Ill get a bit of fish tomorrow or today is it Friday yes. . . . (662-663)

Until the "Penelope" chapter, Molly’s voice is displaced. We hear other characters talking about her,
but we never encounter her as a speaking subject--a fact that explains, in part, why her soliloquy makes such a strong impression on most readers. Had Joyce not given her a voice, Molly would have remained a fetishistic object denied sexual desire in the same way that Gerty MacDowell, Misses Kennedy and Douce of the Ormond bar, and Mina Purefoy are denied their desires. In the above passage from the chapter, Molly describes the experience of masturbating while the "fellow opposite" watched, simultaneously being sexual subject and object; however, Lydia Douce and Gerty MacDowell serve as masturbatory objects only. Although there is a suggestion of Gerty's masturbatory, Bloom's masturbation, with Gerty as the focus of his voyeurism, overshadows this suggestion and renders her an object or, to be exact, a partial object, her bloomers and ankles the real erotic objects for Bloom.

Acting as a coda spoken in Molly's voice, "Penelope" both stands apart from and summarizes the entire novel. Earlier, I referred to Ulysses as the Other (in the Lacanian sense of the term)--chaotic, a-logical, exceeding grammatical bounds. So is Molly-Penelope the Other. Describing the stifling, omnipresent intention of the ruling discourse, Luce Irigaray calls it a narcissistic "quest for sameness" (132) that eradicates difference.
But woman, as the Other, "does not enter a discourse whose systematicity is based on her reduction into sameness" (152). "Her sex is heterogeneous to this whole economy of representation" (152). Coming after the monotonous "Eumaeus" and the homogeneous "Ithaca," "Penelope" sounds wildly heterogeneous—and, in Irigaray’s terms, feminine—mirroring the heterogeneity of Ulysses as a whole.

Unlike the classic realist novelist, who gives the reader a detailed but uniform picture and calls it reality, Joyce fractures "reality" into heterogeneous planes, presenting the reader with eighteen ways of looking at a blackbird. Similar to Wallace Stevens’ aesthetic, Joyce’s aesthetic stages a dialectical struggle between control and free play. In one sense, Stevens’ "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" and Joyce’s novel illustrate the power/control that the abstract artist has over objects. To fragment or deconstruct the object into angles, sides, and planes and then to represent all of these aspects on the same canvas is to be a creator of meaning, an artist-god. Then again, to fracture the object is to admit that it possesses a heretogeneity that no amount of fracturing can exhaust. As a cubist, Joyce complicates the notion of reality by giving the reader a sample of what gets displaced in fictional representation. Reading Molly’s monologue, one
senses that it could go on forever and that her character is uncontainable. Hearing Molly's voice, one becomes aware of all of the other voices displaced from the bounds of the narrative.

Having begun by seducing the reader who would apply generic conventions of the realist novel to *Ulysses*, Joyce ends by betraying this reader, denying him the "innocence" of classic realism. In so doing, Joyce displaces the reader from the transcendent but static position of the Cartesian subject. Unlike Homer's protagonist, the reader can never return to Ithaca, and even if he could, he would find his constant Penelope much changed.

I began this chapter by examining the ways in which critics protect their notions of the essential self from a text that calls into question those notions as well as the critical methods that they imply. I should end by at least briefly considering the post-structuralist position that I am working from and, no doubt, trying to protect. First of all, one might argue that my thesis naively rests upon the belief that there are still many readers clinging to the outmoded idea of the Cartesian subject. I included the discussion of Goldberg's, Kenner's, Shechner's, and Iser's methods to show that I am not being naive. Anyone who remains unconvinced need only do a survey of recent criticism on *Ulysses* to discover that most critical
arguments still work from the Cartesian notion of the "knowability"/decidability of reality and the notion of the reader's being discrete from that known reality. Of course, many critics nowadays would not admit to having such essentialist tendencies, but their methods and hidden assumptions give them away.

Certainly, modern and post-modern literature has trained some readers to be dialectical readers. Describing such readers, Fredric Jameson says, "it is the obscurity itself which is the object of [their] reading, and its specific quality and structure that which [they] attempt to define and to compare with other forms of verbal opacity" (Marxism and Form 341). Unlike naive readers who seek "to resolve the immediate difficulties back into the transparency of rational thought" (341), dialectically trained readers perceive "the substantiality of thought" as an "optical illusion" (57). The fact that there are such readers does not negate my thesis about the reading subject's displacement in Ulysses. The displacement affects all readers; it is just that for some the exile becomes an experience of liberation.
Peter Burger's *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Trans. Michael Shaw. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) offers an excellent definition and description of the avant-garde work of art as well as of the organic work. I think Burger's distinction between the two terms helps us to understand the problems that Goldberg has in maintaining that *Ulysses* is an organic work. Burger says, "The organic work of art seeks to make unrecognizable the fact that it has been made. The opposite holds true for the avant-gardiste work: it proclaims itself an artificial construct, an artifact. To this extent, montage may be considered the fundamental principle of avant-gardiste art. The 'fitted' (montierte) work calls attention to the fact that it is made up of reality fragments; it breaks through the appearance (shein) of totality" (72).

I would include Goldberg in that critical tradition of "holistic interpretation" that Steven Mailloux describes in *Interpretive Conventions: The Reader in the Study of American Fiction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982): "Most old and new critical approaches specify meanings that are spatial or holistic, whether they look for unities or myths, symbolic systems or allegorical messages, whether they find ethical, psychological, and political themes or generic, structural, and imagistic patterns." Such approaches ignore the reader's temporal reading experience, which involves his temporal adjustments and responses to the parts of the narrative. Holistic interpretation focuses only on the final holistic synthesis, completely overlooking the trials that the reader goes through to arrive at that point (68-71). In adhering to a holistic interpretation, Goldberg becomes a proponent of what Roland Barthes has called the "ideology of totality" (qtd. in Mailloux 68).

Robert Con Davis, in "Pedagogy, Lacan, and the Frueidian Subject" (*College English* 49 (November 1987): 749-55) locates the substantial Frued in *The Ego and the Id* (1923), *New Introductory Lectures* (1933), and *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (1940). The semiotic Freud is to
be found in "Project for a Scientific Project: (1895), Chapter VII of The Interpretation of Dreams, the letters to Fliess, Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious, and those meta-psychological works published before 1920.

This page number and all subsequent references to the text of Ulysses refer to the Book of the Month Club edition (New York, 1982) with 680 pages.

In Rhetoric, Romance and Technology, Walter Ong points out that the cliché is the modern counterpart of an oral formulary device. Indeed, on one level, the clichés in "Eumaeus" can be read as a parody of Homeric formulas.
Communication is health; communication is truth; communication is happiness.

--Virginia Woolf
"Montaigne"

We do not know our own souls, let alone the souls of others. Human beings do not go hand in hand the whole stretch of the way. There is a virgin forest in each; a snowfield where even the print of birds' feet is unknown. Here we go alone, and like it better so . . . always to be understood would be intolerable. But in health the genial pretence must be kept up and the effort renewed--to communicate, to civilize, to share . . . to work together by day and by night to sport. In illness this make-believe ceases.

--Virginia Woolf
"On Being Ill"

In dealing with the tension between sameness/unity and difference/separateness that characterizes Virginia Woolf's fiction, the reader finds herself caught in a wave. This reader encounters a text situated both inside and outside of time, moving ceaselessly forward and backward, gathering and forming only to spill into diffuse fragments. Even in the early, more conventional novels, such as *Jacob's Room*, Woolf disrupts the position of the
secure subject.¹ But it is the stylistic and formal experimentation in the later novels that submerges even the best of swimmers. I suspect that part of the reader's rhetorical involvement with a text comes from her involvement with previously read texts by the same author.² Not only do readers' desires and expectations of a literary text result from generic conventions but also from their experiences with its "sibling" texts. In this chapter, I will consider the ways that the reader of Mrs. Dalloway experiences displacement as she reads The Waves. The dialectic of sameness and difference involves the movement within The Waves as well as the movement between this novel and Mrs. Dalloway.

To make clear the positions that the reader moves between, I want to change the terms in the dialectic from sameness/unity and difference/separateness to neurosis and psychosis respectively, terms that reflect the psychological economy of the novels and of the reader. In navigating between these two positions, the reader comes to recognize that the similar dangers they pose prevent their being dichotomous categories. Like Stephen Dedalus in his meditations on the dangers symbolized by Scylla and Charybdis, the reader begins to recognize that a text (reader, writer, or novel) that becomes completely
neurotic or psychotic prevents the possibility of a rhetorical transaction.

Neurosis and psychosis represent different relationships among language, construction of meaning, and subject. And it is their differences that illuminate the displacement a reading subject experiences in moving between the two positions. The following chart indicates some of the distinguishing characteristics that adhere to the terms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neurosis</th>
<th>Psychosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narcissism</td>
<td>Schizophrenia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prose (syntax and grammar)</td>
<td>Poetry (rhythm and sound)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphor</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referential</td>
<td>Non-referential, phatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unity</td>
<td>Fragmentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mimesis of an ordered world</td>
<td>Mimesis of a chaotic mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusal to recognize the</td>
<td>It is the Other or cannot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>be disengaged from an</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>omnipotent Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signifier = signified</td>
<td>No signified, only signifier</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the last element of the chart shows, the end result of a full-blown neurosis or psychosis is that the subject creates discourses that ignore reality. Just as a pathologically paranoid reader would not experience the
displacement that I describe in my discussion of *Gravity's Rainbow*, so the reader of *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Waves* cannot be displaced if he is completely neurotic or psychotic. Indeed, communicating one's narrative to a delusional neurotic or psychotic would be like Rezia Smith's attempts to converse with Septimus. The displacements with which I am concerned involve the difference between the readers implied/invoked by *Mrs. Dalloway* and by *The Waves* and the conflict between the reader addressed by *The Waves* (that reader familiar with the earlier novel) and the reader invoked by *The Waves*.

Although it possesses many of the formal characteristics of high modern texts, *Mrs. Dalloway* also retains strong ties with the classic realist novel. J. Hillis Miller points out the traditional formal elements that this novel shares with earlier fiction, in particular, with Victorian fiction:

> [Interpersonal relations as a theme, the use of an omniscient narrator who is a collective mind rising from the copresence of many individual minds, indirect discourse as the means by which the narrator dwells within the minds of individual characters and registers what goes on there, temporality as a determining principle of theme and technique. (177)]

To the extent that *Mrs. Dalloway* upholds these formal conventions rather than undermines them, it is a novel more traditional than revolutionary. I have described as
neurotic the epistemological and ontological position of classic realism. There are ways in which Mrs. Dalloway is a neurotic text, involved in a narcissistic quest for unity and sameness. As a narcissistic text, this novel exhibits a longing for wholeness/completeness and for control over self and the world.

The narrative method of Mrs. Dalloway differs markedly from Joyce's method in Ulysses. Here, the reader has the benefit of a constant voice—a voice that seems to meld with the consciousness of each of the principal characters but reemerges at points throughout the narrative. In describing the "tunnelling process" that characterizes her method in this novel, Woolf says, "I dig out beautiful caves behind my characters: I think that gives exactly what I want; humanity, humour, depth. The idea is that the caves shall connect" (WD 59). The image of tunnelling conveys an apt spatial description of the narrator's particular kind of omniscience. The narrator occupies the space that characterizes the whole to which each person in the novel yearns to be connected. The reader, too, occupies this privileged space.

The novel features various kinds of narrative intrusion, ranging from subtle description to near-pontification. Describing Richard Dalloway, the narrator
chooses her adjectives and constructs her sentence in accordance with Richard's thoughts at that moment:

and prostitute, good Lord, the fault wasn't in them, nor in young men either, but in our detestable social system and so forth; all of which he considered, could be seen considering, grey, dogged, dapper, clean, as he walked across the Park to tell his wife that he loved her.

The narrator's perspective manifests itself more obviously in lengthy descriptive passages that analyze the characters, such as the one which concludes with the narrator's assessment of Septimus' experiences: "London has swallowed up many millions of young men called Smith; thought nothing of fantastic Christian names like Septimus with which their parents thought to distinguish them" (MD 127). Not limiting herself to description and detached commentary, the narrator launches into a lengthy, vigorous attack on proportion and conversion, the ideals worshipped by Sir William Bradshaw:

Worshipping proportion, Sir William not only prospered himself but made England prosper, secluded her lunatics, forbade children, penalised despair, made it impossible for the unfit to propagate their views until they, too, shared his sense of proportion. (MD 150)

[Conversion] feasts on the wills of the weakly, loving to impress, to impose, adoring her own features stamped on the face of the populace. At Hyde Park Corner on a tub she stands preaching; shrouds herself in white and walks penitentially disguised as brotherly love through factories and parliaments; offers help, but desires power. . . . (MD 151)
Perhaps the most striking instance of the narrator's full presence occurs during the three-page interlude of Peter Walsh as (snoring) solitary traveler, nestled in the breastfolds of sleep. Although the passage is peppered with "he thinks," the point of view is definitely the narrator's. At one point, the narrator gets caught up in alliteration and internal rhyme:

Such are the visions which proffer great cornucopias full of fruit to the solitary traveller, or murmur in his ear like sirens lolling away on the green sea waves, or are dashed in his face like bunches of roses, or rise to the surface like pale faces which fisherman flounder through floods to embrace. (MD 86)

Carried away by her own beautiful, lush language, the narrator temporarily leaves behind Peter Walsh. Howard Harper observes that in this lyrical passage, "[t]he narrative consciousness itself becomes free to dream, captivated by images typical of visionary moments in Virginia Woolf: sky, trees, breezes stirring the leaves, mermaids riding the waves . . . " (123).

The narrator's use of past tense—a convention that Woolf uses in much the same fashion as eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novelists (Miller 186)—creates distance between the narrator and the characters and establishes her position in language as a meta-discourse, effects that further demonstrate her omniscience.
Although it is true that temporal disruption occurs in *Mrs. Dalloway* at those points when Woolf collapses into an all-encompassing past tense what should logically be distinct pluperfect, past, and present tenses (Minow-Pinkney 56), one cannot get around the fact that the novel is framed in the past tense. Implied in the use of the literary past tense is the idea of the narrative as artifact, an object that is finished, complete, and discrete from the narrator. The combined effect of past tense and omniscient narration establishes a more privileged and detached position for the implied reader than would, for example, first-person narration written entirely in present tense. In permeating the consciousnesses of the characters, the narrator temporarily bridges the gap between herself and them, but the use of past tense complicates the notion of a union.

In three of the four passages that I cited above to illustrate narrative intrusion (the commentary on Septimus, the commentary on proportion and conversion, and the narrative of Peter Walsh as solitary traveler), the narrator uses present tense. It is at those moments when the narrator turns away from the story line that she uses the present tense, which is the tense of the meta-discourse that she shares with the reader. Although it is true that a story told in the literary present tense makes
use of what is a specious present that is actually a surrogate past tense (Miller 188; Chatman 83), the instances of present tense in the narrator's commentary differ in effect from a narrator's use of the literary present in plotting a story line. In present tense, the narrator of *Mrs. Dalloway* comments on the characters or on the situation, often offering up generalizations with which the addressed reader is invited to concur. If the reader agrees with the narrator's non-ironic generalizations, his reading resides within the meta-discourse of the novel. This meta-discourse is a neurotic text that dominates the other discourses within the narrative, believing that it has access to reality and refusing to admit that it is simply a language, subject to the same kinds of difference, lack, and absence that characterize other languages. Occupying the transcendent space that would constitute itself as the unity of all minds, but a space to which the characters have only fleeting access at best, the narrator of *Mrs. Dalloway* represents neurotic longing achieved.

The interanimation of unity and separateness that describes the narrator also applies to the characters. In a sense, there is really only one character: Clarissa Dalloway. Despite the extensive narrative space that Woolf devotes to both Peter Walsh and Septimus Warren
Smith, they end up being reflectors for Clarissa’s character, as do the minor characters.

The reader spends more time within Peter’s consciousness than within any of the other characters’ consciousnesses, yet the narrator does not probe as deeply into Peter’s thoughts as she does into Clarissa’s (Harper 123). Thinking back to the days at Bourton when he loved Clarissa but lost her to Richard Dalloway, Peter fills significant gaps in the reader’s knowledge of Clarissa’s past. Privy to Peter’s silent criticism of Clarissa, whom he repeatedly faults for being cold and wooden, the reader better understands Clarissa’s need to maintain a distance from Peter (and his pen knife). Hidden in the subtext of his constant complaining of women’s coldness is the fact that he is a man who neurotically refuses to acknowledge the desire of women: "[W]omen, he thought, shutting his pocket-knife, don’t know what passion is. They don’t know the meaning of it to men" (MD 121).

Lucrezia Smith serves as a reflector for Clarissa in that she is the kind of woman/wife who has capitulated to a man—like Peter Walsh—who demands that she give up everything to/for him and become only his appendage. Her sacrifice is necessary because Septimus cannot connect Rezia’s feelings to anything real within the narrow confines of his own egocentric reality (Harper 127).
The narrator delves as deeply into Septimus' consciousness as into Clarissa's. Especially intense and vivid are those scenes that render his madness—showing, as opposed to telling, the reader what psychotic reality looks, sounds, smells, tastes, and feels like:

The word "time" split its husk; poured it riches over him; and from his lips fell like shells, like shavings from a plane, without his making them, hard, white, imperishable, and flew to attach themselves to their places in an ode to Time; an immortal ode to time. He sang. Evans answered from behind the tree. The dead were in Thessaly, Evans sang, among the orchids. (MD 105)

Yet in those passages of the narrative that consider the stages that lead to Septimus' madness, the narrator distances herself from his consciousness to analyze the reasons for his insane behavior and eventual suicide (Harper 127).

One of these analytical sections occurs in the last part of the novel, when Clarissa is secluded in a small room away from her guests, pondering the death of this stranger, a death that the Bradshaws dared to talk of at her party. In Clarissa's identification with Septimus, the narrator explores the possible reasons for his suicide. Immediately, Clarissa feels Septimus' death through her body in an extraordinary description of "rusty spikes" penetrating him. I use the term extraordinary because Clarissa does not seem to be a person prone to
such physical intensity, and, except in her attraction to Sally Seton, she does not express sexual desire. But in these thoughts on death's embrace and on the young man who "plunged holding his treasure" (MD 281), there is much that is sensual. After considering the glory of death as the supreme act of defiance, Clarissa's thoughts move to the terror involved in living: "there was in the depths of her heart an awful fear" (MD 281). "But that young man . . . killed himself," while Clarissa stands disgraced, "forced to stand here in her evening dress" (MD 282). At the end of her speculation about Septimus' motives, Clarissa sums up the effects of what has become an epiphany for her:

But what an extraordinary night! She felt somehow very like him--the young man who had killed himself. She felt glad he had done it; thrown it away. The clock was striking. The leaden circles dissolved in the air. He made her feel the beauty; made her feel the fun. But she must go back. She must assemble. (MD 284)

Despite the several pages of ontological meditation, there is something spurious about this scene of Clarissa's identification with Septimus. The identification occurs too easily, and the experience concludes too quickly. Perhaps it is the sentence "But what an extraordinary night!" coupled with the lines "He . . . made her feel the fun. But she must go back." that convince me that Clarissa has not experienced genuine consciousness in this
scene. The exclamation mark and the words *extraordinary* and *fun* create almost a flippant tone. In the same way that her guests assemble only briefly into oneness and then disperse, taking the warmth with them (Miller 195), Clarissa experiences death in the rarefied form of a catharsis. Septimus dies so that Clarissa may live . . . to give more parties, as an offering of life to stave off death.

Gillian Beer points out that the connection between Septimus and Clarissa is "oblique and communal" and that the reader, familiar with the shadow-plots of earlier fiction, is disturbed by the "slightness and separation" of the two plot strands (85). But because Septimus acts as a psychotic version of Clarissa and because the narrator endorses Clarissa’s choice to live over Septimus’ choice to die, it makes sense that the plots remain only peripherally related. Both stories together combine in the communal story of the group consciousness.

The idea of the group mind represents the characters’, the narrator’s, and presumably Woolf’s own attempts to transcend the meaning of death. Having heard an ambulance bell (the ambulance carrying Septimus), Peter’s thoughts turn to life and death, and he remembers Clarissa’s theory about the impossibility of ever really knowing anyone or of ever being known:
to know Clarissa, or any one, one must seek out the people who completed them; even the places. Odd affinities she had with people she had never spoken to, some woman in the street, some man behind a counter—even trees, or barns. It ended in a transcendental theory which, with her horror of death, allowed her to believe, or say that she believed (for all her scepticism), that since our apparitions, the part of us that appears, are so momentary compared with the other, the unseen part of us, which spreads wide, the unseen might survive, be recovered somehow attached to this person or that, or even haunting certain places after death . . . perhaps—perhaps. (MD 231-232)

Familiar with Peter's criticism of Clarissa, we might be tempted to discount his observations about her "horror of death" and about her "transcendental theory" that made the idea of death something that she could live with. Yet the narrator uses Clarissa's transcendental theory to structure the story. Although most of the principal characters are strangers to each other, the narrator links them together to form a continuous narrative. The characters share communal symbols such as the old nurse and the singing crone, they share collective images such as the sky-writing airplane and the royal car with its blinds drawn, and the characters undergo uncannily similar experiences, revealed most notably in Clarissa's and Septimus' meditations.

The narrator has the characters share the same space, sometimes straining awkwardly for contiguity. Such
straining is obvious to the reader in the Regent’s Park scene when Peter laughs at the sight of a child running "full tilt" into a woman, the woman being Lucrezia Smith. Both Peter and Lucrezia use the term "full tilt" to describe the occurrence, so they are related not only by incident but by the language the narrator assigns to them in their separate descriptions of the incident. Later in the Regent’s Park scene, Peter sees Lucrezia and Septimus and wonders about them. Soon, however, his thoughts move to different impressions, and the couple--whom he thinks to be "lovers squabbling"--is diminished to a mere vivid detail in Peter’s panoramic view of London. This microscoping-telescoping technique actualizes Clarissa’s transcendental theory in the form of narrative structure. But the fact that Peter so obviously "misreads" the scene between Septimus and Lucrezia accentuates his distance/difference from them and points to the narrator’s contrived efforts to weave the strands of disparate plots into a unified piece. The narrator’s disclosure of difference and distance would seem to compromise her efforts to create unity and, thus, reflect ironically on Clarissa’s transcendental theory’s serving as a basis for the structure of the novel. Although the reader might perceive irony here, I do not think that Woolf intended it, for her own version of the transcendental theory,
which can be found in numerous diary entries and essays, manages to assimilate into a "harmonious whole" incompatibilities and contradictions such as the opposition between Peter's conception and the narrator's.

Woolf conveys a version of the transcendental theory in "A Letter to a Young Poet," offering advice to a writer that can be helpful to the reader of Mrs. Dalloway as well: "... let your rhythmical sense wind itself in and out among men and women, omnibuses, sparrows--whatever comes along the street--until it has strung them together in one harmonious whole." The task of the poet is "to find the relation between things that seem incompatible yet have a mysterious affinity" (qtd. in Beer 114n).

Seemingly incompatible with the notion of a transcendent unity is the fact that Septimus, a schizophrenic cut off from the rest of the world, is the character who has a profound affinity with external objects of nature. Septimus possesses the "rhythmical sense" necessary to make a good poet:

And the leaves being connected by millions of fibres with his own body... when the branch stretched he, too, made that statement. The sparrows fluttering, rising, and falling in jagged fountains were part of the pattern; the white and blue, barred with black branches. Sounds made harmonies with premeditation; the spaces between them were as significant as the sounds." (MD 32-33)
When Septimus declares the end of his marriage to Rezia, he cuts himself off completely from contact with other humans. From this point until his suicide, he assumes a Promethean role, acting as a god who translates for humankind the cryptic messages of the universe. "[M]acerated until only the nerve fibres [are] left" and lying "very high, on the back of the world," Septimus "interpret[s] with effort, with agony, to mankind," (MD 102-103). Knowing that she will drown if she stays submerged for too long in the consciousness of Septimus--"a drowned sailor on a rock"--the narrator draws back "to the shores of life" (MD 104). Assimilating Septimus' consciousness into the harmonious whole of the universe, the narrator counters his psychosis with her neurotic gesture.

Although the lack of "body totality" in the text of a schizophrenic means a dispersal-dissolution of the ego (Rosenbaum and Sonne 76-77), in Woolf's transcendental conception of reality, the ego is dispersed in the sense of disseminated, but not dissolved in the sense of terminated. The self's dispersal into a field of the harmonious whole avoids the death of the ego, a death that the neurotic must deny. I agree with Barbara Rigney's suggestion that possibly "Woolf does not see the mystical experience, insanity, or even death as a loss of self"
(58-59). In her epiphany, Clarissa expresses the belief that death is "defiance" and "an attempt to communicate." Furthermore, death allows persons to reach the center, the core, the essence "which, mystically evaded them" in life (MD 281).

Agreeing with R. D. Laing, Rigney points out that society dictates what is sane and insane, according to what behavior best supports its base of patriarchal power. The ruling ideology of late capitalism perpetuates alienation and fragmentation, encouraging a spurious self-determination. Laing has observed that for the schizophrenic "there is the rent in his relationship with the world, and . . . a disruption of his relationship with himself"; the schizophrenic "experiences himself in despairing aloneness and isolation" (qtd. in Rigney 47). Laing suggests that a descent into madness could be a therapeutic flight, a temporary withdrawal from the general sickness of this culture. Such a withdrawal, whether in the form of mysticism or madness, might enable a subject to maintain an identity opposed to the one (or the lack of one) that the power structure seeks to impose. I agree with this observation, but I would add that if the subject's withdrawal from society, i.e., from other persons, becomes obsessional and chronic, then there is the danger of a destructive and sterile narcissism, with
the subject's being cut off from the world. Obviously, at this point, "madness" ceases to be a cure.

The scene of Septimus' suicide exists in stark opposition to Clarissa's idealized conception of the young man who "plunged holding his treasure." Septimus, cool and logical, considers several suicide methods. Unwilling to sully "Mrs. Fillmer's nice clean bread knife," and unable to locate a razor, he decides to jump from the window:

There remained only the window, ... the tiresome, the troublesome, and rather melodramatic business of opening the window and throwing himself out. It was their idea of tragedy, ... Holmes and Bradshaw like that sort of thing, ... But he would wait till the very last moment. He did not want to die. Life was good. The sun hot. Only human beings--what did they want? (MD 226)

As his last thoughts indicate, Septimus is happy with life--the sun, the wind, the trees; it is human beings that make him jump out of a window.

Anyone who has read Woolf's diary entries along with her novels notices the similarity between Woolf's psychic experiences and those of Septimus. On 8 August 1928, Woolf writes, "I detest more & more interruption; the slow heaviness of physical life, & almost dislike people's bodies, I think, as I grow older; & want always to cut that short, & get my utmost fill of the marrow, of the essence." To get at the essence, Woolf feels she must
separate herself from the world, a world that proves to be a distraction from or a threat to one's identity. In a diary entry written thirteen days after an entry describing the horror of one of her descents into madness, Woolf writes (28 September, 1926),

There is an edge to this [plunge into deep waters] which I feel of great importance, once in a way. One goes down into the well & nothing protects one from the assault of truth. Down there I can't write or read; I exist however. I am. Then I ask myself what I am? & get a closer though less flattering answer than I should on the surface. . . . " (DVW, III 112)

For Woolf, the everyday activities of living produce inauthentic self-consciousness. I suspect that this belief explains, in part, her aesthetic principles, throwing light upon her critique in "Modern Fiction" of Wells, Bennett, and Galsworthy, whom she thought wasted their efforts in seeking to portray reality in an exhaustive display of the mundane details of day-to-day existence.

In idealizing suicide and in making Clarissa's most glorious moments occur during the epiphany when she identifies with a dead stranger, Woolf seeks to transcend the dialectic of inwardness and existence by focusing almost exclusively on inwardness. The diary entry of August 8 speaks of Woolf's no longer wanting children because "[her] ideas so possess [her]" (DVW, III 189). Ideas can satisfy our need for human beings. Constantly,
recurring in Woolf's writing is the notion that one's identity is, indeed, one's own identity. Separation and containment from other persons means survival of this identity. Clarissa, Septimus, and, to a certain extent, Peter express an obsessional desire to be left alone. Reflecting on what she thinks she lost in not marrying Peter, Clarissa says of herself, "It was all over for her. The sheet was stretched and the bed narrow. She had gone up into the tower alone and left them blackberrying in the sun" (MD 70).

During her epiphany, Clarissa returns to the words of the dirge in Cymbeline, which have been echoing repeatedly through her thoughts this day: "Fear no more the heat o' th' sun." Like Septimus, she yearns to escape from the heat of the sun, and arrive at that "virgin forest," the "snowfield where even the print of birds' feet is unknown." Septimus and Clarissa desire the same end, but only Septimus is ready to accept the "dark embrace." This morbid involution, which paradoxically promises a transcendence to communication, to wholeness, and to unity with reality, makes death the quintessential epiphany. And the totality of the paradoxical elements represents the neurotic economy of the novel as well as of the principal character(s).
The implied reader of *Mrs. Dalloway* shares in a metadiscourse that understands and sympathizes with Septimus' response to what he perceives is a world of Holmeses and Bradshaws. Yet Clarissa is the character with whom the reader is meant to identify with most completely. Though some of her experiences are similar to Septimus', she possesses a sense of proportion, which is why she survives. In significant ways, the structure of *Mrs. Dalloway* reflects Clarissa's qualities. The novel, too, possesses a sense of proportion, making it seem generically conventional. But, in other ways, the novel is very "private"--involuted and idiosyncratic--cut off from those other novels that it resembles.

*Mrs. Dalloway* is narrated in the past tense by a consciousness who occupies a space where all of the characters' thoughts and impressions merge. Although the narrator admits of the impossibility of fully knowing ourselves or others, the narrative focuses intensely on Clarissa Dalloway, seeking her out "in the streets of London, on the ebb and flow of things... [as] part of the people she never met..." Clarissa is "laid out like a mist between the people she knew best... it spread ever so far, her life, herself" (MD 12). Her character and its union with the group mind establishes the spatial and temporal parameters of the narrative. The
reader is given a 24-hour segment of Clarissa's life, and during this brief period of intensity, Woolf moves Clarissa as close to death as the situation allows. To sum up Clarissa's character, Woolf uses the events of the party scene (Graham 109). A framework of unity, wholeness, and communication determines the narrative structure and the narrative consciousness, the characterization, the setting, and the theme. Nevertheless, despite this framework, Mrs. Dalloway—as a reading experience—feels involuted and detached. The dialectical relationship of the transcendent desire (for unity/wholeness/communication) and the method of achieving transcendence (involution/detachment) describes narcissism, a form of neurosis that dramatically reveals the subject's avoidance of the Other.

By using a past-tense time frame and a very-apparent omniscient narrator, and by focusing on one character with whom the reader is expected to identify, Woolf's novel acts as one of the clocks of Harley Street. The narrative slices and divides, counsels submission, upholds authority, and "point[s] out in chorus the supreme advantages of a sense of proportion" (MD 154-155). Roland Barthes would call Mrs. Dalloway a "frigid text"—with reader "neither a body nor even an object . . . but merely a field, a vessel for expansion" (5). Barthes uses the
term *frigid* to describe a text that attempts to control the potential Otherness of the reader and of the reading experience. The rhetoric of such a text makes the reader in the image of the narrator. The reader is encouraged to follow the narrator’s lead and adhere to the role of corroborator. In this way, heterogeneous reading responses are discouraged.

Textual frigidity is a condition quite opposed to what Barthes calls "bliss." The blissful text, "imposes a state of loss . . . discomforts . . . unsettles the reader’s historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency of his tastes . . . brings to a crisis his relationship with language" (14). In moving from *Mrs. Dalloway* to *The Waves*, the reader experiences the immediate displacement of switching from a text of pleasure, which implies a secure subject who enjoys a comfortable and conventional manner of reading, to a text of bliss that denies the subject a consistent selfhood and requires an "uncomfortable" reading based on differences.

The reader of *The Waves* feels no guidance from a narrator. This text requires more involvement, inviting the reader’s opposition. Such a text is blissful in providing a site for "a dialectics of desire" (Barthes *The Pleasure* 4), where the writer and reader confront each other’s differences. Sometimes, in moments of liberation,
Woolf seems to get completely away from the need to own/control/dominant her text, inviting the reader to write. This reading-writing--heterogeneous and unsettling--opens up difference and desire.

In *The Waves*, Woolf manages to convey what J. W. Graham describes as a "strange blend of fear and excitement, detachment and involvement, remoteness and intensity, impersonality and rapt absorption" (112). This strange blend occurs also in Woolf's diary entries recounting her mental breakdowns. Her entry of 15 September reads,

> Woke up perhaps at 3. Oh its beginning its coming--the horror--physically like a painful wave swelling about the heart--tossing me up. I'm unhappy unhappy! Down--God, I wish I were dead. Pause. But why am I feeling this? Let me watch the wave rise. I watch. Vanessa. Children. Failure. Yes; I detect that. Failure. failure. (The wave rises). Oh they laughed at my taste in green paint! Wave crashes. I wish I were dead! I've only a few years to live I hope. I can't face this horror anymore--(this is the wave spreading over me). . . . Nothing matters. I become rigid & straight, & sleep again, & half wake & feel the wave beginning & watch the light whitening & wonder how, this time, breakfast & daylight will overcome it. (DVW III 110)

Startling are Woolf's intrusions into the description of what had been--and surely still was--a horrifying experience. When Woolf injects the deictic marker "(this is the wave spreading over me)," she becomes analytical and rhetorically conscious of the effect of her
description—a marked transformation in tone from the "I wish I were dead!" passage that precedes the one about the wave's spreading. This bifurcation in voice/perspective sometimes occurs in Mrs. Dalloway, such as in the narrator's juxtaposing intense passages of Septimus' psychotic visions with detached, analytical passages that consider his madness. But this and similar kinds of stylistic oppositions occur throughout The Waves, making the reader feel alternately inside and outside the narrative—temporally, spatially, and rhetorically.

Radically different from Woolf's conventional use of the fictional past in Mrs. Dalloway is her use in The Waves of what Graham calls the "pure present" tense ("I go," "I sit"). The present progressive ("I am going") is a much more natural form and the one commonly used in even the most self-conscious of first-person narratives. Generally, the pure present is restricted to two specific kinds of action: (1) an external action without a fixed temporal location, usually a habitual, repetitive action ("I teach English"); (2) an internal action not subject to fixed temporal locations ("I believe," "I feel") (Graham 96). Both uses of the pure present imply action but remove this action from the temporal realm.

When the pure present is used to convey external actions unfixed in time, these actions—though actually
habitual or repetitive--become momentary. The actions are robbed of that which constitutes them as actions: "their felt duration" (Graham 96). In purifying, i.e. rarifying, these actions, the pure present qualifies their substance, transforming them into a form that seems unnatural when used to convey actions as they happen. The present progressive tense, on the other hand, keeps the sense of action alive, the -ing perpetuating the motion." Rarely does the voice of the omniscient narrator surface in The Waves. Instead, the characters speak mostly in monologue, occasionally in dialogue, and twice in what is a kind of pseudo-conversation. So it is the characters who use the pure present tense. Verbs in this tense require the constant repetition of the first-person pronoun; otherwise, they resemble imperative forms. The combination of pure present and the frequently appearing "I" produce an effect of "close self-scrutiny" (Graham 98), with the speakers seeming to focus on and to analyze their actions, both present and past. The following excerpt from one of Jinny’s monologues illustrates this effect:

This is the prelude, this is the beginning. I glance, I peep, I powder. All is exact, prepared. My hair is swept in one curve. My lips are precisely red. I am ready now to join men and women on the stairs, my peers. I pass them, exposed to their gaze, as they are to
mine... This is my calling. This is my world. All is decided and ready... I enter.

Though the dramatic monologue conventionally serves to represent a character's stream of consciousness, the monologues in The Waves do not resemble at all consciousness "spilling unmediatedly on to the page" (Minow-Pinkney 152). It is true that very few writers have come closer to rendering stream of consciousness than to represent it with syntactical abbreviations, with grammatical liberties, and with typographical depictions of gaps and non-linearity (e.g., the "Penelope" chapter of Ulysses). For the reader, actual stream of consciousness--if it could be transcribed--probably would be inscrutable and, almost certainly, would be boring. Woolf avoids approximating the stream, but her characters' soliloquies, though grammatically and syntactically clear, pose their own sorts of problems for the reader accustomed to the style of indirect discourse used in Mrs. Dalloway and most other modern novels.

Graham points out that the monologues display a uniform style, with no stylistic distinctions among the speakers (98) and with no distinctions that reflect the aging of the speakers (95). Woolf's diary entries written during the years when The Waves was evolving indicate that she was trying to write a "new kind of play." Eventually,
she came to call this novel a "play-poem." Like a poem, the text features a structure of rhythm rather than of plot. Also, in determining the large structure of the narrative, rhythm succeeds in overriding syntax, not by dislocating syntax at the level of the sentence but by "emptying syntax of its function of articulation across the novel as a whole" (Minow-Pinkney 172). Thematically, the novel considers the effect of transgressing the "law" of linear development. Bernard refuses sequentiality but recognizes that without the notion of sequence civilization would be undone.

As in most of Woolf's fiction, the dialectic of sameness and difference is at work in The Waves. There are six different characters, but the narrative voice speaks in the same style throughout. Despite the narrator's being unconventional, there is most definitely a narrator. Graham aptly describes her as "omnipercipient," possessing "a perception (not an understanding) of the characters' inner experiences fused with a perception (not an understanding) of what they do not perceive--the background of time and sea against which they are set" (106). This narrator recounts; she does not create. In an early stage of the manuscript, Woolf began the narrative by having the narrator reveal her role: "I am the seer. I am the force that arranges."
thing in which all this exists. Certainly without me it would perish. I can give it order. I perceive what is bound to happen" (qtd. in Graham 106). Woolf struggled through the subsequent drafts to efface the presence of the omniscient seer/arranger whose voice was so apparent in the initial manuscript. She succeeded in diminishing the narrator's overt presence to the word said, a speech marker that implies someone who is recounting speeches, and to the interludes, which establish a sense of temporal progression and convey scenes of a seashore. Unlike the narrator of Mrs. Dalloway, this narrator does not offer the reader a secure position within a metadiscourse from which to know and judge the discourses within the novel.

Although Woolf intended the narrative to convey voices that are "severally facets of a single complete person" (qtd. in Leonard Woolf 25) and used a uniform style to effect the sense of singleness and completion, she still worried about fragmentation. In February 1930, she considered putting aside the book because it seemed to be "a litter of fragments" (WD 154). Her phrase "litter of fragments" is significant in light of the narrator's opening statement in the first manuscript:

I am telling myself the story of the world from the beginning. I am not concerned with the single life, but with lives together. I am trying to find in the folds of the past, such
fragments as time, having broken the perfect vessel, still keeps safe. (qtd. in Graham 106)

The narrative consciousness searches through a litter of fragments to find those fragments of "the perfect vessel" destroyed by time.

The fragmentation of The Waves requires the reader to come to terms with a psychotic narrative. Although the characters are closely connected, their monologues are often completely detached from each other. Because the speeches reflect each other thematically, the reader may momentarily assume them to be part of a conversation. But it does not take long for the reader to perceive that there is very little conversational rhetoric between and among the monologues. In fact, Harper has discovered only six occasions of actual dialogue in the novel: a dialogue between Bernard and each of the other characters except Rhoda and two dialogues between Louis and Rhoda (238). But even this "actual" dialogue seems unnatural. For example, Louis and Rhoda, declaring themselves "conspirators" (W 227), whisper so as not to be heard by the others. Appropriately, their dialogue on pages 226-27 is circumscribed by parentheses, separating it from the other speakers' monologues. At points, a kind of pseudo-dialogue occurs, with, for example, Bernard's alternating speeches with Neville and addressing him as "you," but
with Neville's being outside a dialogue, referring to
Bernard as "he." Frequently, dialogue is outright denied
in that two speeches by the same character envelope but
ignore the speech of another character. Those enclosed
voices that do not respond belong to Neville, Rhoda, and
Louis--the voices of sexual anxiety/isolation.

The fracturing occurs not only between and among the
speakers but also within a single speaker's monologue, the
internal fracturing marked by the intrusion of
parenthetical inserts that signal a heterogeneous
discourse. Most of the parenthetical intrusions appear in
Bernard's speeches. The following is a typical example:

But joined to the "sensibility of a woman" (I am
here quoting my own biographer) "Bernard
possessed the logical sobriety of a man." Now
people who make a single impression, and that,
in the main, a good one (for there seems to be a
virtue in simplicity) are those who keep their
equilibrium in mid-stream (I instantly see fish
with their noses one way, the stream rushing past
another.) (W 76-77)

The fact that Bernard directs the above speech to himself
rather than to one of the other characters makes the
occurrence of parenthetical interruptions especially
unsettling. Typically, parenthetical elements provide
additional information to enrich the reader's perception,
and, as such, help to bridge a communication gap between
reader and writer. But, in bridging the gap between
himself and his other self, Bernard's rhetoric emphasizes
the fragmentation of his self. Other parenthetical intrusions in Bernard's speech--marked by "(Note:)") or "(Take note)"--relate to his being a writer and indicate a split between an "ordinary" self and a self as seer/writer: "[S]triking off these observations spontaneously I elaborate myself; differentiate myself and listening to the voice that says as I stroll past, 'Look!' Take note of that! . . ." (W 115). Despite Bernard's being the consciousness responsible for uniting the six speakers in the narrative, he--the orderer and the arranger--is a divided subject.

Explaining the difficulty involved in the structure of The Waves, Woolf says, "... I am writing to a rhythm and not to a plot" and because "the rhythmical is ... completely opposed to the tradition of fiction ... I am casting about all the time for some rope to throw to the reader" (Letters, IV 204). Actually, rhythm in the novel comes in different forms, some of which displace the reader and others that stabilize the reader's position. The large structure of the narrative is the rhythm in which Woolf feared the reader would drown. In place of dramatic interaction among the soliloquies, Woolf substituted a rhythm that keeps them "running homogeneously in and out, in the rhythm of the waves" (WD 159). This arrangement of the monologues makes use of
parataxis rather than syntax (Minow-Pinkney 173), which frustrates that reader hoping for the more conventional association, causality, and closure of a novel like Mrs. Dalloway. In addition to being frustrating, the reading might very possibly feel monotonous, for there is no dramatic building between the monologues nor within them. The language is sometimes stunningly beautiful, and the narrative is shot full of epistemological and ontological insights, but these qualities do not substitute for the effects of a homogeneous rhythm that undermines the potential for narrative drama.

As I demonstrated in my discussion of "The Sirens," rhythm is much less representational than are plot and syntax. In The Waves, not only are the speakers situated according to the homogeneous movement of a wave, they are removed from the everyday situations and scenes of life that would enable the reader to establish some sort of fixed point of reference. In preventing their dramatic interaction and in denying them a context of everyday existence, Woolf hoped to escape what Bernard calls the "warm soluble" effects of social commingling and to get closer to the "essence" of personality, essence being the unconscious.

In other ways in the novel, rhythm stabilizes the reader's position. The narrative interludes are a rope
that Woolf throws to her reader, one form of rhythm that attempts to weld the narrative fragments into a unity. The interludes convey a temporal progression that represents stages in the speakers' lives.

Closely related to the rhythm is the repetition in which the novel abounds. The repetition—phonemic, imagistic, thematic—can be both disruptive and stabilizing. Kristeva considers rhythm and repetition to be among the most elemental of all instincts, originating in the pre-Oedipal stage, in the jouissance of the "as yet undissociated mother and child," and she includes rhythm and repetition in her conception of the semiotic (Minow-Pinkney 184). The semiotic constantly undermines the symbolic (the grammatical, syntactical, and logical) in language.

At the word and sentence level, Woolf establishes a rhythm by repeating phonemes. In the following passage, one is struck by the preponderance of W and S sounds, and, to a lesser extent, R, B, M, K, and P. The passage features a general clustering of phonemes, a repetition of the morpheme -ing, a repetition of words, and a repetition of structural patterns among sentences.

That goes on. Listen. There is a sound like the knocking of railway trucks in a siding. That is the happy concatenation of one event following another in our lives. Knock, knock, knock. Must, must, must. Must go, must sleep, must wake, must get up—sober, merciful word which we...
pretend to revile, which we press tight to our hearts, without which we should be undone. How we worship that sound like the knocking together of trucks in a siding!

Now far off down the river I hear the chorus; the song of the boasting boys, who are coming back in large charabancs from a day’s outing on the decks of crowded steamers. Still they are singing as they used to sing, across the court, on winters’ nights, or with the windows open in summer, getting drunk, breaking the furniture, wearing little striped hats, all turning their heads the same way as the brake rounded the corner; and I wished to be with them.

What with the chorus, and the spinning water and the just perceptible murmur of the breeze the are slipping away. (W 234-5)

Kathleen McCluskey points out the tendency in prose to establish only "short-lived phonemic patterns," but The Waves, like poetry, includes "pervasive phonemic patterns" (78). Poetic language calls attention to itself as language, thus materializing language. With so much emphasis placed on its sounds and rhythm, Woolf’s language undermines narrative progression and fictional referentiality. The reader who has become accustomed to the horizontal, diachronic movement of prose narrative gets caught up in vertical, synchronic saturation points of language (McCluskey 78).

Many critics, such as Howard Harper, feel that though the narrative voice speaks in a formal, uniform tone throughout The Waves, Woolf differentiates the speakers through images characteristic of each (Harper 208-9). But
I perceive imagery as uniting the narrative fragments more than distinguishing the speakers. For the same images recur constantly among the monologues. Although it is true that sometimes the same image is carried on but used differently by different speakers, in just as many cases, the speakers share the same image or very similar images. Common to all six speakers is the group of images that symbolizes engulfment, with images of water, fire, and fissures in the earth being the most frequently used examples of the type.

In 1925, Woolf wrote in her diary, "I sometimes think humanity is a vast wave, undulating: the same, I mean: the same emotions" (DVW, II 22). Fear is the emotion that unites the characters of The Waves. Although they are all fearful, Rhoda's voice, in a sense, speaks all of their fears because fear is her constant companion. Rhoda is a perfect example of what Laing, in The Divided Self, calls the "ontologically insecure" person--afraid in ways that most of us would never think of (Harper 240). She is "alone in a hostile world" where "[t]he houses are lightly founded to be puffed over by a breath of air" and where "[r]eckless and random the cars race and roar and hunt us to death like blood hounds" (W 159). "Unless I can stretch and touch something hard," Rhoda says, "I shall be blown down the eternal corridors for ever. What then can
I touch? What brick, what stone? And so draw myself across the enormous gulf into my body safely?" (W 159).

According to Laing, the ontologically insecure person fears "engulfment" (the losing of one's sense of autonomous self), "implosion" (the sudden crushing of one's self by the force of an impinging world), and ossification and depersonalization (qtd. in Harper 240n.). The fearful person dreads the destruction of the self, the death of the ego. And, indeed, in The Waves, death—the chained, stamping beast that Louis hears on the shore—is the antagonist of all of the characters. As the central image and symbol, the waves connote helplessness, drowning/engulfment, chaos, infinite repetition, fragmentation, and dissolution. Though the wave connotes death, it also implies an attempt to protect against death as closure and death as the heterogeneous, chaotic Other.

I agree with McCluskey who sees the repetition, the continuous rhythm of the wave as an escape from these forms of death. Enclosed within the wave, one transcends time and difference. The rhythm of The Waves, arising from the repetition of phonemes, images, and themes guards against the narrative's coming unbound and flying apart in fragments. As such, the rhythmic structure calls to mind those heavy dark lines that Van Gogh painted around the objects in his late works such as The Starry Night, lines
meant to control and contain objects that threatened to explode into fragments in the pulsing energy of his canvas.

In significant ways, Woolf's style in *The Waves* resembles the style of a schizophrenic's discourse. Rosenbaum and Sonne discovered through interviewing schizophrenic patients that "the chains of signifiers . . . are linked according to relatively simple principles: as repetitions; as relations of similarity or contrast; and as relations in contiguity in theme, sound, and sentence construction (the phonological and syntactic structure of the text)" (81). The following excerpt from a patient's letter illustrates the relationship of repetition, similarity, and contiguity.

> Dear Mother: I am 50 times orthodox. I am 50 times orphan and gave a cat a piece of bread myself three times, and that is four times orphan, of the girls I paid some gooseberries two times, that is three times orphan. I moved a Turkidsh lady's chair two times, that is two times orphan. I paid the girl here 13-14 in 9-10 gooseberries and . . . [etc.]. (81)

Commenting on the letter, Rosenbaum and Sonne observe that conceivably the text could go on forever because the repetitions are not determined by "the rules of a logical or narrative system" (81). Like an exaggerated version of one of the monologues in *The Waves*, this letter features phonemic, syntactic, and thematic repetition as well as a
constantly recurring "I." Rosenbaum and Sonne conclude that all of the letter's "redundancies have the effect of giving the patient a feeling of presence (deictic structure) and thereby a feeling that the self is unified and assembled" (83). According to the laws of narrative convention, The Waves is a psychotic text, but in its psychosis there is evident the schizophrenic's desire for unity, sameness, essential wholeness.

Woolf's most obvious rope thrown to the reader in danger of drowning is the final section of the novel in which Bernard's consciousness subsumes those of the other characters and effaces the narrator's presence. In order to become the narrative consciousness, Bernard has to relinquish his self; dying from himself, he becomes all the selves. Bernard is the wave that contains the narrative. His final speech indicates that he intends to triumph over death: "Death is the enemy. It is death against whom I ride with my spear couched. . . . I strike spurs into my horse. Against you I will fling myself, unvanquished and unyielding, O Death!" (W 297). But the last line of the novel--written in italics, the only use of italics in the final section--reinstates the voice of the narrator: "The waves broke on the shore." Because this last line sustains the dialectic represented by the waves, it qualifies the notion of the ending's being a
synthesis, a resolution. Woolf returned to the waves at the end "because the proportions . . . needed the intervention of the waves finally so as to make a conclusion" (WD 162). Formally, the waves provide authorial totality and conclusion, but because they symbolize the dissolution of Bernard's will to order and to unite, thematically they perpetuate the dialectic.

Woolf believed in the idea of artist as creator and restorer of order, asserting meaning against absurdity (McCluskey 122). Like Wallace Stevens' jar in Tennessee that tames chaotic nature all around it, art can assemble and unify. Just as Bernard battles "the stupidity of nature," Woolf, the artist, never gives in to chaos. Instead, she maintains what Kristeva calls the thetic in language, the site of the rupture between the semiotic and the symbolic (Revolution 51). Barthes says that "every writer's motto reads: mad I cannot be, sane I do not deign to be, neurotic I am" (6). The motto strikes me as being especially appropriate for Virginia Woolf. There is an incident from Woolf's childhood that became one of the central ephiphanies of her life and an essential component of her artistic vision. This incident involved the child Virginia's sudden and momentary inability to cross over a puddle. In that moment, she had an incipient vision of the "ultimate impossible" that Georges Bataille says is
the source of all neurotic apprehension (qtd. in Barthes 5). And Woolf's reader, caught up in the impossible dialectic of dissolution and wholeness, finds that the struggles back to shore become increasingly more difficult with each voyage out.
NOTES: CHAPTER II

1Makiko Minow-Pinkney in *Virginia Woolf and the Problem of the Subject* applies a Kristevan interrogation to *Jacob's Room, Mrs. Dalloway, To the Lighthouse, Orlando, and The Waves*, showing how Woolf's fiction developed, with the succession of the novels, an increasingly more effective and radical means of disrupting the subject's stasis.

2In "Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked," Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford explode the dichotomy of the two kinds of audience, delving into the intricate relationship between them. Using Ede and Lunsford's model enables me to consider the ways in which we both make the text and the text makes us. I am particularly concerned with how the reader invoked by *Mrs. Dalloway* responds as a reader addressed by *The Waves*.

3One of my most startling reading experiences occurred years ago as I began reading Nabokov's *Ada*. It was not the novel itself that was so unsettling (although it abounds in Nabokov's language games), rather it was the comments written in the margin and blank spaces of the first few pages. When I checked with the friend who had loaned me the book, I discovered that the copy had belonged to her Uncle Kenneth, a thirty-year resident of a state hospital for the "mentally infirm," who had been diagnosed as a schizophrenic. In studying this man's reading notes, I recognized that a truly psychotic reader is an impossibility, for one's psychosis would prevent any kind of closure in reading. Kenneth's reading stopped with page 27, when he had filled up all of the white spaces on the page yet had not begun to be finished with his commentary on value, truth, need, relativity, and light, a commentary that Nabokov's words on page 27 elicited. Much more suited to Kenneth's need than an 800-page novel was a one-page novel followed by 800 blank pages.
'Describing the disruption of the "conversational contract" that occurs when one converses with a schizophrenic, Bert Rosenbaum and Harley Sonne point out that "an invisible third party steps between the partners in the conversation. As the conversation progresses, this third party, the Other, virtually assumes control of the patient's speech. The Other interferes, interrupts, directs. Indeed, the Other structures the speech of the schizophrenic in such a way that often it is to the Other and no longer to the second-person receiver that the schizophrenic text is addressed . . ." (56).

'A Writer's Diary, p. 60. All subsequent references to this text will be cited as WD.

'Mrs. Dalloway, p. 175 (out of a total of 296 pages). All subsequent references to this text will be cited as MD.

'In Anti-Oedipus, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari show how the institution of psychoanalysis is one of the primary perpetuators of behavior endorsed by capitalism.

'The Diary of Virginia Woolf, volume III--hereafter cited as DVW, III.

'In Pamela Transue's view, Woolf's use of the pure present reflects a "feminist revision of the masculine mode of perception." The pure present can underscore "the potential for the moments of 'vision'" that Woolf connects more with women artists than with men. The present progressive tense, with its ignoring the moment to look onward, recalls the failing of Woolf's male characters to perceive and appreciate the rich potential in any moment (Transue 138).

'The Waves, p. 101 (out of a total of 297 pages). All subsequent references to this text will be cited as W.
CHAPTER III

GRAVITY'S RAINBOW AND THE PARANOID READER

[A] typology of the pleasures of reading . . . could only be psychoanalytic, linking the reading neurosis to the hallucinated form of the text. . . . A paranoiac would consume or produce complicated texts, stories developed like arguments, constructions posited like games, like secret constraints.

--Roland Barthes

The Pleasure of the Text

Early in Gravity's Rainbow, Dr. Rozsavolgyi describes the basic theory of the Rorschach ink blot to Pointsman, explaining that the subject attempts to impose structure and order upon an unstructured stimulus, an amorphous bit of experience, and this ordering reflects the subject's desires and fears. Works such as Gravity's Rainbow make perfect Rorschach objects for readers. In the active grappling required to control such texts, the reader's fears and desires become especially apparent.

Imposing purpose and order on a text that seems random and chaotic, the reader responds hyper-rationally. This hyper-rational reader is a paranoid reader.
Paranoia, one of the central terms of *Gravity's Rainbow*, is defined by the narrator as being "nothing less than the onset, the leading edge of the discovery that everything is connected" (GR 703). Freud said of the paranoiac, "All that he observes in others is full of meaning; all is explainable. . . . The category of the accidental . . . is thus rejected" (162). Each of the characters in Pynchon's novel, including the narrator, exhibits some sort of paranoia. These characters--obsessed with naming, defining, and, thus, controlling the world--display what James W. Earl describes as "the lingering survival of the mechanical world view after its time" (qtd. in Clerc 236). *Gravity's Rainbow* is heavily influenced by modern theory in physics and mathematics. Although few of Pynchon's readers will possess an in-depth knowledge of quantum theory, they will be faced with a narrative whose setting, structure, and themes dramatize this theory and stage its conflict with nineteenth-century assumptions, assumptions that many of these readers share.

Newtonian physics and its notion of the Universe as a closed, orderly system prevailed for centuries. Although we tend to consider Einstein's theory of relativity to be the point at which the Newtonian mechanical model became completely displaced, we should recognize that Einstein's theory, itself dealing with the Universe as a closed
system, left many of Newton's premises intact. But in the ways that they differed from the earlier model, Einstein's theories set the stage for the real revolution in physics: quantum mechanics.¹ Einstein transformed the discrete entities of Newtonian mechanics into a matrix of interacting systems. He linked space and time to form the four-dimensional spacetime. In similar fashion, he connected space to matter and energy to matter. The most profound effect of his relativity theory was that it laid the groundwork for what N. Katherine Hayles calls a "field concept of reality" (48), with the distinguishing characteristics of this reality being a "fluid, dynamic nature, the inclusion of an observer, the absence of detachable parts, and the mutuality of component interactions" (15). Although the concepts of classical physics deal with experiences of everyday living, relativity theory departs radically from familiar experiences. Unlike his predecessors, Einstein did not begin with common sense, for his goal was to achieve a theory of harmonious fundamental principles. He "decided that if he had to choose between the laws of physics being universal or phenomena appearing invariant [common-sensibly regular for all observers], he would choose the law of physics" (Hayles 46).
Einstein's reverence for the absolute order of the universe explains his negative opinion of quantum mechanics. He spent the rest of his life resisting the revolutionary implications of his Special Theory (the relativity of time, mass, and length, established according to the frame of reference, which unites space and time) and of his General Theory (the argument that spacetime curves around masses, accounting for the effects of gravity). Einstein believed completely "in causality, in an objective world that exists independently of human perception, and in the universal truth of scientific law" (Hayles 48). But quantum physics calls into question all of these notions.

Quantum mechanics clarifies the limits of early theories. It makes clear that the previous way we observed and conceptualized nature is not comprehensive enough to explain the range of observations we have attained now. Newtonian physics still remains valid within its bounds, but it does not pertain to the sub-atomic level and cannot predict or explain the results in quantum mechanics. The classical paradigm of physics dealt with the discrete particle, while the new paradigm involves the field. The Newtonian particle was an object, but the sub-atomic particle in new physics--in no way resembling an object--is a "tendency to exist" or a
"tendency to happen" (Zukav 57). According to the old physics, with enough information, we can predict exactly the outcome of any event (Zukav 51). But New Physics recognizes that it is impossible to make a complete prediction of the future, because our predictions are always probable and partial.

Quantum mechanics depicts probabilities of phenomena that cannot be visualized. Our tendency to form a mental picture of a process that we want to understand results from the Newtonian perception of the world, which describes events that are simple to picture in terms of position, velocity, size, elasticity, etc. Exceeding visualization, quantum physics requires that we understand without visualizing (Zukav 46-47).

Werner Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle, a consequence of quantum theory, shows us that there is no such thing as objectivity by proving that it is impossible to measure simultaneously the position and the momentum of a particle with any more than limited precision. Heisenberg points out that the results that we get are affected by the fact of our looking for them. For example, light becomes wave-like if we perform certain experiments on it, while it can be particle-like in the results of other experiments focusing on it as a particle (Zukav 56).
Complementing Heisenberg’s principle, [Kurt] Godel’s Theorem (1931) states that it is impossible to prove the consistency of a formal system of natural numbers when one is situated within that system. Language cannot objectively describe because it cannot overcome the fact that it belongs to the field that it would describe. Language is unable to free itself from the problems of self-referentiality (Hayles 41).

The paradigm shift in physics reflects similar paradigm shifts in other fields of knowledge, all of which signal a revolution in ontology and epistemology. Quantum physics posits that reality is not being, but becoming; reality is not a state, but a process; reality is a continuum in space and time, infinite and unbroken. This conception of reality poses a profound problem for analytical reasoning. Analysis perceives Being everywhere because Being can be isolated and described, but analysis fails to come to terms with Becoming, which cannot be stopped and defined (Earl 240). Although Einstein is credited with having been a brilliant intuitive thinker, almost all of his work involved him in complex analysis, and it was the analyst in him that struggled against the implications of his theories. In 1936, he was claiming still that "[t]he most incomprehensible thing about the world is that it is comprehensible" (qtd. in Zukav 63).
In the first chapter, I implied that literary critics are among the most nostalgic of all thinkers, clinging to a notion of the subject and a concomitant world view that those in other fields have long abandoned. But it is not true that thinkers in other fields have completely relinquished the idea of an essential, unified self or that they have fully dispensed with the objective paradigm. In a provocative essay entitled "Cognitive Repression in Contemporary Physics," Evelyn Fox Keller argues that a half century of debate among quantum theorists has failed to produce any agreement on a single interpretation of what quantum theory implies for epistemology. Physicists have struggled to come to terms with a relaity in which there is no firm boundary between subject and object but have not yet constructed a cognitive paradigm adequate to their theory. Keller points out that physicists implicitly hold on to one of the two basic tenets of classical physics, either the discrete objectivity of nature or the knowability of nature.

Keller claims that scientists--like children--engage in magical thinking, refusing to relinquish the belief in omniscience, refusing to accept "a more realistic, more mature, and more humble relation to the world in which the boundaries between subject and object are acknowledged to
be never quite rigid, and in which knowledge, of any sort, is never quite total" (721). The paranoid reader of Gravity's Rainbow also engages in magical thinking, working hard to order the data of the text in the belief that ordered data will provide her with the knowledge to fully comprehend the text.

Like Joyce, Phychon knew that he was writing for an audience addicted to the assimilation of facts. Nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century writers who included an incredible amount of detail in their novels in the (neurotic) attempt to realistically convey the world helped to nurture in readers an addiction to facts. A theme that runs throughout Phychon's work is the inadequacy of science/reason to explain life fully and clearly, and certainly his fictional techniques reflect this notion of subjectivity. First of all, there is the novel's bulk; the inclusion of more than three hundred characters makes nearly impossible demands on the reader's memory. Although the reader may temporarily immerse himself in happily putting together facts, he soon discovers that the "facts" are too fantastic to be true. Also, the fragmented, metonymic structure thwarts the reader's construction of a mimetic unity. In making Gravity's Rainbow impervious to synthesis as well as to analysis, Pynchon frustrates the hyper-rational reader.
As if dealing with three hundred characters were not enough, the reader must keep track of those characters who merge: Leni and Solange, Bianca and Ilse, Gottfried and Bianca, Geli and Bianca. And those characters who do not merge undergo so many changes that they become a succession of characters. Douglas Fowler observes that "the Slothrop of any now is not really the Slothrop of any then" (qtd. in Hohmann 20). Repeatedly in the novel, one encounters debates about cause and effect. In his characterization, Pynchon undermines causal explanations for motivation. By deconstructing his characters, Pynchon subverts the concept of fictional identity.

There are numerous centers of consciousness present in the novel. Often, the narrator’s voice merges with the voices of other characters as a sort of narrative interface in which he speaks in their particular dialect or register. At other times, the narrator maintains a distance between himself and the other characters by assuming an omniscient point of view. And occasionally the narrator manages both to merge with a character and separate himself from the character within the space of a few lines, moving from inside to outside in a flash:

"Yeah, I . . ." why is Slothrop drawling this way? "saw ya watching . . . last night too, mister. . . ."
"Oh, my goodness," grinning one of them big polyhedral Jap grins, like they do, "then I would feel more alone." (GR 473)

In the first sentence, the narrator interrupts Slothrop’s statement to ask why Slothrop is drawling, but in the second sentence, the narrator himself uses Slothrop’s style of speech--full of slang--to describe Ensign Morituri. Throughout the novel, unrelated characters sometimes use the deictic marker that, such as in expressions "find that Slothrop," and stutter after the a in the word and. What is significant about these small linguistic markers in the speech of unrelated characters is that they always appear in Slothrop’s speech; they are Slothrop’s verbal tics appearing in the speech of others, a situation that blurs the distinction between characters and further undermines the notion of fictional identity.

Not only are there numerous characters variously acting as centers of consciousness, but there are also dogs of Pavlovian experiments as well as inanimate objects such as light bulbs, trees, and rocks that all exhibit consciousness. At one point in the novel, the reader encounters some locker-room gallows humor among laboratory rats who speak in the dialect of a New York City tough:

Careful youse guys, here comes da screv. Aw he’s O.K. Looie, he’s a regular guy. The others laugh. Den what’s he doin’ in here, huh? The long white lights buzz overhead. Gray-smocked assistants chat, smoke, linger at various routines. Look out, Lefty, dey’re comin’ fer
you dis time. Watch dis, chuckles Mouse Alexei, when he picks me up I'm gonna shit, right'n his hand! Better not hey, ya know what happened ta Slug, don'tcha? Dey fried him when he did dat, man, da foist time he fucked up runnin' dat maze. (GR 229)

Perhaps one of the most endearing of the novel's characters is Byron the immortal lightbulb. As in Ulysses, it is impossible for the reader to construct a hierarchy of discourses. But Pynchon goes even further than Joyce by disallowing an anthropomorphic privilege.

In addition to the everchanging narrative voice is the protean identity of the narratee, who sometimes seems to be a victim of the "System" and at other times seems to be one of the System's own. Occasionally, the narratee becomes someone very specific, such as in the case of Bianca's cruel father (Hohmann 30). In the nineteenth-century novel, because the reader and narrator are involved usually in a close relationship, the reader can easily assume the position of the narratee. But in the course of Gravity's Rainbow, the reader often cannot be the narratee; instead, she is forced to stay outside the narrative frame and listen to the exchange between the narrator and someone else.

Although the relationship between Pynchon's narrator and the reader changes constantly throughout the novel, there are many points in the novel when the narrator makes
a concentrated effort to get close, often explicitly provoking or insulting the reader. On one occasion as he begins to explain the connection between two seemingly disjointed elements of the plot, the narrator turns to the reader and refers to her reductionist tendency, "You will want cause and effect. All right" (GR 663). Describing the "anonymous fucking" of Manuela by Major Marvy, the narrator implicates the reader in the sordid, sadistic act: "Pistol-whip, bite till blood comes . . . visions go swarming, violent, less erotic than you think--more occupied with thrust, impact, penetration, and such other military values. Which is not to say he isn't enjoying himself innocently as you do" (GR 606). In these instances, the reader becomes narrative audience and authorial audience as he/she is confronted by the narrator's attention to the fictionalizing process: "Oh, ho. Here's watcha came for, folks" (GR 661).3

Yet the uncomfortable closeness between narrator and reader is only intermittent and disappears altogether at the end of the narrative. Like Ulysses, Gravity's Rainbow is a negative-dialectical novel; it constructs various conventional fictional possibilities and ends by denying (deconstructing) those possibilities. In this case, the reader begins to feel that he can take up a position alongside the narrator, but by the final section of the
novel, he recognizes that he cannot occupy a position with this narrator who constantly moves and changes. Thus, the narrator, whose tone switches quickly and frequently from tender to ruthless to obscene, betrays that reader—defended by Wayne Booth in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*—who hopes for liberal-humanistic constancy. Despite the fact that the narrator often draws attention to his inability to be completely omniscient, he does act as a guide for the reader. When the reader is denied this guidance, he is left to his own designs, faced with a novel that defies such designs. And his paranoia becomes more pronounced.

The narrator's incomplete omniscience makes perfect sense in Pynchon's field theory, a theory that disallows a hierarchy of consciousness. Although the narrator's consciousness seems all-pervasive, we must admit that it is often impossible to tell when he is conveying his own thoughts and when he disappears in the minds of other characters. There is no fixed boundary between minds in this novel, no wall between subject and object, just as there is no wall between dream and reality, between fantasy and history, between film and event. Unlike the omniscient narrator in nineteenth-century realism, the narrator of *Gravity's Rainbow* has no recourse to a meta-language outside the discourses of the narrative.
Indeed, this narrator shares in the paranoia that affects all of the characters:

Last we saw of Fibel he was hooking, stretching, and running shock cord for that Horst Achtfaden back in his gliding days, Fibel who stayed on the ground, and saw his friend on to Peenemunde—saw him on? isn’t that a slice of surplus paranoia there, not quite justified is it—well, call it Toward a Case for Bland’s Involvement with Achtfaden Too, if you want. (GR 587)

In addition to being betrayed by an inconstant narrator, the reader experiences the betrayal of characters who emerge, reveal fears and desires that transform them into individuals she can care about, but then disappear—or, worse, decompose—without even saying goodbye. Although a minor character, Pokler reveals the most intimate of thoughts in an intense session of introspection. But suddenly he is gone. Pynchon’s deconstruction of Slothrop completely unsettles those readers who come to a novel expecting the main character to survive the narrative, or, if not survive, at least die in the fashion suited to a protagonist. The reader’s expectations about a suitable death were created, in part, by the nineteenth-century novel’s familiar deathbed scene and its summing up of character.

Pynchon’s techniques of establishing distance between the characters and the reader can be compared with the Brechtian techniques of "epic theater." To prevent the
reader's getting too attached to the characters and their stories, the narrator constantly intrudes in the narrative, engaging in silly songs, in bad jokes, and in humorous and serious asides. These intrusions, like the expressionistic techniques of Brecht, prevent the construction of a subject with an (imaginary) full unity and force upon the reader/spectator a succession of displacements. Colin MacCabe observes that Brecht sought to replace the notion of a full, self-contained individuality "with the experience of a self as a constant differentiation, a perpetual process of separation" (MacCabe 74-75). The self in a perpetual process of separation refers to the imaginary unity of a literary character as opposed to a reality that recognizes no rational progression in a life, and this separation also represents the imaginary logic of time in tragedy and a historical time that possesses no such logic. In addition, there is the separation involving the theater-goer who would create a center for the play in her subjective and empathetic judgments. Denied an easy empathy, this spectator is made constantly aware that she is involved in the production of meaning as she attempts to bridge the marked gap between signifier and signified. In preventing the comfortable distance between the spectator/reader and the play that catharsis provides,
Brecht meant his theater to be, among other things, anti-Aristotelian.

Pynchon's technique is also anti-Aristotelian in that it opposes the analysis and categorization that we connect with the Aristotelian method. Pynchon's narrator refers to film and calculus as "pornographies of flight" because in their attempt to convey the actual fluidity of movement, they must break down the movement into successive still pictures, components of movement, removed from the real experience itself. In this way, film and calculus are "reminders of impotence and abstraction" (GR 567). Extending Pynchon's use of the term pornography, I would add that Aristotelian catharsis can be thought of as "pornography of experience," substituting the isolated emotions of pity and fear for the complex of reasoning and emotion involved in genuine experience. In *Gravity's Rainbow*, the reader often feels herself to be the object of a narrative attack, so the comfortable distance and the insulation between herself and the narrative disappear.

The reader's relationship with Slothrop is not based on a cathartic experience of fear but on a fear that they actively share: the condition of anti-paranoia. As Slothrop "perceives that he is losing his mind," the narrator comments on his slide "onto the anti-paranoid part of his cycle": "If there is something comforting--
religious, if you want--about paranoia, there is still also anti-paranoia, where nothing is connected to anything, a condition not many of us can bear for long" (GR 434). As a defense against the state of anti-paranoia in which he begins to encounter "yesterday version[s] of himself, in the Combination against who he was right then" (GR 624), Slothrop becomes increasingly more paranoid:

Omens grow clearer, more specific. He watches flights of birds and patterns in the ashes of his fire, he reads the guts of trout he's caught and cleaned, scraps of lost paper, graffiti on the broken walls where facing has been shot away to reveal the brick underneath--broken in specific shapes that may also be read... (GR 623)

But in the last section of the novel, Slothrop's character rapidly begins to dissipate, and he becomes incapable of paranoia as he loses the capacity to reason. Or, perhaps, because there is too much information to process, noise wins out: "My folks were Congregationalist," Slothrop offers, "I think." It's getting harder to remember either of them, as Broderick progresses into Pernicious Pop and Nalline into ssshhhhghhh... (into what? What was that word? Whatever it is, the harder he chases, the faster it goes away) (GR 682).

Like Slothrop, the paranoid reader will discern patterns in the guts of trout, will perceive causal and sequential design in the mass of details that Pynchon
provides. N. Katherine Hayles points out that the traditional novel includes a lot of loose descriptive passages that the reader learns to subordinate to the meaningful narrative action. In this way, the realistic novel "valorizes" our usual modes of cognition, which depend upon subordinating masses of detail into background that can be safely ignored while we concentrate on the small area brought into focus by our conscious attention" (174). But in Gravity's Rainbow, Pynchon breaks down the traditional distinction between meaningful detail and background detail, "so that background and foreground collapse into the same perceptual plane" (Hayles 174). Everything becomes an element of plot, including random bits of dialogue, songs, jokes, shifts without transition to new scenes and new characters, and sudden changes of tone within a scene. For the hyper-rational reader, accustomed to making his linear way according to a sequential pattern, the holistic patterning of Pynchon's narrative may cause a perceptual overload, with the novel's disintegrating eventually into a mass of chaotic detail.

Charles Altieri has observed that the modern artistic perspective is based on metonymic thought, which derives relationships from contiguous associations rather than from causal connections (qtd. in Siegel 35). Metonymy
reflects the modern artist's inability to know reality in any comprehensive or conclusive way. Metonymic thought is opposed to metaphoric thought--the thought of Romanticism, symbolism, realism, and naturalism--which claims that interpretive structures of the mind can grasp reality in its entirety. Metaphoric thought works from comprehensive structural patterns and from causal connections. The paranoid reader, for whom connections are always causal and details never irrelevant, faces the supreme challenge in the metonymic structure of Gravity's Rainbow.

Although the hyper-rational reader will find no part of Pynchon's narrative easy to get through, at least she will be able to establish some sort of spatial and temporal reference points in sections one and two. The first section, "Beyond the Zero," takes place in England during the V-2 bombings of 1944. The second section, "Un Perm' au Casino Hermann Goering," is set near the French Riviera and concerns Slothrop's introduction to rocket technology. But in sections three and four, the reader becomes increasingly more disoriented as the theme and plot lines proliferate. In section four, the novel virtually deconstructs itself, denying the reader a focal point.

The epigraph to section three, "In the Zone," is a line from The Wizard of Oz: "Toto, I have a feeling we're
not in Kansas any more. . . ." Like Dorothy, the reader finds herself far from any place that remotely resembles home. Fantasy and reality are indistinguishable. At one point, the scene suddenly switches to a Masonic hall in Mouthorgan, Missouri where Lyle Bland and Alfonso Tracy engage in a game of pinball. But no ordinary game of pinball here, no siree; in this game the pinballs are "sentient . . . beings from the planetoid Katspiel," exiles "doomed to masquerade as ball bearings, as steelies in a thousand marble games." And beginning with the relationship of the sentient pinballs to "the great thumbs of Keokuk and Puyallup, Oyster Bay, Inglewood" is an example of the incredible stretch of contiguous connections in the novel:

--Danny D’Allesandro and Elmer Ferguson, Peewee Brennan and Flash Womack ["the great thumbs"] . . . where are they now? where do you think? they all got drafted, some are dead on Iwo, some gangrenous in the snow in the forest of Arden, and their thumbs, first rifle inspection in Basic, GI’d, driven deep back into childhood as little finger sweat-cams off M-1 operating handle, thumb pushing down follower still deep in breech, bolt sshhOCK! whacks thumb oh shit yes it hurts and good-by to another unbeatable and legendary thumb, gone for good back to the summer dust, bags of chuckling glass, bigfooted bassett hounds, smell of steel playground slides heating in the sun). . . . (GR 584)

The passage above is merely one small part of a novel that abounds in such metonymic slides. Also significant is the fact that the passage occurs in parentheses; such
parenthetical contiguous associations reveal a "subatomic" field of movement in the narrative as the reader slips and slides into the interstices (sites of grammatical subordination) between the grammatically ordinate parts of the sentence or paragraph. A whole universe exists in the folds of the parentheses.

There is no way adequately to describe the dizzying effect of section four, "The Counterforce," for such a description necessarily involves some sort of analysis, and analysis is exactly what Pynchon hopes to discourage in this section. I will attempt no comprehensive description of section four; I want merely to convey something of the feel and look of the chapter to show the extent of the paranoid reader's displacement. First of all, there are numerous new centers of consciousness: Eddie Pensiero, the barber who is also an agent of history--reworking and perfecting the colonel's hair; Byron the immortal lightbulb, "condemned to go on forever, knowing the truth and powerless to change anything" (GR 655); an icebox that talks in Kelvinator-Bostonian dialect; Takeshi and Ichizoa, a.k.a. The Komical Kamikazes and The Suicidekicks; Richard M. Zhlubb, a.k.a. "The Adenoid," night manager of the Orpheus Theatre on Melrose.

Not only does the reader jump from one consciousness to another, but sometimes she does not clear the gap
between them. In this case, she falls into a gap, moving through the diaphonous layers in a synchronic slice of the narrative. One such fall occurs as the colonel is narrating a story to Eddie Pensiero. Suddenly, in the midst of the narrator's commentary on the colonel's tale (the narration of the tale itself alternating between first-person and third-person), an argument erupts between two voices, one named Mr. Information and the other named Skippy. Mr. Information attempts to enlighten Skippy:

The Germans-and-Japs story was only one, rather surrealist version of the real War. The real war is always there. The dying tapers off now and then, but the war is still killing lots and lots of people. Only right now it is killing them in more subtle ways. (GR 645)

This political and philosophical insight/paranoia means little to Skippy, who responds with "jeepers" and "wow" while he perpetually waits to see Happyville. The reader experiences a displacement as the Skippy-Mr. Information narrative changes into the colonel-Mr. Information narrative, with Mr. Information played by a plastic robot. After a brief dialogue between those two characters, the narrator begins the tale of Byron the lightbulb. The narratee of Byron's story just happens to be Skippy--a desperately nostalgic Skippy in a different context, far removed from Happyville. And all of this narrative movement happens in the spacetime of four pages. In
attempting to trace the movement of the four pages, one discovers the difficulty in distinguishing diachronic from synchronic time. The actions within the synchronic slice sometimes move in what seems to be diachronic fashion (evident in the encounter between the robot and the colonel) and thus constitute temporal movement in another plane of narrative action. And certainly there is as much movement in this synchronous pocket as there is in the novel as a whole. Pynchon's refusal to pass off the synchronic slice-of-time portion of fictional reality as a substitute for the complexity of spacetime reinforces his critique of sequential, synchronic analysis. And insofar as the diachronic is merely a string of synchronic movements, Pynchon's narrative structure exceeds diachronic comprehension as well. When the narrator uses the transitional word meantime (GR 700) after a long segment of timelessness in section four of the novel, one is struck by the complex irony of the word choice.

In the conventional novel, the diachronic movement of the narrative pauses when the focus changes from the main plot(s) to sub-plots or minor plot events; eventually, though, the narrative gets back on its linear track, the peripheral events having been what Seymour Chatman calls "satellites," easily distinguished from the plot "kernels" that determine the classical narrative's structure
(Chatman 53-54). The reader of the conventional novel perceives the "logic of hierarchy" (Chatman 53) among narrative events in his recognition of the difference between satellites and kernels. Narrative kernels mandate the movement of the text, determining its possible directions. Kernels are related causally, and a kernel cannot be omitted without disturbing the narrative logic. The satellites, however, are expendable, their existence being a result of the narrative logic and thus their deletion offering no threat to this logic. The paranoid reader, assuming (and requiring) a logic of hierarchy among narrative events, finds it extremely difficult to distinguish satellites from kernels in Gravity's Rainbow. Because Pynchon's universe exemplifies the interrelatedness of even the most diverse of elements and because this relatedness involves connections other than causal ones, there are no kernels discrete from satellites.

Michel Foucault's penetrating analysis of social practices has shown what folly it is to assign simple causal configurations to complex historical processes. He feels that "[h]istory protects us from historicism" (Foucault 250)—a historicism that, to serve its own ideological needs, allegorizes and mythicizes history. Opposing such allegorization, Pynchon points to the shared
values of the military, political, economic, and technological systems, revealing a vast network of hidden interconnectedness.

Just as there is no logic of hierarchy in Gravity's Rainbow, so there is no logic of connection among the narrative events. Fiction typically involves two basic kinds of plot: resolution and revelation (Chatman 48). In the conventional plot of resolution, the events get worked out according to a teleology that involves reason and/or emotion. In the plot of revelation, which focuses on character, the narrative does not conclude with events resolved but with a character's situation exposed, such as Clarissa Dalloway's epiphany on the night of her dinner party. Although Pynchon's narrative (anti-)structure comes closer to being a plot of revelation than it does a plot of resolution, it leaves most questions about its principal characters unanswered, complicating the reader's notion of their being principal characters. Pirate, Mexico, Katje, Enzian, Blicero, Geli, Tchitcherine, Slothrop, and the others disappear into the mass of "the dancing Preterition."

Another of the dizzying effects of the fourth section is the way that Slothrop dissolves. The reader cannot be sure at what point in the narrative he disappears; she is left only with the remnants of his presence. The
narrator's description of the team selected to rescue the Radiant Hour is interrupted by someone outside the frame who asks the narrator questions about "Slothrop's own gift and Fatal Flaw" (GR 676), implying that Slothrop survives only as a literary character and construct. A bit later, the narrator compares Slothrop's fate with John Kennedy's and Malcolm X's, concluding that "Slothrop's fate is not so clear. It may be that They have something different in mind for Slothrop" (GR 688). This statement not only reveals the narrator's limited omniscience but also indicates that Slothrop is still alive. Six pages later, the narrator describes Slothrop's sitting on a curb and staring at a photo of "a grinning glamour girl riding astraddle the cannon of a tank"; this descriptive passage is quite concrete, full of the sight, the sound, the feel of a foggy morning. But the concreteness of the paragraph disintegrates in the last two sentences when the narrator adds, "He doesn't remember sitting on the curb for so long staring at the picture. But he did" (GR 694). The use of the present-tense verb does remember to refer to Slothrop, coupled with the past-tense verb fragment did, imply that Slothrop is alive and perhaps even a witness to the narrative about him. These implications, by themselves, would not be jarring, but when stacked up against other
contradictory "facts" about Slothrop in this section, they are disorienting.

Later in section four, the narrator completely objectifies Slothrop, adding to the reader's disorientation:

There is also the story about Tyrone Slothrop, who was sent into the Zone to be present at his own assembly. . . . The plan went wrong. He is being broken down instead, and scattered. His cards have been laid down, Celtic style, . . . laid out and read, but they are the cards of a tanker and a feeb: they point only to a long and scuffling future, to mediocrity. . . . (GR 738)

A few paragraphs down the same page, the reader encounters an interview with a spokesman for the Counterforce, who says, "We were never that concerned with Slothrop qua Slothrop" and then continues to define him—in the past tense—as a "pretext" and a "point-for-point microcosm."

Shortly after the interview fragment, the narrator switches his focus to Seaman Bodine, who finds himself looking directly into the face of Slothrop. Bodine is "one of the few who can still see Slothrop as any sort of integral creature any more. Most of the others gave up long ago trying to hold him together, even as a concept—"'It's just got too remote' 's what they usually say"

(GR 740). In this meeting, Bodine talks to Slothrop-Rocketman, but Slothrop appears to be completely unaware of him. It was not long after this meeting that Bodine
began "helpless, in shame to let Slothrop go" (GR 741). When Bodine lets go, Slothrop ceases to exist. Solitary and naked in Northern Germany, Rocketman dissipates. That reader who would have the facts—the why, the where, the how—of Slothrop's disappearance is denied them. The narrator's next (and penultimate) reference to Slothrop is to point to his non-existence: "Sitting under [an apple tree], with anyone else but Slothrop, is a barelegged girl . . ." (GR 744). Somewhere in the spacetime of a few pages, the reader loses Slothrop. And when Slothrop-as-object disappears, the reader-as-subject gets displaced.

Pynchon's universe, based on the concept of the endless present, disallows narrative closure and even prevents empirical closure. Twentieth-century physicists have discovered, with poets, that the profound truths are imageless (Earl qtd. in Clerc 236). Throughout the novel, the reader finds it very difficult to establish a sense of place, despite Pynchon's descriptions (usually rendered in beautiful language) of the natural surroundings. Especially in the fourth section, the reader loses her temporal and spatial bearings. The focalization, moving from internal to external, constantly and suddenly changes. An apt description of the structural principle of this section emerges in the narrator's description of "the never-sleeping percolation of life" in the Rocket
City: "Outside and Inside interpiercing one another too fast, too finely labyrinthine, for either category to have much hegemony any more" (GR 681). The end of section four is composed of disjointed fragments with titles, some of which sound like the headlines of newspaper stories, while others resemble tarot card titles. Like the titles in the "Aeolus" chapter of Ulysses, these offer no guidance to the reader, rather they serve to illuminate the distance between the narrative fragments that are exaggerated examples of the pieces glued together in even the most seamless of narratives.

Like other post-modern works, Gravity's Rainbow exposes the illusion and mystification involved in fictive reality. Unlike contemporary writers such as Robbe-Grillet who offer up a camera-eye version of fictive reality in an attempt to produce a more authentic mimetic experience of a random, inscrutable universe, Pynchon points to the limited access of the camera (Siegel 26). The narrator draws attention to this limitation in a passage describing Katje:

The cameraman is pleased at the unexpected effect of so much flowing crepe, particularly when Katje passes before a window and the rainlight coming through changes it for a few brief unshutterings to murky glass, charcoal-saturated, antique and weather-worn, frock, face, hair, hands, slender calves all gone to glass and glazing, for the celluloid instant poised . . .
At the images she sees in the mirror Katje also feels a cameraman's pleasure, but knows what he cannot: that inside herself, enclosed in the soignee surfaces of dear fabric and dead cells, she is corruption and ashes. . . .

(GR 94)

The camera eye gives us a wealth of visual aspects, yet what we actually get are fragments—hair, hands, slender calves—that when added together do not equal Katje. In this way, photography is pornography.

Pynchon dismantles the notion of photographic reality's being "objective" by drawing the reader's attention to the manipulative techniques of the photographer/pornographer. Cinematic effect involves rhetoric in the same way that literary effect does. By showing that there is no purely objective reality, that objectivity and subjectivity are caught up in an interdependent relationship, Pynchon deconstructs perhaps the most profound of dichotomies, the dichotomy that has served as the bulwark for all forms of logical positivism and cognitive repression.

The narrative technique of *Gravity's Rainbow* is more akin to Cubist painting and sculpture than it is to cinema. Cubism fractures the object into many angles, aspects, and planes; then it restructures these all on the same plane, exceeding the limited access of the camera. In the (de)construction of Slothrop, in the ever-changing
forms and eventual formlessness of Slothrop, Pynchon refuses to exhaust the object by arresting its process of signification. Unlike the radical restructuring of Picasso and Braque, some Cubists (e.g., Metzinger and Gleizes) attempted to render the object more essential and complete, offering up merely "cubed" harmonious designs. But Pynchon's cubism is anything but harmonious, his object anything but essential.

In considering Pynchon’s deconstruction of dichotomies, we encounter the problems related to the basic pattern of cognition. Human perception proceeds primarily in a sequential manner, a fact evident in psychological experiments with equivocal figures (Hayles 175). These figures are black and white images that appear to be reversible, either as a white figure on a black background or as a black figure on a white background. Once we perceive both figures, we can switch our focus back and forth, causing one image and then the other to emerge. Although we may quickly change our focus, we can never catch the two figures together, because the appearance of one depends upon the disappearance of the other. Despite the fact that the figures "mutually define each other," human cognition allows only one figure at a time to receive the focus (Hayles 176). Thus, we never see the entire picture; half
of it is always outside the range of our vision.

*Gravity's Rainbow* presents a threat to the consciousness of that reader who thinks he can fully know the object, and once consciousness perceives such a threat, it cannot, except through a great effort of self-mystification, conceal its limitations. *

Exploring epistemological and ontological questions related to Pynchon's novel, Charles Russell observes, "Humanity is haunted by a fear of all that is undefined, unordered, and uncontrolled. ... At the heart of culture, consciousness, and language lies the fear of uncontrolled life; and finally, the fear of such life is the fear of death" (qtd. in Clerc 258). Theodor Adorno contends that "[m]an will experience death ... as heterogeneous and alien to the ego. ... [H]uman consciousness to this day is too weak to sustain the experience of death, perhaps even too weak for its conscious acceptance" (*Negative Dialectics* 369). * Accepting the premises of the above two ideas, I would argue that *Gravity's Rainbow* is the narrative equivalent of death and that this death is the father of the paranoid reader's desire.

In what is perhaps the most beautifully worded passage of the novel, the narrator alludes to humanity's fear of the wild heterogeneity of uncontrolled life:
... it was the equinox ... green spring
equal nights ... canyons are opening up, at
the bottoms are steaming fumaroles, steaming the
tropical life there like greens in a pot, rank,
dope-perfume, a hood of smell ... human
consciousness, that poor cripple, that deformed
and doomed thing, is about to be born. This is
the world just before men. Too violently
pitched alive in constant flow ever to be seen
by men directly. They are meant only to look at
it dead, in still strata, transputrefied to oil
or coal. Alive, it was a threat: it was Titans,
was an overpeaking of life so clangorous and
mad, such a green corona about Earth's body that
some spoiler had to be brought in before it blew
the Creation apart. So we, the crippled
keepers, were sent out to multiply, to have
dominion. God's spoilers. Us. Counter-
revolutionaries. It is our mission to promote
death. ... It was something we had to work on
historically and personally. ... holding down
the green uprising. (GR 720)

This passage reflects Pynchon's distinction between death
as part of the natural cycle of life and the death that
humans manufacture and institutionalize in the entropic
systems that we create to protect ourselves against death.
It is in the rigid and closed systems of belief that the
real destruction and negation of life occur.

The character Blicero symbolizes those of us in love
with a self-created death that guards against death--the
"oven"/Other--from the outside. Fetishists, we dress
death in fur and black lace. Recognizing our impotence,
we attempt to master death. In their stylized kinkiness,
the sterile routine of sexual domination and submission,
Blicero, Katje, and Gottfried insulate themselves from
"what, outside, proceeds without form or decent limit . . ." (GR 96). Their "formal, rationalized version" of the master-slave game shelters them from that which "none of them can bear--the War, the absolute rule of chance, their own pitiable contingency here, in its midst . . ." (GR 96). Quintessentially paranoid in their inability to bear the "rule of chance," the S and M players engage in active death work by compulsively treating each other as things. Brigadier Pudding's fulfilled masochism is the only real comfort in his life, satisfying "his need for pain, for something real, something pure" (GR 234).

The stylized sexual routines of the master-slave game reflect the impulse behind "the German mania for name-giving, dividing the Creation finer and finer, analyzing, setting namer more hopelessly apart from named . . ." (GR 391). In their obsession with defining and naming, these analysts seek to order the chaos of the universe. Later in the same passage about naming, the narrator alludes to the process of creating metaphors by uniting terms to create a new term. Pynchon offers a critique of metaphorical ordering by stressing the difference between the terms of the metaphor and by focusing on the gap between the terms. Here, I am reminded of Derrida's discussion in "White Mythology" of the process of metaphorization by which metaphysics systematically
forgets that it works in metaphors, which are substitutions for and displacements of previous terms. By focusing on the gap involved in metaphorization, Pynchon exposes "the chaos at the heart of meaning" (Russell qtd. in Clerc 269). (His critique extends to the image, which does not escape this process of difference.) The hyper-rational reader requires metaphor, but Pynchon gives him metonymic associations.

Peter Brooks refers to Freud's masterplot, as set down in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, to explain narrative plot structure. He points out that both the death instinct and Eros are "embracing force[s], totalizing in intent, tending toward combination in new unities: metonymy in the search to become metaphor" (Reading 106). Both instincts seek a return to quiescence and represent the "need to restore an earlier state of things" (106). Thus, desire is desire for the end. In terms of narrative, we have the reader's desire for narrative closure, and implicit in this desire is the return to the state of nonnarratability.

In my calling Pynchon's text the narrative equivalent of death and in my claiming that the paranoid reader is incapable of handling the chaos and heterogeneity of it as a narrative experience, I would seem to be in conflict with the conception of death implied in Freud's death
instinct. If, indeed, the death instinct implies a need for metaphor, totalization, and a restoration of an earlier or original state of things—which sounds an awful lot like the need for a closed system such as that offered by Judeo-Christian teleology—then I am opposing a different conception of death to this one. At the close of Gravity's Rainbow, the reader is left hanging in the Orpheus Theater, denied a closed, totalizing death because the bomb will never explode. That reader enamored of linear climax is denied narrative orgasm (totalization, restoration of an original state of detumescence) and, thus, can get no satisfaction. Desire persists. And desire is exactly what the paranoid reader neurotically attempts to deny. Like Pokler, this reader must "tam[e] the terror of exponential curves into the linear, the safe" (GR 414).

Saussure established the fact that language is built on a system of differences. Post-structural linguistic theory has gone a step further by showing the instability of the difference between terms. Pynchon's characters reveal the two main actions of language: (1) the fragmenting of experience by language/consciousness "into discrete, abstract, and alienated entities"; and (2) the restructuring of "the fragments into an alternative order that would take the place of the original experience"
(Clerc 29). Although Pynchon engages in a critique of consciousness and language, his own language is often achingly beautiful and effective, such as in the phrases "the geometry of her restlessness" and "But out at the horizon, out near the burnished edge of the world" (GR 214) and "out into the three o'clock waste that presses, oceanic, against their buoyed inner space . . . " (GR 371) and in the passage: "Halfway out now from under the covers, she hangs, between the two worlds, a white, athletic tension in this cold room. Oh, well . . . she leaves him in their warm burrow, moves shivering vuhvuhvuh in grainy darkness over wintertight floorboards, slick as ice to her bare soles" (GR 53). The aptness of Pynchon's language complicates his dramatization of the distance between signifier and signified. Relying on metaphorical association, such passages offer the reader what seem to be fixed spots, places where she can lie still for awhile, stations in the vast spacetime of the novel. And, as the narrator says at a late point in Slothrop's existence, "isn't that every paranoid's wish? to perfect methods of immobility?" (GR 572). But despite the beauty and resonance of Pynchon's descriptive passages, ultimately the reader comes to realize that she cannot form a complete conception of the narrative scene or place. In trying to reassemble the experience from the montage
fragments that Pynchon provides, she encounters a situation much like that of the dreamer, who upon waking and attempting to articulate the dream, feels it slip away. This reader reaches for "halos of meaning around words . . . that only stay behind--if they do--for a moment . . . can't be held or developed, and, presently, go away" (GR 145).

Like Ulysses, Gravity's Rainbow creates a dissonance that exceeds the cognitive realm of experience. The novel makes its music in a polytonal array, with the aleatory free play of all variables arranged in diverse serial forms. For modern music (as for new physics), the only limitations that exist involve the human perceptual and conceptual ability (Babbitt 9). In the Orpheus Theater, Pynchon plays Schoenberg, but many in the audience think they hear Hadyn.
NOTES: CHAPTER III

'My discussion of the paradigm shift in physics owes much to N. Katherine Hayles' *The Cosmic Web* and to Gary Zukav's *The Dancing Wu Li Masters.*

"Pynchon would enjoy the fact that Keller’s article is sandwiched between one piece entitled "Fluorescence spectrum of NaI<Tl> crystal: A laboratory experiment" and another entitled "Multipacting mechanism as the origin of breakdown in high-frequency electrical discharges in gases."

"Peter Rabinowitz’s "Truth in Fiction: A Reexamination of Audiences" (Critical Inquiry 4 (1977): 121-41) provides a helpful analysis of types of audiences.

'Although one might expect Booth’s liberal humanist reader to resemble Wolfgang Iser’s implied (liberal humanist) reader in being self-sufficient and able to transcend logically the ambiguities and indeterminacies of modern and post-modern fiction, this is not the case. Obviously, not all liberal humanist readers are alike. Booth fears the effect on the reader of such morally indeterminate books as Nabokov’s *Lolita* and such immoral books as Céline’s *Journey to the End of Night*, granting these texts the power to unravel the moral fabric of the reader. Thus, Booth’s reader can experience displacement, while Iser’s reader cannot.

'Walter Davis has suggested that paranoia may serve as a meta-discourse for Pynchon and other post-modern writers, a suggestion that I find fascinating.

'In his introduction to the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics*, Friedrich Solmsen points out that Aristotle’s doctrine of *katharsis* helped to justify poetry philosophically and answered Plato’s objection to poetry’s stirring the emotions, which he considered base elements of the human soul. Actually, the *Rhetoric* contains a much more in-depth analysis of human emotion than does the *Poetics.*
Robert Nadeau notes that Pynchon has an agreement with his publisher stipulating that no critical studies of his work can be published by them if they wish to maintain their contract with him. I am reminded of the narrator's/Enzian's words: "a Text, to be picked to pieces, annotated, explicated, and masturbated till it's all squeezed limp of its last drop" (GR 520).

One of the most important contributions to rhetorical theory in this century is Kenneth Burke's analysis of the rhetoric of self-mystification, a ubiquitous form of persuasion. See especially A Rhetoric of Motives.

Of course, death has been "humanized" in many ways, not the least of which is death as defined by Heidegger and other existentialist philosophers. Death as the force that animates and lends meaning to life is a death that one can live rather comfortably with.
runes tunes fairy tales

Terri fails to make cents
cents sense

unfamiliar as she is with the olfactory, the rhetoric of the no’s, though very familiar with the rhetoric of the (e)yes. No no. Numb her dumb her. For she speaks moons . . . loons . . . prairie sails . . .

Sept. 28, 1823:

From here our cabin is a buoy on the red waves of the plains . . .

Too many nights of wolves prowling fresh graves, howling at the fences that kept them out.

She writes in a night of wolves, in the year of the jackal. Weaving in tortuous excess (like Penelope), she hopes to escape that silent coupling of teeth to flesh toward which the fox moves with linear certainty.
(D. H. Lawrence knew.) Certainty and clarity are next to Godliness. God is great, God is omni-everything, God is design. (Robert Frost--ice will suffice--knew this god.)

GOD:DOG

A brown dog falls under the lights with a convincing thump, roll, thump, roll. And with a grand flourish, she dies and dies and dies.

The sleek yellow car disappears around the bend. But let's get the facts straight: Gatsby (God's Boy) was not driving. It was Daisy. (No dun breast here, no siree. Hers is green. Green as pond slime. Just ask Ophelia.) Crazy Lazy Daze-y, her mouth stuffed with $$$, she won't stop making cents/sense. And she won't tell what maze she knew--not to Henry James or to Daisy Miller or even to Hillis Miller (God's Other Boy)¹

In some respects, the feminist literary and critical movement reminds me of the movement of the early modernists, the struggle against patriarchal discourse resembling the high modernists' struggle to break away from the stranglehold of nineteenth-century realism, the literary law of the father. However, in their recent work, No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar question the validity of this comparison. Indeed, they perceive
modernism as a reaction against the literary women who were its direct precursors. Women writers and readers controlled the literary marketplace of the second half of the nineteenth century—at least that was the opinion held by many male writers and critics of the period and of the next generation. Gilbert and Gubar contend that

[even the establishment of a supposedly anti-establishment avant garde can be seen as part of this "reaction-formation against the rise of literary women"], for the twin strategies of excavation and innovation deployed in experimental works like The Cantos (1917-69), The Waste Land, and Ulysses reconstitute the hierarchies implicit in what T. S. Eliot called in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" "the mind of Europe" (6). . . . [The excavation] recover[s] the noble fatherhood of precursors from Homer to Dante and Shakespeare, while the linguistic innovation associated with the avant garde . . . functions to occult language so that only an initiated elite can participate in the community of high culture. . . . It is not surprising, therefore, that on his first reading of The Waste Land Joyce noted that T. S. Eliot’s masterpiece "ends [the] idea of poetry for ladies". . . . (150)

Only a few women writers of the time, such as Djuna Barnes and Gertrude Stein, produced avant garde works.

In searching for radically experimental works by American and British women writers of the post-modern period, I have encountered a situation similar to the one Gilbert and Gubar describe. The avant garde writers--at least those who are visible--are predominantly male.

Bonnie Zimmerman’s cogent analysis of why a post-modern
feminist aesthetic has failed to materialize ("Feminist Fiction and the Post-Modern Challenge") offers several possible reasons related to the conservative tendencies of contemporary women writers:

(1) Those women producing radically innovative post-modern works remain "unfamiliar to the reading public and marginal to the literary world."

(2) Many women writers are "explicitly feminist or influenced by larger aims of feminism [and, thus, remain] committed to realism, to creating an authentic female voice, and to portraying authentic female experience." Of those writers who use experimental techniques, most make these techniques work "in the service of realism." Style and technique do not become ends.

(3) "Perhaps women have been raised to see relations between things and people" and for them language "represents something, something real and rational."

(4) Perhaps women writers are not finished with reality. For them, post-modern anti-realism may be "passé" (186).

Zimmerman's speculation uncovers some of the differences between Anglo-American feminism and French feminism. French feminists do not put their faith in "realism" and in representational language to convey a women's heterogeneity in her own voice. Instead, they
interrogate language and male-defined reality. For French feminists such as Julia Kristeva, Hélène Cixous, and Luce Irigaray, what is acutely real is the fact that language--phallogocentric discourse--has silenced woman. Each time I speak or write the word phallogocentric, I am struck by the redundancies residing within this term that mirrors itself into a Holy Trinity. Phallogocentrism is the fantasy of a centered, essential, transcendent subject and the phallus as the supreme, indeed the only, signifier. Derrida calls logocentrism "the matrix of idealism" and claims that the dismantling of logocentrism requires the deconstruction of every kind of idealism or spiritualism (Positions 51). French feminists, most of whom agree with Derrida's description of the task of deconstruction, have their work cut out for them.

Although Derrida's work has been and continues to be important to French feminist theoreticians, they have established themselves as his somewhat-less-than-dutiful (daughters) students. (Perhaps sisters would be a better term.) And the same holds true for their relationship with Freud and Lacan. The semiotic and psychoanalytic theories of Kristeva, Irigaray, and Cixous concern what Kristeva calls "the specificity of female psychology and its symbolic realizations" (qtd. in Juncker 425). Freud's
posing the unconscious as the site of meaning signalled a Copernican revolution of the subject, overthrowing the sacred Cartesian ideals of presence and self. Yet Freud’s theory is mired in phallogocentric thinking, a fact evident at the most basic level, in his two explanations of the origin and existence of the unconscious. In both versions, the unconscious depends on the prior agency of consciousness. Describing Freud’s first version, Colin MacCabe observes, "what is unconscious is unconscious because it involves a renunciation [of consciousness]" (6). In this account, the conscious is primary and the unconscious secondary and derivative. Freud’s alternative explanation suggests that the unconscious results from the child’s connection with sensuous reality. The subject establishes "defences against being misled by perception and relegates hallucinations to the unconscious," consciousness again prior to the unconscious (MacCabe 6). Irigaray, representing the position of many feminists, criticizes Freud’s theories for ignoring the possibility of a feminine specificity; failing to see two sexes, Freud defines feminine "in terms of deficiency or atrophy, as the other side of the sex that alone holds a monopoly on value: the male sex" (This Sex 69). Freud "giv[es] a priori value to Sameness, shoring up his demonstration by falling back upon time-honored devices such as analogy,
comparison, symmetry, dichotomous oppositions . . . " (72).  
Irigaray poses the provocative question "[W]hat meaning could the Oedipus complex have in a symbolic system other than patriarchy?" (73).  

Lacan's post-Freudian psychoanalysis places the Oedipal complex within an expanded social and linguistic context and would thus seem to be much more acceptable to those Marxist/materialist feminists who fault Freud for viewing women exclusively in terms of their isolated individual histories while overlooking what relationship their suffering might have had to the social/cultural situation. In his analysis of the self, Lacan substitutes Freud's "phallic, Oedipal father with the Name-of-the-Father, that is the father as representative of language, culture, and authority" (Juncker 425). Lacan's discussion of the pre-Oedipal and pre-symbolic stage, a stage he calls "the imaginary," has been important to feminists in their conception of jouissance. At this stage, both girl and boy infants merge with their mother's body and exist blissfully unaware of separation anxiety or castration fear. The pre-Oedipal stage is characterized by pulsions and drives, bodily sensations and instinctual forces allied with Kristeva's notion of the semiotic.  

Once Lacan moves to the Oedipal crisis, he parts company with many feminists, who are suspicious of his
designation of the term *Phallus* to represent the signifier of authority. Those who defend Lacan's use of the term remind his detractors that he is speaking in *symbolic* terms only: the Phallus does not represent the penis. Yet Irigaray contends that in Lacan's theory the significance of "penis envy" is not questioned, rather the female's desire for the phallus "is further elaborated in its structural dimension" (62). In practicing what Irigaray calls "phallic imperialism," which uses "phallomorphic representation" and "phallic categories," psychoanalytic theory protects both the phallus and itself from "the recall of a heterogeneity capable of reworking the principle of its authority" (qtd. in de Beaugrande 262). In this way, woman is cut off from her sexuality and effectively silenced.

Although psychoanalytic theory has the potential to upset the phallogocentric order of discourse, one cannot ignore the fact that it is subject to that very same discourse. And, I would add, so is feminist theory. Irigaray points out, as does Derrida, that there is no easy way "to leap to the outside of phallogocentrism, nor any possible way to situate oneself there, that would result from the simple fact of being a woman" (162). To disrupt the discourse that has for so long ruled the
Western world, feminists must undertake a ceaseless and heterogeneous process of deconstruction.

The fact that one is a woman writer certainly does not mean that one is a feminist writer; furthermore, the fact that a woman writer claims to be a feminist does not guarantee that her writing subverts the ruling order of discourse. Kristeva warns that women writers "tend to identify with [symbolic] power after having rejected it" (qtd. in Marks and de Courtivron 166). She also feels that women writers either put their efforts into representing their own real families or into creating imaginary stories in which an identity is constituted. In both cases, "narcissism is safe" (166). Kristeva feels that for women writers to move beyond narcissistic hysteria and to overcome their tendency to dance around language rather than to actively experiment with it and push it to and past its limits, they need to take full advantage of the position of the negative that woman inhabits. To perform a negative function would mean "to reject everything finite, definite, structured, loaded with meaning in the existing state of society" (166). Such an attitude has the potential to disrupt social codes by denying the phallic position but without assuming an alternate position of mastery. Those writers whom Kristeva considers the most revolutionary, the writers who
have "introduced] ruptures, blank spaces, and holes in language" (165), are all males: Mallarmé, Lautreamont, Artaud, and Joyce.

Clearly, for Kristeva, revolutionary writers are avant garde writers, and I must admit that I tend to share her belief. Yet as I consider the social and political impact of a fairly conventional novel like Margaret Atwood’s The Handmaid’s Tale, I return to one of Zimmerman’s statements: perhaps feminist writers are not finished with reality. The literary avant garde in this culture is male-dominated, and quite likely we come to privilege those qualities in the most innovative works of men while overlooking more subtle--or different--qualities of female or feminist (not necessarily female) revolutionary writers. Mindful of all this and trying to occupy a space informed by French feminist theory and by the Anglo-American feminist interrogation of that theory, I have chosen four very different post-modern texts to focus on in this chapter: Monique Wittig’s Les guerilleres, Hélène Cixous’ Inside, Kathy Acker’s Don Quixote, and Toni Morrison’s Beloved.

I decided to include the two works by French women writers because they dramatize and materialize many of the principles of French feminist theory. Wittig’s and Cixous’ books both were published in 1969, at a time when
the movement for the liberation of women, MLF, had begun to make a tremendous impact on French society. Although *Les guerilleres* and *Inside* are stylistically quite different from each other, as one might infer from their titles, they demonstrate characteristics of feminine or non-phallic writing that make them different from other works published in the post-modern period. They may reflect future forms and trends in Anglo-American feminist fiction. So far, a few critical/theoretical pieces are the only examples of *l'écriture féminine* by American writers (e.g., Rachel Bleu DuPlessis' "For the Etruscans").

The blurbs on the back cover of *Don Quixote* proclaim Kathy Acker "The best of punk writers" (*Esquire*); "Publishing's shocking new sensation!" (*Vogue*); "quickly becoming the hottest, most passionate, sexy, experimental, daring darling of fiction on both sides of the Atlantic since Genet" (*Metro News*). Acker's novel is the most characteristically post-modern of the four in this chapter. She has managed to reconcile her feminist vision with the Anglo-American post-modern aesthetic.

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* may seem an odd choice when compared with the other three works. Like *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Beloved* looks conventional and is . . . well . . . so readable—or "readerly" as Barthes (*S/Z*) describes
texts with classical, traditional structures as opposed to "writerly" (ambivalent, plural, polysemic) texts that require the reader to write them. But as the narrative reveals itself in layers, the reader is faced with a succession of voices and stories that repeatedly overturn her conceptions of the reality within Morrison's novel. Through these displacements, the reader becomes acutely aware of what Kristeva means by "women's time" and women's reality. Like the other three texts, Beloved, in its own specific and heterogeneous ways, is a feminist novel that undermines the security and authority of the phallogocentric subject.

The phallogocentric subject on trial in fiction comes in many forms: the author, the text, the fictional characters, the reader, the cultural and social situation—to name some of the major forms. In this chapter, I concentrate on the reader, but my observations extend to other forms of the phallogocentric subject as well. This reader is a composite of all of the readers that I have discussed in previous chapters—not a reader who died out decades ago as many opponents of post-structural theory are apt to argue, but a reader who is alive and thriving. The phallogocentric reading subject desires representational texts ruled by reason, structured according to narrative tradition, narrated by a constant
voice in language that behaves itself on the page (i.e., acts like a proper lady or an obedient child in being seen but not heard). A perfect example of this kind of reader is Lady Bruton in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Lady Bruton, that quintessential phallogophile, titillated by the grammatical prowess of Hugh Whitbread (white bread--bland, over-leavened, insubstantial) and Richard Dalloway (dull of ways), turned on by their turgid, strong, direct, linear prose. In a classic exhibition of pen(is) envy, Lady Bruton bemoans her lack of rhetorical skill and her inability to produce anything but rambling, diffused--alas, soft--prose. Like Clarissa Dalloway, the four writers of this chapter remain uninvited to lunch with the Lady Brutons of the world.

*Les guerilleres* is lyrical, angry, and radical--full of the fervor of the student-worker strikes in Paris at the end of the 60's. One need only flip through a few pages to perceive that this is a narrative unlike any other. Immediately striking is the large 0 on page 51, which, the reader discovers, acts as a plural motif in the work. I am reminded of the large black dot punctuating the end of the "Ithaca" chapter in *Ulysses*--Fritz Senn's "grotesquely hyperbolized" period--of which this 0 is the converse. Joyce's black hole or sphere calls attention to the artifice involved in imposing artistic closure to
disguise the fact that the black hole (the Other) is unfathomable and unknowable, and although Wittig's open hole represents lacunae or gaps in knowledge and signification, it is also a circle that represents containment and repetition. As a structural motif, the circle ties together the narrative parts, inscribing the 144 pages of fragments around a central topic or theme. The fragments, although disjointed from those contiguous to them, move in a recursive process and are, thus, related in the total scheme of the narrative. There is no linear plot progression. It is true that the story concludes at the end of the women's successful guerrilla war, but this ending is really the beginning of Women's history—a reconciliation of what Kristeva calls "women's time," which is cyclic and eternal, with linear time, which is political and historical.

With the O, Wittig also conveys woman's mouth open to speak but remaining mute, the open but silent mouth symbolizing the gaps in signification, which are the only sites men have been unable to occupy within phallogocentric discourse:

[T]he men have bawled shouted with all their might to reduce you to silence. The women say, the language you speak poisons your glottis tongue palate lips. They say, the language you speak is made up of words that are killing you. They say, the language you speak is made up of signs that rightly speaking designate what men have appropriated. Whatever they have not laid
hands on, whatever they have not pounced on like many-eyed birds of prey does not appear in the language you speak. This is apparent precisely in the intervals that your masters have not been able to fill with their words of proprietors and possessors, this can be found in the gaps, in all that which is not continuation of their discourse, in the zero, the 0, the perfect circle that you invent to imprison them and overthrow them. (114)

By naming--attaching words to objects or facts--men think they have appropriated these words. In naming women, men have called them slaves. Woven into Wittig’s narrative, usually in the middle of a fragment, are full pages of women’s names with beautiful sounds. Although the names originate from different languages and are drawn from different cultures, they all share a significant characteristic: they refer to a prior concept and thus come already "burdened" with meaning, reflecting men’s appropriation. Acting as a woman’s name, these words thus reflect at least two levels of appropriation. The following list of names

DEMETER CASSIA POPPAEA
TAI-SI FATIMA OPAL
LEONORA EMMANUELA
BO-JI SHIRIN AGATHA
KEM-PHET MELISANDE
IRENE LEOKADIA LAURA

contains terms for minerals, plants, animals, actions, and concepts.

In addition to the blank pages with 0 and the pages listing names, pages containing catalogues of anatomical
parts interrupt the narrative paragraphs, mirroring the ways in which women have been fragmented and diminished into segments. One form of fragmentation that the women warriors want especially to guard against is the exhaltation and worship of the vulva, a practice which would substitute one master signifier for another:

They say they must now stop exalting the vulva. They say they must break the last bond that binds them to a dead culture. They say that any symbol that exalts the fragmented body is transient, must disappear. Thus it was formerly. They, the women, the integrity of the body their first principle, advance marching together into another world. (72)

They do not say that vulvas with their elliptical shape are to be compared to suns, planets, innumerable galaxies. They do not say that gyratory movements are like vulvas. They do not say that the vulva is the primal form which as such describes the world in all its extent, in all its movement. They do not in their discourses create conventional figures derived from these symbols. (61)

The women guerrilla fighters must completely dismantle language and society before they can begin to rebuild a feminine world.

Wittig weaves contradictions into the narrative, actions that oppose the feminine mode and indicate that the women have temporarily assumed a position of mastery, authority, power. At points, for example, the warriors get caught up in horrific brutality, exhibiting behavior similar to the barbarous behavior that men exhibit--on and
off the battlefield. But the narrator reports later that the women have corrected themselves, resolved to adhere to guerrilla-feminine tactics in which

the objective is not to gain ground but to destroy the greatest number of the enemy to annihilate his armament to compel him to move blindly never to grant him the initiative in engagements to harass him without pause. Using such tactics, to put an enemy out of action without killing him is to immobilize several individuals, the one who is wounded and those who bring aid, it is the best way to sow disarray. (95)

Part fiction and part epic poem, *Les querilleres* defines generic categorization. It is the glossalalia of a priestess-bard with O as oracle-orifice. It renounces all former myths and creates new ones, beginning with Eve in the garden. In the new myth, Eve does not lose paradise; on the contrary, once she eats the fruit, her head "touches the stars" while her feet remain firmly planted on the ground.

In *Les querilleres*, the phallogocentric reader is faced with a text so different from conventional fiction that this text becomes the Other. Denied a text that acts as a mirror from which he can simply read his own reflection, the reader immediately experiences the difference, the gap, between himself and the text. Though defining himself in opposition to the text, he is also likely to identify with the text as a whole or identify
with it at points in the narrative. At the moment of this identification, the reader is both subject and other—a subject in process/on trial.

With the exception of Irigaray, no other French writer has been more closely connected with l'écriture féminine than has Cixous. Yet she reluctantly uses this term to refer to what some choose to call feminine writing—her reluctance expressing her desire to avoid all forms of binary oppositions. She emphatically denies that she is a feminist, and she dislikes being labeled as one. (Of course, her protests do not stop people like me.) For Cixous, dissolving such stifling categories has proved to be liberating, both personally and aesthetically. In "The Laugh of the Medusa," she observes that binary oppositions lead to "hierarchizing," and exchange involving "the struggle for mastery which can end only in at least one death" ("Laugh" 264). In exploding the self/other opposition, she does not argue for the merging of self and other to accomplish an androgynous "Selfsame," rather she seeks "the possibility of extending into the other without destroying the other" and searches "for the other where s/he is, without trying to bring everything back to myself" (qtd. in Juncker 427).
Inside obliterates the boundary between outside and inside. The narrative tells the story of a young girl who loves her father so passionately that she fuses with him.

But if we were one, there would be no space between the two of us, for God to creep in. If I were he, if he were me, if he were me, if I were he, who could have come between us?

Do you understand? Into his ear, without a word, I slip my secret, with the tip of my tongue I draw mute signs in his ear. He understands. Then in the darkness, he encloses me in his slender arms once more, and I am so small that his arms around my back cross over and his hands hold on to my thighs. Our flesh is the same, fibrous, hard, with the same skin too thin for life that tears easily on top. Dissolved, I have neither bulk nor weight. My heart comes undone and falls into my father's chest. I am no more than a mouth attached to his breast. He is everything and I am nothing. (53)

Her father is also the Phallic Mother, and the narrator is both the daughter and the son; thus, the potential for incest is doubled. Indeed, the narrative contains several sensual passages describing the connection between father and daughter/"mother" and "son." To reflect the lack of a self/other dichotomy, the point of view changes constantly, switching from "I" to "you" to "he" to "we."

When her father dies, the girl understands that she must separate herself from him, who is also a succession of indistinguishable lovers, or else herself die. Translated into feminist theory, the girl cannot make the transition to the symbolic stage within a feminine
discourse until she separates herself from the language of the Father.

The reader finds no temporal boundaries in Cixous’ novel; past and present often merge within the space of one paragraph. This blurring of tenses occurs because the narrator has chosen to tell herself “another past” to replace the one her mother failed to preserve. Consumed by the past that she is creating, the narrator loses sight of the present. She cannot come fully into the present, cannot begin to live (or speak or love) until she climbs out of her dead father’s entombed body. As in Les gerrilleres, woman’s history begins at the end of the narrative.

Cixous contends that although one cannot define a feminine practice of writing, this does not mean that such a practice does not exist. Feminine writing exceeds the bounds of phallogocentric discourse, and, thus, makes philosophical containment and coding impossible (“Laugh” 253). L’écriture féminine functions within the phallogocentric system of signification, but it does so through the extra-linguistic means of “music, rhythm, voice, and laughter” (Juncker 426). Inscribed by the oral, anal, vocal, and gestational drives, l’écriture féminine is an erotic writing that troubles Logos (as well as his sons, Coherence and Unity) with texts of heterogeneity,
simultaneity, and ruptures. Cixous stresses that this is a language that avoids inscribing contours and allows other languages to speak through it. Feminine writing "does not contain, it carries; it does not hold back, it makes possible" (qtd. in Jones 366). Such writing does not attempt to own or control words as a liege to Capitalism and patriarchy (Cixous, The Exile of James Joyce 744).

Cixous insists on the significance of "multiple, specifically female libidinal impulses" (Jones 366). Her texts, like those of other contemporary French feminists, abound in the use of the verb jouir ("to enjoy, to experience pleasure") and the noun la jouissance ("bliss, rapture, sexual pleasure"). Female pleasure differs markedly from male pleasure in terms of libidinal economy. While the male libidinal economy is defined "in terms of the capitalist gain and profit motive [,] [w]omen's jouissance carries with it the notion of fluidity, diffusion, duration . . . without concern about ends or closure" (Marks and de Courtivron 36-37n). Jane Gallop points out that the meaning of jouissance in a legal sense is related to usufruct, a term defined as the legal right of using and enjoying something owned by someone else; thus, jouissance involves using and enjoying without exchanging for profit (qtd. in McGee 204n). Cixous claims
that males fear jouissance because they do not know it: "Men say that there are two unrepresentable things: death and the feminine sex. That's because they need femininity to be associated with death; it's the jitters that give them a hard-on! for themselves!" ("Laugh" 255).

In Cixous' writing, the ear often takes precedence over the eye. She believes that the musical quality of words has the power to heal (Conley 146). The tempo of her novels "is in cadence with lacunary moments of grammatical inconsistencies, sentence fragments, image signs, portmanteau words, litanic inscriptions, and jets of letters of infinite regress" (Conley 86). Perhaps the most obvious way that Inside displaces the phallocentric reader is by subordinating sense (meaning) to sound.

Although the novel contains many litanic passages, the resonance and repetition of the litanies do not clarify the meaning, mainly because there are so many "scenes" in the narrative that exceed the reader's ability to visualize and to conceptualize. The following passage, which begins one of the chapters, details one of these scenes; novelists have traditionally used the beginning of chapters for exposition, but this passage is anything but expository in the traditional sense:

A MOUTH with a firm line is speaking to the bowl of undelineated night. The mouth is speaking to me, inside me however, I see its firm lips forming speech. I see a mouth speaking inside
me, I do not see myself, I am black, filled with a soft pliable substance, an unlimited mass, silent, vibrant. The lips in profile articulate vigorously.

He wants to persuade me: his lips are near, so near they appear immense though not disturbing. I know they are bigger than I, about whom I know nothing. . . . The firmness of the speech rubbing, rubbing kneads my pasty mass, firing me up, I hollow myself out, going round faster and faster, turning round, I pick myself up and make for the corners of the mouth, it sucks me in, I swell up in reply. I'm burning, ah! I'm being torn apart, I'm opening up, ah! . . . The mouth is testing, the upper lip curves me a slight question which throws me back ever so slightly to the left beneath it, and not to the right or in front. (63-64)

At this point, the mouth leaves the narrator, who misses its/his presence. Suddenly, a small hand appears:

A blue hand stretches out palm down, on the left, below. The fingers appear, the outer edges spread out and vanish between the dark blue and my blackness. The five fingers barely apart point toward the place where the mouth was. The blue hand hesitates or rather floats, resting on the moving surface that is me, or rather slides over my congealed surface, but where is it going? how far? fine hand long blue fingers sliding up to where I am and then am no more, and suppose it were to go all the way to the edges? my substance hopes it will float, slide, nothing impossible in the time they inhabit. The thickness of my hope turns to metal, riveted to the hole's wound knocked over and over again tick took knock by lit-tle/knocks cold/knock, knock, and hop, my thickness clings to the hollow of the palm, and off we go in one leap toward the edges. In its narrowness it is female, smaller too than the mouth, yet sufficient, less commandig, but self assured. (64-65)

In the passages above, Cixous' language is concrete, physical, and sensuous--likely to affect the reader.
through sensory appeal, but unlikely to provide enough logical connections to enable the phallogocentric reading subject to conceptualize the scene or the situation. The psycholinguist Teun Van Dijk has observed that readers attempt to construct "macrostructures." Typically, readers begin with the recognition of individual words and move to the transitions between words, then to phrasal syntax and to functional relationships; readers progress from visual words to associations, from simple images to categories and their associations, ending with real-world contexts that produce understanding (Van Dijk 29). Well, the reader of Inside gets lost somewhere in the gap between visual words and real-world contexts. Cixous' scenes are much less representational than the Daliesque, surreal dreamscapes so common to postmodern literature. Surreal works are firmly connected with the real, requiring the standard of the real to reveal their defamiliarizing effects. Rarely do these texts attempt to represent the mechanisms of the unconscious—condensation, displacement, distortion—that are at work in the discourse of an actual dream (Norris 4). Instead, the surrealist usually constructs an imitation of a dream, providing his reader with the picture of a dream translated into conscious (waking) terms. But Cixous' writing goes beyond the surreal, making the reader feel as
if she is caught in a dream or a nightmare while blindfolded . . . or perhaps involved in a dream to the second power, i.e., a dream within a dream, twice-removed from reality. Although modern and post-modern novels focus on the "inside," often situating themselves within the consciousness of the characters, Cixous' novel inhabits a space neither inside nor outside. And to that reader for whom locus is Logos, Cixous' world must feel off center.

In describing the ways that Luce Irigaray's discourse subverts the syntax of discursive logic, Robert de Beaugrande points to "a cyclical array of concepts or theses touching each other at their edges, but not striding forward in the directional march of argument or syllogism, let alone of formal demonstration or proof." The reader can enter Irigaray's discussion at various sites and roam freely, "never finding a first ground or absolute origin. Social, economic, symbolic, linguistic, psychoanalytic, and philosophic issues reflect and refract each other in a bewilderingly variegated and often richly imagistic texture" (260). By taking Irigaray's discursive form and submitting it to another turn of the screw, i.e., contextualizing the form in a novel describing the post-modern condition, one can begin to understand Kathy Acker's method in Don Quixote. However, unlike the
writing of Irigaray, Wittig, Cixous, and Kristeva, which ultimately express affirmation and empowerment, Acker's writing dramatizes woman's non-existence and non-language.

On the title page directly under the title but in lower case letters so small that one might overlook it (as I did) is the phrase "which was a dream." This phrase--though brief and understated--carries a lot of significance for the novel. Quite obviously, the novel's being a dream explains its peculiar structure: the first part of the novel is called "The Beginning of Night," and the third part is "The End of the Night," with the narrative as a succession of dreams, some of the dreams imbedded within each other like Chinese boxes. Although Don Quixote is infinitely more readable than Finnegans Wake, it shares some of the characteristics of Joyce's book of the night. Both texts reflect the fact that an actual dreamer is not an omniscient, unified, conscious subject. Speaking of Finnegans Wake, but in terms that can apply to Don Quixote as well, Margot Norris says, "The vantage point of the work is not an area of consciousness, but rather a place where the unconscious--the essentially 'unknowable' self--tries to communicate with the dreamer's conscious self" (4). Acker does not experiment with language to the extent that Joyce did, but she conveys clearly the inability of language to bridge the gap
between consciousness and the unconscious and the use (orchestrated by the ruling ideology) of lucid language to make the unknowable even more unknown. Being a woman and a dreamer, Don Quixote is especially estranged from language. The second part of the novel, titled "Other Texts," makes this estrangement very evident by removing Don Quixote as an active voice, relegating her to the position of an observer hidden in the lines of anonymous dialogue. The epigraph to this part reads: "BEING DEAD, DON QUIXOTE COULD NO LONGER SPEAK. BEING BORN INTO AND PART OF A MALE WORLD, SHE HAD NO SPEECH OF HER OWN. ALL SHE COULD DO WAS READ MALE TEXTS WHICH WEREN'T HERS."

Perhaps it is Acker's use of the past tense form was in the phrase "this was a dream" that makes me read the phrase as "This was a dream that Don Quixote once had but has now forsaken," and therein lies a hint of the grim resignation that pervades the novel. In Acker's dramatization of post-modern tenets taken to the extreme, logos, purpose, presence, cause, order, coherence, determinancy, closure, and depth are neutralized by silence, play, absence, trace, anarchy, dispersal, indeterminancy, openness, and surface. Most of these concepts in the latter group, connected with postmodernism and post-structuralism, have been so completely assimilated into contemporary intellectual circles that
they are taken for granted. But when Acker applies these epistemological and ontological concepts to relationships, the result is Don Quixote's impossible quest to find love and to discover her own language in the capitalist marketplace, which is a post-modern waste land devoid of any kind of community. Yet that result is not to suggest that the prior terms, the ruling concepts of realism and logical positivism, create a world any less grim. What the errant knight concludes is that it is impossible in this culture to be errant in the sense of deviating outside proper bounds or straying from what is standard, for monopoly capitalism has already bought up all the terms and co-opted both sides of binary oppositions, guaranteeing the failure of any kind of quest for liberation: "The political mirror of this individual simultaneity of freedom and imprisonment is a state of fascism and democracy: the United States of America" (DQ 187). In its project of ideological demystification, Acker's feminist critique moves beyond the issue of gender.

Although Herbert Marcuse's One Dimensional Man (1964) was published twenty years before Acker's novel, there is much about Don Quixote that recalls Marcuse's pessimism regarding the possibility of genuine liberation and happiness in the United States. He argues that American
capitalism has preempted all the traditional means of opposition by tolerating them, tolerance having become an effective form of repression. The ruling ideology achieves co-option by giving its "rebels" the space to engage in a specious and harmless freedom. Even art and sexuality, commonly construed as means of liberation, have become merely "entertaining" with no potential of becoming "endangering." (One of the characters in Don Quixote concludes that art is "fetishism" [DQ 94].)

Marcuse also perceived the repressive ideology embedded in the formal modes of thought of American intellectuals, the repression assuming the form of "rationality" that prevented the possibility of any genuine dialectical encounters and, thus, any serious opposition to itself. A closed syllogism of circular reasoning can serve as a metaphor for this rationality. One of the fascinating aspects of Acker's critique is her scrutiny of the "logic" of the closed syllogism that prevails in the capitalist waste land. Don Quixote abounds in flawed enthymemes. The Aristotelian notion of the enthymeme involves a syllogism based on sign or probability that is often presented with one of its premises suppressed or missing. In the Rhetoric, Aristotle suggests that speakers omit mentioning some of their logical premises because audiences, assumed to be
untrained in complex thinking, will not be able to follow a long string of syllogistic reasoning. Also, because rhetorical premises are propositions generally held to be true, the listener fills in the missing proposition for himself (1.2.1357a10-91). But in the world of Acker’s narrative, nothing is real, there are no causes or effects, time (which is a rational concept) cannot exist, and there is no community. Thus, the concepts of proof, probability, and commonly-held beliefs are meaningless.

The identification that Kenneth Burke says rhetoric requires in order for persuasion to succeed (A Rhetoric of Motives) cannot occur in a world in which persons can never know anything about others or about themselves.

The following "enthymemes" are brief examples of the "logic" that motivates the characters. In each case, a premise is either missing or hidden, and/or there are too many premises for the conclusion to support.

By taking on such a name which, being long, is male, she would be able to become a female-male or a night-knight. (DQ 10)

This is why I’m having an abortion. So I can love. (10)

Prince, unlike all our other images or fakes or Presidents stands for values. I mean: he believes. He wears a cross. (21)

Since the sole reason she ever went out of her house was to fuck, she decided that to be happy’s to fuck. (23)
Since the travellers were humanists, they beat up the dog, left it for dead, and rescued the monk. (25)

Because I love you I’ve destroyed myself: I’m you. (51)

You do not know who you are because you do not know how to speak properly. (78)

Everyone has a father. If a child didn’t have a father, it wouldn’t know how to want. (79)

When the world ends, there’ll be no more air. That’s why it’s important to pollute the air now. Before it’s too late. (81)

Since my only desire is that my fake family love me, my desire or me is reasonless and stupid. (150)

By definition, being unable to know anything, Don Quixote was mad. (191)

Since I no longer want anyone, I’m not human. (193)

Despite the sophistic reasoning of these enthymemes, the reader becomes uncomfortably aware of how true most of them are within the terms of the ruling discourse.

It is in those parts of the novel that scrutinize the fascism involved in our sexual loving that Acker’s critique strikes closest to the bone. In order to insulate ourselves as subjects, we turn the other into a thing. As Walter Davis’ Inwardness and Existence makes clear, to risk oneself in love is to submit one’s being as subject to the most perilous of existential experiences, requiring one to confront all of the falseness of her
existence. And it is the other with whom we engage in love who "tests the authenticity (adequacy) of our inwardness." Unable to withstand the rigors of such a test, most of us find shelter in inauthentic loving. Acker's errant knight sets out on a quest for true love but quickly perceives the futility of the quest, because "On no side, from no perspective, do women and men mutually see each other or mutually act with each other" (DQ 94). Thus, love in the Land of Annihilation becomes another form of fetishism.

The reader is in the uncomfortable position of having to witness displays of those very ways by which he has avoided authentic loving, to see played out the too-familiar sadistic and masochistic rituals, which preclude any deep self-reflection. The safe, circular rituals of loving in *Don Quixote* resemble the closed "syllogisms" of its reasoning: with the Other as the black hole to be avoided, human loving/reasoning circles endlessly back on itself. The reader, made uncomfortable by Acker's brutally relentless portrayal of the methods by which we commodify the other may very well begin to reflect on the way he/she defines himself/herself as subject. In such reflection, subjectivity is on trial.

Although a novel very different from *Don Quixote*, *Beloved* also troubles Logos, producing anxiety in the
reader as a thinking subject. After talking with friends and colleagues about Morrison’s novel, I decided that it is one of those books that one either loves profoundly or does not finish. But digging deeper into the reading responses of others as well as reflecting on my own response, I now think that my initial either/or conclusion was much too simple. Beloved is a book that one can both love and not finish, for in its other-ness it is painful for readers.

The narrator is a wise, warm, lyrical, humorous presence. Early in the novel, the reader (and especially the reader who has lived in Ohio) is drawn in by such observations as "Winter in Ohio was especially rough if you had an appetite for color. Sky provided the only drama, and counting on a Cincinnati for life’s principal joy was reckless indeed" (B 4). Later in the story, the narrator returns to this topic, assuming the same tone: "In Ohio seasons are theatrical. Each one enters like a prima donna, convinced its performance is the reason the world has people in it" (B 116). The recursiveness of the narrator’s telling, along with the poetic refrains that she uses for emphasis at key points make the narrator seem like a oral storyteller, an effect that diminishes distance between her and the reader. The reader senses that this narrator wants to retell the story over and over
to keep it alive, in the manner of village/tribal storytellers in oral cultures.

Already, those involved in this story—even Sethe—have deliberately forgotten Beloved, for "[r]emembering seemed unwise" (B 274). Feeling that they have survived a bad dream, they agree that "[t]his is not a story to pass on" (B 275). Because history for Blacks in this country is such a grim narrative, much of it has been deliberately forgotten; personal histories, or what Sethe calls "rememories," have served as substitutes. It is only by creating their own narratives, constituting some sort of space in which they are able to act as subjects, that Blacks have lived through the unbearableness of being. What the narrator of Beloved keeps alive are those psychic dramas always unaccounted for in the large historical narrative and eventually repressed in personal histories as well.

Despite the narrator’s warmth and wit, she tells us a profoundly unsettling story. And perhaps because the narrative, especially in the beginning, is full of homey details and because the narrator’s presence is so comfortable, the reader is thrown off balance when what initially seemed to be representational fiction begins to seem more and more strange, until one can no longer distinguish between reality and fantasy. In its refusal
to remain static and unified, Beloved as object-in-process prevents the reader from occupying a stable, secure position as subject. In this way, Morrison’s novel is the other (very unlike Roots or Uncle Tom’s Cabin), evoking anxiety in the reader, and such anxiety is what the phallogocentric must avoid to remain insulated, static, intact. With the appearance of Beloved, who represents the unnameable and unknowable other, the structural integrity of the novel is destroyed. And this is the point at which many readers put down the novel and fail to take it up again.

The following passage from Beloved’s first monologue is one of the most haunting descriptions that I have ever read and unlike anything that I have encountered in modern and post-modern fiction--with the exception of Cixous’ Inside:

I AM BELOVED and she is mine . . . . how can I say things that are pictures I am not separate from her there is no place where I stop her face is my own and I want to be there in the place where her face is and to be looking at it too a hot thing

All of it is now it is always now there will never be a time when I am not crouching and watching others who are crouching too I am always crouching the man on my face is dead his face is not mine his mouth smells sweet but his eyes are locked some who eat nasty themselves I do not eat the men without skin bring us their morning water to drink we have none at night I cannot see the dead man on my face daylight comes through the cracks and I can see his locked eyes I am not
big small rats do not wait for us to sleep short and then return in the beginning we could vomit now we do not now we cannot. . . .  (B 210)

Although this passage contains images that recur throughout the narrative, and most of them we can piece together to create Beloved's story, the story that results still has too many gaps. The last two pages of the novel subvert the reader's conception of Beloved. Until this point, the reader can attribute Beloved to Denver's desire to be recognized and to her overwhelming loneliness and to Sethe's desire for both atonement and punishment for killing her child. Yet despite their obsessions, or more accurately because of their obsessions, Denver and Sethe have both "disremembered" Beloved by the end of the story; it is the narrator who utters her name and holds on to her, defining her as the existential loneliness and alienation that cannot be soothed away, a loneliness repressed but familiar to us all.

Not the least of Beloved's unsettling effects is the reader's relationship with Sethe. The reader comes to admire Sethe, agreeing completely with Paul D., who says, "You your best thing, Sethe. You are" (B 273). Yet the reader also accepts Paul D.'s conclusion that "[t]here are too many things to feel about this woman" (B 272). Sethe is a character who exceeds the reader's conceptions. It
is one thing for the reader to deal with Beloved’s otherness, treating her as an enchantment or as a spirit made palpable, but it is quite a different matter to grapple with Sethe’s otherness, which involves issues related to the reader’s being as a subject. Above and beyond everything else, Sethe killed her child in an act of love. And we cannot know the kind of love that it took to drag the teeth of that saw under the little chin: to feel the baby blood pump like oil in her hands; to hold her face so her head could stay on; to squeeze her so she could absorb, still, the death spasms that shot through that adored body, plump and sweet with life. . . . (B 251)

Paul D., who loves Sethe, also fears her, for her "love is too thick" (B 164). Denver, unable to trust her mother, has kept a twelve-year vigil, never leaving the house and yard for fear that "the thing that happened" might happen again if she is not there to stop it. Denver says she needs to know that which "makes it all right" for Sethe to kill her own, but she does not want to know this. Her nightmares replay the same scene of her mother gazing at her with the eyes of a stranger and then carefully cutting off her head, carefully so as not to hurt Denver. Likely to share Paul D. and Denver’s feelings, the reader cannot fully understand Sethe and cannot trust her completely, although he admires her courage. Infanticide, even more than incest, is unfathomable.
It is easy enough for the reader to take up the position of the New Age liberal and condemn the mentality of a white consciousness that diminished the Black to the status of commodity-beast and to condemn the concomitant brutality of Whites toward Blacks. In this position, the white reader identifies with Sethe and the other characters, identifying in opposition to his own race and culture. But when Sethe kills her baby to "out-hurt the hurter" (B 234) and, thus, become a subject rather than an object in her fight against schoolteacher, for many readers the identification ends. Although a reader can claim that she understands, Sethe herself recognizes that she can never fully explain the murder, "never close it in, pin it down for anybody who had to ask" (B 163). The phallogocentric reader is a schoolteacher of sorts, keeping the accounts straight and making sure the arithmetic works out. But this reader cannot know, from Sethe's perspective, the "dirtiness" of the white consciousness, which robbed her both of a self and the ability to reconstitute a self.

Zimmerman points out that "it is women's real lives that defy the laws of texts" (177). Sethe's life occurs outside of linear, historical time. She says that time did not pass at Sweet Home, and neither does it pass at 124 Bluestone Road. Until the end of the novel, the world
of Sethe and Denver is circumscribed within the bounds of their house and lawn. For Sethe, "the future was a matter of keeping the past at bay" (B 42). The only things she seems to "rememory" involve the murder and her reasons for committing it. She says that she has kept this story alive so that if she is reunited with her daughter or sons, she can make them understand. The reader suspects that the rememory is necessary for Sethe to quell the anxiety she feels about her action. Sethe's time is cyclical and eternal, constructed in the narrative of her life that she has created, and such are the stories that historical time cannot contain. The same holds true for Sethe's reality--a reality so alien and other, according to the text of American history--that Morrison is obliged to use fantasy to attempt to fill out its contours.

As phallogocentric readers, our compulsion to know through reasoning is frustrated (and interrogated) by Morrison's narrative. Although the story is revealed incrementally in successive layers, at the end we cannot completely explain Beloved or Sethe nor the complexity of the terrible bond/bind of love between them. For the layers peel down to the site of the other. Antonin Artaud observed that

> [a]ll true feeling in reality is untranslatable. To express it is to betray it. ... All powerful feeling produces in us the idea of the void. ... That is why an image, an allegory,
a figure that masks what it would reveal has more significance for the spirit than the lucidities of speech. (Theater 71)

Artaud's words help to explain the connection between Beloved and the epigraph Morrison chose for the novel: "I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved" (Romans 9:25).
NOTES: CHAPTER IV

"In the spirit of this chapter on feminine discourse and its challenge to phallogocentrism, I have begun by writing from the body as opposed to adhering to the norms of academic discourse. But because the rhetorical contract to which I have committed requires that I speak the language of the academy, I will now fall back into line, observing the rules of clarity, economy, and linearity--only occasionally straying off course in speculative ambling, a delicious but prohibited activity in this realm.

"Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (eds. New French Feminisms) claim that "nowhere else [but France] have groups of women come together with the express purpose of criticizing and reshaping the official language" (6). Marks and de Courtivron suggest that the reason behind the phenomenon relates to the emphasis that the French have always placed on language, men and women having always been encouraged to perform well in speech and writing (5).

"Refer to Deleuze and Guattari's brilliant, irreverent critique of Freudian psychoanalysis in Anti-Oedipus.

"Patrick McGee (Paperspace: Style and Ideology in Joyce's Ulysses) points out that Lacan would disagree. For Lacan, jouissance is not physiological, rather jouissance is thought (204n).

"This idea reminds me of the repeated syntactic coupling of the words womb and tomb in Joyce's Ulysses.
CONCLUSION:

REDEFINING THE RHETORIC OF FICTION

Obscure and obscene--these words sum up the responses of the trustees on the Pulitzer board when they overruled the panel of judges who recommended that Gravity's Rainbow be awarded the 1974 Pulitzer Prize for fiction. Though they denounced Pynchon's novel as incomprehensible, the trustees evidently understood enough of it to label it pernicious and pornographic. For these readers, the novel exceeded the bounds of decency and clarity, exceeded the sense of order that they felt entrusted to uphold. And, once again, clarity comes to be connected with morality.

The neurotic response of the Pulitzer board represents the kind of rhetorical response to literature that I hope this study calls into question. As the title of this concluding section implies, I think Wayne Booth's rhetorical analysis in The Rhetoric of Fiction is badly in need of a new definition of rhetoric. I have chosen Booth's text because it is paradigmatic of traditional Anglo-American rhetorical analysis, which is characterized by logical positivism and humanism. By new definition, I
mean an expanded definition that will more adequately describe the relationship between the reader and those twentieth-century texts that threaten her position as a would-be unified, transcendent subject.

Booth draws most of his examples from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century fiction (the Golden Age of logical positivism). He feels secure with the kind of rhetorical contract provided by these works, clearly revering those texts like Jane Austen's *Emma* that feature an implied author who acts as a friend and a guide to the reader:

> We have been privileged to watch with [the implied author "Jane Austen"] as she observes her favorite character climb from a considerably lower platform to join the excited company of Knightley, "Jane Austen," and those of us readers who are wise enough, good enough, and perceptive enough to belong up there too. (The Rhetoric of Fiction 265, my emphasis)

> The only illusion we care about, the illusion of traveling intimately with a hardy little band of readers whose heads are screwed on tight and whose hearts are in the right place. . . . (266, my emphasis)

Booth focuses on twentieth-century works mainly to point out "the price of impersonal narration" and "the [im]morality of impersonal narration," at some points sounding dogmatic:

> The "well-made phrase" in fiction must be much more than "beautiful"; it must serve larger ends, and the artist has a moral obligation, contained as an essential part of his aesthetic obligation to "write well," to do all that is possible in any given instance to realize his world as he intends it. (388)
But at other points, Booth sounds downright deluded:

Yet regardless of how much we may reason about it, we have, in the course of our reading of [Céline's _Journey to the End of Night_], been caught. Caught in the trap of a suffering consciousness, we are led to succumb morally as well as visually. . . . Though Céline has attempted the traditional excuse--remember, it is my character speaking and not I--we cannot excuse him for writing a book, which, if taken seriously by the reader, must corrupt him. . . . If the reader takes its blandishments seriously, without providing a judgment radically different from Céline's, the result of reading the book must be not only to obscure his sense of what is wrong with such an action as clouting a woman's face just to see how it feels but finally to weaken his will to live as effectively as possible. (383-384)

Such statements prompt me to analyze Booth's own rhetoric.

For Booth, the bottom line is "whether everything has been done that ought to be done . . . to make the work fundamentally accessible, realized in the basic etymological sense of being made into a thing that has its own existence, no longer tied to the author's ego" (392). Booth resents the tendency of twentieth-century works to make the reader seek textual meaning in rhetoric outside the primary text, in the rhetoric of critical explication.

Charles Altieri's description of the modernists' definition of rhetoric offers surprising insights into the epistemological and ontological underpinnings of Booth's rhetorical assumptions:

Rhetoric is, of course, a very loose term and the modernists did not define it very carefully.
In essence, the term referred to various forms of self-delusion, especially those caused by a willingness to interpret and judge experience without being aware of its full complexity. This blindness was attributed to many sources, including Romantic sentimentalism . . . and to the Victorian reliance on abstract principles, derived either from a sense of social propriety or from a faith in scientific or religious universals. ("Objective Image" 101)

Although the rhetoric of the modernists expresses a very limited notion of rhetoric (self-persuasion/delusion is only one of many kinds of rhetoric that Kenneth Burke discusses), in its narrowness, it conveys something of the narrowness and nostalgia of Booth's conception.

Having begun as a stepchild of Platonic philosophy, rhetoric continues to be censured by those philosophers who oppose it to dialectics and fault it for focusing on that which is already known and fixed. Such philosophers despise rhetoric for working within the linguistic realm but failing to concern itself with the inadequacy or sloppiness of language. This is the rhetoric--formulaic and moribund--that Roland Barthes refers to as "the reification of the topics." Theodor Adorno points out that in the recent history of philosophy rhetoric has been "[s]evered and degraded into a means to achieve ends" (Adorno 55). In this conception, rhetoric acts as an impoverished substitute for philosophic thought.
Of course, not all philosophers agree with this assessment. Deconstructionists observe that rhetoric embodies the aporia, the gap between its performative function and its system of tropes. Its performative, speech-act function—full of psychoanalytic mystery—always exceeds its constative bounds. In addition, the movement/force of tropes and figures subverts the classification system that they represent. Shoshana Felman says that rhetoric is not a geometry, but a physics, involving "the study of movements produced by the interaction of forces in language" (Felman 25). As the embodiment of the gap between signifier and signified, rhetoric would seem to be the stuff of philosophy, for the gap represents the impossibility of the subject's full access to meaning, an impossibility—inscribed in language—that reveals a conflicted subjectivity split between the conscious and the unconscious. And it is this conception of rhetoric, replete with demonstrations of what Lacan calls "missed encounters" between language and the objects that it would fully describe, define, and, thus, control, that is missing in Wayne Booth's account.

A significant part of the meaning of Ulysses lies in the novel's anti-dialectical "dialogue," in that space created by the positing of a closure—generic, semantic, and otherwise—coupled with the refusal of such closure.
That unarticulated space, which is a variety of the phatic, helps to create the rhetoric of *Ulysses*. *Finnegans Wake* demonstrates even more dramatically the importance of the phatic in avant garde literature, stressing play in language over exchange of ideas. A new definition of rhetoric must take into account the phatic.

Rhetorical analysis should deal also with the musical, an element of writing stressed especially in feminist texts. As I mentioned in Chapter IV, Cixous emphasizes the power of words to soothe, writing in a poetic prose that appeals to the ear. Classical rhetoric included attention to iatrology, the ability of words to heal (Baumlin and Baumlin 259). But this view of language has gotten lost in logocentric, agonistic discursive practices. The comfort that Booth finds in language comes from the level of idea and proposition, not from the rhythm and music of the prose. Allied with the iatrological is sensual/kinesthetic language written from and for the body, language unnamed and unaccounted for in traditional rhetorical analysis.

In attending to the musical, the rhythmical, and the kinesthetic, rhetoric transforms stylistic analysis into a much more complex affair than it is now. Because of his attention to the psychological effects, the "hidden" means of persuasion, of literary form and style, Kenneth Burke
has been called the first post-modern critic of the century, "the great complicator of positivistic and logocentric criticism," a reputation inaugurated by the publication of *Counterstatement* in 1931 (Covino 220). Boothian rhetorical analysis still has much to learn from Burke. And it could learn a thing or two from Kristeva's stylistic analyses, which constitute an important part of her theory of the subject-in-process.

In her essay, "From One Identity to Another," Kristeva deals with Céline's writing, ending up at a point much different from Booth's. She calls Céline a "stylist," as opposed to a rhetorician. In examining Céline's style, she focuses on two phenomena: sentential rhythms and obscene words. Sentential rhythm in Céline refers to the division of his sentences into constitutive phrases separated by ellipsis periods, a process that detaches these phrases from the central verb that usually controls a sentence. Liberated from the verb, the phrases take on multiple connotations, and "the denotated object of the utterance, the transcendental object, loses its clear contours" (141). The interstices of the predication reveal the impossibility of knowing the transcendental object. Related to gesture, bodily drives, and kinesthesia, Céline's obscenities exceed linguistic signification. Although these two characteristics of
Céline's style are related to non-sense and laughter, they also "were posited as idols in Hitlerian ideology" as part of fascism's jolt to the transcendental consciousness (145)--observations crucial to any in-depth critique of fascist ideology. But, alas, observations outside Wayne Booth's rhetorical purview.
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